

INSPECTION REPORT

RECVLVER C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Herne Bay

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118656

Headteacher: Mrs G Burgess

Reporting inspector: Paul Missin 19227

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st March 2002

Inspection number: 196719

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hillborough Herne Bay Kent
Postcode:	CT6 6TA
Telephone number:	01227 375907
Fax number:	01227 742761
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Reculver CEP School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Cunningham
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19227	Paul Missin	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology. English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9691	Jon Vincent	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23674	Wendy Simmons	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, design and technology. Special educational needs. Equality of opportunity.	
23434	Marie Gibbon	Team inspector	English, history, music.	
10808	Alan Britton	Team inspector	Geography, physical education. Children in the Foundation Stage.	
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Science, religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2913	Sue Airey	Team inspector	Visually impaired unit. Special educational needs unit.	
11982	Ray Morris	Team inspector	Teaching assistant survey	

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants, "Thule", 60 Joy Lane, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4LT
01227 273449

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Reculver Church of England Primary School educates boys and girls aged from four to 11 years. There are currently 472 pupils on roll, 224 boys and 248 girls. At the time of the inspection, one girl attended part-time. This is bigger than most schools of the same type. Five pupils have English as an additional language (one per cent). This is low. Six pupils are from black heritage ethnic groups. One pupil is a designated Traveller and receives support from a specialist teacher provided by the local education authority. The school has integrated units for pupils with visual impairment and for those with specific learning difficulties. The visual impairment unit has 12 places, ten of which are currently used. The specific learning difficulty unit is for six places and currently has four pupils. One hundred and fourteen pupils are on register for special educational needs (24.2 per cent). This is broadly average. Thirty pupils have statements of special educational need, 14 of these are in the designated units (6.4 per cent). This is well above the national average. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils with statements of special educational need has almost doubled. In the last school year, 32 pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of admission and 31 left other than at the usual time of transfer. This is very high. Forty-four pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals (9.3 per cent). This is below average. At the time of the inspection, 58 pupils were in the Foundation Stage and were taught in two Reception classes. When they enter the Reception class, overall, children are achieving standards that are below average for their age because of the number of those with special educational needs, pupils with specific learning difficulties and those with visual impairment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Reculver CE Primary School is a good school with several very good features. The full inclusion of all pupils in its work is a high priority and is achieved very well. Since her recent appointment, the headteacher's leadership and management of the school have been excellent. She has built on the several existing strengths of the school and has brought a new commitment to achieve higher standards. She is very well supported in her work by knowledgeable and committed senior teachers and by an effective governing body. The good teaching across the school enables most pupils to reach average standards by the time they leave. For the high proportion of pupils with special and additional educational needs, this represents very good achievement. Other pupils achieve well. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The way that all pupils are fully included in the life and work of the school is outstanding.
- The headteacher's excellent leadership and the very good contribution made by other senior teachers ensure that the school is always seeking further improvement.
- The good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and the high quality of the relationships in the school promote the school's effective learning environment well.
- The well organised provision and the very good levels of support given to pupils with special educational needs and those within the specialist provision for visual impairment and for specific learning difficulties ensure that these pupils' needs are met very well.
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development enables the school's aims to be fully met.

What could be improved

- The standards pupils achieve in Years 3 to 6 in music are not high enough.
- There are weaknesses in the provision of reading across the school which limit pupils' ability to attain higher than the current average standards.
- The school is not meeting the minimum recommended teaching time for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since it was last inspected in May 1997, the school has made a good improvement. Overall, good progress has been made in addressing the key issues which were identified. Very good improvement has been made in introducing regular, effective and consistent assessment procedures across the school. Progress in successfully meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils and in addressing aspects of risk in the accommodation of children aged under five has been good. The use of information and communication technology in the daily curriculum is now satisfactory. The significant strengths in teaching identified at the last inspection have been maintained and the strong leadership of the headteacher has been improved. It is now excellent. Since the last inspection, average standards have been maintained in most subjects at both key stages. However, standards have dropped across the school in design and technology and physical education and in science in Years 3 to 6. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved. Now it is very good. Considering the very strong leadership which is now well focused on raising standards, the good teaching and the effective support provided by senior teachers and the governing body, the school is very well placed for these improvements to be continued.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	C	C
mathematics	C	C	C	D
science	E	C	C	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that standards in 2001 in English and science were average when compared with all and similar schools. Standards in mathematics were average when compared with all schools but below average when compared with similar schools. There were several significant features relating to the pupils in the Year 6 group in 2001 which limited their capacity to reach national standards. This group had a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs (39 per cent) and with statements of special educational need (ten per cent) than most other year groups. These pupils achieved very well to attain overall average standards. The school's ambitious targets for attainment in the English and mathematics tests in 2001 were not met, but the school is on course to reach the targets set in 2002. Over the period covered by the table above, the rate of improvement has been in line with the national trend. The findings of this inspection are that in Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve average standards in all subjects except music where they are below average.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve average standards in all subjects. This broadly reflects the results of the national tests for seven year olds in 2001 except that, in those tests, standards were below average in reading. There was insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made about attainment in music.

Children in the Foundation Stage reach standards which are similar to those found in most schools in all areas of learning. Across the school, pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs achieve well and make good overall progress. Those with visual impairment and additional specific educational needs make very good progress. Overall, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress and achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school, are enthusiastic learners and are sensitive to the needs of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class and around the school is very good. In assemblies, it is excellent. Pupils are respectful and courteous to adults and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils are very strong. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' personal development.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The rate of attendance is slightly below the national average. However, the school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

During the inspection, the overall quality of teaching was good. Most was good or better and a very small proportion was unsatisfactory. The strongest teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6 where nearly three-quarters of the teaching was good or better, and over a fifth was very good or excellent. In Years 1 and 2 and in the Foundation Stage, half the lessons were good or better, although the proportion of very good teaching was higher in the Foundation Stage. Judgements about the quality of pupils' learning mirror these proportions. The quality of teaching of English, including literacy, and of mathematics, including numeracy, is good. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good in English and physical education and satisfactory in all other subjects. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is good in English, mathematics, science and physical education and satisfactory in all other subjects, except in music where it is unsatisfactory. A new programme has been recently introduced for this subject but this has not had time to have an impact on standards achieved. This weakness has been recognised by the school. The main strengths in teaching across the school are in the positive way in which pupils are managed, the detailed planning and assessment practices, and the close and effective partnership between class teachers and the teaching assistants. These promote pupils' learning well and ensure that they are involved well and effectively motivated.

The quality of teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. For children's personal, social and emotional development, it is very good. The quality of teaching of pupils with special and additional educational needs is very good. The needs of all pupils, including higher attaining pupils, are met well. The needs of pupils with special and additional educational needs are met very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. However, the total weekly teaching time for Key Stage 2 is below the recommended minimum. Also insufficient curricular time and the previous lack of a detailed scheme of work have limited pupils' attainment in music in Years 3 to 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Support for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is very good and in the Foundation Stage, it is excellent. Provision is very well managed and pupils' individual learning

	plans are clear, precise and attainable.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	None of the five pupils who have English as an additional language requires specialist language support. They all have sufficient command of English to gain full access to the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is very good overall. The school provides very good opportunities for meaningful spiritual experiences and moral reflection. Pupils have a good appreciation of their own culture but not of the impact of our own multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after its pupils very well. This caring culture is promoted by a warm and welcoming attitude, the sensitivity of all staff and the priority put on the inclusion of all pupils.

The work of the school in dealing with pupils within the specialist provision for pupils with visual impairment and specific learning difficulties is very effective. These are managed very well, and this work has a very high priority within the school. Pupils are supported very well and the way that they are included fully in the school's work is very impressive. The school successfully builds a good partnership with its parents. Parents help in the school, and most support the school and their children well. This strength adds significantly to the quality of the school environment and the school's impact within the wider community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership of the school is excellent. Since her recent appointment, she has made a significant impact on the work of the school. The school improvement plan and its emphasis on raising standards are outstanding. Other key staff provide very good support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a good view of the school's work through its full meetings and through the work of the several well organised committees. The Chair and other individual governors support the school very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is done very well. The headteacher's analysis of the 2001 national test results and the way that these findings have become whole school improvement issues in raising standards is exemplary. The monitoring of teaching and learning is very thorough. Performance management procedures have been implemented very effectively. They are at the heart of the school's work.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The several different elements of the school budget are managed very well. Funds allocated for special and additional educational needs are used very well. When purchases are made or building improvements secured, the school ensures that it gets good value for money.

