

INSPECTION REPORT

SAINT PETER'S METHODIST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Canterbury

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118707

Headteacher: Mrs Carol Townsend

Lead inspector: Margaret Dickinson

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 October 2004

Inspection number: 266557

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	210
School address:	St Peter's Grove Canterbury
Postcode:	CT1 2DH
Telephone number:	01227 464392
Fax number:	01227 464474
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Abbott
Date of previous inspection:	April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Peter's Methodist Primary School is a popular and oversubscribed voluntary controlled Methodist school, located in Canterbury city centre. There are 210 pupils on roll who come from Canterbury and nearby villages. Very few pupils join or leave the school at times other than the normal time for transfer. Children's attainment on starting school varies from year to year, but is above average on balance. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds though the overall socio-economic profile is above average. Most are from White British families and a few come from Asian, Chinese or mixed backgrounds. The number of pupils who require additional help with English is very low. Around 27 per cent of pupils are registered as having special educational needs, which is above average. Their needs are very wide-ranging but most have moderate learning difficulties. Two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school has recently been successful in its reassessment for the Investors in People award. It also follows the Healthy Schools standard.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12373	Margaret Dickinson	Lead inspector	English, music, physical education, English as an additional language
19338	Graham Ellis	Lay inspector	
22359	Jean Havard	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, history, geography, Foundation Stage
27055	Creighton Muirhead	Team inspector	Science, religious education, information and communication technology, design and technology, special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **good** education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. The school is well managed. Leadership is satisfactory and improving. The headteacher has pupils' achievement at the forefront of all developments. The new deputy headteacher is a strong addition to the senior management team. The school spends less per pupil than most schools and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils do well because teaching is good overall, but some aspects of teaching could be improved.
- The school is a caring community, with strong moral and social provision. This has a clear impact on pupils' good attitudes and behaviour.
- The school is well managed by the headteacher and senior management team and the governing body is effective.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and teaching assistants make an effective contribution to their achievement.
- Pupils do not make enough headway in information and communication technology (ICT) between Years 3 and 6 and standards are below average by Year 6.
- Whilst pupils' progress in mathematics is good overall, it could be better in some classes.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good and issues have been addressed well. The curriculum is planned more coherently. Pupils' attainment is now assessed and their progress tracked and monitored well. After the last inspection, standards at Year 2 dipped. This has received careful attention and strategies have been successful. Subject leaders have a greater role in monitoring pupils' attainment and they are making a stronger contribution to improving the school's effectiveness, though there is still some way to go with this.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	A	B	B
mathematics	A*	B	C	C
science	B	B	C	C

*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.*

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Pupils enter school with above average standards. They achieve satisfactorily in the reception class and, on leaving reception, most are reaching or exceeding the goals for children of this age. Standards at Year 2 are average but pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Achievement is good between Years 3 and 6. By Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, with well above average attainment in reading. Pupils achieve particularly well in reading across the school. Pupils with special educational needs also do well. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by Years 2 and 6. A notable strength has been the improvement in results at Year 2. These have been a concern over the last few years, with signs of underachievement in literacy. Appropriate action, including a programme of support, has resulted in standards improving from persistently below average over the last four years to above average in reading and writing in 2004. The contrast between the current

standards in Year 2 and those last year is not due to falling standards, but a reflection of a less capable year group, with fewer higher attaining pupils.

Pupils' **personal qualities are good**. They are well behaved, with the exception of a minority of pupils who sometimes become restless and talkative at inappropriate times. Pupils have positive attitudes to school. Attendance is well monitored and is now satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good, with particular strengths in social, moral and cultural development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good quality of education** for its pupils. **Teaching and learning are good overall**. The good teaching in English and mathematics is contributing strongly to pupils' achievement. Good teaching occurs across the school but is generally stronger between Years 3 to 6. Teachers' questioning techniques are a particular strength - a range of strategies are used to motivate, encourage and challenge pupils. Teaching assistants provide good, and sometimes very effective, support. They often have a positive impact upon learning for those pupils who require additional support. Pupils' books show some inconsistencies in how well pupils achieve over time – in some classes this is good, in others work is not always well matched to pupils' capabilities. There is a good range of opportunities for enriching the curriculum. Pupils are well cared for and supported by staff. The systems for monitoring and tracking individual progress in English and mathematics are good between Years 3 to 6 and developing well in the lower part of the school. Links with the community and other schools are good - these links support pupils' learning and personal development well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with some strengths. Management is good and leadership is satisfactory and improving. There have been several changes in leadership over the last three years as a result of promotion or retirement. With the appointment of a new deputy headteacher in September 2004, the leadership team is now stable. The headteacher and new deputy headteacher work well together and the capacity for further improvement is good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, firmly rooted in improving pupils' achievement, but this is not always communicated in a clear and focused way. The governing body is effective. Statutory requirements are fully met. Governors bring a range of professional skills and experience to the work of the school. They and the staff recognise that the improvements that have been implemented by the headteacher are beginning to have a positive impact upon pupils' academic achievement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Links with parents are satisfactory. The majority of parents are supportive but a small but significant minority would like to see better communication and a more receptive response to parents' concerns and suggestions. Inspectors found that the school provides good information for parents and aims to work closely with them. Most pupils enjoy school and find most lessons fun. Some feel that other pupils do not always behave well. Inspectors did find an element of restlessness in some lessons and some older boys do not set a good example and show inappropriate attitudes in lessons and assemblies.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in ICT by Year 6.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching to encourage more good or better teaching.
- Monitor pupils' progress in mathematics to encourage good achievement in each year.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are above average by the end of the reception year and Year 6. Standards are currently average at Year 2 because this class has more lower attaining pupils than in the previous year. Pupils achieve well overall. This includes pupils with special educational needs. Achievement in the reception year is satisfactory and this steady achievement continues until the end of Year 2. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils' achievement is good, because teaching is generally better.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at Year 2 improved markedly in 2004, particularly in reading and writing.
- Standards in reading are well above average by Year 6 and pupils develop their reading skills and interests well throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and consequently make good progress in lessons and over time.
- Standards in ICT are not high enough by Year 6 because pupils do not have enough time for the subject and do not have enough experience of using computers in ICT and other subjects from Year 3.
- Achievement in mathematics is good overall but this is not consistent across the school.

