

INSPECTION REPORT

MINSTER IN SHEPPEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minster, Sheerness

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118344

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Seager

Lead inspector: Mr Paul Evans

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st October 2004

Inspection number: 267333

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	534
School address:	Brecon Chase Minster Sheerness Kent
Postcode:	ME12 2HX
Telephone number:	01795 872138
Fax number:	01795 877705
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gloria Williams
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Minster in Sheppey Primary school is a larger than average school providing education for 534 children – 254 girls and 280 boys, aged 4 to 9 years of age. At the time of the inspection the children in the school's reception classes were only in school part-time, half in the morning and half in the afternoon. These children will become full-time after the autumn half-term. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than in most schools. There is a low proportion of pupils in the school for whom English is not their first language, although only a very small number are at the early stages of acquiring English. The attainment of children joining the school is well below that expected nationally for their age. The proportion of pupils on the school's special educational needs register is above the national average, and the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below average. Historically, there has been a very high turnover of teaching staff, which has presented a serious barrier to pupils' learning

and achievement. The headteacher and the governing body have taken action to improve the stability of the teaching body. The school was awarded the Healthy Schools Award in 2001 and the ECO Schools Award as well as the Investors in People Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20737	Paul Evans	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology History Geography
9420	David Martin	Lay inspector	
32218	Andrew Mumford	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design and technology Personal, social and health education and citizenship
32107	Mike Dukes	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Religious Education Art and design
25925	Elizabeth Pacey	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Minster in Sheppey is an improving school and provides a **satisfactory education** for its pupils. The leadership of the headteacher, the senior management team and the governing body are good, and strategies to improve teaching and learning are beginning to have a positive effect. Teaching is now satisfactory overall, although its quality needs to be improved further to raise the standards achieved by the pupils. Currently, the school provides satisfactory value for money and the school demonstrates good capacity to remedy its shortcomings.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and the senior management team have led the school well in taking decisive and radical action to resolve the serious staffing problems.
- The headteacher provides enthusiastic leadership and has built a strong team.
- The role of subject leaders is unsatisfactory.
- Although standards have been too low for some time, there was clear improvement in assessment results in 2004. There is still much work to do. Very high staff turnover has been a barrier to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.
- There are inconsistencies in marking and assessment, and its use to match work to pupils' levels of achievement is unsatisfactory.
- There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and for those with special educational needs.
- Skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are not well used or developed in other subjects.
- Levels of attendance are not high enough.

Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory improvement. Almost all areas of concern raised in the last inspection report have been tackled, and some headway is now being made in raising standards. The remaining issues are being vigorously dealt with by the management team. Extensive changes in staff have slowed progress. The headteacher, all the staff and governors are committed to developing and implementing strategies which are designed to raise standards quickly, and this is beginning to have a positive impact.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 2 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003

Reading	D	E	E	D
Writing	E	E	E*	D
Mathematics	B	E	E	D

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E very low.*

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Pupils' achievement, overall, is **satisfactory**. This is an improvement on the school's performance over recent years, but there is still a good deal of ground to make up. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage. Children join the reception class with skills that are well below average for their age. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress and achieve well in almost all areas of learning. As they join Year 1, children's standards are in line with those expected nationally in most areas of learning. The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were lower than in most schools, and in the lowest five per cent of schools whose pupils have similar backgrounds. The unconfirmed results of assessments in 2004 show improvements in reading, writing and in the higher levels of mathematics. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were below expectations, but there are clear signs of improvement in the content of pupils' work. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and their skills in using information and communication technology are below expectations. Provision for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are good, and they achieve at the same level as their classmates. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support by teachers and teaching assistants and they achieve well.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**. They have good attitudes to their work and behave well. Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching is **satisfactory** overall, and is good in the Foundation Stage. Assessment and its use to match work carefully to pupils' growing levels of attainment are unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 4. There are good relationships between pupils and staff and good relationships between pupils. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. The quality of the curriculum offered to pupils is satisfactory with a good range of extracurricular activities. The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for its pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team is good. They have a good, clear educational vision for the school. However, some areas of management by the headteacher, senior management team and governors are not good enough, especially the school's failure, until recently, to maintain a constant drive to improve

standards. Financial management is good, and the governors now have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have a good working partnership with the headteacher and with all staff in the school. Many aspects of governors' contributions are good, but there are some minor breaches of their statutory obligations in respect of the information published by the school, which do not affect pupils' learning or achievement. Governance is satisfactory overall.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the school and were generally complimentary about it. A number of parents feel that they are not well informed about their children's progress and that the provision of homework is not consistent. Inspection evidence shows that the school's partnership with parents is good. Pupils are pleased with their school. All pupils now know that their main objective is to learn. They have great confidence in all adults working in the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the achievement and standards of all pupils.
- Improve the use and development of skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects.
- Fully implement, and rigorously monitor, the new strategies for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.
- Further raise the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Enable subject leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement in their subjects.
- Improve levels of attendance.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents contain all the required information.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards throughout the school are improving, but are still below average overall. Achievement is **satisfactory**, although the children's achievement is **good** in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, literacy, mathematics and numeracy are below expectations throughout the school.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well to reach standards which are below national expectations in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- There has been improvement in some subjects since the last inspection.
- More able pupils are not always fully extended.

