

INSPECTION REPORT

Littlebourne CE Primary School

Littlebourne, near Canterbury

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118657

Headteacher: Mrs Jacqueline Reed

Lead inspector: Mr Rob Crompton

Dates of inspection: 21st – 23rd February 2005

Inspection number: 267223

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	116
School address:	Church Road Littlebourne Canterbury Kent
Postcode:	CT3 1XS
Telephone number:	01227 721671
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Liz Henwood
Date of previous inspection:	17th March 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves a rural village near Canterbury. The five classes are organised in mixed age groups. When they start school, children's personal development and their early language and mathematical skills are below those generally found at this age. A third of all pupils have special educational needs. Two pupils have statements of educational needs. These proportions are above the national average. In addition to language and communication difficulties and general learning problems, several pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small number are supported in learning English as an additional language. Although the number of pupils taking free school meals is below average, the school serves a mixed area. There have been significant changes in staffing since the last inspection. The headteacher was appointed immediately afterwards and the deputy headteacher started in September 2004. A further two teachers are new to the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7230	Rob Crompton	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Music English as an additional language
13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector	
14509	Philip Mann	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology (ICT) Design and technology Geography Physical education
24528	Garth Muton	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design History Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an improving school. It has overcome previous weaknesses and now provides an **effective** education for its pupils. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, there is a determination to improve standards. Good teaching means that pupils are trying hard and making good progress in lessons. However, the standards achieved by year 6 are not as good as they should be as pupils have too much catching up to do. Improved provision for personal development has led to much better attitudes. Governors provide good support and have been particularly successful in helping the school move forward. It provides **satisfactory** value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although progress is accelerating through years 3 to 6, pupils are not reaching average standards by year 6 because of previous underachievement
- The leadership of the headteacher promotes the strong ethos of the school. Staff morale and team spirit is very high
- Teaching has significantly improved and is leading to better progress
- Provision for personal development, including support for pupils who find it hard to cope with school life, is making a real difference to their attitudes and behaviour

Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Serious weaknesses in the quality of education have been overcome to the extent that teaching and learning are now good. Pupils are now progressing well in lessons. Planning is much better and pupils' achievement is being tracked systematically. Their attitudes and behaviour are far better than they were. Subject leaders are more effective at promoting good standards.

STANDARDS

Children are making good progress in reception from a below average start and are on course to achieve the levels expected in personal, social and emotional development, and in language and mathematics. In years 1 and 2 pupils are making good progress and are achieving average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are gradually improving in years 3 to 6 and pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. However, the legacy of underachievement means that, by year 6, pupils are not yet reaching average levels in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) or religious education. Overall achievement is therefore **unsatisfactory**.

Standards in science, ICT and religious education are improving but remain below those expected. A further factor in the overall performance of the school in relation to national averages is the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils, over half of whom have emotional and behavioural difficulties, are now making satisfactory and often good progress. Over the past few years, boys have considerably out-performed girls but there are currently no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. The few pupils with English as an additional language benefit from extra support and make good progress. Standards meet expectations in art and design, geography, design and technology and music but not in history. It was not possible to judge overall attainment in physical education. Care is necessary when reading the table below. Because of the small number of pupils in each year group, the results of one or two can dramatically affect the grades.