Overall, the provision and allocation of teaching and support staff are very effective in meeting the sometimes complex needs of all pupils in the school. The school's accommodation and level of resourcing are good. These help to create an effective learning environment where all pupils achieve well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school emphasises the inclusion of all pupils very well. • The school is a caring and supportive community. • Children's behaviour is very good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons is too narrow. • There is insufficient information about the progress that pupils make.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school responds openly to parents' suggestions. | |
|---|--|

The findings of the inspection confirm all the positive views that parents expressed about the school but not the two areas of concern. Provision for extracurricular activities is satisfactory and a good range and number of visits and visitors to the school enhance the curriculum. Parents are provided with good information about the progress that pupils make. The school is working to make the quality of information provided even better.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Several significant factors which are unique to this school affect the overall standards which pupils attain, especially in relation to national averages and the published results of the national tests for 7 and 11 year olds. The school's integral designations for pupils with visual impairment and specific learning difficulties mean that several pupils in the school have physical, emotional and behavioural difficulties which affect their capacity to reach average standards in national tests. The school's good reputation locally has also meant that pupils with other special educational needs have been attracted to the school and now the proportion of these pupils in several year groups is above average. The variation in the proportion of special educational needs and statemented pupils across each year groups affects the standards achieved and results in a wider fluctuation in test results from year to year than in most other schools. The high mobility of pupils significantly affects the standards achieved. The school's own analysis of test data shows clearly that a significant proportion of pupils entering the school after the Reception year also have special educational needs. This high mobility factor makes it more difficult for the school to set year group targets and to track the progress made by pupils as they move through the school.
2. When they enter the Foundation Stage, most children achieve below average standards overall because of the number of pupils with special and additional educational needs. Also, the number of pupils who join the school at times other than in the Reception class who have both general and more specific special educational needs means that the overall attainment of pupils on entry to school is below average. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good and all children including those with special and additional educational needs make good progress relative to their abilities. By the end of the Reception year, most children are on course to meet the recommendations for the end of the Foundation Stage in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development and in their personal, social and emotional development. A significant minority of children are on course to begin their National Curriculum work before they leave the Reception classes. In the school's previous OFSTED inspection, the attainment of children under five was judged to be satisfactory and these standards have been maintained. The children settle in very well to their lessons, listen attentively to each other and to their teachers and support staff. They participate well in whole school or key stage assemblies and are generally well behaved. Their listening skills are good but most find difficulty in offering their own opinions in any discussion work. They interact with each other and with all adults in the school very well.
3. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2001, compared with all and similar schools, standards in writing and mathematics were average while those in reading were below average. The assessment made by teachers in science in 2001 was below average for the expected Level 2 and above, and average for the higher Level 3. The trends in standards in these tests show that attainment in reading and writing has been consistently at or below average since 1997 while mathematics has been slightly above average in 2000 and 2001. The rate of improvement in these subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend. The findings of this inspection are that, in Year 2, pupils achieve average standards in all subjects except in music where there was insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made. Current standards in writing and mathematics are similar to those in the 2001 tests but standards in reading have improved as a result of the impact of the National Literacy Strategy. Higher attaining pupils are now being appropriately challenged. Overall, this represents satisfactory achievement.
4. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 2001, compared with all schools, standards were average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, standards were average in English and science but below average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 and above was average in science but below average in English and mathematics. However, the

proportion of pupils achieving the higher than expected Level 5 was average. This represents good achievement because the group taking the test in 2001 contained a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs (36.8 per cent). Trends since 1997 show a rate of improvement in English, mathematics and science that is broadly in line with changes in the national average. The school did not reach its published targets for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in English and mathematics in 2001, but is on course to achieve its targets for 2002.

5. The findings of this inspection are that, in Year 6, pupils attain average standards in all subjects except music where they are below average. Standards are below average in music because of the insufficient curricular time allocated to this subject and the previous lack of a detailed and progressive curriculum. Standards in reading are sound, but the school has recognised the need to improve them by making this a priority for development. The judgements of the inspection for English, mathematics and science are the same as the school's own targets for the current Year 6. Since the last inspection, average standards have been maintained in most subjects. However, standards have fallen from above average to average in design and technology and physical education across the school and in science in Year 6. In music, standards have fallen from average to below average in Year 6. The reasons for these falls is the increased proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs, the attention the school has given to English and mathematics, and a lower curricular time allocation as in physical education. Overall, the needs of all pupils, including higher attainers, are met well and most pupils achieve well at this key stage.

6. Pupils with special educational needs largely achieve standards that are below and well below national averages. However, most achieve well and make good progress towards their individual learning targets. Their achievement matches the quality of teaching and learning and reflects the very good management within the school as a whole and within individual class lessons. Pupils with visual impairment often achieve average standards, with a few doing extremely well, for example in mathematics, where some pupils' attainment is above average.

7. None of the five pupils who have English as an additional language require specialist language support. They all have a sufficient knowledge and understanding of English to enable them to gain full access to the National Curriculum. As a result, they achieve similar standards to their classmates.

8. The attainment of pupils with visual impairment and those with specific learning difficulties is appropriate to their abilities and they achieve well in relation to their earlier assessments. These pupils derive great benefit both from individual support, group work and their lessons, which they take together with their peers. They make very good progress, both in specialist teaching and when taught within the main school. All pupils have statements of special educational need and their learning and physical needs are identified on entry to the school. Clear progress targets are set on individual education plans and these are shared with pupils and teaching staff and reviewed and modified on a weekly basis. Pupils with visual impairment and specific learning difficulties also make very good progress because of the school's strong commitment towards including them in all class and whole school activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Most enjoy coming to school. They have a positive approach to their lessons and try hard to meet the expectations of their teachers. The safe, warm and welcoming atmosphere promoted by the school provides a learning environment that encourages pupils to do their best. Pupils listen attentively, follow instructions and co-operate and collaborate with school staff and each other. They comment constructively on each other's work and applaud the successes of others. Most pupils are well-motivated, sensitive to others' needs, confident and courteous to adults and each other. An example of this sensitivity was noted in pupils' involvement with a totally unsighted child. They helped her to cross a room by following the sound of their clapping hands. This awareness of the needs of others greatly assists with inclusion. Pupils' attitudes to their learning

continue to be a strength of the school and have maintained a significant strength of the school identified at the last inspection.

10. Pupils' behaviour overall is very good. This is assisted by the quiet, calm and caring atmosphere throughout the school and reinforced by the excellent examples set by all school staff. In whole school assemblies observed, the behaviour was excellent with pupils demonstrating strong self-discipline, courtesy and respect for people and property. This self-discipline ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the school as pupils constantly move between sets and classes. Pupils form orderly queues, wait their turn and open doors for others. They work and play well together, regardless of age and gender. No examples of inappropriate or oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. An observation of playtime activity illustrates the qualities clearly. During a game of 'touch', a girl fell over and was immediately helped to her feet by the boy trying to catch her. He immediately asked, 'Are you all right?' and she replied, 'Yes, thank you.' There were many other examples of pupils extending basic courtesies and polite treatment to both adults and each other.

11. Opportunities for pupils' personal development are very good. The inclusion in school of many pupils with complex learning, physical and emotional difficulties enables pupils to develop an understanding of the many different needs that can arise. This enhances the personal development of many pupils and they assist unobtrusively and unprompted when required. Older pupils attend residential weeks in both Somerset and Snowdonia and these extracurricular activities also help to enrich pupils' personal development. Pupils initiate support for various charities. House captains, vice captains, monitors for information and communication technology and many other responsibilities all help build pupils' personal development. Relationships between pupils are very strong, regardless of age, ability or gender. Relationships between teachers and teaching assistants are of a high professional standard.

12. Children in the Reception classes settle very quickly into their class and school routines. They are all keen and interested in their lessons and have very positive attitudes to all their work and play. An observation of children coming to school in the morning indicates that the vast majority of them enjoy coming to school and they take full benefit of the wide range of activities prepared for them. Most children organise themselves well but their ability to take personal responsibility for some of their learning is less well developed.

13. Pupils with special educational needs show positive attitudes to learning overall, although sometimes they need considerable help to concentrate. Behaviour is well managed. The very good support by teaching assistants ensures that where difficulties lie, pupils with special educational needs do not disrupt the learning of other pupils. All pupils in the school respect each other. Moreover, pupils show their initiative by acting as partners to support pupils with special educational needs.

14. Pupils with visual impairment show interest and sustain concentration. Their attitude to learning is very good and they are seen to persevere and make learning gains. They are supported by achievable targets within their own learning plans, which also help to improve their self-esteem, self-image and independence. Pupils with visual impairment are fully supported by their peers and all pupils work and play together and classmates understand the needs of pupils with visual impairment. Pupils with specific learning difficulties also have a positive attitude to school and to their learning. Although they may find concentration difficult, these pupils persevere and keep trying to overcome their difficulties through sensitive management by teachers and teaching assistants. The specific targets set encourage good behaviour and help to focus on learning and concentration. All pupils benefit from the positive approach to behaviour and the reward system of praise, stickers and certificates, and pupils' self-esteem is raised as a result. The school carefully and sensitively provides equality of opportunity for these groups of pupils and this has a positive impact on all pupils in the school.