Commentary

1. In national tests at the end of Year 2, the school's results have shown a steady decline since 2000 in reading, writing and mathematics. In the 2003 tests, standards were well below average in reading and mathematics and were in the lowest five per cent in writing against all schools. Compared to the results of similar schools, these results were in the lowest five per cent in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics.
2. In 2004, the school took part in the national pilot of Year 2 assessments. The results showed improvements in the number of pupils reaching the expected levels in reading and writing. In mathematics, there was an improvement in the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3, although the numbers reaching average levels fell. In science, there was a significant improvement in the number of pupils reaching average levels, compared with 2003. These results show a halting of the decline in standards and a slight improvement overall. The decline in standards had been caused, to a large extent, by changes in the area that pupils come from, the fact that attainment on entry to the school is now well below expectations for children of this age, and the constant, very high level of change amongst teaching staff. The improvements are the result of improved teaching and wide-ranging strategies to stabilise the teaching staff. There is clear evidence of good recent improvement and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory overall. The school is aware that much is still to be done to further raise standards.
3. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English and literacy and mathematics and numeracy are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year

4. In addition, the use of literacy and numeracy skills and their development through other subjects is unsatisfactory. In science, standards are below national expectations at the end of Year 2, but in line with expectations at the end of Year 4. In ICT, pupils' skills in using computers and other equipment are in line with expectations throughout the school, which is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the use of ICT to teach and raise standards in other subjects is unsatisfactory. Standards in religious education have improved and are now in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus throughout the school. Standards in music are now in line with expectations for all pupils. History, geography, art and design, design and technology and physical education were sampled during the inspection, but no judgements are made on the standards that pupils reach.

4. In the Foundation Stage, standards in communication, language and literacy are below expectations, mainly in writing but also for a significant number of pupils in speaking and listening. Standards are below the expectations of the early learning goals when pupils join Year 1. However, their achievement is satisfactory overall in communication, language and literacy in terms of their prior learning. Their low starting point has a slowing effect on their learning in other areas of the early learning goals (ELGs), and contributes significantly to their overall development being below expectations by the time that they join Year 1. Standards in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development are in line with expectations, and achievement in these areas of learning is good. In creative development, children's standards are in line with expectations and their achievement is good, but in personal, social and emotional development, they reach standards which are above expectations and achieve very well. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and personal, social and emotional development and have been maintained in physical development. Standards in communication, language and literacy also remain the same as in the last inspection. This level of attainment is due primarily to a lowering of children's attainment on entry to the school because of changes in the school's catchment area. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has shown good improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory.
5. Support for pupils with special educational needs is well organised and provided, both within the class and by taking pupils out for help in small groups. Individual education plans are well written to reflect pupils' needs. They are regularly reviewed and used as working documents to help track progress. However, in some classes, teachers do not use them to plan work to match pupils' needs. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than in most schools, but the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is lower. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is very well documented and they achieve well because of the very good support that they are given. The achievement of the very small number of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English is in line with their classmates, and they are well supported, both by the school and the

outside agency. There are occasions when expectations for pupils of higher ability do not fully extend them and they do not always achieve at the level that they should. This is because assessment information is not well used to match the level of their work to their ability.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.0 (14.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	10.6 (12.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.5 (15.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 112 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes overall are **good**, and behaviour is **good**. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also **good**. Pupils' punctuality is **good**, but their attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good behaviour reflects the school's high expectations of them and the way it works to achieve them.
- Pupils show good interest in and enthusiasm for their own learning and other activities provided by the school.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory, but improving because of the procedures and practices to monitor and promote it.
- Pupils form good relationships with staff and with each other.
- Moral and social development are good.

Commentary

6. Pupils like the school and feel that they are learning in "good" lessons, which they enjoy. They are polite and show respect for staff and each other. They are aware that their purpose is to learn. They are eager to please and work collaboratively with each other. Pupils understand the need for rewards and sanctions in the behaviour policy, and also understand what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Pupils willingly carry out their roles as monitors, members of the school council or as playground buddies. All of these good attitudes help to improve pupils' learning. Some pupils have been identified as having severe behavioural difficulties and most staff apply the school's management strategies consistently. Pupils' behaviour outside the classroom is good. The conduct of pupils is good overall, due to the good manner in which the school applies its assertive discipline policy. This has resulted in no exclusions to date this year, and exclusions last year were minimal. Pupils are confident in their surroundings and this impacts well on their attitudes to learning.
7. Pupils enthusiastically participate in a range of extracurricular activities, such as orchestra and choir, physical activities, and the learning and achievement of pupils who take part in these activities are enhanced well.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.3	School data:	0.7
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. The figures, for the year 2002/2003, show that attendance is unsatisfactory. However, the school has worked really hard, and the latest figure is only just below the national average. This is much improved.
9. Some parents and pupils report that incidents of bullying occur, mainly in the playground. Parents stated that incidents were dealt with well, but pupils felt that the response of staff in the playground was not always the appropriate one. Inspection evidence shows that the school deals satisfactorily with any incidents of aggressive or inappropriate behaviour. The caring, inclusive ethos of the school creates an atmosphere which promotes learning, although the school leadership realises that the pupils need more challenge in their learning in order to raise standards of attainment.
10. Pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness are satisfactory; pupils are able to understand the importance of caring for each other. They know the difference between right and wrong and apply this to the way that they work with each other and with all staff. They have good manners to all the people that they meet, including visitors. The moral values of the pupils are good; they show honesty and integrity in the way that they openly admit when they have been wrong; ethnic minority pupils are fully included in lessons and in activities outside of the classroom. The caring and inclusive nature of the school leads to pupils having a strong sense of right and wrong, and the responsibilities of living in a community.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	420	1	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum are **satisfactory** overall. The school offers **satisfactory** care,

guidance and support to all its pupils. Partnership with parents is **good** and links with the local community and other schools are **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. Assessment and the use of assessment information are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good.
- Assessment is not well used to match work to pupils' levels of ability in Years 1 to 4.
- There are inconsistencies in the teaching and learning of English, expectations are too low in mathematics and the use and development of skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' learning is very well supported by teaching assistants.
- Some teachers do not adapt good overall lesson plans to meet the needs of their classes.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	7 (18%)	16 (42%)	14 (37%)	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.