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

Good provision for pupils' personal development results in good relationships. Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well due to the very good support for moral and social development. Attendance levels are average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Teachers have a broad range of subject expertise and pupils respond well to the increasingly challenging work. Lessons are well planned to enable all children in the mixed age classes to make progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, providing good support for individuals and different groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs. Much work has been done to improve the curriculum and this is now satisfactory, with a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are cared for well and receive good support and guidance. This is particularly helpful to those with emotional and behavioural difficulties and enables them to focus increasingly on school work. The good partnership with parents enables them to share in their children's education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported effectively by the new deputy head. It is her vision that has led to a strong sense of purpose throughout the school. The combined efforts of staff, with good support from governors, are helping the school move forward.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school and so are their children. Parents are particularly pleased with the way the school has changed since the last inspection and say that their children are much happier than they were at that time. They appreciate the calm atmosphere and the welcome they receive. They like the regular newsletters and curriculum information. Some parents raised concerns about the organisation of the mixed year classes by age rather than ability. The inspection found that the current system is working well generally because teachers are good at setting appropriate work for all the pupils. For their part, pupils are very happy with the school. They too feel that attitudes and behaviour have improved because staff set boundaries and reward those that keep within them. They like their teachers and say they make learning fun. Pupils enjoy school life and feel that they have good opportunities to pursue their interests outside the classroom.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to improve the progress children make in years 3 to 6
- Improve standards in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall achievement is unsatisfactory and the standards reached by year 6 are below average. Achievement in reception is good. Standards in years 1 and 2 are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although pupils are now making good progress in lessons, they are not reaching average standards by year 6
- Increasing progress in reception and years 1 and 2 is leading to improved standards

Commentary

1. Pupils in year 6 are working hard to compensate for their previous lack of progress. Because of consistently effective teaching, they are moving forward quickly and gradually gaining a better knowledge and understanding in most subjects. However, there is too much to do in the time remaining for them to make up for what they have missed. In the 2004 national tests in year 6, results were well below the national average and well below those of similar schools. Pupils had not built sufficiently well on their attainment when in year 2 and the 'value added' figures were well below average. The school's forecasts for the forthcoming year 6 tests show that very few of the fourteen pupils are on course to reach above average levels in English, mathematics and science, with overall results likely to be well below average. This is in line with the inspection findings. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is high and they are now making good progress towards their targets. Pupils have not made enough progress in religious education or ICT and standards are below those expected. Pupils do better when studying more practical subjects. They make at least satisfactory progress and meet the expected standards in art and design, geography, design and technology and music but not in history. It was not possible to judge overall attainment in physical education.
2. Pupils in years 3, 4 and 5 have a better chance of fulfilling their potential. Although the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also high, there is more time for pupils to catch up. This is especially the case with those pupils with previous negative attitudes, as they are increasingly positive. Improving standards are evident in pupils' books and during lessons.
3. Children's early language and mathematical skills as they start school vary from year to year but are typically below those of most five year olds. They make good progress in the key skills of literacy and numeracy and in developing maturity and independence. Attainment by the end of the reception year also varies but most of the nine children in the current reception class are on course to reach the expected levels in personal development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
4. Pupils in years 1 and 2 are making good progress in most lessons and this is improving overall achievement. By year 2 pupils are reaching average levels in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (15.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.8 (13.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.8 (15.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.4 (25.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	24.8 (25.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	24.8 (29.1)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are good overall. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance levels are average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils’ attitudes have improved significantly since the last inspection
- Good progress has been made in improving the conduct of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Good provision for pupils’ personal development has positive outcomes

Commentary

5. There has been a good level of improvement in this aspect of the school. The last inspection found that some pupils had poor attitudes. This is in sharp contrast to pupils’ current attitudes and behaviour. They are very positive and proud of their school. Their improved attitudes can be seen in lessons, where they try hard and tackle challenging work with good humour, and during break times when the play is often boisterous but not aggressive. This improvement is a tribute to the determined efforts of the whole school community which have succeeded in establishing a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties account for over half of the pupils with special educational needs in years 3 to 6. The school’s detailed monitoring of the behaviour of these pupils shows that they are overcoming many of their previous difficulties and are doing better in class as a result. There have been no recent exclusions.
6. Every effort is made to promote pupils’ moral and social development. They are involved in making up class and school rules and displays such as the ‘tree of behaviour’ and the ‘golden board’ celebrate pupils’ efforts and achievements. Pupils take initiative in supporting others, such as the recent fund-raising for cancer research and the tsunami disaster. The school council activity represents pupils’ views and has a voice in school decisions, such as the provision of play apparatus for breaktimes and changes to the school uniform. There is a strong feeling of community during assemblies and good opportunities for spiritual development as pupils reflect on their own feelings and beliefs. Pupils support a school in South Africa and exchange letters and photographs. They learn about different cultural traditions within and outside the UK during art and musical activities.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.4
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning have improved significantly since the last inspection
- Teachers set challenging work for pupils of different abilities
- Pupils are made aware how to improve through good feedback and marking
- The targets set for pupils with special educational needs are often not clear enough