Commentary

1. In the 2004 national tests for Year 6 pupils, results were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. This is not quite as good as previous years. However, comparing one year's results with another has to be done cautiously, because there are only 30 pupils each class and pupils' capabilities vary from year to year. When results are compared to those of schools that had similar results at Year 2, pupils' performance in 2004 was above average in English and average in mathematics and science. This suggests good achievement in English, which supports the findings from the inspection evidence. Pupils are doing well between Years 3 and 6, mainly as a result of careful monitoring and assessment and good teaching.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (28.9)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.2 (27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.4 (29.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Children in the reception class start school with above average skills. By the time they finish the reception year, they are exceeding the goals for children of this age in most of the areas of learning, including communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development.
3. Reading and writing standards by Year 2 have been causing concern for some time because they have been below average for several years and the trend in improvement in reading, writing and mathematics has been below the national trend. Given that most pupils start school with above average skills, all indicators were pointing to underachievement during the first years of schooling. The headteacher and subject leader for literacy instigated several effective strategies to improve standards. Through careful monitoring and a programme of support, including advisory help from the local education authority, pupils' standards have improved and

they are now making much better progress in their reading and writing. This was borne out by the 2004 national tests at Year 2, when pupils' performance was above average in reading and writing. When compared with similar schools, reading was well above average and writing above average. This reflects the inspection judgement, which shows pupils make good progress in English in Years 1 and 2.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.0 (14.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.7 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.7 (15.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Pupils enjoy reading and this is taught well. Some very effective guided reading sessions were observed during the inspection. Some of the strongest aspects of these were teachers being very clear about what they expected each group of pupils to achieve in the time available. Teachers focused carefully on specific aspects of reading, such as the length of sentences and the impact of varying sentence length. In a very effective lesson, the teacher matched activities very well to the differing abilities within the class. A group of higher attaining pupils, for instance, were working on a complicated comprehension task which was stretching them. As a result they worked with confidence and concentration. Pupils have good recall of books they have read. Many older pupils in Year 6 are avid readers. They tackle substantial books and relish them. They speak very confidently and assuredly about favourite books, the characters they particularly like and why they admire certain authors and the way they write. They give considered and mature opinions when asked questions about their taste in reading and their reasons for recommending books to other readers.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They are set good individual targets to help them improve and these are regularly checked, monitored and updated each term. Teaching assistants provide good support for these pupils, helping them to concentrate, providing extra explanations and clarification and praising them for their hard work. In some lessons, this support is very effective indeed, which means that these pupils made good strides in their learning. The good quality monitoring and support, over time, is helping pupils to make good progress and reach their potential.
6. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to use computers on a regular basis. This applies to the sessions that they have in the computer suite, which, for pupils in Years 3 to 6, is a much shorter time than in most schools, and in other subject lessons. This means that they are not covering the full range of the curriculum in ICT so there are gaps in their learning. Another reason is that some teachers are not fully confident in using computers to support pupils' learning. The cumulative effect of these factors is hindering standards, which are not as good as they should be by Year 6.
7. The overall picture in mathematics is that pupils achieve well and in many classes, higher attaining pupils are given tasks that stretch them. However, this is not happening in every class. Where this is inconsistent, work is not always appropriate for pupils' capabilities, being usually too easy rather than too hard. In addition, teachers' marking is not helping pupils to move on in their learning. The school has been concentrating mainly on raising standards in literacy, particularly writing, over the last year, and this has been successful. Through their monitoring of standards, the headteacher and senior management team have identified that it is now time to turn to mathematics because improvements have not been quite as marked in mathematics as in literacy. The subject leader has drawn up a good action plan which has a clear focus on improving achievement further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have positive attitudes and most behave well. The school has taken good steps to improve attendance, which is now satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development during their first year in school.
- Pupils are confident and friendly and enjoy coming to school.
- Most pupils are well behaved and form good relationships with one another because social and moral provision is good.
- At times, some older boys do not display enough self-discipline.
- The emphasis on spiritual development is not as strong as social, moral and cultural provision, which is good.

Commentary

8. Most children are likely to meet the goals for personal, social and emotional development by the time they complete their reception year and a good number will exceed them. Children settle quickly into school routines when they start reception, helped by the good induction arrangements and good care and support. They are happy coming to school and soon establish friends and become part of the school community. Teachers and support staff encourage children to take part in a range of activities, talk to them and value their contributions and ideas. Through a range of outdoor play and role-play activities, they learn to mix with one another and take part in creative play. Children soon become confident to talk, answer questions, and share resources with one another.
9. Pupils between Years 1 and 6 enjoy coming to school and show positive attitudes in lessons and at other times of the school day. They generally settle quickly in lessons and organise themselves well. They respond particularly well in lessons when teachers adopt a lively and engaging approach and involve them in a range of interesting activities. They like using their initiative and solving problems. In several lessons, this type of activity resulted in keen anticipation and some good collaborative work. The pupils' positive response to school is an important factor in their good achievement.
10. Most pupils are well behaved in lessons. They play happily together at break times. They mix well across age groups and older pupils help out younger ones when necessary. Pupils are sensible in the dining hall during lunchtimes and when moving around the school. Although parents are happy with the standard of behaviour in the school, some pupils felt that it was not as good as it should be. During the inspection, behaviour was judged as good overall but pupils are correct that behaviour is not always good. In assemblies, for instance, most pupils enter the hall quietly and sensibly, and listen to the music that is playing. However, some older boys talk at inappropriate moments and do not show enough self-discipline and respect for the occasion, or for the member of staff taking the assembly. This undercurrent of chatter spoils the special atmosphere in assemblies and undermines the spiritual value of this important part of the day. This also carries over to lessons, when, on occasions, there is an element of arrogance amongst a small minority of boys.

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	157	2	0
White – any other White background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	34	0	0

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

11. Pupils are confident and form easy relationships with one another and with adults. They enjoy talking about their school, their work and interests. They work well together when they are given tasks to do in groups. The school gives them good opportunities to develop their social skills, through organising clubs and visits to the local or wider community, including residential trips. The joint sessions with pupils from St Nicholas Special School gives pupils valuable opportunities to foster supportive relationships and learn to respect other children who have special difficulties and needs.
12. The school values pupils' views and these are sought through questionnaires, which are carefully analysed to establish what pupils do and do not like about their school. The School Council is also used well to gauge pupils' views. This encourages pupils' sense of responsibility and enables them to consider other people's opinions and contribute ideas as members of their school community. All pupils are well known to staff and this helps to reinforce a shared moral code, a strong sense of community and a supportive ethos.
13. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in cultural events through being located in Canterbury. They have been involved in archaeological projects, through BBC Time Team, and regularly visit Canterbury to support their learning in history or religious education. Pupils also have a valuable opportunity to consider the traditions and lifestyle of children who live in a very different cultural context. They benefit from a long-standing link between a member of staff and a rural community in India. Pupils have considered ways in which they can support this small community, through fund-raising events or emailing school children. The school fosters social, moral and cultural development well. Spiritual provision, whilst satisfactory, receives on balance relatively limited emphasis in assemblies and through the different subjects of the curriculum.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	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.