15. Pupils' attendance at school is satisfactory. In the previous year, the attendance rate was slightly below the national average but the rate of unauthorised absence was above the national average. The school has been successful in reducing absence levels by liaising closely with both parents and the

appropriate agencies. Registers are called promptly at the start of lessons and pupils settle down to work straight away. Attendance of pupils with visual impairment and specific learning difficulties is good. This is supported by the vigilance of the class teachers, the Additional Education Needs Manager and teaching assistants. Some of the children with visual impairment have other physical problems and have to travel long distances by taxi but all are eager to come to school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This is similar to the judgement made at the previous inspection. Nearly half of the teaching observed during this inspection was good and nearly a fifth was very good. An equally small proportion was either excellent or unsatisfactory. This teaching profile is similar to the one recorded at the previous inspection. The school has made good progress in addressing the key issue at the last inspection which reported the weakness in fully meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils. These pupils are now clearly identified across the school and teachers' planning shows work which is well matched to pupils of all abilities in their classes.

17. Across the school, the most important strength in teaching which has a positive impact on pupils' learning is the very good way in which pupils are managed. All teachers work very hard to establish responsive and receptive learning environments in their classes. This is achieved by the consistently fair but firm way that pupils are treated and by the positive way in which their work and opinions are valued. Teachers use praise and encouragement well to interest and motivate pupils. Their introductions to lessons are clear and most remind pupils well of previous work. This ensures that pupils understand the context of their learning well. A further strength in teaching is the way in which teachers ensure that all pupils are fully included in the learning opportunities. Minor shortcomings in otherwise satisfactory lessons are where activities are not fully explained before pupils begin them, where teachers' dependence on lesson notes limits the flow and pace of the lesson and where opportunities for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills through short, focused, paired discussions are not sufficiently taken.

18. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. For children's personal, social and emotional development, it is very good. During the inspection, twelve lessons were observed in the Reception classes. Lessons were never less than satisfactory and five good and two very good lessons were observed. This quality of teaching leads to children of all abilities making good progress. All children develop good attitudes to learning due to the evident warm relationships in the classrooms and the excellent support given especially to children with special and additional educational needs. Teachers' planning is very comprehensive and contains learning objectives aimed at the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum for children of high ability. Classroom routines are well organised and managed and this has led to children quickly responding to the high expectations for attentiveness and behaviour. Teachers and support assistants, in both Reception classes, listen carefully to what children have to say and constantly prompt, talk and question them in order to develop their speaking skills. Children's responses are very carefully noted and recorded by Reception teaching assistants to provide teachers with assessment data for them to use in future planning. Teachers use time, support staff and resources very well to ensure that all children receive a full and stimulating curriculum. A distinct strength of teaching in the Reception classes is the excellent teamwork between teachers and support assistants.

19. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and pupils make sound progress. During the inspection, 22 lessons were observed. Two were very good, nine were good or better and 11 were satisfactory. This means that teaching and learning in half the lessons observed were good or better and, in one in ten, they were very good. Teaching and learning are good in English and physical education and satisfactory in all other subjects. There was insufficient evidence for an overall judgement to be made in music. Where it is possible to make comparisons with the judgements made in the previous inspection, standards have been improved in English, dropped in science and have been maintained in all other subjects. The proportion of very good teaching was highest in Year 2.

20. A literacy lesson to pupils in Year 1 illustrated several features of good teaching. The lesson focused on reading the shared text of the story 'Gran, Gran'. The lesson was planned well and followed the recommended National Literacy Strategy format. Pupils' confidence and reading skills were developed well as they shared the reading of the story and their attention was drawn to different forms of punctuation, such as full stops, exclamation marks and question marks. The discussion was managed cleverly to maintain pupils' interest and secure their involvement. Appropriate writing activities followed this introduction, including sentences about pupils' own grans using correct punctuation. Pupils were well supported by the class teacher and the teaching assistant as they worked in their groups. The result of their good teaching was that pupils were committed to their learning, well supported and made good progress.

21. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection, 61 lessons were observed in this key stage. Of these, one was excellent, 12 were very good, 32 were good, 15 satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. This means that in nearly three-quarters of the lessons, teaching is good or better and in over a fifth, it is very good or excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, science, and physical education and satisfactory in most other subjects. Teaching in music is unsatisfactory. Insufficient curricular time is devoted to the subject and the current curriculum lacks detail. There was insufficient information in the previous OFSTED report for detailed comparisons to be made of changes since then. The strongest teaching was evident in Years 3 and 6 where over a quarter of lessons seen were very good or better. In the very small proportion of lessons seen where teaching was unsatisfactory, teachers lacked sufficient confidence and subject knowledge, their introductions to lessons were hesitant and unclear and pupils were unsure of what was expected of them.

22. A science lesson to pupils in Year 6 where they were investigating how they might separate mixtures of sand and salt illustrated several features of good and very good teaching. Pupils' investigative skills were developed very well as they were given good opportunities of devising their own tests. They demonstrated a good understanding of fair testing and the importance of controlling the different variables as they carefully measured two tablespoons of water, sand and salt. All the pupils were enthusiastically involved in their work and made good gains in their ability to work co-operatively, in their appreciation of scientific vocabulary and in their understanding of the characteristics of different materials.

23. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is very good overall, but stronger in Years 3 to 6 due to the organisation of some teaching groups by pupils' ability. This is good practice as it allows pupils of very wide ranging abilities to be well challenged and to achieve good results according to their ability. In lessons, teachers' planning clearly identifies these pupils with the provision of work that is well matched to their specific needs. Inclusion is very good and sometimes excellent. The needs of all pupils are considered carefully and the happy ethos ensures that pupils of all abilities can feel secure and flourish. Relationships are excellent. An example of very good teaching occurred in Year 4 where a lower set mathematics group set was helped to recognise multiples of ten, five and two. Here, the class teacher and teaching assistant encouraged and motivated pupils to think. The teacher said "You've achieved it, well done, nobody is happier than me, now try this one if you dare!" In this lesson, the planning had been modified by both the teacher and assistant to take account of previous misunderstandings by pupils. Furthermore, very good use was made of information and communication technology in the computer suite to enable pupils to agree or reject multiples of ten on a mathematics program. The integration of a visually impaired pupil was also very strong.

24. The quality of teaching and learning of pupils with visual impairment and specific learning difficulties is very good. All class teachers are aware of the specific needs of these pupils and plan their work in detail supported by the Additional Education Needs Manager. The school has allocated time for these planning sessions to take place on a regular cycle and this is very successful practice as it also allows the teaching assistants to be involved in the lesson planning. Consequently, all the staff

involved in teaching pupils with visual impairment and specific learning difficulties have contributed to differentiating the lessons appropriately. In many lessons, the text being used is modified and enlarged print books and closed circuit television are used for pupils with visual impairment. Reading and writing aids such as sloping desks and boards are also available. Pupils are given more time to master reading techniques and are given detailed explanations and those with limited or no vision are taught Braille by trained teachers and teaching assistants to aid reading and writing. Pupils are also taught computer-keyboarding skills. Pupils are supported very well in lessons and are enabled to take a full part in all class activities. For example, in a literacy lesson, a pupil with visual impairment had a short additional session of one-to-one teaching about the story of Cinderella and, through the use of closed circuit television which magnified the pictures, was able to understand what an Ugly Sister looked like. In another literacy lesson, pupils with visual impairment were using the same reading book as the rest of the group but the text had been magnified to make the words clearer. In science, where pupils were experimenting with how far a balloon could travel because of the air it contained, a pupil with visual impairment was given many opportunities to touch and feel the balloon and the air being expelled to aid his understanding of the experiment taking place. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are also equally supported. The experienced teaching assistants and teachers also give pupils opportunities to explain their work and support them with organisation of their work and formulating ideas. In an English lesson, pupils with specific learning difficulties were able to contribute fully to the lesson due to sensitive and targeted support. Teachers and teaching assistants also understand the need to stand back at times and allow pupils to be independent learners which helps to aid progress.

25. The inspection of this school included a focused view of the contribution of teaching assistants to teaching and learning in literacy and mathematics. This was found to be good. Teaching assistants have a clear understanding of their role and actively support the class teacher with management of the pupils and assessment of their progress. They ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the lessons. Pupils make good progress when working in a group or individually with a teaching assistant.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

26. Overall, the quality and range of the curriculum provided by the school are good and promote the aims of the school well. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and offers pupils a good range of opportunities. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and most subjects receive an appropriate amount of teaching time. However, the time allocated for music in Years 3 to 6 is insufficient to teach the full curriculum. Long-term and medium-term planning is good and provides for the coverage of all National Curriculum programmes of study. Team planning in year groups enables a strong system of curricular planning to ensure continuity of teaching and provision across year groups. Weekly plans are detailed and focus on key objectives that meet the differing learning needs of pupils well. The total weekly teaching time at Key Stage 2 is below the recommended minimum. The school recognises this and is in the process of addressing the shortfall.