Commentary

7. The last inspection identified many very significant weaknesses in teaching and learning. Staff had low expectations and many pupils had poor attitudes. Planning and assessment was patchy and one in six lessons was unsatisfactory. Only two teachers remain at the school since then and the current quality of teaching is in sharp contrast. Teaching is consistently good across the school. Lessons are lively and interesting and based securely on pupils' prior attainment and emerging needs. Pupils enjoy lessons and say they find learning fun. This is evident in their enthusiasm. They are attentive and keen to respond to teachers' skilful questioning. Teaching is underpinned by a good level of subject expertise. This enables teachers to set work which challenges pupils of all abilities. For example, work in mathematics in year 6 involves both sophisticated algebraic ideas and basic numeracy. Teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants has also improved, particularly in their support for pupils with special educational needs.
8. Assessment systems were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Much work has been done to address this and the school is now able to track individual progress and forecast results. At classroom level, this means teachers are increasingly setting individual and group targets so that pupils have a clearer idea of what they need to do to improve. This is not yet fully operational and there is more work to do in refining targets and expressing them in pupil-friendly language. Individual targets are set for pupils with special educational needs and their progress is closely monitored but these targets are often not specific enough and can be too ambitious. Staff do record pupils' progress towards these targets but there is no agreed method of doing so.
9. A strength of the teaching is the feedback that older pupils receive in English, mathematics and science. In addition to feedback as lessons progress, the quality of marking in years 4, 5 and 6 is very good. Teachers mark work meticulously, noting pupils' strengths and weaknesses and establishing a written dialogue with them. Symbols are used consistently so pupils know what is a point for future reference and what needs immediate attention. For their part, pupils respond positively to this constructive criticism by correcting their work. Time is set aside each week for pupils to reflect on how they are getting on. Teachers also extend pupils' learning and monitor how they are doing through the very effective use of homework. This too is very well marked, ensuring that it is valued by teachers and seen as worthwhile by pupils. The school has recently introduced assessment systems in ICT, religious education and other subjects but these have not yet had a major impact on standards.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	13	4	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory and opportunities for enrichment are good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The weaknesses identified by the last inspection have been rectified, although there are gaps in the ICT curriculum
- The match of teachers to the curriculum has improved significantly
- A good range of extra activities supports pupils' learning and personal development

Commentary

10. Curriculum time is much better allocated across subjects than it was. The school no longer spends too much time on literacy at the expense of other subjects. Weekly monitoring by the headteacher helps to ensure that pupils experience a broad range of work. The need to concentrate on the key skills of literacy and numeracy still affects the time spent on other subjects to some extent. The school has recognised this and is reviewing the curriculum to identify where subjects can be linked; for example, by setting more writing tasks in geography or religious education. Although planning in ICT now covers all aspects of the subject, pupils' progress in ICT has been restricted because the full programme was not taught. Although links between ICT and other subjects are emerging, more could be done to teach pupils about databases in mathematics or the use of sensors in science, for example.
11. The most significant improvement in resources is due to the appointment of three new teachers since the last inspection. They have a good level of expertise and this has led to better curriculum coverage and more interesting and successful lessons. They use their subject knowledge and experience to help ensure that pupils' skills are developed systematically across the school. This was not happening at the last inspection and is a factor in pupils' improving progress. Pupils with special educational needs also benefit from improved staffing. Teachers and teaching assistants, ably directed by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), provide them with good support.
12. The many visitors to the school and educational trips enrich pupils' experience. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the recent music week, for example. Drama groups stage small plays which promote reflection on a number of issues, such as the misuse of drugs and an artist has supported pupils' work. Visits to Canterbury Cathedral and Hever Castle support pupils' understanding of religion and history. Pupils' work in science is supported by taking part in challenges and competitions organised by local companies. Sporting links with local schools and after school clubs provide a good range of opportunities for playing in teams.

