

INSPECTION REPORT

HERNHILL CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hernhill, Faversham

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118647

Headteacher: Mrs M B Windsor

Lead inspector: Mrs C Skinner

Dates of inspection: 20th-22nd September 2004

Inspection number: 266998

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:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	190
School address:	Forstal Hernhill Faversham Kent
Postcode:	ME13 9JG
Telephone number:	01227 751322
Fax number:	01227 752391
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Hernhill CE Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Fricker
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hernhill CE Primary School is of an average size compared to other primary schools. There are 190 pupils on roll. The school has similar numbers of boys and girls overall, but there are noticeable imbalances in Years 2 and 6. Approximately two per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is broadly average. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning the English language. Twenty-five per cent of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is higher than the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. No pupils have statements of special educational need, which is below average. The turnover of pupils is fairly low, although it has been high in past years. For example, 46 per cent of the pupils who took the national tests in Year 6 in 2003 did not spend all seven years at the school. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school received an Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Skills in 2003. The school moved on to its new site in February 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23160	Carole Skinner	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology (ICT), art, music.
9691	Jon Vincent	Lay inspector	
19142	Audrey Quinnell	Team inspector	Mathematics, religious education (RE), geography, history, special educational needs (SEN).
27644	John Tate	Team inspector	Science, design and technology (DT), physical education (PE), personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE), the foundation stage curriculum.

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants
37 Broadlands Avenue
North Petherton
Taunton
Somerset
TA6 6QS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Hernhill CE Primary School provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Overall, pupils' achievement is good and they reach above average standards by the time they leave the school. The leadership and management of the school are good and it gives good value for money. The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and physical education (PE).
- Although standards are rising in information and communication technology (ICT) they are still below average in Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall but some lessons in Years 3 to 6 lack sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently and creatively.
- The good leadership, management and governance of the school maintain a clear focus on achieving high standards.
- The role of some subject leaders in evaluating the quality of teaching and the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- The school provides a good curriculum which is enriched by a very good range of additional activities.
- Good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes positive attitudes to learning, good behaviour and harmonious relationships.

The school has made a satisfactory improvement since it was inspected in 1999. High standards have been maintained in English, mathematics and science and there have been improvements in the provision for ICT, PE and children in the Reception class. The leadership and management of the school remain good, although there are now shortcomings in the monitoring of the curriculum. The role of governors has strengthened. Significant improvements in the accommodation and resources have resulted from the school's recent relocation. Minor issues relating to the information provided for parents remain.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A top 5% of schools; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Achievement is good. Unconfirmed results of the 2004 national tests indicate that standards have risen in mathematics and science as a result of improved teaching strategies. The school's continuing focus on improving pupils' writing is helping to maintain good standards in English. In Year R, pupils achieve well and are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and creative development. Many are on course to exceed the goals in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. In Year 2, achievement is good and standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are average in ICT, religious education (RE) and geography, and above average in PE. In Year 6, achievement is good and standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and PE. They are below average in ICT and average in RE and geography. Standards in ICT are already rising as a result of improved resources and greater expertise among teachers.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is above average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show interest in learning and apply themselves well to their work. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They take responsibility willingly and show initiative in undertaking tasks.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Sometimes, lessons in Years 3 to 6 provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop independent, creative thinking. Teachers' expectations of the pupils are generally high and, as a result, pupils work hard. Lessons are planned well and meet the varied needs of the pupils. Assessment information is used well to plan suitable work for all pupils in English and mathematics but is less well developed in other subjects. The curriculum is well planned and enriched by a very good range of sporting activities, clubs, visits and visitors. Links with other schools and the community contribute well to the pupils' learning. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory but there are some shortcomings in the quality and consistency of communication with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. Good leadership by the headteacher has helped to achieve a smooth transition to the new school while continuing to maintain a clear focus on raising achievement. Monitoring of standards and the curriculum is good in English and mathematics but less effective in other subjects. The school's ethos is good and equality of opportunity and fairness are strong features. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and meet all statutory requirements. Good financial management ensures that the school is well staffed and resourced.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally positive about the school. A few parents do not feel well informed about their children's progress and how to help with homework. Inspection findings show that there are some inconsistencies between teachers and classes. Pupils are keen to grasp opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility. They enjoy the wide range of additional activities that the school offers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise standards in ICT.
- Improve the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators, especially in those subjects which have not been a recent focus for development.
- Ensure that all lessons provide pupils with enough opportunities to work independently and creatively.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement in the Foundation Stage prepares pupils well for learning in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Years 1 to 6 due to good teaching.
- The school received a national Achievement Award in 2003 and is sustaining the drive to improve standards.
- Pupils achieve lower than average standards in ICT in Year 6 because the school has only recently been adequately equipped to teach the subject.
- Achievement is good in PE and standards are above average.

Commentary

1. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good. This reflects the good teaching the children receive in the Reception class. Children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning with many exceeding them in physical development and in personal, social and emotional development. Attainment is in line with expectations in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and creative development. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement about children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (16.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.5 (15.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.3 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Since the previous inspection in 1999, standards in the Year 2 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently above average and in line with those of similar schools. In 2003, the most recent year for which validated results are available, the proportion of pupils who reached Level 3 (above average) in reading was well above average; it was average in writing and above average in mathematics. In 2004, unconfirmed results and school assessments indicate that standards remain above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are average in ICT, RE and geography and above average in PE. These were the only other subjects where sufficient evidence was gathered to make reliable judgements. These standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection in English, mathematics, geography and RE. Standards have risen in science, ICT and PE. The judgements of the inspection are similar to the school's results in the 2003 national tests. Pupils achieve well because the teaching of basic skills is consistently good. As a result, by Year 2, they have good levels of competency in literacy and numeracy and sound skills in ICT.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (30.3)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.3 (27.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.2 (30.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In the Year 6 national tests in 2003, the school's results in English were well above the national average. They have been high for four out of the past five years. In 2003, standards were average in mathematics and below average in science compared with all schools. In these two subjects, there has been more variation from year to year, ranging from above average to below average in mathematics and from well above average to below average in science. The 2003 English results compared very favourably with those of schools whose pupils performed similarly in Year 2, while in mathematics they were broadly similar and in science they were below the average for similar schools. Despite these fluctuations from year to year, the overall trend in standards is in line with that seen nationally. Unconfirmed results of the 2004 tests show that the proportion of pupils who reached Level 5 (above average) had risen in all three subjects, significantly so in English and mathematics. However, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 (average) was lower in English and did not meet the school's target. In mathematics, there was a very good improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4. These results show that the school has successfully identified the causes of underachievement amongst some pupils and put effective strategies in place to address them.

5. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are below average in ICT because, until recently, when the school moved into its new premises, there were insufficient computers to enable pupils to acquire skills at an appropriate rate. Standards are average in RE and geography and above average in PE. Standards are similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection in mathematics, science, ICT and geography. They are higher in English and lower in RE. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed well across the curriculum, and an increased emphasis on using ICT to support and aid learning in other subjects is having a positive effect on raising standards.

6. All groups of pupils in this school achieve well by the time that they leave Year 6. Parents have positive views of how well their children are progressing. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards their targets because they receive well-planned support. The school has identified some underachievement amongst boys in mathematics and amongst girls in science through detailed analysis of test results and has put strategies in place to address this. The school also caters well for more able pupils and those with particular talents. Teachers prepare work that matches individual pupils' needs and ensure that tasks are sufficiently challenging for higher attainers. The school also identifies gifted and talented pupils and is taking steps to ensure that their needs are met. Its wide range of extracurricular activities in sport and the arts makes an effective contribution to this work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The school successfully promotes good attendance levels and parents ensure the attendance of their children.
- Pupils show interest in school life and in the range of activities provided for them.

- Pupils are willing to be enterprising and enjoy taking responsibility.
- Pupils' confidence and self esteem are good.
- Opportunities for personal development are good.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Commentary

7. Attendance is higher than the national average and this aspect has improved since the last inspection when it was broadly in line with similar schools. The school ensures that parents and carers appreciate the importance of the prompt and regular attendance of their children at school. These efforts are very effective and as a result there is a very low incidence of unauthorised absence. No pupils have been excluded from school in the past year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	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.

8. Overall the attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good and, when the teaching stimulates and excites them, these become very good. Most pupils show good interest in their lessons and strive hard to achieve the expectations of their teachers. However, there are a few inconsistencies in the way teachers reinforce these. Boys and girls of differing ages interviewed during the inspection displayed confident attitudes. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are included well in all that the school offers and have positive attitudes to learning.

9. The school takes every opportunity to promote personal development. Pupils have many opportunities for taking on additional responsibility and they respond very well to them. The school council consists of two representatives from each year group from Year 2 upwards, who meet regularly to discuss the various suggestions they receive. The 'buddy' system ensures that younger pupils are fully supported when they start school and helps build relationships with older pupils. House captains undertake specific responsibilities and every Year 6 pupil has an individual prefect duty. An example of how these responsibilities aid personal development is the Year 6 reading club where prefects read with pupils in Years R, 1 and 2 at lunchtime. 'Bus monitors' have responsibility for ensuring that pupils catch the correct bus at the end of the school day.

10. Pupils' moral and social development is good. They know the difference between right and wrong and value the level of independence they enjoy in the classroom and in the school. Pupils know that their views are considered and valued through the class and school councils. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to interact with classmates in group work and paired discussions with each class. Pupils' relationships with their peers and with adults have been maintained at the high levels noted at the time of the last inspection. This contributes to the quality of work in lessons and to the progress they make, especially by giving them the confidence to ask and answer questions.

11. Pupils' spiritual development is good and is reflected in their ability to think positively about themselves and others. Their good spiritual development is enhanced by the sense of community developed through the whole school assemblies. Discussions in the classroom help pupils to appreciate their own worth and to raise their self-esteem. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures as well as their own, which is an improvement on the judgement made in the last report. They are involved in many fundraising activities during the year, for example the Kosovo appeal at Christmas, and they benefit from visits by members of other faith communities, for example the parents of Muslim pupils. The school also has membership to the World Education Development Group which has enabled them to bring in Caribbean artists to work with the pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, as is the curriculum. Enrichment of the curriculum is very good. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Good provision for children in the Foundation Stage promotes good progress in learning. Good provision for pupils with SEN helps them to achieve well. There are good arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare. The school works satisfactorily in partnership with parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, overall, and good in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning is of a high standard.
- Teachers expect pupils to do well and succeed, whatever their capabilities, and are constantly seeking ways to raise their achievement.
- Good teaching of literacy, numeracy and scientific investigation skills is helping to raise standards throughout the school.
- In some lessons, teachers' use of time and resources does not achieve the best results in promoting learning.
- High expectations of pupils' behaviour ensure they apply themselves well to their work.
- Teachers and learning support assistants work well together to support pupils' learning, especially those pupils with SEN.
- Assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics but less well developed in other subjects.

Commentary

12. The table below shows the judgements made of a sample of lessons during the inspection. In addition, inspectors examined teachers' planning and pupils' work and held discussions with pupils and teachers. Taking all of this evidence into account, as well as the standards pupils achieve, the inspection findings show that the quality of teaching and learning is good, overall and helps pupils to achieve well, particularly in English, mathematics, science and PE. Parents also have positive views of the teaching in the school and feel it helps their children make good progress. The good teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection and it has improved in ICT, which was unsatisfactory at that time.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	1 (3%)	23 (64%)	11(30%)	1(3%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. During the inspection, all but two of the lessons seen in Reception and Years 1 and 2 were good, and one was very good. This was reflected in pupils' work from the previous year and in the standards they achieved in national tests. In Years 3 to 6, the proportion of good teaching was not as high as in the younger classes. However, other evidence, in particular the work completed by pupils during the previous year and the school's own records, shows that teaching is more consistently good in these classes than in the sample observed.

14. Underpinning the good teaching is high quality planning, which shows clearly what pupils are expected to learn and how teachers will achieve this. Lessons are planned carefully to build on pupils' previous learning and to cater for the differing needs of the various groups within each class. This ensures good progression in learning and continuity from term to term and from year to year. Teachers also plan effective links between subjects to make learning more meaningful and relevant for pupils. For example, the Year 2 teacher made very effective links between literacy, art and ICT when she used the story of *Dogger* as a basis for developing pupils' drawing and painting skills and used a digital camera so that pupils could record how they acted out the story.

15. Teachers' high expectations of all pupils are reflected in their planning and in the lessons. Individual needs are met through the provision of different tasks for groups and individual pupils to ensure that all are challenged but that the work is achievable. There is much evidence to show that teachers are constantly looking for ways to raise individual pupils' achievement, for example by setting individual targets in writing and tracking pupils' progress carefully. The introduction of small 'focus groups' and booster groups is aimed at improving attainment at all levels and eliminating underachievement.