27. The way that the school includes all its pupils in the full range of activities is a major strength in provision. The strong management systems involving year group planning meetings, section team meetings, systematic consultation over all special educational needs issues, and the thorough support and involvement of all teaching assistants, are all major strengths of the school. Although information and communication technology is being increasingly used to support learning across the curriculum, the school recognises it as an area for development. The school has successfully concentrated its efforts on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. While this continues to be a focus, particularly in respect of improving boys' attainment in line with that of girls, the current school improvement plan places greater emphasis on the development of science and information and communication technology. The additional activities undertaken by the school are wide and varied and add an extra

dimension to the planned curriculum. These include visits to theatres, field centres, parks, zoos, a local pharmaceutical company, and historical venues such as Hever Castle to supplement classroom work in several curriculum areas. As a Church school, the pupils are invited to attend the Cathedral Day during which they have the opportunity to explore the workings of the Cathedral by taking part in a wide range of activities. Other aspects of learning also benefit from visitors to the school including a Franciscan monk, police and fire safety officers, drama groups and musicians. A significant contribution to the curriculum is the residential visits to Somerset and Wales for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

28. The quality and range of learning opportunities for all children in the Foundation Stage are good. The planned and provided curriculum is well matched to all of the recommended areas of learning. Planning is very thorough and detailed for each area of learning and is well linked to appropriate topics like, 'Ourselves' and 'Easter'. A strong emphasis is placed on children participating in 'hands on' practical experiences especially in their mathematical, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Personal, social and emotional development runs through most of the day-to-day classroom and school activities. Both teachers plan more focused teaching, linked to the format of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, and this is introduced effectively to the children. Children of higher ability are also provided with extension work that is linked to the National Curriculum to ensure that they achieve their full potential. Both Reception class teachers provide appropriate physical challenges both indoors and outdoors to include children of all abilities, including those with additional educational needs.

29. Throughout the school, standards of literacy are average and the development of literacy across the school is satisfactory. Sound opportunities are provided for pupils to reinforce their literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, in history, there are useful opportunities for pupils to write in role as children from different times such as evacuees during the Second World War and to incorporate their information retrieved from various sources into a report. In geography, Year 6 pupils create an argument for tourism in St Lucia. In religious education, there are good opportunities for pupils to consider the meanings reflected in stories of the life of Muhammad thus developing their skills at reading more deeply. In science, pupils are given appropriate opportunities to organise their writing of their investigative work. However, there are also several missed opportunities in subjects such as history to support pupils' writing at length and to present a balanced argument, and in information and communication technology for pupils to organise and present their work. In a range of subjects, there are also some missed opportunities to develop the detail and length of pupils' oral responses.

30. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented effectively and pupils use their numeracy skills well to support work done in other subjects. For example, in information and communication technology, pupils draw line graphs and pie charts to show information about features of their own class, such as pupils' eye and hair colour and their height. In science, pupils practise reading different scales as they measure pulling forces on their Newtonmetres and record the temperature of different liquids using thermometers. In design and technology, pupils carefully measure some of the components required in their buggy constructions.

31. The school provides very good equal opportunities and its inclusiveness is very impressive. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Further to this, since the last inspection, very good progress has been made in improving the provision for higher attaining pupils. This is especially evident in English and mathematics work, although reading is not sufficiently challenging for all pupils. The provision for average ability pupils is good overall although, in some classes, the organisation and challenge for these pupils are inconsistent. The Additional Educational Needs manager has worked successfully to identify pupils who are working well above average and require individual learning targets. The school has not identified pupils with musical ability, but artistic ability is recognised. Sports provision shows equal opportunities and challenges the higher attaining through matches with other schools. The school has a very low number of pupils from Traveller

backgrounds. Nevertheless, the school has very good provision for these pupils and successfully values their cultural heritage. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well integrated and supported. Evaluation of test results by the headteacher and co-ordinators has led to the identification of the need to improve boys' reading skills. Girls and boys are given equal opportunities.

32. Provision for pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. The school has a comprehensive policy that provides for very good teaching in both personal and social awareness as well as citizenship. The ethos of the school continually builds on these aspects in addition to structured lessons. Lessons observed featured pupils describing various emotions, how these affected them, and how they dealt with both happy and sad feelings. Pupils discussed openly and maturely how family bereavements and parental break-ups had affected them. The teachers dealt carefully and thoughtfully with these very sensitive issues. Pupils were reassured that 'we are all one family in school' and that they could take any problem to any member of the school staff if they felt uneasy about mentioning it during the lesson. This repeated underscoring of the caring culture of the school assists pupils in coping with any personal, social and health problems that might arise. Lessons also dealt with the problems of adolescence and the possible uncertainties of secondary school life. Pupils' personal development is fostered very well through the school's policy on teaching personal health, social and citizenship matters. This, together with the recent introduction of a house system and the example the school sets in helping and respecting others ensures that pupils progress very well.

33. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with a challenging and broadly balanced curriculum, which reflects the school's aims to be totally inclusive. For example, the photographic records show a wealth of interesting sports and environmental trips, including a residential trip to Somerset, in which all pupils were helped to participate in all activities. From the Foundation Stage through to Year 6, the curriculum is carefully planned to meet pupils' specific needs. For example, autistic spectrum pupils are given visual timetables so that they are secure in the curriculum routines. The use of information and control technology supports pupils' learning well. For example, in a short spelling lesson in Year 3, those with visual impairment worked on large and bold text spellings using a laptop computer, while another pupil worked on the class computer. The effectiveness of the curriculum is significantly enhanced by the high level of co-operation between class teachers and teaching assistants.

34. Care is taken to ensure that pupils with visual impairment receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum and, in addition, receive mobility and independence training, touch typing and specialist technology equipment as appropriate. Pupils learning Braille are taught the shape and meaning of each Braille symbol to enable them to read and write Braille efficiently. In addition, the school has a good selection of library books and specialist reading books for pupils with visual impairments. In subjects such as science and geography, first hand experiences are given to pupils with visual impairments and they are able to handle realistic models, and real objects and materials. In all subjects, good oral explanation and description are given to pupils to help develop their understanding and to allow them access to the curriculum. All pupils with visual impairment have access to extracurricular activities and appropriate equipment is available such as specialised footballs and equipment for swimming. No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum.

35. Pupils with specific learning difficulties receive a highly structured programme in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy when appropriate. The class teacher and teaching assistant work together on planning and use similar curriculum plans to ensure appropriate coverage of each subject. There are also spelling programmes and reading activities in place, which help to enrich the curriculum for these pupils with specific problems. Opportunities are also provided to help develop independence and memory. All the pupils have equal access to extracurricular activities and clubs unless after-school transport requires pupils to leave at a set time.

36. The provision of extracurricular activities is satisfactory. Pupils are able to participate in a limited number of clubs during the lunchtime and after school. These include a computer group and the opportunity for boys and girls to play netball and football. Both teams have achieved success in recent months. The pupils run their own performing arts club at lunchtime and there is a gardening club, which runs in the spring and autumn term. The gymnastic club and after school French club held in the school are run by outside specialists.

37. There are very good links with the local community that make a positive contribution to pupils' experience and learning. The school is involved with the local schools' carol service, participates in a summer festival concert at the bandstand in Herne Bay and each year a choir performs at various events at outside venues. The school received sponsorship from several national and local organisations for the jackets and hats that pupils wear going to and from school on the 'Walking Bus'. A number of nearby supermarkets also support the school well, with one providing five hundred cream eggs for pupils this Easter. A small group of older pupils who have been responsible for developing the programme to build a sensory garden for the visually impaired pupils have received support from a garden designer. The school is a member of the Herne Bay Consortium 'Out of Hours Learning Project' organised by Herne High School and pupils have taken part in an assortment of curricular challenges devised by a local pharmaceutical company and local secondary schools. The school has good links with the Nursery, which shares the same site, and other playgroups and Nurseries within the local area. Links with the many secondary schools to which pupils transfer are also good. These good links help to prepare pupils well for their transfer to the next stage of education. There are very good links with the many outside agencies for pupils with special educational needs with which the school works.

38. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when provision was judged to have been good. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. The excellent school assemblies are full of spirituality. An example seen was an assembly where pupils entered quietly and reverently to the playing of a musical arrangement of the 23rd Psalm. The whole atmosphere was one of calm and reverence. Older pupils re-enacted the story of Palm Sunday and kept the whole congregation spellbound. This role-play was an initiative by pupils and a good example of personal development. To ensure inclusion, visually impaired pupils were placed in the front row. The assembly concluded with a hymn sung with vigour and a period of reflection. Members of the inspection team present commented on how the experience left them feeling spiritually uplifted. Teachers prepare an attractive worship focus for assemblies. Across the curriculum, pupils are made aware of beauty in art and music and consider the suffering of others and how fortunate many of them are. Academic and personal achievements are shared and celebrated during these assemblies.