14. The school has recently taken positive steps to improve both attendance and punctuality. These measures have been successful. Attendance was below average last year but is now

satisfactory with the levels for both authorised and unauthorised absence around the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good overall. The curriculum is planned well and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are well cared for and supported by staff. Links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community and other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is satisfactory in the reception class and in Years 1 to 2, though there are some good aspects to the teaching in these years. Teaching is good and occasionally very good between Years 3 to 6. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- English is taught well between Years 1 to 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching assistants are used well and provide effective support for pupils to help them learn well in lessons.
- Work set by teachers is not always well matched to pupils' capabilities.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3 (10%)	15 (50%)	11 (37%)	1 (3%)	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.

15. The school has been focusing on improving the quality of teaching in English in order to raise standards in reading and writing. The changes that have been introduced and the programme of support have clearly had a positive impact on standards by Year 2 and in the rest of the school. Teaching in English is now good and pupils learn at a good pace. This was confirmed both by lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work over a longer time-span. Teachers plan an effective range of reading activities and ensure there is a clear focus on developing reading skills. Pupils of all capabilities are well supported and more fluent and capable readers are expected to tackle harder books and more involved tasks. This effective approach to reading is one reason why pupils make good progress in reading and why standards are well above average by Year 6. There are positive signs that writing standards are also improving. Good examples of effective teaching were seen in many lessons. In a Year 1 lesson, for instance, pupils were given good worksheets to help them write more independently. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were devising a longer piece of writing over a series of lessons and were being given plenty of guidance as to how to structure and expand upon their ideas to create an effective piece of work.
16. Good teaching was seen in each year group, including reception, during the inspection but evidence from analysis of pupils' work over a longer time-scale shows the strongest teaching generally occurs between Years 3 to 6.
17. The following characteristics were often evident in lessons judged good or very good:

- Lessons have a sharp focus on what pupils will learn and teachers make good connections with previous lessons. This was effective in a Year 5 mathematics lesson on equivalent fractions and a Year 3 lesson on measurement.
 - Teachers plan activities that are appropriate for pupils' differing capabilities, and make sure the tasks for higher attaining pupils are going to make them think and feel challenged. In Year 6 English and mathematics lessons, for instance, these pupils were working at Level 5 standard because they were capable of tackling work at this level. In several lessons, teachers had planned relevant extension work to help pupils once they had achieved their tasks.
 - Teachers ensure the lessons move at a good pace to motivate pupils and encourage them to work hard. In one lesson, pupils were so motivated that they were reluctant to stop at break.
 - Teachers establish very good relationships with the pupils and use their lively sense of humour to engage pupils, and encourage an enthusiasm for learning. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, for instance, the teacher jumped off the ground to pretend she was the tallest member of staff in the class. This made the pupils laugh and injected energy into their learning. In Year 5 design and technology lesson, the teacher took on the role of a director of a biscuit company to stimulate pupils' interest and prompt them to think.
 - Many teachers use questions very well, to prompt them to think more carefully, for example, or assess their understanding before they continue. Teaching is particularly effective when teachers identify different groups of pupils and ask them easier or harder questions according to their capabilities.
18. Although teaching is good overall, there are aspects of teaching that require further improvement in order to pupils to achieve consistently well as they move through the school. The characteristics that led to teaching being judged satisfactory rather than good, or very occasionally unsatisfactory, were:
- Teaching lacked clarity and was not sufficiently focused on what pupils would learn and achieve within the lesson. Teachers had planned the same task for all pupils so that higher attaining pupils were working well within their capabilities.
 - Pupils were expected to sit and listen to the teacher for prolonged periods, which led to restlessness. There were missed opportunities to vary the teaching approach, or to involve pupils more, through using a broader variety of teaching methods
 - Teachers were too tolerant of constant low level chatter, calling out, or extended lapses in concentration on the part of some pupils. Very occasionally, this applied to a significant proportion of the class, and therefore led to unsatisfactory learning.
19. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows marking is effective in some classes but not in others. At best, teachers use assessment to share points for improvement with pupils. In some classes, this is helping pupils to understand what they need to do to work towards a higher level of attainment. In other cases, marking is cursory and is not supporting pupils' learning effectively.
20. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows they work at a good pace in many classes because teachers have high expectations of them and expect them to work hard and do their best. Teachers have a good awareness of the levels at which pupils are currently working and what they need to work on next. However, pupils' books show this is not totally consistent across the school. The expectations are sometimes the same for all pupils, irrespective of their potential. In mathematics, for example, there has been an over-reliance in some classes, upon pupils working their way through a commercial scheme, and this has not always supported the achievement of the higher attaining pupils. The school is aware of this and has started to address this issue.
21. Teaching assistants are well qualified and experienced and they provide good support. In some lessons, they are highly effective. On occasions, for example, where teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, the pupils supported by teaching assistants make much better progress than the rest of the class. In lessons, they take an active role in supporting, clarifying, questioning and assessing. They ensure that their pupils understand the task and remain

focused. In the majority of lessons, the support staff are well briefed on the learning that is to be expected and they have a detailed knowledge of the individual pupils' needs or difficulties. Their commitment and hard work means they make a valuable contribution to the achievement of the pupils, particularly those who need additional help.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad and balanced and supports pupils' achievement well in all areas apart from ICT. There are good opportunities for enriching the curriculum. The accommodation is much improved and, together with resources, is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has been developed effectively since the last inspection and is now well organised and planned.
- The provision for pupils with special needs is good.
- The school makes good use of its location to enrich the curriculum and organises a good range of additional opportunities.
- There are weaknesses in the school's ICT provision, which are affecting pupils' standards.