Care, guidance and support

The attention given to pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on monitoring, are good. Involvement of pupils is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Positive relationships within the school help pupils feel secure
- Good new systems for monitoring and mentoring make expectations clear

Commentary

13. Children get off to a good start in the caring surroundings of the reception class, supported by the close links with the neighbouring playgroup. Parents appreciate this. The school functions well as a family community, with staff and pupils gathered together for daily events such as assemblies and lunchtimes. This is enabling pupils to develop a sense of belonging and loyalty. Daily routines are well managed and run smoothly, creating a calm and settled environment for pupils.

14. Good new initiatives have been brought in to monitor pupils' personal and academic progress, and these are already having an impact. Behaviour tracking across all classes is helping to build a consistent approach to discipline across the school and make pupils realise what happens if they behave badly. The mentoring scheme recently introduced in year 6 gives pupils excellent opportunities to discuss their all-round progress individually with a teacher on a weekly basis. Pupils are getting a great boost to their self-confidence as they realise that the school is really interested in how they are doing. Pupils' self-esteem and loyalty to the school are further strengthened by the chance to do their bit through the school council or as prefects.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is good. Links with other schools and the community are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good initiatives to inform and involve parents are taking shape

Commentary

15. The school has worked hard to improve its partnership with parents since the last inspection. Parents now enjoy good quality information about what their children will be learning and what they will be expected to do at home, through curriculum meetings, topic letters and homework diaries. Reports now contain helpful targets, but still need to make it clearer to parents how well their children are doing for their age. The school is always ready to listen to what parents have to say, and is now beginning to consult them systematically as part of the school improvement process.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a determined and effective leader. Leadership of other key staff is good, as is the governance of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads the school well
- Challenging staffing situations have been well managed
- Governors know the school well and work very closely with it
- Finances are effectively managed

16. The headteacher has enabled the school to become a very different place compared with how it was two years ago. At her appointment the headteacher had to tackle immediately the many weaknesses identified by the last inspection. This has been done with the full support of staff and governing body. Several of these changes are quite recent, including the appointment of a deputy headteacher.
17. The headteacher has a very clear vision of how she wants the school to develop and this is shared by all staff and governors. The joint re-writing of the school mission statement with staff and governors, the changes in school uniform and timings of the school day are some of the factors influencing the new direction the school is taking. Very good progress has been made in the attention given to improve the quality of teaching, the reorganisation of curriculum planning and a whole school approach to managing behaviour. The results of these initiatives are already clear as teaching has improved significantly, the curriculum is better and pupils' behaviour has vastly improved. As a result of efficient routines and good communication the school day runs smoothly. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has helped the senior management team to guide and support further improvements such as better lesson planning and the use of assessment information to track pupils' progress. Performance management is well established. Objectives set for staff are firmly linked to the school improvement plan with a clear focus on raising the quality of teaching and improving pupils' achievement.
18. The coordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) provides good leadership and management. She has established some very good systems for continual review of pupils' progress and the monitoring of behaviour. She is well aware that pupils' individual learning targets need to be clearer.
19. The governing body takes an active interest in the school's progress and development. Although it has seen a high turnover of headteachers and other staff, its goal of ensuring the school provides well for the community has remained constant. The governing body has a shared vision of how the school is to evolve and gives the headteacher unstinting support. Governors have subject responsibilities and are knowledgeable about classroom practice as they regularly visit classes and are often welcomed on an informal basis.
20. The finance committee has budgeted prudently and financial procedures are well managed by the administration staff. The school has carried forward a high proportion of funds into the current financial year due to staff changes. Plans are in hand to spend this money in the light of the inspection findings.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	488,785
Total expenditure	466,586
Expenditure per pupil	3,673