Commentary

11. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There have been weaknesses over time in the quality of teaching caused by a very high level of changes of teachers. The school has a good plan in place which is addressing that weakness and the inconsistencies caused by it. During the inspection, 97 per cent of teaching and learning in lessons was judged to be satisfactory or better, with over 60 per cent of lessons good or better. This shows an improvement since the previous inspection and demonstrates the school's capacity to improve. In the few lessons seen which included pupils who are in the early stages of learning English, they were fully included because of the good support that they were offered. However, the weaknesses in teaching detailed above were observed when looking at pupils' past work and the school agrees that these must be improved.
12. In lessons, teachers adopt a good variety of teaching styles. They treat all pupils fairly and pupils behave well and show respect to all adults. Because teachers know their pupils well, they usually promote pupils' interests well and pupils attend to their work and make good progress in most lessons. Because of these good relationships, pupils work well in most lessons, even when not supervised closely by an adult. This promotes their learning well.
13. Teachers are supported well by senior teachers who plan lessons and then share these within year groups. This ensures that the lessons are well planned and carefully matched to the national curriculum and to the age of the pupils. However, because some teachers do not yet have the experience to carefully modify these lesson plans to the needs of their own pupils, the same work is taught to all pupils on too many occasions. This has the effect of slowing the learning of some pupils, particularly those of higher ability, in some classes.

14. There is inconsistency in the way that pupils' work is marked, and this does not help pupils to understand how to improve further. Because the good, new policy for assessing pupils' progress is only just being implemented, the impact on pupils' standards and achievement are not yet able to be judged. Assessment is not well used to match work to pupils' different levels of ability, and this is unsatisfactory. Overall, the programme for teacher training and stability is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' learning and achievement.
15. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage, which is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Staff have high expectations of behaviour, as is the case throughout the school, so children quickly learn how to work within well-defined boundaries, and these prepare them well for more formal learning in Year 1. Teachers' planning, subject knowledge and style of teaching are effective, and teaching assistants are particularly well used so that pupils make good progress in their learning during their time in the reception class.
16. Good teamwork between teachers and high quality teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and skilled. They ensure that all pupils are included in their lessons and are able to achieve their tasks. In many lessons, work is well matched to pupils' needs and they make good progress. On a small number of occasions, targets on pupils' individual education plans are not sufficiently taken into account, and when this happens, pupils' progress is barely satisfactory.
17. The use of homework is unsatisfactory. A limited amount of homework is given to most pupils, but there are inconsistencies between classes. Parents are advised that they can have extra homework for their children if they ask for it.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **satisfactory**, with **good** enrichment opportunities. The school's accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use and development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, in other subjects, are unsatisfactory.
- Good use is made of a specialist teacher in music.
- Good opportunities are provided for learning outside the school day.
- The hall is not always fit for use immediately after lunch.

Commentary

18. The school provides a broad range of curricular opportunities that meets statutory requirements. It provides well for pupils with special educational needs through the use of well planned programmes and good support from teaching assistants. Good use is made of specialist teaching for music, so all pupils have positive experiences in lessons, and good opportunities are provided outside lesson time. Throughout the school, pupils are provided with effective personal, social and health education, which includes sex and relationships education. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

19. The school does not systematically plan to promote the use of pupils' skills of literacy and numeracy through other subjects. For example when writing in history, geography and other subjects, the format and genre of pupils' writing are not included in lesson planning, and opportunities to extend learning in literacy are missed. Similarly, in numeracy, while numbers are used in some lessons in science, for example, this is not planned, and again opportunities for learning and progress are missed. While there is some clear intention to include learning in other subjects in lessons in ICT, the level of development is low, and pupils' skills in other subjects are not well promoted in ICT lessons.
20. A good range of enrichment activities is provided for pupils. Many of these are at lunchtime and after school. Amongst other things, these encompass music, such as the orchestra and choir, physical activities, including a wide range of traditional games as well as line dancing, and computers. These activities are well attended and have a positive effect on the learning and achievement of the pupils who join them. The school's ECO group has been successful in obtaining ECO school awards for their work on the environment, which has extended their learning in geography. These activities promote participation in sport and music and also add to pupils' personal and social development well.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. This is an improvement on the last inspection report. They are well supported in lessons by class teachers and teaching assistants. When they are withdrawn from classes, they carry out the same topics as other pupils, which ensures that they have full access to the curriculum. They are fully included in all activities, and their positive attitudes towards their work means that they make good progress.
22. Visitors to the school and visits out of school by pupils add to the experiences pupils enjoy. Many of the visits made are to the local community, although some are further afield. For instance, Year 4 pupils visit a Gurdwara and Rochester Cathedral. Visitors include the nurse, and good use is made of members of staff with different backgrounds, such as a teacher from South Africa. A residential experience is offered to Year 4 pupils.
23. Overall accommodation is satisfactory. The classrooms, which are large and light, are at least satisfactory. Specialist rooms for music and ICT are provided. However, the hall is unsatisfactory. It is too small for the whole school to meet together, and is not always clean and ready for physical education lessons straight after lunch. The school has satisfactory resources to meet the needs of the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a generally safe, caring and healthy environment for pupils. It provides **satisfactory** advice, support and guidance for the pupils and makes **satisfactory** arrangements to involve them in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have trusting relationships with adults.
- Pupils are provided with good support for their personal development.
- The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory throughout the school.