16. There has been a notable emphasis on improving teaching and raising standards in English, mathematics and science over the past three years, as a result of the increasingly effective analysis of pupils' performance and the reasons for underachievement. The ongoing attention to pupils' writing reflects greater understanding of how pupils learn and the introduction of the Kirklees writing project is bringing together a number of initiatives that have evolved from year to year. Similarly, a strong emphasis on improving the teaching of mathematics has resulted in significant improvements in standards in the Year 6 national tests. Teachers have also improved pupils' achievement in science by focussing more effectively on learning through investigation and experimentation. This is reflected clearly in pupils' workbooks for the past year. Although still in the relatively early stages of development, following the move into new premises, the teaching of ICT is improving as a result of ongoing training for teachers and significantly better equipment. High standards in PE result from good teaching which is enhanced by the use of specialists from other schools and very good extracurricular activities.

17. In the lessons seen during the inspection which were satisfactory rather than good, the main contributory factors related to the teachers' use of time and resources. Teachers have very quickly become proficient in using the interactive whiteboards that are to be found in every classroom. In most lessons, these are used well to enhance learning, but in some they detract from the effectiveness of the lesson. This is because some teachers use them too much, which results in pupils sitting passively for too long before being engaged in practical activity. On one occasion, the teacher had prepared a Power Point presentation which was very slick, but failed to engage the pupils productively in learning. It also presented them with too much information in one sitting, which confused some of the less able pupils. The overall outcome is that in some less successful lessons, pupils do not have enough time for independent learning or applying what they learned from the teacher's presentation to new situations. When the interactive whiteboards are used as another tool in the teachers' extensive repertoire of teaching methods, they are more effective in promoting learning than when they dominate the lesson.

18. Pupils learn well in most lessons because they have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good. They listen carefully, take part in discussions and apply themselves to their work conscientiously. Teachers set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and, for the most part, reinforce these consistently. They form good relationships with pupils which help pupils to do their best and involve them in making class rules so that they understand the reasons for them. When pupils' behaviour does not meet these high standards in lessons, this is sometimes because pupils become restless after spending too long listening to the teacher or because work is not presented in a sufficiently interesting way.

19. A strong feature of the teaching is the way teachers and assistants work in partnership to support pupils' learning. Teachers provide well for pupils who have additional educational needs. Clear achievable targets are set and the work is adapted well to the needs of these pupils, which

ensures that they make good progress. Teaching assistants are well trained and have a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils within a class. They provide valuable support for groups of pupils in literacy and numeracy, which helps to ensure that they make good progress.

20. The previous inspection found that assessment procedures were good in English, mathematics and science, and underdeveloped in ICT. This is still the case, although procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in ICT are currently being developed. The school has acknowledged the need to improve assessment procedures in other subjects, where they are relatively informal and no whole school recording formats are yet in use. Teachers keep their own records of pupils' achievements in daily note books. Effective procedures in English and mathematics, in particular, are contributing to rising standards, as teachers become increasingly aware of pupils' needs and capabilities and use this information to guide their planning. The headteacher has a good overview of all pupils' progress as she enters assessment data on to the school's tracking system, which also helps teachers to set challenging targets for all pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided at Hernhill CE Primary School is good. The school supports pupils' learning outside of the school day and develops the range of their interests very well. The very good accommodation and good range of resources enhance the curriculum well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school plans its curriculum effectively and adjusts it successfully in order to cater for the changing needs of the pupils and national requirements.
- There has been a good improvement in the planning and provision of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
- The pupils' learning is enriched well through the very good range of clubs, visitors and educational visits provided by the school.
- Provision for pupils with additional educational needs is good.
- The new school buildings and grounds and the greatly improved range and quality of resources make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

Commentary

21. The school provides a good curriculum, which enhances pupils' learning well and meets all statutory requirements. It keeps the effectiveness of its curricular provision under constant and effective review and implements changes well. A specialist from the Kent Music School takes the music lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6, which extends pupils' learning effectively. The school combines aspects of the curriculum, such as art, music and drama with aspects of history, in order to make subjects more meaningful for pupils and to extend their learning.

22. The good curriculum for children in the Reception class is varied and interesting and planning is clearly linked to the statutory curriculum for children of this age. This is a good improvement from the judgements in the previous inspection, when this was unsatisfactory. The accommodation is very good and meets the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the children well. The attractive outside area also has a large covered area, which ensures that children have access to the wide range of resources at all times.

23. Provision for pupils who have additional educational needs is good. They are given work that is pitched at appropriate levels for their stage of development. This ensures that every pupil, including those with particular gifts and talents, is able to achieve standards in line with their ability. Some older pupils attend booster classes to help to improve their standards of attainment in English and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good, appropriate support and targets are well matched to pupils' individual needs.

24. The school extends pupils' learning very well through a very good range of visitors, clubs and educational visits. Visitors such as the vicar, a Christian Missionary and a Muslim, enrich pupils' understanding of different faiths. The fire service, police, school nurse and the Life Education mobile classroom enable pupils to learn more about keeping safe and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Visiting singers, dancers and artists deepen pupils' appreciation of different cultures. This judgement supports the parents' view that the school provides a very good range of extracurricular activities. There is a very good choice of out of school clubs, which are supported well. These include football, Kwik-cricket, tag-rugby, netball, athletics, French, journalism, music, dance, drama and art.

25. The school has been a pilot school for the East Kent Schools co-ordinator programme, which is enabling schools to develop a wider range of physical education activities and involvement with other schools. Pupils take part in the Kent Youth Games. The school rugby A team was successful in winning the Tag Rugby tournament at the Swale Festival and the B team won the plate side of the competition. Pupils take part in the Faversham Schools Choir Festival, which is very good for their self-esteem when they perform before an audience. Visits to the Guardian Newspaper, the British Museum, Hampton Court, Dover Castle, Wildwood and Chatham Dockyard enrich pupils' learning in many areas of the curriculum. The residential visit to the Isle of Wight for pupils in Year 6 enables them to learn to live together and experience outdoor adventure activities, whilst their visit to Rippledawn House at Deal extends their knowledge of science, geography and history.