39. The very good provision for pupils' moral development is founded on the high expectations that staff have of them. The whole school staff team provides very good role models for pupils. One of the classroom rules is to 'treat people as you would like to be treated'. It is evident that this has been adopted throughout the school. The school's behaviour policy is based on positive reinforcement rather than the use of sanctions. Much pride is taken in the awarding of house points and the accompanying celebratory announcement at the Monday assembly. Pupils' self esteem and respect for others' efforts are fostered by these procedures. Moral issues are taught well and are discussed thoughtfully. There is a healthy sense of competition and fair play through the house system and sporting activities. Pupils are proud of personal, team and school achievements. They are very well behaved in and around the school.

40. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. The school creates a supporting and caring 'family' community where everyone is included. Pupils and all school staff treat each other with mutual respect. Pupils decide which charities they would like to support and organise events appropriately. One pupil has written to the headteacher formally suggesting that a school

council be set up. He has received an equally formal reply and the matter is now under consideration. Older pupils are helping to design and plan a sensory garden for use by visually impaired pupils. The school has close links with the local parish and the vicar visits and leads assemblies when he is able. The opportunities provided for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to attend residential visits in Wales and Somerset provide very good opportunities for them to develop social skills away from the home and family setting.

41. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. This is also an improvement since the last inspection when provision was judged to have been satisfactory. Their work in history and geography gives pupils a thorough understanding of the cultures of different times and of different places. Visits are made to places of local interest, such as Hever Castle, Herne Bay and the historical sites in Canterbury. Visitors from the local community such as the vicar, members of the emergency services and drama groups are invited to the school. The school is involved with the local schools' carol service, participates in a summer festival concert at the bandstand in Herne Bay and each year a choir is formed to perform at various events at outside venues. These opportunities all help pupils to appreciate their own culture. However, pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity is less secure. This was also a shortcoming identified at the last inspection. Opportunities are missed to prepare pupils for the multicultural society of which they are a part.

42. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils with special educational needs is very good, because of the very good enhancement of pupils' self esteem. The very strong spiritual atmosphere permeates the daily workings of the school and underpins the care and respect that pupils and staff have for each other. Special moments of learning are a joy to all in the school. This was especially evident in the science week activities, in which pupils with special educational needs delighted in the success of their buggy designs. The visually impaired and Downs Syndrome pupils have a special way of bringing joy to others which enriches the whole spiritual life of the school. Social development is very good, particularly as all pupils learn about respect, tolerance and care of others.

43. Pupils with visual impairment and specific learning difficulties also play an active part in all school activities that are intended to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. All pupils are in a mainstream class and attend assembly and other communal activities with their class. There is genuine care and concern for these pupils and they help each other in and around school. The school is an inclusive school and places great emphasis upon equality of opportunity for all. Pupils' relationships with teachers, teaching assistants and one another are very good. There is strong emphasis on spiritual, moral and social development. Care is taken to ensure that pupils can participate in assemblies and that they are given opportunities to reflect on their work and the work of others. Pupils with little or no vision are also taught to manage their independence through the planned programme of independent and daily living skills and to develop social skills. In lessons, pupils with visual impairment are encouraged to raise their hands to speak, to take turns and help each other. At lunchtimes and break times, pupils with visual impairment are fully integrated into the whole school and equally contribute to the whole school community. A lunchtime supervisor has been appointed to support these pupils at lunchtimes and again to ensure that pupils can be as independent as possible. Strengths and weaknesses in these pupils' cultural development are similar to those of their peers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school looks after its pupils very well. The caring culture promoted throughout the school by all staff ensures pupils' well-being. This, coupled with the warm and welcoming atmosphere that permeates the school, creates a very good learning environment. The school's caring reputation, together with the inclusion of pupils with varying and complex special educational needs, results in requests for admission from a wider area than the immediate locality of the school. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy and regular and thorough risk assessments take place. During the inspection, two minor risks were identified by staff and the appropriate action taken. The health and safety issue relating to children aged under five, noted as a key issue in the last report, has been

successfully addressed. The combination of a behaviour policy based on positive reinforcement and the procedures for personal, social and health education ensure that the very good standards of behaviour are maintained. Parents acknowledge and appreciate the very good standards of behaviour.

45. Procedures for monitoring attendance are sophisticated, rigorous and effective. The school works closely with the educational welfare officer and other similar agencies. The school has a suitable child protection policy with the co-ordinator and two other members of staff having received the appropriate training. All school staff are aware of the necessary procedures and know the pupils and their backgrounds very well. The availability of staff to listen to any concerns is stressed at every opportunity. A recent initiative has been the provision of a 'worry box' carefully sited so that pupils may be sure of confidentiality if they prefer to put their concern in writing. This is yet another indicator of how seriously the school views the welfare of its pupils.

46. Procedures for monitoring personal development are informal but effective. Progress in personal development is recorded in the reports that parents receive annually. The support for personal development is very good and is exemplified in the personal, social and health education lessons. The whole culture of the school and the example set by all staff encourage pupils' personal development very effectively.

47. Children in the Foundation Stage are very well cared for and are obviously very happy in their classroom and in the school surroundings. Assessment and record keeping procedures are very good. Children are observed in every aspect of their school life and a 'day book' is used by teachers and teaching assistants to record children's academic, personal and behaviour. These data are then used well by teachers to plan lessons for groups and individual children. Children are assessed using the local education authority's assessment on entry to the school programme soon after their entry to school and this information is used to start the school's tracking of pupils' progress and to predict the National Curriculum levels likely to be achieved at the end of Year 2.

48. The support, guidance and the use of assessment for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Pupils' individual learning plans are very clear, with several examples of excellent and model practice. These are best where the targets for both English, mathematics and personal and social development are broken down into very small and focused steps, which can be easily ticked off and evaluated. A significant strength is the strategic decision to provide cover for staff so that class teachers can be released from occasional lessons to be actively involved with support assistants and the Additional Educational Needs Manager in the review/ monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress. This is also model practice, which ensures that the quality of teaching, learning and progress of pupils is given a high profile. Learning is further supported by the very good assessments of pupils' particular needs. During the week of the inspection, a wide range of testing was going on, some using specific computer programs. For example, an average ability pupil was being skilfully assessed by an assistant for dyslexia.

49. The school places a high emphasis on providing effective pastoral care for pupils with visual impairment and specific learning difficulties. The teachers and teaching assistants are sensitive to the needs of pupils and have high expectations of and for them. Procedures for monitoring progress and personal development are very good and there is high quality personal support from teaching and support staff. All teachers are equally concerned to ensure that pupils' specialist needs are catered for and met. The school has well established links with outside agencies to ensure these pupils receive any additional support required and there are good working links with the on-site Day Nursery with provision for visually impaired pupils. There are good arrangements for diagnosing and assessing the needs of pupils, which are in line with the requirements of the revised Code of Practice. The requirements of statements of special educational need are implemented well and annual reviews are fully in line with statutory requirements. The school also provides opportunities for the visually impaired children to meet others who face similar difficulties and plans the next stage of education for pupils

with specific learning difficulties and visual impairment very carefully. Care and support for pupils with visual impairments and specific learning difficulties are very good.

50. The school's assessment procedures and the way that it monitors and supports pupils' academic progress are now good. This has been a very good response to the key issue identified at the last inspection which required the school to increase teachers' awareness of the use of assessment data. The co-ordination of assessment is the responsibility of the headteacher, who is particularly well qualified to develop this aspect of the school's work. She has undertaken a very detailed analysis of the results of the national tests in 2001. The results were used to inform whole school development and are reflected in the school improvement plan. Class and individual pupil attainment records have been developed in reading, spelling and mathematics which are related to national standardisation. A very useful system to track pupils' attainment against National Curriculum targets has also been established. The assessment data that have been collected are used very well. These are used in target setting procedures and as further information to support the identification of pupils with additional education needs and those of potentially higher ability. This system has enabled the school to identify those pupils who are not making the expected progress and have been the subject of focused teaching through additional literacy support, springboard and booster class teaching. These data also inform the placing of pupils in ability sets for literacy, creative writing and numeracy. This has resulted in a positive effect on standards, particularly in creative writing. However, there is little evidence to suggest that pupils are involved in setting their own targets. The school is now building new portfolios of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science which are assessed according to National Curriculum criteria in order to give all staff a clearer appreciation of the different National Curriculum levels at which pupils are working. Assessment procedures for reading, in other National Curriculum subjects and religious education are at an early stage of development. Teachers are mostly using the examples for assessment provided in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines as the main source of material in which to make an end of year judgement. However, this is not been put together as an effective record. The school's marking policy emphasises the need for constructive marking, and although some teachers are gradually developing their own skills in providing useful comments which move the pupil's learning forward, as well as celebrating their achievement, this is not consistent throughout the school.