Commentary

22. The curriculum was one of the key weaknesses at the last inspection. There has been good improvement since then. Teachers are now sharing their planning and using a common format across the school. Pupils now enjoy a more cohesive curriculum as one year follows on smoothly from the previous one. The support programme instigated by the current headteacher has led to clear improvements in how literacy is planned and taught: this has had a clear and positive impact upon pupils' standards, particularly in writing.
23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well planned. Their individual education plans are very good. They have clearly stated short term targets that include details of which strategies will be used to help them. There is an effective system of review, and the co-ordinator makes sure all staff have access to the information they need. Good contacts exist with relevant outside agencies and any necessary support is effectively implemented. These good aspects of planning and management, together with the good support from teaching assistants, means pupils with special educational needs do well.
24. The school provides a good range of additional activities which support and enrich the curriculum. Very good use is made of the local community and the city of Canterbury to support learning in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. The school itself is an archaeological site and many pupils therefore have a particular interest in history. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to take part in clubs throughout the year and there is a chance to learn a musical instrument through a visiting teacher. Pupils benefit considerably from taking part in community events, such as sport competitions, local arts festivals, Canterbury Carnival and art competitions. All these extra opportunities make a substantial contribution to pupils' achievement, attitudes and personal development.
25. One subject which requires further improvement is ICT. Although this is planned and taught, the time allocated for the subject from Years 3 to 6 is not sufficient to cover the full range of the curriculum. It is much lower in these years than the average time allocated by schools nationally. Pupils say they do not use computers much in other lessons, apart from those they have in the ICT suite, and there was very little evidence in books of pupils using ICT to support their learning across different subjects. Some classes have only one computer in their room and the suite is not effectively used in the mornings. This is limiting the way in which pupils can use computers for a wide range of purposes. The gaps in provision are hindering achievement, which is why standards are below average. The school has wisely allocated some of its surplus funding to expanding resources for ICT to give pupils more access to computers.

Care, guidance and support

The school has good procedures for care, welfare, health and safety. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance for their personal and academic development. There are good procedures for finding out how pupils view the school and involving them in its development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Support, advice and guidance are good and support pupils' achievement well.
- The school provides good standards of care, welfare, health and safety.
- There are good arrangements for ensuring a smooth transition when children start school.
- The school values pupils' views and takes steps to gauge their views.

Commentary

26. Pupils are happy in school. They feel part of a caring community, in which they are confident, trust the staff and are aware how they can obtain help. Teachers and other staff know them very well. Their personal development is systematically and well monitored so that staff can quickly recognise their needs and thereby provide good standards of pastoral support and care. Staff act quickly to assist any pupil who is concerned or in need of support.
27. Policies relating to health and safety and child protection have recently been reviewed and updated. Arrangements for pupils' health, welfare and first aid are good with regular risk assessments. There are good procedures in place for child protection with good co-ordination with outside agencies so that further support may be provided in appropriate cases. Pupils are effectively supervised. These good arrangements reflect the school's strong commitment to care and welfare and help to set a climate where pupils can achieve well.
28. Staff work closely with parents of the youngest children starting school and there is good liaison with pre-school provision. The school's caring environment ensures that children entering reception and those transferring from other schools are supported well. As a result, children settle in quickly and happily to their new school.
29. The overall arrangements for involving pupils in the work and development of the school are good. There is an openness in which pupils' views are actively sought and valued. Pupils are consulted through an annual questionnaire and results are very thoroughly analysed and carefully considered. They are encouraged to contribute to the running of the school and there is an active School Council involving pupils from Years 2 to 6. Members are elected each term and gain valuable experience of a representative organisation. Time is set aside for them to liaise with and report back to the pupils in their respective classes. This means that pupils have an opportunity to express their views and make suggestions that affect their experience of school.
30. As a result of effective record keeping and good communication the requirements of pupils with special educational need are well known to staff. There are very good systems of recording and monitoring progress, with clear short term goals. Individual education plans are used effectively to set targets, plan support and monitor.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has satisfactory links with parents and good links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides good information for parents.

- Pupils benefit from the school using its location well and its good links with the community and other schools.
- A significant minority of parents are worried about aspects of the school's provision.

Commentary

31. The overwhelming majority of parents take an active interest in the school and its work. Most of them hold the school in high regard and are appreciative of its achievements and what it does for their children. They provide good general and financial support. A significant number of parents regularly help in classes, supporting reading, for example. The school aims to engage parents productively in school life and forge good relationships with them. This has been successfully achieved with the majority of parents. They feel the school is accessible, that they are welcomed and that members of staff are approachable. However, a significant minority expressed a contrary view at the parents' meeting, in response to the parents' questionnaire or in writing to the registered inspector. Their concerns fell into three main categories: that there have been too many changes, with inadequate consultation; the school has lost much of its friendly atmosphere; and their views and concerns are not fully considered and taken into account by senior management.
32. The inspection team found no evidence to suggest an unfriendly atmosphere in the school. They judged the school to be a happy learning environment with a good ethos. Governors and staff are supportive of the changes that have taken place and recognise that most of these were needed. Shortening the lunch hour, however, was carried out without notifying parents beforehand and explaining the reasons. This has understandably left some parents feeling aggrieved. It is clear that the governors and the headteacher have underestimated the strength of feeling amongst a minority of parents and there is a need to improve communication and partnership in order to encourage as many parents as possible to feel supportive of the school.
33. The school communicates frequently with parents. Both the prospectus and the annual governors' report are well produced and informative. A minority of parents did not consider that they were kept well informed by the school on their children's progress but the team does not agree with this view. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through the consultation meetings with staff and informal contact throughout the year. The pupils' annual reports are good, providing detailed informative guidance for parents. They include targets for future development in English and mathematics with attainment related to national levels. These are supported by valuable interim termly reports.
34. The school has established good links with the community, including good links with the church and clergy. The school is able to use the church for assemblies, services and musical productions and this gives pupils valuable opportunities to worship or perform in a different environment from the school hall. There are good commercial links, for example with local shops, cafes and restaurants. Pupils take part in the Canterbury Festival and the St. Nicholas Parade and the school makes good use of the locality for various visits. The school is involved with a multi-cultural charity, Music for Change, and takes part in the annual Global Awareness week. All these opportunities help pupils to broaden their awareness of their local culture and those further afield.
35. The school has good links with Canterbury High School, as part of the sports partnership. Both staff and pupils benefit. A local private school provides science facilities for older pupils and their grounds are used for sports day. There is a particularly strong link with St. Nicholas Special School with pupils attending the school for placements or for joint-lessons. This is a major contribution to inclusion and pupils' personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory with some strong elements. The school is satisfactorily led by the headteacher. The new deputy headteacher and senior staff provide good support. The school is well managed and is governed well. The school is in a good position to build further upon recent improvements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has introduced good systems to monitor pupils' progress and set targets for them.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator is effective.
- The governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and use their own expertise effectively.
- The headteacher has not always communicated changes effectively, ensuring there is clarity and consultation within the whole school community.
- The subject leaders' monitoring role requires further development.