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	34,640
Balance carried forward to the next	56,839

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables children to progress well
 - Older pupils provide good role models for reception children in the mixed age class
 - The outdoor learning area is barely adequate
21. The nine reception children are taught in the same class as six younger year 1 pupils. Good planning and organisation means that reception children have opportunities to learn through play, together with more formal lessons. Lessons are brisk but there are good opportunities for children to learn at their own pace and to develop good relationships with other children and adults. The teacher and teaching assistant work well as a team. The small class size means that children have a lot of individual attention and staff can keep careful track of their progress. Working alongside older pupils is particularly helpful in the area of **personal, emotional and social development** where the provision is good. Children soon settle in to school routines and settle in to the caring environment. They are keen to learn and their independence is successfully promoted through daily opportunities for them to choose from a good range of activities. Most are on course to reach expected levels by the end of the reception year.
22. Skills in **communication, language and literacy** are promoted successfully. Reception children make good progress during literacy lessons. After reading *Little Red Riding Hood* they joined the older pupils in acting out parts of the story in pairs. The teacher took photographs with a digital camera, successfully encouraging children to adopt poses and use facial expressions. Such imaginative approaches, together with the systematic teaching of letter sounds, help children to make good progress. Writing is taught well. Children's workbooks show good progress from September, when few letters were recognisable, to now, when they are making good attempts at writing independently. Overall standards are at the levels expected.
23. Children are on course to reach the levels expected in **mathematical development**. Practical activities with counting and construction toys support children's learning well. In addition, their numeracy skills are developed successfully during more formal lessons. For example, children showed how they could recognise numbers up to 10 as they played a 'number bingo' game. Early ideas of weight are taught through practical work with balances. Children quickly learned to use the words heavier and lighter appropriately as they balanced different objects with wooden cubes. The ideas of weighing and measuring were reinforced as children made fairy cakes, carefully measuring out ingredients with the support of an adult. Such activities and a good range of other experiences contribute to the good provision in **knowledge and understanding of the world**. This was illustrated by the work centred on travel. They worked in the 'travel exchange', answering phone calls and issuing tickets. They enjoyed finding out about France, trying to count in French and greeting visitors with '*Bonjour*'. Early ICT skills are well taught using the class computer and a toy robot, which children learn to program using simple forward, back and turn commands. Children are reaching the levels expected in this area of learning.
24. It was not possible to fully evaluate provision or standards in **creative and physical development**. Evidence from planning and from the range of colourful paintings and models around the classroom suggests that children benefit from a reasonable range of creative activities. Lessons in the hall provide good opportunities for physical development but the outdoor area is cramped and climbing apparatus is limited. The school has plans to modify this area to provide better outdoor facilities. Apart from this, good headway has been made since the

last inspection. The quality of teaching is better and work is now based on systematic assessment which was missing before.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved by year 6 are below average
- The quality of teaching has improved and pupils are achieving well in lessons
- The quality of teachers' marking is good and often very good
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects

Commentary

25. Standards achieved by year 2 pupils in reading have been maintained since the national tests in 2003 and are close to the national average. Standards in writing for this age group are improving and are also close to the national average. The pupils in years 1 and 2 are achieving well in lessons now and their overall achievement is satisfactory.
26. Standards achieved at the end of year 6 are below national averages and results in this year's national tests are unlikely to improve on the well below average results achieved in 2004. These pupils have a lot of catching up to do as their achievement has been hampered in the past by weaknesses in the quality of teaching and problems with disruptive behaviour. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now achieving well in lessons and there are very positive signs that standards in years 3 to 5 are improving. However, many pupils in year 6 have not reached their full potential and so their achievement overall is unsatisfactory. For example, their writing may be well organised and punctuated accurately but lacks the fluency, detailed descriptions and range of vocabulary expected for this age group. Their reading is usually accurate but they lack the skills to analyse texts and make their own deductions. They have good attitudes to learning and are appreciative of the efforts being made to improve their achievement.
27. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good. The subject is led and managed well. The coordinator, with support from the headteacher, has worked hard to raise standards by keeping the quality of teaching and learning under continual review and by introducing good systems of planning and assessment. As a result, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers are clear about the next steps they want the pupils to make and lessons are well planned. Pupils listen well, respond to questions and get on with their work quietly and sensibly. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teachers' marking and this is starting to have a positive effect on pupils' knowledge of how they can improve. Homework is being used to very good effect to support pupils' learning. The school is particularly effective at managing opportunities for pupils to read either in groups or individually. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' progress.