Commentary

24. All teaching and support staff are reported to have had recent training in child protection procedures, but some support staff are still unsure of these. The school closely monitors situations which may give rise to concerns. Overall, the school's provision for child protection is satisfactory. There are satisfactory procedures and practices to meet the medical needs of pupils.
25. Pupils work in a safe and healthy environment. However, some deficiencies were noted during the inspection and the school has been made aware of these. Risk assessments are carried out prior to any external events. The targets written for pupils with special educational needs are good. They are reviewed by teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs at regular intervals during the year to track pupils' progress and ensure that targets match pupils' needs.
26. The school has satisfactory induction arrangements for new pupils which help to reduce any anxiety for the child and assist with their early learning. Parents complete a data sheet prior to the pupil's first visit, which gives basic information on the stage of the child's development. Parents are given good information about their children joining
27. The school makes satisfactory provision for seeking and acting upon the views of pupils through the school council, to which pupils are elected, and occasional whole-school surveys. Pupils discuss the proceedings and outcomes of council meetings during some of their circle time sessions and, as a result, feel that their views are listened to.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are **good**. Links with the community and other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides good opportunities for parents to undertake courses which help them to help their children.

- Inconsistencies in setting homework limit the extent to which parents can promote pupils' learning at home.
- There are some minor omissions in the information provided to parents by the governing body.

Commentary

32. A significant number of parents at the meeting prior to the inspection, and amongst those who responded to the questionnaire, felt that they are not well informed about their children's progress. Inspection evidence does not support this. The school now provides a written report each term, which details what pupils have been doing. The report in the final term of the year also gives targets for English and mathematics and a general target. Parents receive a newsletter each half-term and are provided at the start of each term with information regarding curriculum and topic work and assisting their child at home. Parents have also received a pamphlet about reading, and the school held evening meetings for groups of parents to explain their reading strategies as a means of improving pupils' learning. This good level of information keeps parents aware of what their children are doing and this helps pupils' learning.
33. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and involved in reviewing their children's progress. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement because their parents know what they are learning and how to help them.
34. Parents' consultation evenings are offered each term. These meetings are well attended and provide parents with good opportunities to discuss their children's progress. The school makes a strong effort to see all parents, including providing flexible timing arrangements and contacting parents who do not attend.
35. For the last three years, in association with the adult education department, the school has provided family learning courses in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The school has been asked to share its good practice with other schools. The number of families which have been involved in these courses during the past three years covers approximately 20 per cent of families in the school, and this is having a good effect on the learning and achievement of the pupils' involved. A significant number of parents who replied to the questionnaire did not feel that the school works closely with parents. However, the school does provide opportunities for parents to become involved in the work of the school, and a significant number of parents who have attended one of the courses noted above have progressed to become teacher assistants in the school, and some have moved on to train as teachers. This has a significant effect on the learning and achievement of pupils.
36. The school has satisfactory links with the local community. Some local organisations, such as the Parish Council and the Girls Brigade, use the school's facilities. Pupils give a musical presentation at a local residential home. Two

local senior citizens have just agreed to come into school to help pupils with their reading. This has a good effect on the learning of the pupils involved.

37. The school has satisfactory arrangements for the transfer of pupils into middle school and these help pupils to settle in quickly.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher, the senior management team and the governors are **good**. The management of the school and leadership of other key staff are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Monitoring the impact of new initiatives on the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' standards is unsatisfactory.
- Strategies for recruiting and retaining staff are innovative and good.
- The governing body is closely involved in shaping the direction of the school.
- Subject leaders are not able to fully monitor the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement in their subjects.

Commentary

38. Since the last inspection, the school has faced a significant period of difficulty and turmoil beyond its control in terms of staffing and the need to recruit and retain teachers. Key personnel, including two deputy headteachers, have been appointed and a very large proportion of the teaching staff has changed. The headteacher has worked very hard to find a long-term solution to the staffing difficulties. Together with the governing body and the senior management team, she has put in place good innovative strategies to recruit staff by training eight teachers 'in-house'. While the recruitment and training of teachers has been managed very well, this has created its own problems in the sheer volume of work created. More importantly, in their enthusiasm to monitor the progress of the trainees, the school has not focused sufficiently on the raising of pupils' standards. This has been a significant barrier to improvement and has affected pupils' standards and the rate at which the school has progressed. The school has now introduced strategies to put this right, and early progress is already being seen. The headteacher and the senior management team have created an ethos where pupils and adults in the school are valued and grow in confidence. School development is sound and the priorities for development are carefully chosen. The senior management team works closely with the governors with the aim of improving the school.
39. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has a wide range of expertise and experience. Governors are supportive and work closely with the headteacher and the senior management team. They are very aware of the challenges facing the school and are kept well informed by the headteacher.

They have a very good knowledge of the life of the school and are very supportive of the teacher training programme in the school. However, they also failed to focus sufficiently on the raising of pupils' standards while working closely with the headteacher and the senior management team to overcome the serious staffing problems faced by the school. Committees are well organised and run efficiently. With the headteacher and staff, governors are now fully committed to raising standards.

40. Leadership of subject areas is unsatisfactory. Due to the turmoil in staffing, many subject leaders are in the early stages of their teaching careers and their expertise is still developing. As a result, it is difficult for them to have a good understanding of standards and what has caused the decline in their subject. In some cases, their action plans are those of previous co-ordinators. They have monitored teaching plans, but have not all monitored teaching or carried out regular examination of pupils' work to check and improve standards. Overall, the subject leaders' monitoring role is underdeveloped and the least experienced need guidance on how to carry it out.
41. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is experienced and carries out her role efficiently. Good liaison between the co-ordinator and outside agencies, such as speech therapists and paediatricians, has been used to establish a very good evidence base to ensure that provision for these pupils matches their needs. The co-ordinator is fully supported by the governor for special educational needs.
42. The organisation of so many trainee teachers is complicated, and whilst the pupils have no difficulties in dealing with the situation, some parents find it confusing, and the impact of the initiative has not been sufficiently evaluated, especially with regard to pupils' standards. This aspect of management is unsatisfactory. Staffing is managed very well, continuous professional development is very good and the recruitment and retention of staff is now good. Satisfactory policies are in place for performance management and procedures and processes are kept under review. The school has very good links with Canterbury University and has contributed extensively to initial teacher training. However, the headteacher has wisely decided to postpone accepting more students in the near future.