51. The assessment of the attainment of pupils with visual impairments and specific learning difficulties is regular and thorough. Class teachers and teaching assistants constantly review pupils' longer term learning targets and, each week, further short-term targets are set. Teaching assistants make valuable contributions to these assessments. Pupils with visual impairments are also assessed in the same way as their normally sighted peers, with adaptations where appropriate and allowances for extra time in standardised tests if appropriate. When the homework is set for these pupils, it is appropriate and allows them to continue with their learning at home.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school continues to enjoy good relationships with parents. This maintains an important strength identified at the last inspection. The parents have positive views about the school. They appreciate the standards of behaviour and the effective way that the school promotes clear moral and social values. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems and appreciate the high expectations the school has of their children, whatever their ability. The inspection team does not support the parents concern about a lack of activities outside lessons. Inspectors witnessed the successful netball team being coached by one parent and co-ordinated by another. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is good. Many help in school by listening to readers, supporting younger pupils and assisting in the computer suite. The 'walking' bus is co-ordinated, 'driven' and 'conducted' by parents who operate on a rota basis. This major and successful venture is an example of parental inventiveness and also evidence of the school listening and responding to parental concerns. Parents have committed themselves to help as bricklayers and labourers in the

construction of the sensory garden for the visually impaired. The parent, teacher and friends' association raises large sums of money to purchase materials and resources for the school. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school.

53. The school has developed additional and different opportunities for parents to gain information about their children's progress in order to address the fact that some parents feel that information about pupils' progress is not always sufficient. For example, it is attempting to overcome this view by informing parents through 'open afternoons' in school. These involve the pupils in explaining what he or she is working on and the progress they are making. This is in addition to the two consultation evenings a year, regular newsletters and the home/school liaison book which parents can use to communicate with the school. The annual reports to parents are informative and detailed. The governors' Annual Report to parents is comprehensive and includes all the required information. The school prospectus is very informative and helpful to parents. It stresses the need for parental participation but does not include the full information on attendance and absence rates to comply with legal requirements. The school has a very informative 'Parent contact policy' covering 'things you need to know'. It explains induction procedures for Foundation Stage children and transfer arrangements for Year 6 pupils. Teachers have good links with the neighbouring Nursery and introduce children and their parents to school life by hosting a teddy bears' picnic. Year 6 pupils are prepared for the various secondary school admission procedures and teachers from these schools visit to explain the processes. This preparation assists the seamless transition of pupils.

54. Induction procedures for children who are starting school are good. Parents and new children are invited to the school for four 'play' afternoons before they start school. The two Reception class teachers take turns to either speak to assembled parents or look after the new children in their prospective classrooms. A booklet is also given to parents before the new term so that they become conversant with school times and routines. This also contains useful guidance on the way that parents can help their children with their school work. There is very close liaison between the school and a playgroup that is adjacent to the school. Some parents assist in the Reception classes and help with out of school visits and trips.

55. The quality of information to parents about special educational needs is of a very high standard. Furthermore, it is easy to read and understand. The new Code of Practice has been shared with parents, so that they can have a greater involvement in their children's learning. Parents are well involved in reviews of pupils' progress. The school can be proud of the successful relationships and partnership approach to learning with parents as it has a significant impact on pupils' achievement.

56. Although parents of pupils with visual impairments come from outside the immediate area of the school they are kept well informed about progress. The home-school contact book is used for daily messages and there are regular meetings, home visits by a specialist teacher and telephone contacts with parents to discuss the very special educational needs and targets for these pupil. Parents are invited to the annual review and information regarding pupils' own learning plans is sent home regularly. The school runs a parents' support group in addition to inviting all parents to school events. The unit has good links with The Kent Association for the Blind who work with pupils in mobility training and information is sent home regularly to parents. In addition, visually impaired pupils are involved in all the school community links. Parents, teachers and pupils are also working hard together to develop a sensory garden for the benefit of all pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher's leadership of the school is excellent. This has maintained a strength identified at the previous inspection when leadership was also judged to have been strong. In the relatively short time since she was appointed in September 2000, the headteacher has made a significant impact on the life and work of the school. As well as getting to know staff, pupils and school routines, she focused quickly on three important developmental areas. The school undertook a full revision of the curriculum in the light of the Curriculum 2000 recommendations, performance management procedures were

introduced and there was a deficit budget situation in the school. Each of these priorities was developed systematically and very thoroughly. The most recent thrust for school improvement has been to further improve the use of assessment data to raise standards across the school. This has also been managed very effectively. The headteacher has worked sensitively with senior teachers, teaching and support staff in this important drive to move the school forward. She has a very clear vision for the future of the school which is firmly based on raising standards and fulfilling the Christian aims of the school's foundation.

58. The leadership and management of the senior teachers in the school are very good. The work of the senior management team is effective and provides a good forum for supporting and challenging teachers in their work. A further strength of the management of the school is in the well-established team and year group systems. The division of the school into upper, middle and lower school units, each managed by a team leader, is used effectively. Team leaders have an important support and monitoring role and fulfil them well. The school planning in year groups helps to ensure continuity of coverage and approach. This tight management structure encourages teachers and support staff to be involved with, and informed about, decisions. It also helps to ensure that priorities for school improvement are effectively implemented.

59. The school improvement plan is outstanding. This was also the judgement of the previous inspection. The current plan is prefaced by a summary of the achievements of the previous plan. It contains reference to appropriate priorities, where the developments are carefully costed and success criteria defined. It is made relevant to the life of the school by the addition of individual subject co-ordinators' action plans. The most significant strength of the current plan is the emphasis which is given to raising the standards that pupils achieve across the school. The headteacher undertook a very detailed analysis of the trends shown through the Autumn Package in 2001. This shows the results of the school's national test results compared with all and other similar schools. The issues about standards which were identified have become priorities in the school improvement plan. This plan is clearly at the heart of the school's work and ensures that raising standards is a shared focus for all staff across the school. The process of devising the plan and monitoring its progress is secure.

60. The financial management of the school is very good. The headteacher and the school bursar maintain very clear records of the several different elements of their school's budgets. Records of the allocations to, and spending patterns of, the two designations and the main school are carefully maintained. Funds for the training of teachers and support staff and for special educational needs are used very well. Governors give good support to the school's financial management. The chair of the finance committee works closely with the headteacher and the bursar and ensures that day-to-day spending patterns are carefully monitored. When dealing with building maintenance and improvements and the acquisition of learning resources, the school ensures well that purchases represent good value for money.

61. The school's implementation of performance management procedures is very good. The team leaders for the different sections of the school are also performance management leaders. Individual teachers were set three objectives. One was related to a whole school development priority, one was related to an issue from their section of the school and one was concerned with their own professional development. This has brought coherence to the full school development and improvement programme and supports the school's very good capacity for further improvement. The progress of classroom observation and review has been carried out rigorously.

62. The governing body supports the leadership and management of the school well. At the last inspection, this was judged to have been satisfactory. The Chair of Governors is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and his commitment to the school sets a very good example. Through its full meetings and through the work of the several well-established committees, the governing body has a good view of the school's work. Individual governors use their own interests and expertise well to support the school. Governors have recently ensured that the issues about school improvement are fully discussed

by adding a standing item to their meeting's agenda. Governors' monitoring of the work of the school through visits remains informal.

63. The procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' learning are very good. There are several different forms and levels of monitoring. Monitoring is carried out by the headteacher and members of the senior management team, by leaders of the school's teams, by performance management team leaders and by curriculum co-ordinators. These are all managed well according to an agreed timetable. Appropriate non-contact time is provided for team leaders and feedback and support are given to individual teachers as appropriate. This is beginning to provide a clear view of the quality of teaching across the school and is an important part of the school's drive to raise standards.

64. The leadership and management of the provision for children in the Foundation Stage are good. One of the Reception class teachers is responsible for the Early Years and a member of the senior management team has overall responsibility for the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes. The quality of relationships within the Reception classes is very good and teachers and support assistants work together as a team to ensure that all children receive the very best education. The indoor accommodation is bright and spacious and includes two classrooms each with an adjacent activity area. There is a small outside area for free play and the use of large wheeled toys. Reception classes also have the use of the two school halls and the larger playgrounds. There is no outside activity area for climbing or clambering. Learning resources are good.

65. Leadership for pupils with special educational needs is of an extremely high standard. The manager has very good and highly professional knowledge and skills while also exhibiting the warmth and sensitivity which this provision requires. Management is very good. A strong, enthusiastic and very well qualified team of assistants guides, supports and encourages pupils in their learning. The strong team ethos between the manager, assistants and teachers is a strength of effective management. Communication is excellent. Formal monitoring of teaching and support in classes is developing effectively as part of the wider performance management programme. There has been very good progress in the provision of special educational needs since the last inspection in 1997.