Commentary

36. In the five years since its previous inspection, the school has undergone several changes in senior management, resulting from promotion or retirement. The appointment of a headteacher in the last two years and a deputy headteacher very recently has led to a new leadership team, which is having a positive impact on the pupils' performance. The headteacher is successfully establishing a united and supportive senior management team, which is committed to pupils' successful academic and personal development. The new deputy headteacher is working effectively with the headteacher and the signs are that this will be a strong and successful leadership team.
37. The headteacher has had to work hard to bring about the much-needed changes since she took up post eighteen months ago. The staff are committed and work hard. They recognise that changes were needed in the school and are pleased that standards are improving, especially at Year 2. Staff feel well managed and well supported by the headteacher. Discussions with staff indicate a clear willingness to contribute to improving the school further. Morale, overall, is good.
38. Although the headteacher has a clear vision for the future, with an appropriate focus on raising standards, this is not always communicated with sufficient clarity. In the past, some changes have not been communicated as well as they could have been. The headteacher is very keen to improve on this, especially with those parents who are not fully supportive of the direction the school is taking.
39. The quality of subject leadership was highlighted as an area for development at the last inspection. The demands on subject leaders have increased over recent years and this continues to be a developing area. They now have a stronger monitoring role, and review the quality of provision across the school but there is still some way to go. Some subject leaders have carried out a perceptive analysis of strengths and weaknesses. This is evident, for example, in mathematics and English where good action plans are in place.
40. The headteacher has introduced effective systems to track the progress being made by individual pupils. In this way, staff and pupils' expectations have been raised. Targets are set for individual pupils and these are challenging, particularly between Years 3 to 6. In most cases, teachers are using these targets effectively, to plan work at an appropriate level so that pupils achieve well. However, this is not yet consistent across the whole school.

41. The school shows strong commitment to enable all its pupils to benefit as best they can from their education. It is an inclusive school and all pupils are valued. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator is very well organised and there are good procedures for identifying pupils who need support at an early stage. Support staff are deployed to good effect and receive good support through weekly training meetings. The good record keeping ensures that pupils' progress is accurately assessed, and appropriate targets set. This is having a positive impact upon achievement for these pupils.
42. Governance of the school is good. The governing body shows great commitment to the school. Governors are clear about their responsibilities, well informed and have an impact on the strategic direction of the school. The governing body is fulfilling its statutory requirements well in all aspects apart from ICT, where pupils do not have enough access. Many governors have professional expertise in a range of fields and they make a significant contribution in supporting and guiding the school. Although governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school they have underestimated the degree of concern amongst some parents. The Governing Body has made an effective input to the development of the accommodation since the last inspection. The changes have made a significant contribution to improving facilities and access for the benefit of pupils, staff, parents and visitors.
43. The finances are managed and administered well. The budget surplus has been higher than it should be, but this has been allocated to improving resources for ICT. This is highly appropriate, since pupils do not achieve well in this subject and standards are below average.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	538,904
Total expenditure	539,415
Expenditure per pupil	2,569

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	36,211
Balance carried forward to the next	35,700

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44. When children start school, their standards vary from year to year. Most enter the reception class with nursery or playground experience and, on balance, attainment on entry is above average. By the end of the year most children meet the goals for children of this age and some exceed them. Since the last inspection the school has maintained its provision in the reception year, with children continuing to achieve satisfactorily and build upon their standards on entry. Leadership and management are satisfactory.
45. The children enter the reception class on a part time basis during the September before their fifth birthday. All the children attend full time from mid October. The staggered induction programme is having a positive impact on the children's transition to school. Good relationships are established with the parents and they are kept well informed of their children's progress
46. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planning and assessment has improved recently but there is a need to develop this further to include more detailed planning for areas other than communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Teachers and support staff monitor each child's progress carefully. However, evidence from scrutiny of previous work shows that staff need to ensure there are greater expectations and challenge for the more able children.
47. The school has worked hard to improve the accommodation since the last inspection. Outdoor provision has improved, with a new purpose built playground for the reception children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children settle well and are happy in school because of the good induction programme and the support, care and respect shown for each child.
- The children know what is expected of them and respond well to the clear routines.
- The behaviour of the children is good overall.
- Staff provide a range of structured activities to enhance the children's personal development, enabling the children to develop confidence and independence.
- Children are happy in school and their successes are celebrated.

Commentary

48. When the children start school, their personal, emotional and social skills are above those expected for this age. Most leave the reception year with good personal, social and emotional skills, and make good progress. Children are confident and happy to come to school. They use resources confidently and play with other children co-operatively. Although they have only been in school for five weeks the children are already responding well to the clear routines, and settle with the minimum of fuss. Teaching in this area is good. High priority is given in allowing the children to develop their social skills through, for example, structured play and snack time. By the time they leave the reception year the children share, take turns and work independently. The children are friendly, interact well with others and behave well. Children show a pride in their work and they are rewarded in their efforts by praise and stickers.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children demonstrate good speaking and listening skills.
- The children make good progress in their reading skills.
- Opportunities to develop writing skills are limited.

Commentary

49. Many children have good language and literacy skills when they start the reception year. This is especially so in speaking and listening. Most children speak confidently, with good articulation and a wide vocabulary for their age. By the time they leave the reception year, most are meeting the goals for this age and some exceed them. Children are given many opportunities to talk and listen. Staff develop the children's vocabulary through probing questions. For example, when children tasted different apples, the support assistant continually chatted to the children asking them questions, so that they could think and describe what they were doing. Relationships between staff and children are good and this means that the children are comfortable talking to adults, who show genuine interest in what the children have to say.
50. Many children come to school with a wide experience of reading books for enjoyment. They enjoy books and listen well when a story is read to them. For example, when the teacher read 'Jack and the Beanstalk' the children were hanging onto her every word as she read with expression and excitement. Current planning demonstrates that the development of reading skills is a strong priority. There was limited evidence of early writing skills, at this stage in the term. However, children's work from last year shows there are limited opportunities for children to write independently and a significant number of children did not meet the expectations in writing by the end of the reception year Teaching is satisfactory overall.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a good range of activities to develop learning in this area and help children to build upon their early mathematical skills.