Financial Information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1 258 459	Balance from previous year	34 576
Total expenditure	1 277 081	Balance carried forward to the next	15 954

Expenditure per pupil	2 369		
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43. Financial control and administration are satisfactory. The school has secure procedures and systems in place, and monitors and controls the budget effectively. The governors ensure that money is spent on clearly-defined priorities, such as staffing, and that principles of best value are secure. The cost per pupil is broadly average. The school now provides a satisfactory quality of education overall and provides satisfactory value for money.

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**. Attainment on entry to the school is well below what is expected for children of this age.

At the time of the inspection, the children were still attending part-time as part of their induction programme. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well, and their partnership makes for an effective team. The quality of teaching is good and there is a good range of activities for the children. Relationships between teachers and children and between the children themselves are very good. As a result, children develop positive attitudes to school and to learning. However, because of their low levels of attainment in English when they join the school, their attainment when they join Year 1 is still below expectations overall in spite of good progress and achievement in the Foundation Stage.

Good assessment systems mean that teachers are aware of each child's progress. The good outdoor area is well used to develop children's social and physical skills. There is a good balance overall between teacher-directed activities and those chosen by children. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The curriculum provided for all children is good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between adults and children create an effective climate for learning.

Commentary

44. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers put good emphasis on this area of learning, and together with the teaching assistants, they provide good role models. As a result, children achieve very well. Not only do they enjoy very good relationships with adults, but they also play happily together and willingly take turns. They are considerate of others who have particular learning needs. Within the classroom, they independently put on aprons to paint or participate in another messy activity. When asked to do so, they help clear up the outdoor area and put everything away. They confidently make choices about the activities they want to follow. In this area of learning, children are in line with expectations by the time that they join Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults create good opportunities to extend children's spoken language.
- The teaching of reading is well structured, so children make good progress.
- Opportunities for children to explore writing are missed.

Commentary

45. When they join the school, whilst some children's speaking and listening skills are in line with expectations, a significant number do not speak clearly. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Adults use questioning well to develop children's oral skills. As a result, they make good progress. Reading activities are well matched to the differing needs of the children, and they enjoy these sessions. Few words are recognised at this stage, but most children have developed an understanding of the way stories work and how to handle books. However, although children's formal writing skills are taught in a structured way, there are insufficient opportunities and encouragement given for them to try writing in other, less formal contexts. Generally, the role-play area is the only place where children may be encouraged to try to write. As a result, they do not perceive themselves as writers in the way that they see themselves as readers. This affects their attitudes to writing. Because their levels of attainment in all areas of English are well below expectations overall when they join the school, children's attainment in communication, language and literacy is below the expectations of the early learning goals in all areas by the end of the reception year.

Mathematical development

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adult modelling of mathematical language helps children understand it.
- Well planned sessions provide good opportunities for learning.

Commentary

46. Whilst some children can count confidently to ten or beyond, a significant number have low levels of attainment when they join the school. Some know the names of the simplest two-dimensional shapes and are learning others, such as the hexagon and pentagon. Overall, children will be below the expectations of the early learning goals by the end of their reception year, because of the low abilities of a significant number when they joined the school. The quality of teaching and learning are good. The use of good questions helps teachers assess what children know and to move them on in

their learning. Adults model correct mathematical language for shapes and positions, and this helps the children to begin to use it naturally. Teachers' planning is good, so sessions are purposeful and targeted well to address the needs of the children in the class. There are too few opportunities for children to experiment using their mathematical skills in free-learning situations, and this could be further improved. Overall, children's achievement is good.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use the computer with confidence

Commentary

47. Children have frequent opportunities to use ICT for a variety of tasks. They use the computer with confidence, and competently move the mouse and point and click to successfully negotiate different programs. They listen to stories on it, responding as necessary, and use a paint program to design pictures. These opportunities have a good effect on children's learning and achievement. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan well for different experiences, so that children are acquainted with a variety of wild animals from their story books, and they visit the local community at times during the year, which helps them to understand the area in which they live. Early elements of religious education are taught, and this helps develop their understanding of themselves and others. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals for this area by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Physical development

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities outdoors to develop physical skills

Commentary

48. The quality of teaching and learning are good, and children achieve well. Adults have well established routines, particularly for the outdoor area, so children learn how to play with the toys available. Sessions are well planned and stimulating, which helps develop good co-operation, for instance with the trikes. Good opportunities are also provided to practice throwing and catching, and adults join in well to develop children's skills. In the classrooms, teachers provide a range of opportunities to develop control and co-ordination when using tools. These include painting, often with an adult supervising and encouraging, cutting and sticking activities and handwriting practice. Overall, most children are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Creative development

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided for imaginative play, although outdoor resources are limited.
- Some opportunities are missed for children to develop their own ideas.

Commentary

49. The quality of teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. Teachers provide good opportunities to develop aspects of children's creativity. Role-play areas, such as a vet's surgery, are found within the classrooms, and children are encouraged to explore their ideas outside. Whilst they do this, such as the pair who were deciding whether to ride their tandem trike to the circus or the zoo, there is a limited amount of resources such as road markings to aid imagination. Children have opportunities to explore ideas through painting. These are frequently structured to ensure adults have the opportunity to develop children's oral and physical skills and their thinking. At times, this can restrict the freedom for children to be fully creative, and opportunities to develop skills using their own ideas are missed. They enjoy music, and can be heard singing whilst playing in other areas. Most are on course to attain the expected levels by the end of the reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking are not developed well enough, but standards in reading are beginning to improve.
- The quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent.
- More able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Teachers do not use assessments effectively to respond to the needs of individual pupils, and senior staff do not track the progress of pupils across the school sufficiently well.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

50. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 2, the unconfirmed results show that the school was well below the average of all schools nationally and below the results of schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals. Test results showed an improvement on the previous year in both reading and writing, and signify a turnaround in pupils' progress and achievement over the previous four years. These previously declining standards were largely caused by a very high level of changes of teaching staff. Now that the school has taken steps to stabilise the turnover of teachers, standards are starting to improve. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Pupils' standards and achievement are satisfactory at the end of Year 4.