Literacy across the curriculum

28. Whilst there have been some minor improvements to this aspect of the subject there remains a great deal of scope for development. There are examples of teachers making links with other subjects, for example, pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 write down their feelings and opinions about some paintings they study in art. In general however there are many missed opportunities for linking literacy skills with other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving but overall attainment in year 6 is below average
- Good teaching means pupils are now achieving well in lessons
- Good leadership and management have led to improvements since the last inspection

Commentary

29. Every effort is being made to help pupils catch up on work they have missed. The impact of this is seen clearly in the standards reached by year 2. They are on course to reach average levels, which indicates at least satisfactory progress from the beginning of year 1. Many pupils have good numeracy skills and this enables them to tackle simple problems confidently, using their knowledge of addition and subtraction. Although pupils are working hard in years 3 to 6, with many making good progress, the improved provision in mathematics has not had time to influence the standards reached by year 6. The few more able pupils are on course to achieve average or higher levels. For example, they have a good understanding of decimals and confidently interpret different types of graph. They have a secure knowledge of co-ordinates and plot shapes accurately, exploring aspects of symmetry such as reflection and rotation. Other pupils have a good grounding across all areas of the subject but several lack the skills that they should have learned in earlier years. Hence the school predicts that results in the national tests are likely to be below the national average.

30. Teachers are adept at setting work which challenges pupils of all abilities. Lessons move at a brisk pace. Pupils enjoy the quick fire question and answer sessions which introduce most lessons. Practical experience helps them to understand mathematical ideas and a strong emphasis on neatness helps their accuracy when doing calculations or measuring. Homework is set consistently and supports pupils' learning well. It is particularly effective in the classes with older pupils where they benefit from excellent feedback on this and on their day-to-day class work. Teachers devote a lot of time to spotting where pupils are having difficulty and in setting new tasks to help them move forward.

31. The deputy head, who took over as the coordinator just two terms ago, has already made a good start in addressing the previous weaknesses. Parents have been informed of how the subject is taught through meetings and written information. Ideas are shared regularly among staff. Year 6 pupils have extra lessons each week to help boost their performance. A new published scheme is helping to ensure that skills are taught systematically throughout the school and individual pupil targets have been introduced. The coordinator is aware that the assessment system needs to be refined further in order to track pupils' progress more closely.

Mathematics across the curriculum

32. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to practise and consolidate their mathematical skills in other subjects. They learn to measure accurately in science and in design and technology. They use their knowledge of coordinates when learning to read maps in geography. There are some direct connections between mathematics and ICT. Most links across the curriculum are incidental rather than systematic however, and more could be done in this regard.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good; pupils benefit from very good feedback
- There are good practical approaches to the subject but there is not enough recording of results
- Assessment does not inform weaker areas of learning