Commentary

51. Initial assessments show that the children's mathematical development is generally above the expectation for their age when they start school. By the time they finish the reception year, most meet the goals for this age and some exceed them.
52. Many children can count to ten and some beyond this. They recognise the written numerals and some higher attaining children count to 20 and refer to halves and quarters when talking about apples. During one activity, where the children had created a graph of their favourite apples, several children were able to work out how many more apples were in one line than the other.
53. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The teacher plans a suitable range of activities to promote mathematical understanding, including counting, sorting and recording information on simple bar charts. Teaching provides challenge for the higher attaining children, through targeting more taxing questions when children are capable of more difficult calculations. However, during the inspection, some questions were too hard for the majority of children in the group, which meant only the higher attaining children were able to work out the answers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a good range of activities and experiences to develop children's observational skills.
- The children respond with enthusiasm and curiosity when taking part in investigative work.

Commentary

54. Attainment on entry to school is above the expectations for this area. Children achieve satisfactorily and many are on course to attain the goals by the end of the reception year. Teaching is satisfactory and staff provide a good range of structured activities to widen the children's experience and develop their knowledge and understanding. Role play themes are used well to develop children's knowledge of the world, through playing in the doctor's surgery, for example.
55. The children demonstrate curiosity and develop good observation skills. For example the children were able to describe the different tastes, shape and size of apples in a 'science' activity. Some of them were able to suggest why wasps were attracted to apples. They share experiences, talking about places they have visited with their parents, such as Tonbridge Castle, The Natural History Museum, or a contemporary dance performance. Two children showed a good understanding of what a map was, by drawing their own map and following its trail in the outdoor play area. There was no evidence of children using computers during the inspection.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children demonstrate good co-ordination and physical control.
- Some outdoor play sessions are not as effective as they could be.

Commentary

56. When the children start in the reception class their physical skills are beyond those expected for this age. No hall sessions were observed during the inspection, but children were observed in the playground and indications are that children have well developed physical skills and are on line to exceed the expected goals by the end of the year. The classroom is well positioned for easy access to a spacious outdoor area and the children use this well. Children enjoy physical activities. During their outdoor play they demonstrated good co-ordination and balance as they ran, skipped, hopped and jumped. They demonstrated confidence and good control as they rode on the tricycles and scooters. However, on occasions, outdoor play lacked focus. The staff acted in a supervisory role, rather than providing activities that supported physical development. Children develop their manipulative skills well by handling pens, brushes, scissors and glue sticks. They can also handle and use small construction equipment, beads and pegs with dexterity. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

57. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards, but the work on display indicated appropriate standards for this stage in the year. Children have a range of opportunities to take part in creative play. For example, a large area was designated as a doctor's surgery in which the children played well, using their imagination to treat patients and 'write' up records and appointments. Children were using apple segments to print using a variety of colours. They were able to name the colours and make their own decisions on the patterns they wished to make. When singing songs, children join in with the actions and they enjoy joining in with chants and rhymes.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- English is taught well and pupils achieve well overall.
- Pupils' reading standards are well above average by Year 6 and pupils make particularly good progress in reading.
- Standards have improved markedly at Year 2.
- English is well led and managed and the developments over the last two years are leading to a more consistent approach and improved achievement.
- Listening skills are not as well developed as speaking skills.
- On occasions, pupils make slower progress in writing because the teachers' expectations are not high enough.

Commentary

58. Standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening are average at the end of Year 2. This is different from the 2004 test results, which were above average in reading and writing. The reason is this year group has a larger number of pupils with special educational needs and fewer higher attaining pupils. Standards in English at Year 6 are above average in speaking and listening and writing, and well above average in reading. This is broadly similar to last year's performance in English, which was above average. Pupils achieve well in English, as they did at the last inspection.
59. The school has been focusing on improving planning and teaching in English and this has had a positive impact. The governors and headteacher were concerned that results at Year 2 were not as high as they should have been, given pupils' attainment on entry, and a lot of hard work has gone into improving them. Teachers have revised the way they plan literacy lessons. The subject leader has played a key role in implementing and sustaining these changes, and raising teachers' expectations, and her leadership has been good.
60. Reading is a clear strength in the school. Pupils enjoy reading. Some of the older pupils described themselves as "bookworms" and proudly stated that they sometimes read for several hours a day. Guided reading sessions are well organised and teachers arrange a good variety of reading tasks to develop reading skills. Teaching is often well focused. This was the case in a Year 2 lesson, where the teacher used a good range of strategies to help a lower attaining group of pupils succeed. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher's sharp questioning helped pupils to come up with views about characters' feelings and the author's techniques and style of writing. In Year 3, higher attaining pupils showed good comprehension skills when working on a book they had read previously because they had been set a challenging task. They found this quite hard so they worked with plenty of concentration and motivation.

61. Teaching and learning in English are good. As well as successful reading sessions, teachers are also helping pupils to develop well as writers. Younger pupils, in Year 1, are helped to write through group writing tasks. They are given good support, through targeted teaching and helpful resources, to help them write independently. Pupils learn how to plan, structure and refine their writing as they move up the school. In Year 3, for instance, they are given phrases as a 'scaffold' to help them come up with their own ideas, rather than facing a blank page as a starting point. By Year 6, many pupils use imaginative, creative language. These pupils write extended pieces, compiled over a series of lessons. They consider aspects such as setting a dilemma and deciding how it will be resolved. They build belief in their characters through adding detail and dialogue. Again, pointed questions such as "How real are your characters' personalities?" help them to enliven their writing further. These pupils are proud of what they achieve and enjoy reading out their drafts to another pupil or adult.
62. The good attention to writing is not yet consistent throughout the school. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows two areas where provision could be improved. Firstly, teacher's marking is not always helpful, giving guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work further, for instance. Significant errors in spelling or grammar that should be very secure by a specific age are not picked up by teachers. On occasions, teachers set writing tasks that are within pupils' capabilities, given their prior attainment – very simple phonic spelling exercises, for example, when the pupil is easily capable of spelling those words, and harder ones.
63. Although speaking and listening skills are above average, speaking is better than listening. Most pupils are confident when speaking. They are articulate and use good vocabulary and turns of phrase. Older pupils show a thirst for expanding their vocabulary and enjoy finding hard words in dictionaries that they can incorporate into their writing. In assemblies or lessons, many pupils do not show good listening behaviour. They fidget and sometimes talk when other pupils or teachers are addressing them. An extra drawback is that the extraneous noise in classrooms, such as squeaky chairs, does not help to set an atmosphere that is conducive to careful listening.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their speaking skills in lessons. Listening skills receive less focus. Reading is well promoted, through a range of lessons: researching facts about Ancient Greeks in history, for example, or reading Bible stories in religious education. Pupils write for a range of purposes in subjects such as science and design and technology. In history, they write from a personal perspective, from the role of an evacuee in World War II, for example. However, the contribution that other subjects can make to developing writing opportunities is not fully tapped in some classes. There is an over-reliance on commercial worksheets in some cases, when pupils could be writing more independently. This has already been identified by the subject leader, and developing writing across the curriculum is current priority area for the school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and most pupils achieve well.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Good systems are in place to track pupils' progress.
- The use of ICT to support mathematics is under-developed.
- There are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in Years 1 to 4.