51. All pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, achieve as well as their classmates and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve at least as well as their classmates, and sometimes better. There is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls. The more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could because their work sometimes fails to challenge them enough. The school recognises this as an area for improvement and is beginning to implement strategies to raise standards.
52. Standards in speaking and listening are below average across the school. Many teachers are not sufficiently aware of the need to provide frequent opportunities for pupils to talk for a variety of purposes. Consequently, pupils have a restricted vocabulary and they are not as confident or clear in their speaking as they should be. However, most pupils listen carefully for sustained periods, showing respect for those speaking.
53. Reading standards are below average in all year groups, and the school is rightly concerned at the effect this has on the pupils' ability to succeed in other subjects. The school has begun to make reading a priority, and as a consequence, a small improvement in standards is beginning to be found. Pupils are taught strategies for tackling new words, and teachers provide opportunities for group, paired and silent reading. However, there is inconsistency in the teaching of reading, particularly where pupils in some classes read infrequently to their teachers on an individual basis, although all are heard at least weekly in guided reading sessions. The school benefits from a group of adults, trained by the national charity "Volunteer Reading Help", who hear children read. They make a good contribution to promoting literacy and a love of books. Standards in writing are low. They have declined since the last inspection but are beginning to improve.
54. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school. Over time, the quality of teaching and learning has been inconsistent because of the very high level of changes in teachers. The school has worked very hard to correct this, and there is now a stable teaching staff, and the quality of teaching and learning are improving. In the lessons seen, teaching ranged from barely satisfactory to very good. However, the quality of teaching seen in pupils' work was inconsistent and sometimes unsatisfactory. For example, pupils of widely differing abilities were sometimes set similar work, and as a result, the more able were not sufficiently challenged. This has the effect of slowing the rate of learning for these pupils.
55. A significant number of teachers use day-to-day informal assessments of pupils' learning to match their teaching to the pupils' levels and needs. Consequently, some pupils do not make the progress they are capable of in some lessons. The inconsistency in the quality of teaching is a significant weakness in English and the main reason why the standards reached by pupils are not high enough. In the best lessons, the teaching is lively and interesting and teachers modify their work to match the abilities in their class. As a result,

the lessons capture the interest of the pupils who behave well, work hard on challenging tasks and their learning is good. Lessons are normally successful for the pupils with special educational needs who are well supported by teaching assistants.

56. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership, but there are weaknesses in management. She is fairly new to the post and keen to improve the subject. However, she is hampered in her role because she is not able to monitor the teaching and standards sufficiently. Consequently, she does not have a full view of the strengths and weaknesses in her subject. In addition, the subject leader and senior staff do not yet use information from pupil data as well as they could to improve the subject, because a school-wide system for achieving this has only been in place for a few weeks and has not yet had time to affect pupils' standards or achievement. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. The use and development of English in other subjects is unsatisfactory. The management of this development is unsatisfactory, but strategies are being implemented to improve this. Pupils use language and literacy in other subjects, but they are held back by their low levels of skills. They have some opportunities to practise and consolidate their use of information from books when undertaking research in history and geography. Teachers help pupils to use the correct technical terms in subjects such as religious education. Opportunities for developing writing skills are often missed because the school does not yet have a system to ensure consistency in planning and teaching these skills across other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The good quality, new assessment policies have not been in place long enough to have had an impact on standards.
- Very good teaching assistants help pupils to make progress.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards their work.
- The use and development of numeracy skills in other subjects is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

58. In the unconfirmed results of the 2004 national assessment of pupils at the end of Year 2, standards were well below the national average and below the average of schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals. These results showed a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are now below national expectations, but that the quality of teaching and learning is steadily improving. However, little use is made of information and communication technology in the teaching and learning of mathematics. This area is unsatisfactory.
59. Standards in mathematics are below average. This represents a decline since the last inspection report and is reflected in the test results over recent years. Over time, there has been a fall in standards, largely due to the high level of changes in the teaching staff, which had a considerable impact on standards. This has been rectified and pupils' levels of achievement are now satisfactory and improving. There has also been a rise in the number of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons because of the very good support given to them by teaching assistants. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated into lessons and make sound progress. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school.
60. Mathematics is taught in groups organised according to ability. The quality of teaching in mathematics lessons is never less than satisfactory and is generally good. In the good lessons, different work is planned for pupils of different abilities and lessons move at a brisk pace. The very good teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants ensures that all pupils work hard, make sound progress, develop good attitudes towards their work and behave well. However, lesson observations are not supported by an analysis of pupils'

books. There are inconsistencies in their books, and in some classes there are instances of pupils of all levels within a set carrying out exactly the same work. Teachers' expectations of what their pupils should be attaining and achieving are too low. For example, in the presentation of their work, as well as in the levels and quantity of work demanded. As a result, although pupils' achievement is satisfactory, the work in their books indicates that some pupils do not work at a level that will ensure they make good progress and reach higher levels of attainment. The school has recognised this weakness and is taking steps to put it right.