66. The quality of the management of the specialist provision for visually impaired pupils and pupils with specific learning difficulties is very good. The policies and other documentation are detailed and staff employed to support these pupils are given clear direction. The record keeping and management are effective and informative both for teaching staff and teaching assistants. The procedures for target setting and distributing key information about the pupils are also very good and statutory provision identified in statements is correctly managed. The Additional Education Needs Manager and the deputy headteacher, who manages the provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties, have high expectations of their pupils and know them and their needs very well. The support and provision are also monitored well in order to evaluate the effectiveness. Through the enthusiasm of the respective co-ordinators, staff and governors are informed about developments for visually impaired pupils and pupils with specific learning difficulties, which also helps to steer the whole school in its drive towards inclusive practice. The governors are also committed to inclusive practice and, through the support of the previous designated governor and the newly appointed additional educational needs governor, are kept up-to-date with proposed developments. The qualifications and expertise of the co-ordinators and their teams are also very good and help to improve pupils' progress. Teaching assistants take part in appropriate training and their personal commitment and involvement are of benefit to the pupils. School staff are also supported and receive training and advice in the use of specialist techniques especially for visually impaired pupils. The Additional Educational Needs manager also promotes new ideas in the school such as the management of pupils with autism and behaviour management strategies and is involved in local education authority and local developments. There is a real sense of teamwork in the school and pupils come first.

67. Induction, training and support procedures for new staff are very good. There is a comprehensive staff handbook and together with the middle school team leader, staff new to the school plan the

support they will need over the first term. They have regular progress meetings and any staff development needs are identified and met. Year group colleagues give support on curricular planning and team leaders give extensive guidance on the use of budgets. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good. The support staff are very well qualified.

68. The school's overall accommodation and level of resourcing are good. These are similar judgements to those at the last inspection. There is a large hall which is used for physical education and drama activities. This is just big enough to be able to accommodate the whole school for morning assemblies when required. A more recently built small hall adds to the quality of the school's accommodation. Some classrooms are small, but several have useful shared areas which can be used for group work. The shared areas for pupils in Key Stage 2 are used well to support the several teaching groups that are organised by pupils' ability. Availability of storage is sparse. The school has a large grassed area which is used for summer and winter games. However, the main playground is too small for the number of pupils in school and is overcrowded at times. The playground surface is poor and the markings for games are faint and hard to see and use. Overall, the current use of this hard play area is dull and unimaginative. The school has an attractive cloistered area which acts as a sanctuary for pupils who wish to undertake quieter activities. The school has an outdoor swimming pool which is extensively used in the summer months. Overall, resources continue to be good and are used well. Special educational needs and visual impairment resources are very good and are being used very well.

69. The inspection of this school included a focused view of how effectively teaching assistants are managed and trained to contribute to the teaching and learning of literacy and mathematics. The way that this is done is a significant strength of the school. The school effectively builds on training opportunities provided nationally by giving a comprehensive range of opportunities for teaching assistants to develop within the school. Expertise is readily shared between teachers and teaching assistants and their developmental needs are identified through regular monitoring in the classroom and an annual appraisal carried out by the Additional Educational Needs Manager. The system of regular meetings of all relevant staff, including teaching assistants, to discuss and evaluate the progress of individual children is another significant factor which contributes to the excellent management and training that the school provides.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to continue to improve the quality of education offered to the pupils, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) * **Improve the standards achieved in music in Years 3 to 6 by:**
 - ensuring that sufficient time is allocated to the subject;
 - fully implementing the new scheme of work.
See paragraphs 5, 21, 26, 133 - 136

- (2) * **Continue to improve the standards achieved in reading across the school by:**
 - widening the opportunities and challenges provided in reading;
 - fully implementing the new procedures for assessing and monitoring the development of pupils' reading skills.
See paragraphs 5, 50, 84

- (3) * **Continue to implement the current plan to ensure that the length of the taught day meets national recommendations.** See paragraph 26

* Priorities already identified in the current School Improvement Plan.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Develop and implement a full scheme of work to show the development of skills in swimming and devise a clear assessment and recording system to monitor the progress that pupils make. See paragraphs 137 - 142

- Improve the attractiveness and resourcing of the library areas and develop and implement a programme for the progressive development of pupils' research and library skills. See paragraph 84

- Ensure that pupils are made more aware of the lifestyle and culture of the ethnic groups that make up our own multicultural society. See paragraphs 41, 74, 78, 113

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	95
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	16	46	31	1	0	0
Percentage	1	17	48	33	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	472
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	114

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	34	34	68
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year					
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	26	28	
	Girls	29	32	31	
	Total	51	58	59	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (77)	85 (86)	87 (91)	
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	26	28	
	Girls	31	29	30	
	Total	53	55	58	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (82)	81 (80)	85 (85)	
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)	

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	33	36	69
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year					
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	22	30	
	Girls	28	25	34	
	Total	51	47	64	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (76)	68 (71)	93 (84)	
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	21	26	
	Girls	26	23	29	
	Total	46	44	55	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (70)	64 (68)	80 (76)	
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)	

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	2
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	463
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.7
Average class size	29.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	31
Total aggregate hours worked per week	771

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	1020725
Total expenditure	996596
Expenditure per pupil	2181
Balance carried forward to next year	40484

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	472
Number of questionnaires returned	167

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	35	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	47	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	51	12	0	1
The teaching is good.	56	38	4	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	35	24	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	35	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	48	13	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	51	38	5	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	40	6	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	36	26	5	14

Other issues raised by parents

- The school emphasises inclusion of all pupils very well.
- The school is a caring and supportive community.
- Children's behaviour is very good.
- The school responds openly to parents' suggestions.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

71. Overall, when children enter the school, the local education authority's assessment on entry to the school programme indicates that their attainment is broadly below average for their age because of the number of children with special educational needs, specific learning difficulties and visual impairment. By the end of the Reception year, most children are achieving well and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative and physical development. This is due to the good teaching and learning in these areas of development and the excellent support provided. A significant minority of children are on course to begin their National Curriculum work before they leave the Reception classes. In their personal, social and emotional development, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. A significant strength of the Foundation Stage classes is the very wide inclusion of children of all abilities in all areas of the Early Years curriculum. The school has maintained the good provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. The very well organised day-to-day routines established by the Reception teachers enable all children to feel secure and safe and to grow in confidence. The overall, good teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning.

72. There are two intakes into the school, the major one in September and another in January. At the time of the inspection, nearly all children were full time with the exception of some children with additional educational needs. One child with visual impairment, who is below statutory school age, attends the school part time. Most children have attended the pre-school group adjacent to the school or other local playgroups. Induction procedures are good. Parents and children are invited into the school for four play afternoons to meet their teachers and their classmates. One teacher and teaching assistants look after the children while the other Reception teacher talks to parents. New entrant children are invited to the school play and Christmas party and a comprehensive folder is given to new parents. Last year, a teddy bears' picnic was arranged for parents and new children before entry to the school.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. Standards are average in this area of learning. This shows good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching, where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. The children settle in very well, and quickly learn to share and take turns while at play or work. They listen carefully to others, both in the classroom and during school assemblies, when they are very well behaved and try their best to join in with the hymns and prayers. During whole class sessions, children sit quietly, remember to take turns when speaking, and learn to consider the viewpoint of others. For example, when answering questions from the teacher or teaching assistant talking about the meaning of Easter, the children listened to one another's contributions with interest, but they were not sufficiently confident to ask their own questions. They are polite, and mostly remember to use conventional phrases, such as 'please' and 'thank you', when asking for or receiving anything that is handed to them. The children attend to their personal hygiene appropriately, and most of them undress and dress themselves independently before and after physical development lessons. The children enjoy their learning. For example, when participating in physical education and music, they show great pleasure in taking part and in what they achieve. All children settle quickly to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, show ability to concentrate for appropriate periods of time and listen attentively to their teacher's instructions.

74. The teaching of this aspect of learning is very good. Personal and social development is strongly promoted in all areas of learning and the planning is very thorough. A strength of the teaching is the

warm and encouraging relationships that the adults develop with the children, which enable them to feel secure. The adults provide very good role models for the children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to develop an awareness of others. The support for pupils with special or additional educational needs in both Reception classes is excellent and teachers and support staff work very well as a team to provide all children with an appropriate and full curriculum. The Reception class teachers ensure that there is sufficient time for the children to choose activities for themselves and to initiate their own ideas through play. There is a wide range of resources to support this aspect of their learning. However, the opportunity to experience differences in cultures other than their own is relatively limited.