Commentary

65. Standards attained by pupils in Year 6 are above those expected for their age and achievement is good. This is similar to the findings at the last inspection. However, year groups vary from year to year. The national test results in 2004 were in line with the national average and that of similar schools but analysis shows these pupils made satisfactory progress since they took their national tests at the end of Year 2. The national tests for Year 2 were also average in comparison with both national and similar schools. However, standards with the current Year 2 are closer to average. This is mainly due to this year group having a higher number of pupils with special educational needs than the previous year. These pupils are making satisfactory progress.
66. Teaching and learning are good. Strengths include:
- Carefully planned lessons with clear learning objectives, which have a positive impact on pupils' learning and standards.
 - Work that is well matched to pupils' different capabilities, with good support for the lower attaining pupils and challenge for the higher attaining pupils.
 - Teaching which captures pupils' interest and enthusiasm with a strong emphasis on practical activities and problem-solving.
 - Teachers place good emphasis on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary.
 - Teachers make sure pupils fully understand how work builds upon previous learning.
 - Questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding and advance their thinking.
 - Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils' learning.
67. Where teaching is less effective, there is not enough focus on what pupils will learn, and insufficient pace and challenge. Pupils who become inattentive and overly noisy are not handled effectively enough, so that the pace of learning slows down. The quality of marking is particularly good in Years 5 and 6. Elsewhere, teachers' marking is variable and does not often indicate to pupils where and how they can improve.
68. The school has clear and effective procedures for assessing pupils' achievement and progress. These are developing well and this is supporting pupils' good achievement. The tracking procedures are also helping the school to identify when pupils may not be achieving as well as they should. In lessons during the inspection, pupils were working at appropriate levels for their capabilities. However work in pupils' books shows that higher attaining pupils do not always build sufficiently upon their prior learning. The school's monitoring has identified that some higher attaining pupils could cope with harder work and steps have been taken to improve its provision.
69. Scrutiny of pupils' work over the last year shows that, in some years, pupils have regular opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills through investigations and problem-solving activities. In other years, this aspect of mathematics is underdeveloped. In one class, for example, the majority of pupils' work related to number and the other areas of mathematics received much lighter coverage.
70. The mathematics curriculum is led and managed well by a subject leader who is working hard to raise standards. She leads this area of the curriculum with enthusiasm and commitment, demonstrating good subject knowledge and expertise. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject have taken place including an analysis of assessment and tests. The subject leader has developed a clear action plan which has a clear focus improving pupils' achievement throughout the school. An appropriate area for development is refining and adapting the commercial scheme currently in use, to ensure the pupils have more opportunities to work independently on problem solving activities.

Mathematics across the curriculum

71. Pupils often use and consolidate their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, they read and make charts and graphs in science and measure materials in design and technology. However, opportunities tend to occur incidentally rather than through systematic planning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall between Years 3 to 6.
- Good emphasis is given to scientific enquiry.
- Teachers are clear in their explanations and use good questioning techniques to focus learning.
- Assessment is not being used routinely to inform pupils what they have achieved, or to tell them what they need to do next to improve.

Commentary

72. Standards in science are average at Year 2 and above average at Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. These judgements represent a slight drop in the good attainment of Year 2 pupils in the previous year, but the current Year 2 pupils entered the school with a lower level of attainment. Science shows satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
73. Pupils' books show that teachers are encouraging the pupils to think about science through enquiry. Year 2 pupils are posed questions such as: 'How far?' and 'What if?' In lessons, teachers employ good questioning techniques to reinforce previous learning, focus on the current work and, at times, direct the pupils towards further learning. Teachers also reinforce pupils' answers with correct scientific vocabulary helping them to extend their knowledge. Pupils are encouraged to set up investigations to test hypotheses. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, they were working in groups and had devised their own questions in an experiment on dissolving. They all understood the requirements of a fair test and were able to conduct an experiment to check their hypothesis. Work shows that Year 6 pupils can follow their investigation plan, measure and record with some accuracy, discuss their investigation and findings, and identify where improvements could be made in their approach.
74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, teachers' use appropriate methods and deliver information and instructions in a style which engages the pupils in their learning and motivates them. Good pace in the lessons maintains concentration and good preparation ensures that the pupils have on hand the materials and equipment they need to ensure their learning is successful. Pupils are making good progress in Years 5 and 6, where the expectations of teachers are generally higher. In Year 5, assessment is used well to focus pupils' attention on what they need to achieve and what they are aiming for. In Year 3, higher attaining pupils are sometimes given harder work. These factors, whilst not consistent across all classes, are helping to boost pupils' achievement between Years 3 and 6.
75. Leadership and curriculum management of the subject is satisfactory, and the schemes of work are well embedded. Assessment has been introduced but is not consistent. In particular the quality of day-to-day marking and assessment varies widely across the school. In the best examples marking of pupils' work is evaluative and indicates ways pupils can improve, but other books have no information which helps them move forward. Pupils with special educational needs are closely supported by teaching assistants in lessons and make good progress. Higher attaining pupils are not routinely challenged in science, and more could be done when planning lessons to ensure that they are more stretched. Monitoring of books is

carried out annually by the subject leader but as yet there is no formal arrangement for the observation of classroom teaching to help raise pupils' standards and improve their achievement further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average at the end of Year 6 because achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6.
- The computer suite is not used enough during morning teaching sessions.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use computers in other subjects.