61. The good quality, new whole-school assessment and recording procedures have not been in place for long enough to have had an impact on standards in mathematics. Most teachers and teaching assistants demonstrate good practice when monitoring learning satisfactorily during lessons, questioning and talking to pupils to check and improve their understanding. There is one example of good practice where the teacher has given each pupil a target to achieve in the front of his or her book, but this is not the general rule. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, with some books not marked, whilst others have good evaluative comments about pupils' work. As a result, pupils do not know what they need to do to improve. Many pupils with special educational needs have specific targets for numeracy, which teaching assistants use well in most lessons. However, occasionally the targets are not used to plan specific work for these pupils, and when this happens it limits the rate of their progress.
62. The mathematics co-ordinator has held the responsibility for six weeks and is still in the early stages of her teaching career. She is enthusiastic and keen to raise attainment and achievement in mathematics. She has monitored teachers' planning. However, there has been no time for her to monitor the very important areas of standards, teaching or learning in the subject. Since the last inspection, improvement has been unsatisfactory overall because standards have not been significantly improved. However, the teaching staff is now much more stable and the quality of teaching and learning in lessons is now good. The school has identified the weaknesses in mathematics and is well set to make rapid improvement. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory.

Mathematics and numeracy across the curriculum

63. There were few examples of mathematics being used across the curriculum, and this area is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this weakness and is developing policies to correct it.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject co-ordinator leads the development of investigational skills well.
- In the best lessons, teachers make their pupils feel enthusiastic about science.
- Work is not always well matched to pupils' differing abilities, and more able pupils are not always fully challenged.
- Marking does not help pupils to make progress.
- ICT is not well used to enhance learning.

Commentary

64. In 2003 national tests, three quarters of pupils attained the expected level (Level 2) or better in science. Very few attained the higher Level 3. In both cases, this was well below other similar schools. There was a significant improvement in the numbers attaining Level 2 in 2004, but the proportion achieving Level 3 remained the same. As a result, standards in science are below expectations. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, pupils are in line with national expectations. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory because of improved teaching in lessons and improved achievement.
65. In all year groups, teachers plan well for pupils to learn through investigations whenever possible. As a result, although investigative skills are below expectations in Year 2, by the time pupils are in Years 3 and 4, they have a clear understanding about the need to conduct a fair test, by changing one variable at a time, and about the methodical processes needed in science.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all year groups. However, some lessons are good or very good. These are characterised by enthusiastic teaching which stimulates the pupils to be keen on science. Very good questioning by teachers leads to pupils' ideas and thinking being challenged. The pace of these lessons is good, so no momentum is lost. Teaching assistants, when present, are well used to support the learning of particular groups, often the less able. In some other lessons, though, the quality of teacher input is less interesting, and sometimes confusing.
67. Lessons seen during the inspection had good support in place for the less able, including adult help and writing frameworks. In many cases, though, more able pupils were not sufficiently challenged either by having an additional idea to think about or to consider their own ways of recording their findings. Pupils' books indicate that meeting the needs of different pupils is not so well managed over time. Those who are struggling are, at times, asked to write out what they have done, and the results are incomplete and difficult to understand. Occasionally, evidence was seen of pupils simply copying from the board. Pupils' work was marked, but usually it was full of praise, without constructive comments for development. As a result, the development of pupils' work and understanding over time is only satisfactory.

68. The emphasis on the development of investigative skills in science is as a direct result of the good leadership of the co-ordinator, who has a clear understanding of how pupils develop scientific thinking and skills. Management of the subject is satisfactory, because although there has been some monitoring of pupils' work, there is insufficient knowledge of the quality of teaching and the use of assessment information is still being developed.
69. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. While there has been an emphasis on the development of pupils' investigative skills and in the quality of teaching and learning, literacy and numeracy skills are not well developed in science lessons, and the use of ICT to promote learning and achievement in science is unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is insufficiently used in classrooms or in the teaching and learning of other subjects.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language.
- There is good teaching and learning of ICT skills in the ICT suite.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory
- The resources in the ICT suite are good and support the teaching well.

Commentary

70. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards in ICT skills are in line with national expectations.
71. The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and for those pupils who are in the early stages of learning English, as teaching assistants ensure that they can play a full part in all lessons in the ICT suite. At all stages throughout the school, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how to use computers and other ICT equipment, such as tape recorders. They use a mouse and the keyboard satisfactorily and can find their way through icon-driven menus with ease to find the programs that they want. However, there are limited opportunities provided for pupils to practise their skills in other subjects in classrooms. While teachers plan to use computers in lessons, and some of this was seen during the inspection, there is only a small number of computers in each classroom, and it takes a long time for any task being undertaken to be carried out by the whole class. All pupils positively enjoy working with computers.

72. The leadership and management of ICT are good. The new subject co-ordinator's leadership is already having a good effect on the way ICT is taught and managed. The good ICT suite is well timetabled and well used. All classes have regular use of the suite and all pupils show that they can use computers satisfactorily for their age as they progress through the school. This has a positive impact on their learning and achievement. In-house training for staff is good, for example, in the use of the digital camera, and training is planned in the use of interactive whiteboards, which were delivered to the school during the inspection. Resources in the ICT suite are good and sufficient to deliver the programmes of study. Pupils' progress is not sufficiently well assessed and recorded, and is unsatisfactory.
73. Planning is coherent, with a clear vision for development over the next two years. The co-ordinator has good capacity for rapid improvement in all aspects of the subject. There has been good improvement in ICT since the last inspection when it did not meet national requirements.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. ICT is not used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning and achievement in other subjects. While teachers plan to teach ICT skills well, the use of other subject skills is not well developed through the use of ICT. For example, in a good lesson which taught pupils to send e-mails, the level of English skills used was low, and an opportunity to develop pupils' literacy skills through ICT was missed. There is limited use of ICT across the wider curriculum, so pupils are denied opportunities to practise their skills. However, this picture is already beginning to change. The new co-ordinator is brimming with ideas for development.

HUMANITIES

Insufficient evidence was gathered to fully inspect history or geography and these subjects were sampled.