Commentary

33. Results of assessments at the end of year 2 in 2004 were below the national average. However, the number reaching the higher levels was above average. Currently pupils in years 1 and 2 are making reasonable progress and most are on course to reach the expected standards. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in years 3 to 6 and they attain below average standards by the end of year 6. Due to previous underachievement, standards are generally lower than at the time of the last inspection. Recent improvements have led to better progress. Teaching is now good and pupils are achieving well in lessons. Standards in years 3, 4 and 5 indicate that more children are on course to reach average levels by year 6.
34. Lessons are planned in detail and much thought is given to providing for the wide range of ability in each class. Teachers mark pupils' work thoughtfully and they are given opportunities to reconsider particular aspects of their work in order to help their understanding in the light of helpful teacher comments. Investigations form a major part of science work. Years 4 and 5 were using well-designed observation sheets to guide the dissection of leaves and comment on their shape, edges, length of stalk and thickness in connection with plant habitats and adaptation. In years 5 and 6 some excellent supportive work sheets enable pupils to carry out their investigations into filtering, evaporating and dissolving. An appropriate emphasis was made on observation, prediction, recording and discussion. These attractive prompt sheets limit pupils' independent writing however, and there are few extended explanatory accounts of investigational work.
35. A lack of effective management in the past has affected standards and there are gaps in pupils' learning as the curriculum has not been well organised. Planning now helps to ensure good coverage. Leadership and management are now satisfactory. The coordinator took over the role at the beginning of the school year and is aware of what needs to be done. A more rigorous system of assessment is being adopted to enable teachers to make better predictions of performance and identify weaknesses in pupils' understanding.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

- Improvement has been too limited since the previous inspection
- Pupils in year 6 have not studied all aspects of the curriculum
- The use of interactive whiteboards¹ support pupils' learning
- Teaching assistants are well trained in ICT
- There is no established system of monitoring and assessment

Commentary

36. The previous inspection made no judgment on standards reached by year 2 as there was little evidence to go on. Similarly, this inspection also found little evidence to make a secure

¹ These project the computer image onto a large 'touch screen' and allow the teacher and pupils to write or move objects around the screen with their fingers rather than use the keyboard.

judgment. Pupils in years 1 and 2 access ICT chiefly in the classrooms where satisfactory use of software helps to consolidate reading, literacy and numeracy skills. Satisfactory progress was made by year 2 pupils in the computer suite in using word processing skills to write about the story of Cinderella.

37. Standards of year 6 pupils have not been maintained since the last inspection and are below expectations. Pupils confidently use ICT to communicate and share information, such as their multimedia sequences about life in ancient Egypt and their word-processed winter narratives. These presentations also contained illustrations that the pupils had made and then scanned into their work. However, there are gaps in the oldest pupils' knowledge as the full range of ICT activities has not been available to them. For example they have not learned about control technology or the use of temperature and light sensors.
38. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching as only one lesson was observed. However, the lack of progress across the school indicates previous weaknesses in curriculum coverage rather than a lack of expertise in teaching. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very effectively in other subjects and this provides pupils with further insights into ICT. Teaching assistants have received training in a variety of software which enables them to provide worthwhile support across the school and especially for pupils with special educational needs.
39. The management of ICT is developing but is unsatisfactory. The new coordinator is providing good leadership but has much to do and is aware of the developments necessary to help raise standards. The school benefits from a part time technician, ensuring pupils' access to ICT is successfully maintained. Apart from the computers in class areas, pupils have regular time in the suite to develop computer skills and to apply these in subject areas. However, pupils have difficulty locating and retrieving their saved files on the school network because the system is not organised well enough. The school is developing a system of assessment but, at the moment, pupils do not know how well they are using ICT or what the next stage of their learning will be. The school makes good use of digital photography, a computer microscope and flatbed scanner. Internet access is efficient and pupils use this as a resource for their learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

40. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is just satisfactory. Much of this is incidental and there is not enough systematic planning for ICT within other subjects.