26. The school has a good number of teachers and teaching assistants, which supports the curriculum well. The new school building provides the school with very good accommodation and, together with the good range of resources, supports the curriculum very well. The new classrooms and the generous sized hall are attractive and are used well. The new ICT suite is used effectively to promote pupils' learning of the subject. The spacious grounds are laid out well, although a small area still has to be completed. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring of pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are effective procedures for health and safety, first aid and child protection.
- Relationships with adults are good and pupils feel well supported by all staff in the school.
- The tracking of pupils' academic progress is good in English and mathematics but not yet fully developed in other subjects.
- Pupils are actively involved in school life and their views are taken into account well.

Commentary

27. The school now has good health and safety procedures in place with both formal and informal risk assessments carried out regularly. This was a key issue at the last inspection and has now been fully addressed by the school. There is a school governor with specific responsibility for health and safety matters. Since the last inspection, staff members and some Year 6 pupils have received appropriate first aid training and the school has ensured that this training is continually updated. The school now has regular contact with the educational welfare service and maintains accurate attendance registers in accordance with local authority guidelines. There are full child protection procedures in place and all school staff are aware of the appropriate procedures.

28. All adults who work in the school form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. They know them well and provide good role models for behaviour. Discussions with pupils show that they feel safe and secure and would be happy to turn to any adult in school should they need help, comfort or advice. Pupils with SEN are cared for well and given good support and guidance.

29. The school's systems to monitor and track pupils' standards and progress are satisfactory at present and good in English and mathematics. Procedures in other subjects are currently being developed and tried out. The school is developing strategies to ensure that pupils' targets become more meaningful and result in improved performance.

30. There are many good practices to ensure that pupils are involved in the work of the school. The school council encourages pupils to make constructive comments and suggestions on differing aspects of school life. The 'buddy system' ensures that younger pupils have older mentors when they start school, and older pupils take responsibility for the various lunchtime clubs. The appointment of Year 6 prefects, coupled with the arrangement of the school into houses, further re-enforces pupils' participation in the life and work of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. There are good links with the community and with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents have positive views of the school and support it well.
- Several parents have concerns about the quality of information they receive about homework and their children's progress.
- Links with the community are good.
- Good links with other schools and educational establishments support pupils' learning well.

Commentary

31. Most parents and carers are comfortable about approaching the school and feel welcome. The school provides a satisfactory range of information for parents. There are two formal meetings and an open afternoon each year for parents to meet teachers, as well as additional evenings at which parents are given information about aspects of the curriculum. Class newsletters are sent home termly with information about what pupils will be learning and teachers make themselves available for informal discussions at the start and finish of the school day. Parents of pupils with SEN are kept well informed about how their children are progressing. The school operates a genuine 'open door' policy.

32. However, several questionnaires and some parents present at the meeting prior to the inspection raised concerns about the quality of information they receive. Some had difficulty in helping their children at home because they were unsure of what was expected. Some felt that their children's annual reports were not specific enough in giving details of achievements in relation to national norms. Those parents who were able to visit school and ask for a progress report felt well informed. Parents also felt there was inconsistency in the setting of homework and the school has acknowledged this. The school has a comprehensive homework policy but this has not been sent to parents or featured in the newly completed school prospectus. The inspection findings support the parents' concerns. Although there is some good practice in both the provision of homework and in ensuring that parents are given clear information about their children's progress, this is not consistent across the school. The new prospectus and the governors' report to parents fulfil statutory requirements.

33. The school has good links with the local community. School life is chronicled in the parish magazine and pupils participate in local choir festivals and music weeks. The school, together with the Parents', Teachers' and Friends' Association, provides entertainment and refreshments at the village fete. The Friends of the School Association is very active and organises many fund raising events. The association works closely with the school to realise a variety of pre-agreed projects. Pupils have enjoyed visits to the theatre, newspaper offices and museums. The school has a close

connection with the local church and members of the local community are invited to school events. All these links have a positive effect on the quality of education the pupils receive

34. The school feeds several secondary schools and makes every effort to ensure a smooth transition to secondary education. The school enjoys strong sporting links with a local high school and is a member of a pilot group of primary schools developing expertise in PE in collaboration with two secondary schools. The school has good educational links with other schools and colleges. Year 10 and 11 students from local secondary schools enjoy work experience with 'Early Years' children. Post-graduates from Canterbury Christchurch College undertake teaching practice in school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is good. The school's management and governance are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership by the headteacher maintains a clear focus on achieving high standards.
- Self-evaluation procedures are effective in identifying key priorities for improvement and are linked effectively to strategic planning.
- There is a strong commitment to improving curricular provision but the role of subject co-ordinators is not yet fully effective in monitoring and evaluating teaching, the curriculum and pupils' progress.
- Performance management and professional development are closely linked to the school improvement plan and contribute effectively to raising standards.
- Efficient financial management has enabled governors to ensure that the new school is well staffed and equipped.

Commentary

35. During her four years in the post, the headteacher has led the school effectively during a time of considerable upheaval and uncertainty, which eventually led to the building of the new school and the move to the new site in February 2004. Despite a number of setbacks along the way, the headteacher, staff and governors maintained a clear vision for the future of the school and a continuing focus on the quality of education provided for the pupils. Even though much of the previous school year was taken up with preparations for the transfer to the new site and the move itself, this did not detract from the pupils' education in any way, as the pupils' work completed throughout the year demonstrates. This was also reflected in the improvements in the results of the national tests in 2004. The headteacher is supported well by the deputy head, governors and all staff, who work well together as a team to address the priorities identified for improvement.

36. All contribute effectively to the school's self-evaluation procedures. Senior staff analyse the results of national tests in detail to identify the causes of underachievement and formulate strategies to address them. English and mathematics co-ordinators have gained valuable insights through observing lessons and analysing pupils' work which have led to improvements in teaching and standards. Governors make an effective contribution to self-evaluation through discussions with the headteacher and staff and by asking challenging questions. There is no complacency at any level, but a shared commitment to seeking ways to improve all aspects of school life.

37. The move to the new school has interrupted some aspects of the school's work, notably in the arrangements for subject leaders to observe teaching and monitor pupils' work. Although this has been done effectively in English and mathematics, there have not been any recent opportunities for the co-ordinators of other subjects to carry out this work with a view to identifying where the priorities for improvement lie. The school has already put plans in place to remedy this situation. For example, the ICT co-ordinator is due to observe lessons this term in order to check on how

effectively teachers are using the ICT suite. The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement in the current school year. However, there is no outline planning for the next two years to show, for example, when other subjects will be a focus for evaluation and improvement. The Additional Educational Needs coordinator provides good leadership. She has a good understanding of how to provide the most appropriate curriculum for pupils who have additional educational needs, so that their individual needs are met well.