Commentary

76. Standards in ICT are average at Year 2, but below average at Year 6. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Discussion with pupils and scrutiny of work shows that, between Years 3 and 6, pupils have had limited chances to develop their ICT skills across all the different aspects of the subject that are required nowadays. They use the Internet in school but have not had enough opportunities to develop skills in desktop publishing, combining text and graphics, using a presentation program, sending and receiving email or using control technology.
77. Currently all classes are taught by a specialist unqualified teacher. Overall the standard of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. However this arrangement is insufficient to ensure that adequate attention is given to acquiring the skills now required in ICT. This arrangement also limits the potential contribution of ICT across the curriculum. As a result, teachers' plans do not show how ICT skills can be developed through different subjects and how using computer technology can help broaden their learning in each subject.
78. Teaching was most successful when the task set focused on computer skills, for example when designing spreadsheets. It was less successful when the pupils' abilities in other areas such as literacy, were a barrier to learning in ICT. In one lesson, for example Year 4 pupils were asked to design a questionnaire. They were able to use the computer well, but found it difficult to phrase the questions they wanted to ask. As a result much of the lesson was spent on literacy rather than ICT skills.
79. Leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory. The subject manager has put in place a scheme of work but this needs further development to ensure that pupils' needs are fully met. Pupils in some years say they do not use computers much in lessons. One pupil made the telling comment, "Our teacher does not know much about computers." Although some teachers have good ICT skills and use technology well to assist their teaching - the data projectors are a good example of this – not all have sufficient confidence and skills to make the most of the potential of ICT. Some monitoring of saved work is carried out but this is an area which needs more development.
80. The subject time allocation for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is not sufficient to ensure pupils make acceptable progress. It is much lower than the national average for this age, and this is hampering standards. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The requirements for ICT have increased considerably since the last inspection, when pupils' standards were meeting the expectation and progress was satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. The computers in the suite are not used sufficiently outside ICT lessons. Classroom computers are also underused. This impedes pupils' standards and ICT skills. There are few examples in pupils' books of ICT being used to support other subjects, through using charts, graphs, text or graphics. Inspectors noted missed opportunities for this. There is very limited evidence of computers being used in mathematics. This applies to books from last year's work and the work completed this term so far.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. History and geography were sampled.

82. In the two **history** lessons seen in Years 1 and 3, teaching and learning were good. In Year 3, good questioning and good resources allowed pupils to find out facts about the Ancient Greeks. Pupils were well behaved and keen to learn. Work seen in the pupils' books indicates that standards are at broadly expected levels at Year 6. During a discussion with a group of higher attaining Year 6 pupils they demonstrated a secure knowledge of historical facts and a good awareness of the key events, for example, the impact of the Roman invasion. Pupils have a clear enthusiasm for history. The curriculum covers a suitable range of topics and good use is made of visits to the locality to stimulate interest and learning.
83. No lessons were seen in **geography**, but from discussions with Year 6 pupils they demonstrated standards expected for this age. For example, they have a good knowledge of river formations and they have a secure knowledge of the immediate locality. The pupils described the exciting work undertaken to support their learning, including the residential visits to France and the cultural exchange with pupils from Germany.

Religious Education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of resources in the local area.
- There are very good links with St. Peter's Methodist Church.

Commentary

84. Standards are average at Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. This is broadly similar to that found in the last inspection.
85. The Kent Agreed Syllabus is used as a basis for all work and pupils study other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism as well as Christianity. Evidence from work scrutiny, lessons and discussions with pupils shows that teaching is satisfactory. In a good Year 2 lesson the teacher engaged the pupils' interest by dressing up to represent the traveller in the Good Samaritan parable. The pupils listened attentively and were able to respond to questioning on the main points in the story. Pupils know other Bible stories, such as those about Noah and Jonah. Year 4 pupils were also looking at stories from the New Testament. They read them together in small groups, discussed the details and then re-told the story in pictures and text. Year 6 pupils study the work of the Church, both locally and in the wider community. They had the opportunity to interview the Methodist minister and an army padre. They drew up questions to ask and recorded their answers as a newspaper article. Pupils in Year 6 considered the worldwide church community during a visit to Canterbury Cathedral. They considered its special chapels,

read other people's individual prayers and wrote their own, and many reflected quietly at the shrine of Thomas Becket.

86. The major Christian Festivals - Harvest, Christmas and Easter - are celebrated in the Methodist Church, which provides good support for religious education in the school. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory. Monitoring and assessment, particularly in marking, which rarely contains comments to help the pupils' improve, have yet to impact on teaching and standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, music and physical education were sampled.

87. Examples of **art and design** work displayed around the school show a satisfactory variety of techniques. As well as work related to topics, pupils have opportunities to use a wide range of materials to explore and investigate visual and tactile qualities. The pupils have opportunities to work collaboratively. For example, the Art Club demonstrated their developing skills, using a variety of techniques and materials to create an effective sea-side collage. The pupils' art work is valued and displayed well. Art is often used to provide information, for example, a pupil's drawing was used well to remind pupils not to run in the corridors. A display of Year 3 writing about tigers was enhanced by pupils' drawings. The pupils have been very successful in participating in a range of art and design competitions, and have also taken part in the television programme, 'Art Attack'.
88. In a Year 1 **music** lesson, pupils were working at appropriate standards when using voices and exploring different sound sources. They copied the teachers' changing rhythm patterns, using fingers and knuckles. They were quick to respond to the rhythmic changes and also to differing dynamics – sometimes tapping softly, sometimes loudly. The children had positive attitudes in the lesson and enjoyed joining in with a number of action songs. They sang enthusiastically, and benefited from the teacher's accompaniment on guitar.
89. In a **dance** lesson, pupils in Year 6 were devising a dance based on 'Mission Impossible'. They were making good progress, especially as they had not had much experience of dance beforehand. The teacher had good subject knowledge and was introducing relevant terminology, such as 'canon' and 'unison'. The pupils clearly understood these terms as they soon put them into action when working in small groups or as a whole class. Whilst some pupils were a little self-conscious, they persevered, encouraged by the teacher's enthusiasm and clear focus on dance elements. This was a well organised and successful lesson.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

90. The school promotes healthy lifestyles through its Healthy Schools Award and pupils are aware of the benefits of eating a balanced and healthy diet. The School Council makes a good contribution to pupils' awareness of citizenship and encourages them to consider the views of others and make a contribution to school like. Assemblies contribute well to this aspect, and follow specific themes each week that link in well with the school's good provision for pupils' moral awareness. In a joint lesson for pupils in Year 4 and visiting pupils from St Nicholas Special School, the emphasis was clearly on participation, teamwork and trusting relationships. The teacher introduced a lively and appropriate range of chants, songs and musical activities which promoted enjoyment and participation for all. The good level of banter amongst the staff helped to engender a sense of fun and this rubbed off on the pupils. The pupils in Year 4 supported their friends well, encouraging them to take part and helping them to play instruments where necessary. This good lesson made a strong contribution to the school's aim to be an inclusive school and to encourage pupils to be accepting of one another.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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