History and geography

75. Because inspection trails were focused on other areas of the school's provision, neither **history** nor **geography** was inspected in full. The evidence is that both subjects are planned to be taught to satisfactorily meet national requirements throughout the year to all pupils.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lively and interesting work makes pupils enthusiastic for the subject.
- The subject has improved well since the last inspection.
- Teaching is not of a consistent standard, with some teachers lacking knowledge and presenting unimaginative work.
- The new subject leader is quickly beginning to manage aspects of religious education well.

Commentary

76. By Years 2 and 4, the standards reached are in line with expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The evidence from inspection is that achievement is satisfactory for all groups of pupils. By Year 2, pupils know about several Bible stories, and about the main features and uses of Christian churches. They also begin to develop an awareness of Judaism and Hinduism. As they progress through to Year 4, their knowledge of Christianity deepens and they can give a reasonable explanation of what it means to be a Christian. They also develop a basic knowledge of Sikhism.
77. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the lessons and assemblies seen, the teaching ranged from good to barely satisfactory. In the better lessons, the teachers skilfully select material to appeal to their pupils, and they present that material in a lively and exciting manner. For example, in a Year 3 lesson linked to Judaism, the teacher let pupils handle real Jewish artefacts and clothing. She played a recording of Jewish music while pupils enacted rituals with the Jewish holy scroll, The Torah. As a result, pupils showed good interest and went on to work enthusiastically on their written tasks. By contrast, other lessons are less successful because tasks are dull and unimaginative and emphasise remembering facts. A lack of knowledge of the subject prevents some teachers from correcting misconceptions in pupils.

Consequently, pupils in these lessons do not achieve as well as others. The headteacher enhances the teaching in religious education with her good assemblies. The local vicar also makes a positive contribution by his visits to school and by welcoming class groups into the abbey. Representatives of the Sikh community provide a helpful resource and pupils benefit from visits to The Gurudwara.

78. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader is a great asset. She is very new to this position and has not yet had sufficient time to fully begin her role. Consequently, her leadership and management are currently only satisfactory. However, she has made a very good start and her leadership is soon likely to be good or better. The curriculum has improved considerably since the last inspection and now meets legal requirements.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There was insufficient evidence gathered to fully inspect art and design, design and technology and physical education. Consequently, these subjects were sampled.

79. During the inspection, no lessons were seen in **art and design**. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about provision. However, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about the subject and looked at past work.
80. In **art and design**, standards across the school and by Year 4 are below average. Work on display contains poor visual design with immature drawing and a lack of imagination and confidence. Visual displays around the school are bright and attractive. However, these are largely the work of adults, with insufficient prominence given to pupils' work. Consequently, staff miss the opportunity to raise the profile of pupils' art and to celebrate and promote high standards in the subject. Evidence from pupil interviews indicates that the range of art materials and activities which teachers provide in lessons is narrower than it should be. Some pupils used a computer program to produce a painting in the style of Jackson Pollock, but computers are generally underused in the subject.
81. In **design and technology**, from looking at school and teachers' planning, it is clear that the required curriculum is planned to be taught in the course of the school year.
82. There was insufficient evidence during the inspection to form a secure judgement about the overall quality of provision, pupils' standards, their achievements or the quality of teaching and learning in **physical education**. Evaluations of teachers' planning and talking to pupils indicate that all statutory requirements are met. There is a good range of extracurricular sporting activities, some seasonal, such as cricket, cross country, athletics, football, line dancing and tag rugby. Good links are maintained with other schools when pupils participate in competitions with them.

83. Resources for physical education are satisfactory. However, the multi-use hall presents some problems. The hall is small for gymnastics, especially when older pupils need to use apparatus. When the hall is used after lunchtime, the floor is not always sufficiently clean and dry, making it unpleasant and sometimes unsafe for pupils to work, especially in bare feet. The school is fully aware of the problems regarding the hall, which were also mentioned in the last inspection report, but the solution is largely beyond the school's control.

Music

Provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The expertise of the specialist music teacher is an asset to the school.
- The subject is enhanced by good extracurricular activities.
- Pupils enjoy their musical experiences.
- Music contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

84. Pupils' standards are in line with national expectations, and their achievement is satisfactory and improving throughout the school. This is because of the employment of a specialist teacher who teaches all classes in the school.
85. The quality of teaching in the two lessons observed was good. Since the specialist subject leader teaches all classes, the judgement can be made that all teaching in music is at least good. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are fully included in lessons and activities. This promotes pupils' learning and achievement well.
86. The school offers pupils the opportunity to engage in a variety of musical activities, and a significant number of pupils play instruments such as guitars, recorders and violins. The school orchestra provides a good opportunity for pupils to improve their musical abilities and is open to any pupil. Pupils clearly enjoy playing together – they are enthusiastic and work hard to improve. Assemblies provide a good opportunity for pupils to sing together very well, sometimes performing movements and clapping the rhythm of songs enthusiastically and accurately. The school is very fortunate to have two rooms that provide good space for musical activities, which contributes well to pupils' standards and achievement. Resources for music are good and include a good range of music and instruments from other cultures. Overall, music makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
87. The quality of leadership and management in music are good. The music subject leader is an expert musician who is an asset to the school. As a result

of her expertise, pupils are given a good range of experiences to enhance the music curriculum. For example, writing an opera with the Royal Opera, a 'strings week', supported by the Kent Music School, and participating in Indian music and dance. This good leadership enhances pupils' learning and achievement well. The school has made good improvement in music since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

88. No lessons were seen during the inspection. However, there is a clear programme in place for each class involving a weekly 'circle time', where issues are discussed. Included in this are aspects of sex and relationships education and developing an awareness of the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse. Evidence elsewhere in the inspection indicates that the school is successful in encouraging pupils to think about their attitudes and behaviour. Other activities undertaken by the school, such as the ECO-schools project, help pupils to develop a sense of responsibility for their school and wider communities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	5
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	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	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	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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