HUMANITIES

41. Due to timetable arrangements, it was not possible to fully evaluate provision in geography, history or religious education. One lesson was observed in geography and in religious education. No lessons were seen in history. Evidence was gathered by looking at plans and at pupils' past and current work and talking to them about what they have learned, as well as through discussion with staff.
42. The evidence available for **geography** indicated that National Curriculum requirements are met. Standards are broadly in line with expectations and achievement is satisfactory; an improvement since the last inspection. In the older classes, teachers provide a range of activities to match the varying abilities of pupils, but there are missed opportunities to extend pupils' writing skills.
43. Teachers follow national guidelines in **history** and there are examples of work done on topics such as the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians and other areas. However the amount of recorded work is very slight throughout the school. A similar situation was reported at the time of the last inspection so there remains much room for improvement. The evidence seen indicates that standards are below expectations.
44. In **religious education** it is clear that pupils have not acquired the knowledge and understanding that is expected. Pupils have a smattering of knowledge about the bible, the life

of Jesus and, in the case of the older pupils, aspects of other faiths. However they have very little understanding of how religious ideas affect the way people live or the meanings or significance of the stories they have heard. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The coordinator has ensured that the content of the locally agreed syllabus is covered in teachers' plans. However lessons tend to be unimaginative. There is very little evidence that teachers are taking advantage of the opportunities offered in art, music and drama to make learning more accessible and fun. Recorded work in books is usually mixed up with other work, which does not help pupils to value the subject or develop any sense of continuing themes or ideas.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

45. No overall judgements about provision in these subjects were possible. It was not possible to observe any lessons in art and design and design and technology but portfolios and displays of pupils' work provided an indication of standards. Similarly, although only one lesson in music was observed, this, together with singing in assemblies provided evidence of how pupils are doing. Discussions were held about physical education but no lessons were observed.
46. Standards in **art and design** are in line with expectations. There are several examples of pupils producing artwork after studying particular artists. For example pupils in year 3 learnt about the style of Kandinsky before attempting their own collages. In year 2 pupils painted their own version of Monet's water lilies. A special feature of both these examples was that pupils were encouraged to write reflectively about the artist's work. There were further examples; in year 5 pupils tried their own pointillist painting after Seurat and year 6 pupils tried their own techniques after looking at the work of the impressionists. The subject coordinator has some good ideas for building upon the encouraging progress already in evidence.
47. In **design and technology** pupils experience a suitably wide range of materials and through building on previously learned skills achieve satisfactory standards. Written accounts clearly explain how they have designed, made and evaluated products such as their balsawood vehicles in years 1 and 2 and cam-driven moving toys in years 3 and 4. Years 5 and 6 had designed torches and used graphics software to illustrate their ideas. The profile of the subject was raised through a successful Design and Technology Week, during which pupils produced ideas and models for playground improvements. This provided a good link to everyday school life with the school council involved in making final judgements.
48. The pupils enjoy very good facilities for **physical education**. The school has a good-sized hall for gymnastics and dance lessons. Similarly, the school field offers excellent facilities for summer-time games and athletics. The older pupils are taken swimming and the majority achieve their 25 metre certificates by the end of the year.
49. Good progress has been made in **music** since the last inspection. The subject is now taught systematically across the school and the quality of pupils' singing has improved. Children sing tunefully and with expression as they sing hymns from memory. Pupils are developing satisfactory composition skills and standards are broadly in line with those expected. The school benefits from having two teachers with a good level of musical expertise, one of whom has advanced skills. Activities such as the recent Music Week have renewed pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. This involved an impressive range of songs, dances and instruments and gave pupils valuable insights into the cultural traditions of other countries and communities. The Kent Music School offers instrumental tuition and fifteen pupils have lessons in piano, violin or woodwind. Twenty pupils learn the recorder and older pupils reach good standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

50. No judgement is made about the school's overall provision as only one lesson was seen. However, the well thought-out scheme of work and planning for assemblies address all the relevant themes. Appropriate links are made with other subjects and the school taps into a variety of resources, including the Internet. In addition, day-to-day school life enables children to develop confidence in these areas of learning. There are good opportunities for learning beyond

the school in terms of visits and visitors. The programmes for sex and drugs education are well established. For some lessons, such as the one seen, classes are combined. This is not conducive to helping pupils to reflect on personal issues. Some find it difficult to contribute in such large and unfamiliar groups. The school council is well established and helps pupils to develop a sense of citizenship and community responsibility.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5
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	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
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	3
The effectiveness of management	3