38. There are good links between the school development plan and the targets that are set for both staff and pupils. For example, governors have set measurable and challenging targets for the headteacher to achieve in raising achievement which are reflected in teachers' performance management objectives and the targets that are set for individual pupils. Arrangements for the continuing professional development of all staff are closely linked to these objectives and provide teachers and assistants with a good range of training opportunities. For example, all staff have benefited from specialist training in the teaching of writing, numeracy and ICT skills.

39. Efficient financial management by the governors, headteacher and finance officer has ensured that the school has sufficient funds in hand to meet any unexpected expenses related to the costs of the new buildings. The higher than average carry forward figure at the end of the last financial year is forecast to reduce significantly during the current year as the costs of running the new school become apparent. Governors and staff make effective use of specific grants and have made a firm commitment to maintaining current staffing levels. They evaluate the cost effectiveness of spending decisions by measuring their impact on the quality of provision and the standards achieved by the pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	449298
Total expenditure	448518
Expenditure per pupil	2265

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	51025
Balance carried forward to the next	51805

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 **good**.

40. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The curriculum is broad and balanced, enabling most children to reach the goals which are expected of them at this stage in their learning and development. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the curriculum was planned according to National Curriculum requirements rather than those suitable for children in the Foundation Stage. The management of the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher and learning support assistant work effectively together to meet the needs of the children. The children respond to this and their behaviour and attitudes towards school are very good. The teacher's system of record keeping is good, giving an appraisal of each child's progress in every aspect of their development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clear routines encourage children to be independent.
- Many children exceed the standards that are expected of them in this area of the curriculum.
- The high standards of behaviour and the children's positive attitudes help them to make good progress.

Commentary

41. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Very good emphasis is given to children's development in this area of learning and they achieve very well. Even though the children had only recently started school, they were nevertheless very well behaved and beginning to socialise well within the class. Children make friends easily and are kind to one another. This was especially noticeable when a group was working with playdough. They co-operated well, sharing the equipment and their ideas very happily. Boundaries for acceptable behaviour are being established and relationships between adults and children are developing very well indeed. Good opportunities are presented to enable children to make independent choices in the classroom and children are already aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Children are happy and relaxed in the classroom and the teacher and assistant offer ready comfort and encouragement to the less confident children. This is an important feature which leads towards high self esteem.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well.
- Speaking and listening skills are developing well.

Commentary

42. Good speaking and listening skills were noticeable throughout the inspection. Most children pay close attention to instructions and requests for information and are always eager to participate in

discussions. Speech patterns are developing well and children can communicate easily within their group and with adults. In preparation for reading and writing, the teacher uses WriteDance, a method of teaching which introduces the children to the letters of the alphabet using music and activities. During the observed lesson, the letter 'S' was the focus and the children became thoroughly absorbed using their bodies to create the shape. Subsequently, the teacher had prepared a series of practical activities to reinforce understanding of the letter and how to write it. These included writing it in sand and painting the letter onto white card. The children thoroughly enjoy listening to stories and can recall the storyline of well known fairy tales, for example *Snow White*. Linking this to the previous lesson based on letter 'S', the teacher read the story very expressively whilst allowing the children to join in with parts of the text. The teaching of reading and writing skills is well organised and planned. The children made good progress in all aspects of this area of learning, with the majority achieving the goals which are expected of them by the end of the year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and are linked effectively to practical activities.
- A variety of activities is provided to extend children's knowledge and expertise.

Commentary

43. Most children achieve well and reach the goals which are expected of them in mathematical development by the end of the Reception year. During the inspection, children were reinforcing their understanding of simple two-dimensional shapes, most of which they could recognise and name. Some cut out the shape of a snake on which a variety of shapes had been drawn. These were identified and coloured. Others made potato prints of the same shapes, creating sequential patterns on white card. In a later lesson, small groups were making three-dimensional shapes using a variety of equipment ranging from solid wooden shapes to 'sticklebricks'. Some created repeating patterns on a magnetic board. Two children excitedly pointed out that they had made a cuboid, which was an interesting extension to the work.

44. An analysis of work from the previous year confirms that by the end of the Reception Year, most children have gained sufficient knowledge and understanding of number to count and recognise numbers up to 10 and beyond with good levels of confidence and accuracy. The strong practical element of all the work further confirms that the teaching of mathematics is imaginative and is naturally linked to children's play activities in the classroom and elsewhere, although the outdoor resource has not yet been fully developed in this respect.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

45. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of standards in the wide area of learning that relates to children's knowledge and understanding of the world, but discussions with the teacher indicated that children are given a wide range of experiences. Evidence gleaned from displays and discussions with the teacher confirmed that children are beginning to find out more about themselves and their families. Photographs of the children as babies were being collected and comparisons made with the children as they are now. Children use a computer program to sequence 'The Three Bears' story. Children's awareness of differing religious and cultural traditions is suitably enhanced through stories.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Physical skills are developing well.
- Children use equipment sensibly and with confidence.

Commentary

46. Children achieve well and reach above average standards in this area of learning. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Even though the children have only been in school a short time, it is very noticeable how well co-ordinated and confident most of them are. During the physical development lesson, the majority of children managed to change with little help from the teacher and assistant. This was also done with the minimum of fuss. Walking down the corridors they were quiet and on entering the hall they moved around sensibly before finding a space. The hall was set up with a number of activities which the children used very well, completing moves and climbs as directed by the teacher. They responded to instructions promptly and were already aware of the main safety requirements when using the equipment. Manual dexterity is developed well through a range of activities in the classroom. Children were observed cutting, building shapes from a variety of equipment and completing creative activities such as painting. The children are at an early stage of development but all are making good progress.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of planned activities which develop children's interest and expertise in art and music.
- Children are enabled to explore and use their imagination.

Commentary

47. The quality of teaching and learning is good. A good range of activities is planned to develop children's imagination and creativity. They achieve well and reach the goals expected of them by the end of Reception. During a good lesson, the teacher encouraged the children to imagine themselves as a volcano. Suitably evocative music provided the stimulus and, with encouragement, the children participated with enthusiasm. In another lesson, the teacher helped the children to explore rhythms using parts of their own bodies, either clapping, stamping or clicking as a small group or all together. The children thoroughly enjoyed this activity, all joining in and being very excited when the teacher recorded their final effort. In art, good opportunities are provided for children to learn to draw and paint and use other media, for example the activity linked to the shapes in mathematics.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Good teaching of reading skills and good quality resources enhance learning well.
- The school is introducing a range of strategies to improve pupils' writing skills.
- Assessment procedures are good and help teachers to meet pupils' needs effectively.
- Good leadership in the subject is having a positive effect on raising standards.

- Language and literacy skills are developed well across the curriculum.

Commentary

48. Standards in Year 2 have been consistently above average in reading and writing since the last inspection. Good teaching of basic reading and writing skills enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Standards in Year 6 are also above average, though higher in reading than in writing. Pupils with SEN achieve well because work is planned to meet their needs and they receive effective support from teaching assistants in literacy lessons. More able pupils achieve well because teachers have high expectations of them and provide suitably challenging work. Some pupils are taught in small 'focus' groups which are designed to raise their achievement. Speaking and listening skills are more variable, but broadly average overall. In their planning for literacy lessons, teachers identify how speaking and listening skills will be developed, for example through paired discussion and collaborative work.

49. The school achieves consistently high standards in reading, as reflected in the results of national and internal tests and teachers' records. Pupils enjoy reading a wide variety of literature, and reading skills are developed well in whole class shared reading sessions and group guided reading lessons. Reading forms a key element in all pupils' homework and is also developed through other subjects, as when pupils carry out research in history. For example, pupils in Year 5 used a variety of texts to find information about Ancient Greek legends, pastimes, gods and cities. Parents have contributed significantly to the new library, which provides pupils with an interesting range of good quality books. The school has invested heavily in ensuring that pupils have plenty of books to support all areas of learning and keeps this constantly under review.

50. There has been a particularly strong emphasis on improving pupils' writing skills following detailed analysis of their performance in national tests. Teachers have had training to enable them to improve their own skills in teaching this aspect of English, and all have performance targets to meet in order for the school to achieve its overall goal in raising achievement. Much thought has been given to the strategies that are used to improve the quality and range of pupils' writing, and the school has sought advice from a Local Education Authority adviser, who has provided valuable ideas and guidance. The results can be seen in the improving standards throughout the school. For example, in 2004, there was a significant increase in the number of pupils who reached Level 5 in writing in the Year 6 national tests. The whole school emphasis on linking individual targets with regular termly assessments to track pupils' progress provides a consistent and coherent whole school approach to raising standards.

51. Overall, good teaching in the subject promotes good learning and progress. This was reflected in the work completed by pupils during the previous school year, and in most of the lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers give pupils a wide range of opportunities to read and write different kinds of text and to discuss what makes a piece of writing effective. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 use imaginative methods to teach spelling and punctuation rules, as when Year 2 pupils learned to recognise the different ways to write the same sound in 'pale', 'stay' and 'pail'. The Year 1 teacher made learning very enjoyable for pupils when they played a game to match letter names and sounds using pictures and hand signals. In a good Year 3 lesson, the teacher brought the story of *The Owl Babies* to life through very expressive reading and used it well to illustrate how to write a story with an 'introduction, problem and resolution' format.

52. Good assessment procedures ensure that teachers know individual pupils' needs and capabilities and provide suitably challenging work for them. When teachers mark pupils' work, most provide helpful comments that give praise for good achievement while pointing out ways to improve further. Teachers have recently adopted a system of assessing pupils' writing against the objectives that are set in the lesson. The headteacher and subject leader have a clear overview of class targets and pupils' progress and check regularly for any indications that individual pupils may be underachieving.

53. The co-ordinator provides a clear direction for the subject and manages its development well. She has observed lessons and checked pupils' work throughout the school, and, together with the headteacher, has analysed test data in detail to highlight where weaknesses lie. Subsequently, she has provided training and advice for colleagues and is overseeing the implementation of the new systems for assessment, target setting and tracking pupils' progress. Raising achievement in writing remains a high priority for the school, and this is reflected well both in the school development plan and in the co-ordinator's subject action plan, which sets out clearly what is to be done within a given timescale.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop language and literacy skills across a range of subjects. In several lessons, pupils were given opportunities to discuss ideas in pairs before writing them. Pupils develop factual writing skills in science, DT and history, and use reading skills for research. A relative weakness is an over-reliance on worksheets by some teachers in some subjects, which limits opportunities for pupils to express their own ideas freely and to write at length. The school has recognised this as an area for improvement in the school improvement plan.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils are attaining above average standards and achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- There are good procedures for and use of assessment.
- The subject manager provides good leadership.
- Targets are set for pupils in order to raise standards.

Commentary

55. Provision for mathematics is good throughout the school. Many pupils are achieving above average standards of attainment. The provisional results for the 2004 tests show that they match this judgement. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement, which takes account of their capabilities and previous levels of attainment, is good. Standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6 in numeracy and in other areas of mathematics.

56. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers provide challenging tasks, which are suited well to pupils' needs. Most pupils enjoy mathematics lessons and respond positively to the tasks. Good teaching in a Year 5 lesson inspired pupils to achieve well. The teacher explained the learning intention of the lesson, which was 'to recognise when two simple fractions are equivalent', so pupils were aware of what they were to learn. After a brisk question and answer session, the teacher asked pupils to explain their ideas to the class. This enabled everyone to be involved and to feel confident. The lesson was challenging for pupils of all abilities. Lower achieving pupils were provided with appropriate levels of support, which enabled them to take a full part in the lesson. Pupils sustained interest well as they worked on improper fractions. There was a buzz of anticipation throughout the class, especially when pupils showed their mathematical ideas on the interactive whiteboard. Pupils quickly settled to work in pairs for their independent work. Their good attitudes to work enabled the teacher to provide pupils with various levels of support and to check on their level of understanding without worrying about any behaviour problems. Pupils were engrossed in their work and successfully completed their tasks. They followed instructions well and enjoyed the lesson.

57. There are good inclusion procedures, which ensure that every pupil achieves high standards in line with their ability. Pupils who have additional educational needs are included fully in all activities. They are provided with good support, which enables them to make good progress towards their own targets. More able pupils are given appropriately demanding tasks to ensure that they are able to maintain their high level of attainment.

58. There are good procedures for assessment. Information gathered is used well to plan future work, so that pupils are given the most appropriate level of work and this is effective in helping to raise standards. For example, after studying data from assessments, the school has identified a small number of pupils who may underachieve. To ensure that this does not happen, teachers' planning now includes a 'focus group' for each mathematics lesson, so that extra support can be provided. Targets are set for pupils so they know the next steps in their learning in order to achieve higher attainment and to feel successful.

59. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has a clear sense of direction on how to continue to improve the standards of mathematics across the school. She is a very good role model for other staff and monitors teaching and pupils' work effectively. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to improve upon the already high levels of attainment.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum is good. There are good links with other subjects, as when pupils create time lines in history and graphs in geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the National Curriculum tests and assessments are good.
- Investigative work is used well.
- There has been an effective focus on the subject which has led to good improvement.
- Writing is being used well in recording experiments.
- Monitoring of teaching and individual target setting for pupils are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

61. In Years 2 and 6, standards are above average and achievement for pupils of all abilities is good. This represents an improvement in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 where they were judged to be average when the school was last inspected. The improvement is due to a better quality of teaching and learning. The achievement of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 has been erratic over recent years with a dip in 2003. Recent results in 2004 confirm that this has been corrected and standards are once again good. In order to raise standards in the subject, teachers have placed a strong emphasis on investigative science and pupils' independent learning.

62. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils enjoy science and are keen to do practical investigative work. This is because they are given opportunities to work independently and try things out for themselves. For example, in Year 4, pupils were finding out about their skeletons and the changes which take place as they grow. For homework, they had been challenged to find out body measurements of their family members which were then transferred onto disk. Their next task was to originate an investigation measuring the changes taking place in their own class and in other classes in the school. The study prompted a great deal of discussion and trial and error leading up to a fair test. In Year 6, pupils were learning about the characteristics of the main habitats in the world using a Powerpoint delivery created by the teacher. Unfortunately, in this lesson, pupils did not have the opportunity to complete any first-hand work but the content did generate a great deal of thought and enquiry.

63. Analysis of pupils' work shows that teachers ensure that they write the findings of their experiments well and that there are good links with other subjects. They always include predictions but also write the methods and the outcomes. Discussion with pupils shows that they really enjoy science, and they can recall much of the detail from past lessons. The work covers all the areas of study that are required and pupils learn about living, things, materials and their properties and

physical processes. ICT is used well to research and store information. Pupils' literacy skills are very well developed in science, particularly their scientific vocabulary and their abilities in writing are also extended well. Application of mathematical skills is evident in the way pupils present their results using graphs and tally charts and in the use of measurements to gather evidence during their research.

64. Overall, the subject has made a good improvement since it was last inspected. This is because of the emphasis on investigative science and the thorough way in which the programme of study has been taught. Analysis of work confirms that marking is thorough and completed work is properly assessed. However, there is no clear method of setting individual targets for improvement and the science co-ordinator has not recently had an opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Good links are made with other subjects, for example mathematics and geography, to enrich the curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are below average, but throughout the school pupils' achievement is improving as a result of significant improvements in resources and staff expertise.
- Good curricular planning ensures that pupils learn new skills and techniques in appropriate progression.
- Assessment procedures are developing but not yet fully effective.
- Effective leadership in the subject provides a clear direction for its development and good support for staff.

Commentary

65. At the time of the last inspection, ICT was significantly under-resourced, teachers lacked sufficient expertise to teach all of the strands of the subject adequately and there were weaknesses in curricular planning. As a result, standards were below average throughout the school and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Until February 2004, when the new school opened, many of these weaknesses remained. Since teachers and pupils have had access to the new suite of 16 computers and interactive whiteboards in every classroom, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of provision. Standards remain below average in Year 6 because pupils have not reached the standards expected in many areas of the curriculum due to lack of opportunity for 'hands on' experience in the past. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in Year 2. However, curricular planning shows that pupils are learning the skills that are appropriate to their age. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, and is now leading to satisfactory achievement by most pupils.

66. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were being introduced to the Power Point program and were learning how to create their own multi-media presentation. Although some pupils were familiar with the program, most were not and some needed help and guidance to begin creating pages. However, their enthusiasm was obvious and most progressed at a satisfactory rate during the lesson. Teachers have all received training in ICT and are much more confident in the subject than at the time of the last inspection.

67. There has been a good improvement in curricular planning since the previous inspection and in the time allocated to teaching the subject. Each class has allocated weekly times in the ICT suite, and teachers' planning shows clearly what pupils are intended to learn from week to week. Termly planning is thorough and builds effectively on pupils' previous learning. However, assessment procedures are not yet sharp enough to ensure that pupils' differing needs are fully met. Teachers record pupils' progress in their own way, but there are no consistent assessment procedures or

methods of recording pupils' progress that track their achievements from year to year. This has been identified as a priority for improvement in the current year.

68. The ICT co-ordinator provides good leadership in the subject and has devised a comprehensive action plan for its development. She has plans to monitor the quality of teaching in the subject during the current school year and currently provides informal support for all staff as well as training sessions in the use of new hardware and software.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. Teachers make effective use of ICT to enhance learning in other subjects. Termly plans identify opportunities for using ICT across the curriculum and many lessons are enlivened by the use of the interactive whiteboards in classrooms. However, there is at present a tendency to overuse the whiteboards when other teaching methods might be equally or more effective. Pupils use the Internet for research into a range of subjects and also use digital cameras to record their work, as when Year 2 pupils acted out a story.

HUMANITIES

70. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements on attainment or teaching and learning in history. Pupils in Year 2 learn about famous people and events from the past, such as Queen Elizabeth I, Florence Nightingale, Guy Fawkes and the gunpowder plot and about the great fire of London in 1666. They compare past and present seaside holidays. Older pupils learn about the Ancient Egyptians, the Ancient Greeks, the Romans, Vikings, the Tudors and Britain since the 1930's. Pupils can use secondary evidence to extend their learning about the past. Books, artefacts and information from the Internet are used well to enhance pupils' learning. Visits to places of interest, such as the British Museum, extend pupils' understanding of the past well.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Use of the local environment and visits to places of interest provide pupils with good first hand experiences.
- Pupils use books, photographs and the Internet effectively to enhance their learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning is not currently monitored.

Commentary

71. In geography, only lessons in Years 2 and 6 were seen. Evidence was gathered from discussions with teachers and pupils, analysis of pupils' work and displays. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 are achieving average standards. Achievement is satisfactory. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection.

72. Pupils in Year 1 study their local environment. They use maps and photographic evidence of the local area to extend their learning. The teacher in Year 2 makes good use of the *Katie Morag* stories to help pupils learn about life on a Scottish island. She enables pupils to relate these fictional stories to reality by the use of maps of the British Isles and identifying the islands around the Scottish coast. Older pupils learn about geographical features around the world. Pupils in Year 4 learn about life on the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia. They compare their own lives with those of young people in Saint Lucia. Pupils in Year 6 make a study of rivers and mountains around the world and the effect of the weather on these. They download information and pictures from the Internet to extend their learning about geographical features. Pupils learn to use books and photographic evidence well in order to describe geographical features and compare these with their local area. Visits to places of

geographical interest are invaluable, such as the Isle of Wight and Deal, as these extend pupils' geographical knowledge well.

73. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well and explain what pupils are to learn within the lesson. In the best planning, it is evident that teachers adapt the work well to the needs of pupils of different abilities. However, marking is often congratulatory, which boosts pupils' self-esteem, but does not help them to know how they can improve their work in order to achieve higher attainment. The school is developing portfolios of pupils' work to help teachers to assess pupils' learning. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has not monitored teaching and learning, but gathers information about the standard of pupils' work from displays around the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils have a good understanding of Christianity.
- There is a good range of resources to support learning.

Commentary

74. Religious education is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus and pupils attain standards in line with the expectations for their age in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in Year 6 are lower than at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and leads to sound achievement. Judgements are made on the two lessons observed, samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning. Pupils study Christianity and the other main world religions. Overall, most pupils have a good understanding of Christianity and a satisfactory understanding of other faiths. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the life of Jesus and of His teaching and of the main Christian festivals. Pupils in Year 2 show great respect for the Bible and know that it contains stories about the life of Jesus. Their visit to the local church enhances their understanding of a Christian place of worship.

75. In the lesson observed in Year 3, teaching and learning were good. The teacher enabled pupils to make good progress in their understanding of the early life of Gautama Siddhartha and how he became the first Buddha. Pupils were able to explain that he was a prince who was sheltered from the knowledge of poverty and the ordinary lives of people and of his search for truth. As pupils progress through the school, they gain a satisfactory understanding of Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam and Hinduism. They show respect for people of different faiths.

76. The good range of resources enhances pupils' learning well. Visits to the local church and Canterbury Cathedral help to extend pupils' learning about Christianity. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. No lessons were seen in **DT**; therefore no secure judgements on the standards pupils attain or on the quality of teaching and learning can be made. Previously, standards were judged to be average at the end of both key stages. Inspectors were unable to make reliable judgements about art and music as it was possible to observe only two art lessons and none in music. Both of the **art** lessons, in Years 1 and 2, were effective in developing pupils' drawing skills. This is further illustrated in pupils' profile books, which contain samples of observational drawing to illustrate progress from year to year throughout the school. Evidence from displays and teachers' planning indicates that pupils receive a broad and interesting curriculum in art. The Year 2 lesson made good use of links with other subjects: it was based on the story of 'Dogger', which pupils had read, and

pupils had taken photographs of each other, acting out scenes from the story, with a digital camera. They then used the photographs as a starting point for their drawings. When the registered inspector visited the school towards the end of the previous term, many examples of art work were on display in classrooms and around the school. The subject enjoys a high profile and is enhanced well by extracurricular activities, such as an art club and visits to places of interest. The school has identified the need to improve both resources and staff expertise in art as a priority in the current year's development plan.

78. **Music** also enjoys a high profile throughout the school. Although it was not possible to make reliable judgements about standards or teaching, there is sufficient evidence to show that the subject is covered effectively, both in lessons and through a wide programme of extracurricular activities. Specialist teachers from the Kent Music School take lessons for classes in Years 3 to 6 and the school has a strong commitment to music as an extracurricular activity. School choirs take part in the Swale Music Festival, pupils participate in singing and percussion workshops and visiting musicians perform for the pupils. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 benefit from recorder lessons and a number of pupils take woodwind lessons with visiting specialist teachers. A Year 5 choir performed in *Alice in Wonderland – The Musical* alongside Year 6 and infant pupils performed *It's A Baby* as a Christmas celebration.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The school provides a wide variety of opportunities in sport.
- PE is well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator.
- Extracurricular provision and participation in competitive sports fixtures are very good.
- Standards in swimming are above average.
- The overall quality of accommodation and resources is very good.

Commentary

79. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Standards at the time of the last inspection were judged to be good at the end of Key Stage 1 but judgement was reserved for Key Stage 2 because of lack of evidence. Discussions with teachers indicate that standards in swimming are above average. Most pupils can swim at least 25 metres safely and unaided, using a recognised swimming stroke, by the time that they leave Year 6. Virtually all pupils are confident in the water before they leave the school. Standards in games and gymnastics are good and sometimes very good. In a very good Year 1 lesson pupils were asked to devise five different balances and travel across a beam in different ways. They also had to build a course over which they could travel slowly and quickly. There were some imaginative outcomes from this, all the more interesting because the pupils created them.

80. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This was well illustrated in a Year 2 lesson when pupils were practising their skills throwing and catching a beanbag. Pupils were given the opportunity to working in group of three in order to practise their netball skills by moving up and down the playground making best use of the space and their agility. This enabled them to refine and improve their skills well. All lessons begin promptly and every teacher reinforces safety principles. Teachers encourage pupils to build well on previously acquired skills and try hard to improve their personal performance.

81. The development of PE is enhanced by a very good range of extracurricular activities. There are clubs for all the main sports activities which now include Tag Rugby and Kwik Cricket. These are well supported by the pupils. The school takes part successfully in a good range of competitive

sporting fixtures with other schools, achieving good results in several competitions. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is extremely enthusiastic and is very much involved in several initiatives aimed at raising the profile of sport generally in the school and in the wider community. Very good links have been made with local secondary schools which offer help and expertise readily. The new facilities provide an excellent opportunity for the further improvement of PE in the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**. It was not possible to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching as only one lesson could be observed. In addition, the school's documentation was analysed and discussions were held with staff. Year 3 pupils were observed discussing the importance of listening to other people and actively showing them they were interesting to listen to. The teacher gave several examples to prompt a response which pupils provided with enthusiasm. In pairs they then exchanged personal stories, each time trying to engage the listener. There was a strong link with literacy and pupils offered worthwhile contributions and did not find this issue difficult to deal with. It also reinforced the good attitudes and relationships which were generally evident during the inspection.

83. The programme for PSHE has evolved over a number of years. Circle times provide good opportunities for pupils to explore feelings and share concerns. Sex education is sensitively taught within PSHE lessons appropriate to pupils' age and stage of development. Pupils are involved in drawing up class rules and know the reasons for them. Provision is enhanced by an annual visit of the life education mobile and first aid instruction for older pupils.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	3
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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	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	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).