Communication, language and literacy

75. Children make good progress in this area of learning, and, by the time they have completed the Reception year, most are on course to meet the recommended Early Learning Goals. Their language and communication skills develop well, and most children talk freely about their own experiences and the things that interest them. Staff in both classrooms use talk to good effect and are good active listeners. Throughout all the areas of learning, both the Reception teachers and classroom assistants talk to the children individually, and in groups, to ensure that all children extend their vocabulary and have the ability to use their language and communication skills for a range of purposes. The children sustain attentive listening and particularly enjoy listening to stories and singing or reciting well-known songs or rhymes like, 'Old Macdonald's Farm' and 'Five Currant Buns in a Baker's Shop'. Children know that print carries meaning and point to the words in books as they read. They make relevant observations about the characters in pictures and can explain what they are doing. Consistent strategies used by the teachers and support assistants enable pupils to recognise and say the initial sounds of words. The more able children can recognise a good bank of familiar words and use this knowledge to help them read simple sentences in their reading books. Most children are able to write their names although a few still rely on tracing techniques. They confidently practise their writing and, by the time they leave the Reception class, some children can write independently for an appropriate range of purposes.

76. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have effectively adapted the format of the National Literacy Strategy to meet the needs of all children in the class. A good programme of teaching, based on the meaning of words, spelling patterns, sentence construction and reading groups helps to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of literacy. All children are provided with a good range of purposeful activities to develop their use of language for reading and writing, whatever their stage of development. For example, they are provided with paper and pencils when acting out the role of waiters and waitresses in the 'Reculver Café' and write a list of customers' orders. Music is used well to foster children's enjoyment of the spoken and written word. For example, after reading *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, the teacher effectively used the story to capture the children's imagination by encouraging them to use various musical instruments to illustrate the characters of the story. Through very effective interaction with adults, and realistic expectations of the quality of work that can be achieved, all children extend their communication, language and literacy skills well.

Mathematical development

77. This area of learning is well taught; most children achieve well and, by the end of the Reception year, are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals for mathematics. Children can mostly count up to ten and record it with the correct number of pictures. They copy-write numbers and, by the end of the Reception year, many are recording numbers unaided. Most children develop a sound understanding of mathematical language and use words such as 'before', 'after', 'bigger than' and 'smaller than', when talking about numbers. Only a few higher attaining children are able to use their developing mathematical ideas to solve problems, such as one more, two more or three more than a number from one to ten. In their early work, children are provided with an appropriate and wide range of practical experiences, such as sorting and ordering games, shape puzzles, building with bricks and

using coins. The more formal activities for mathematics are effectively introduced to the children through the framework for teaching numeracy. Most children have a sound understanding of the terms, 'heavier' and 'lighter' although some still consider that 'larger' and 'smaller' match the original terms. One particular child found it difficult to understand that, although the inspector was shorter than the class teacher, he was still heavier!

78. The work is very well planned to ensure that all children including those with additional educational needs receive the necessary support. Children are encouraged to see mathematics all around them and develop their mathematical ideas through play situations like the 'class bus' and the 'café' play corner and singing rhymes. The rhyme, 'Five Currant Buns in the Baker's Shop' is used to introduce the concept of 'one less'. Questions are used skilfully to encourage children to organise their thoughts and build on their understanding. For example, in their work on 'heavy' and 'light', children were encouraged to use a balance to put in extra cubes or 'teddies' to make one side lighter or heavier and explain their actions. All teachers and teaching assistants use practical 'hands on' apparatus and equipment well to enhance all children's mathematical understanding. Children are introduced to the idea of data collection by producing a simple class bar chart on hair and eye colour.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. Most children enter the Reception class with a basic general knowledge, which the teacher builds on effectively, helping them to learn more about the world around them. The teaching and learning are good and most children make good progress and are on course to meet the expected standard by the end of the Reception year. Activities are very well planned and organised and are carefully linked between the recommended areas of learning and National Curriculum subjects, like science, geography and history. Taking themes such as 'Ourselves' and 'Easter', teachers plan activities very well to enable children to explore aspects of the environment and to relate the work to their own experiences. Discussion forms an important part of the work, and children are encouraged to be observant and describe what they see. Effective questioning focuses children's attention and ascertains their understanding. For example, in a lesson on the senses, the main element was 'taste' and children worked in groups, blindfolded, to taste various items including apple, bread, cheese, banana, carrot and chocolate. 'What things did you like to taste and which did you dislike?' asked the teacher and children were asked to say the reason why and describe each taste. A good knowledge and understanding of health and safety factors was evident as the teacher reminded children about the dangers of tasting things that they did not know. Children's findings were recorded well by drawing a happy face next to things they liked to taste and an unhappy face next to their dislikes.

80. In other work related to a knowledge and understanding of the world, children investigated 'change' by bringing in photographs of themselves as babies and comparing them with today. The teacher introduced the lesson on Easter by reading a book that emphasised the festival as meaning a symbol of new life. Children were encouraged to put forward their ideas of Easter like eggs, daffodils and the Easter bunny. It was also stressed that Easter is a celebration of Jesus coming back to life. Many children are not confident in talking about their ideas and impressions and prefer to be led. Nearly all children make good progress when working on the computer and the vast majority of them are able to move a cursor appropriately by using the 'mouse'. A child with a visual impairment worked very capably on the computer ably assisted by his mainstream classmates. Although the children are introduced to a suitable range of religions and beliefs through literacy and religious education lessons, there are very few role-play resources that reflect a variety of different cultures.

Physical development

81. All children are making good progress in developing physical control, mobility and awareness of space both indoors and out. There is a designated play area with direct access from the Reception classrooms which is well used for large wheeled toys. However, there is no outside climbing or clambering equipment for the children to use, enjoy and refine their physical skills. The children join the older children in the playground at break times and have regular opportunities to use the hall for

physical education, music and movement lessons and drama activities. In these lessons, the children make good use of the space in the hall and develop a good awareness of others in their spacing. Appropriate learning in these lessons is due to careful planning, the teacher's good use of time and the imaginative approach that keeps all children involved and active. The available support is used very well to ensure that children of all abilities are able to participate fully in the planned activities, including balancing and jumping on a 'trampet'. The teacher used some children well to demonstrate good practice especially in the balancing activities. In their catching and throwing lesson, most children showed an increasing development in their skills of throwing and controlling balls.

Within the classroom, children develop increasing hand control through cutting, gluing and by practising their handwriting. The children competently pick up small items of equipment when engaging in play activities and when rolling out play dough and using cutters to make shapes. Children have prepared Easter cards and small baskets containing chicks to take home thus fully utilising their physical development skills. Good teaching and support fully maximise what the children can do in this aspect of their physical development. Good learning in this aspect is due to the direct teaching of skills and the variety of methods used by the teacher. As a result, the majority of children are on course to achieve the appropriate learning goal by the time they leave the Reception classes.

Creative development

82. The children make good progress overall in developing their creative skills and most are on course to meet the nationally recommended levels of attainment by the end of the Reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and indoor activities are well planned, resourced and organised. Role-play opportunities are carefully planned and enable children to play out imaginary situations and dress up accordingly. They use props and other resources imaginatively and are able to sustain aspects of characters for appropriate periods of time and talk about what they are doing. Teaching assistants play a large part in introducing and participating in roleplay in the 'bus', 'Reculver Café' or outside in the play area without over direction. One particular assistant acted as the bus driver with an appropriate cap at one moment and was then observed as a policeman, with a helmet, directing traffic in the outside area. In music, some responded well to the story of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* using musical instruments but the majority seemed overawed by the occasion and found it difficult to play their instruments without prompting by adults. Their creative play outdoors is mainly concerned with riding and controlling large wheeled toys like scooters and tricycles. In their artwork, children paint freely and produce good self-portraits. They learn how to mix colours when painting and they are receiving effective support and guidance from adults while they work. They are introduced to colour shape and pattern in their work involved with drawing with a wax candle and covering with a paint wash. Children thoroughly enjoy their music lessons and learn to listen carefully. They sing a variety of simple songs from memory and particularly enjoy participating in action songs.

ENGLISH

83. Overall standards in English are average for seven and 11 year olds. However, standards in speaking and listening by the age of seven are below average. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection, except that standards in speaking and listening were above average by the age of seven. This main difference is due to the fact that the school now has a higher proportion of pupils in Years 1 and 2 with specific speech and language difficulties. Children enter the Reception class achieving standards that are broadly below average for their age because of those with special and additional educational needs and many of those entering the school later have significant language difficulties. The school's assessment data show that pupils achieve satisfactorily at both key stages and those with special educational needs and visual impairment achieve well. These pupils receive good, and sometimes very good, support from teaching assistants and class teachers and develop their confidence and skills well. They are very well integrated into all lesson activities and benefit significantly from the very good relationships between pupils and teachers and between pupils themselves.

84. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2001, when compared with all and similar schools, standards were below average in reading and average in writing. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 2001, standards were average when compared with all and similar schools. Over the past four years, standards have been similar in reading for seven year old pupils and they have improved in 2001 in writing. Standards for eleven year old pupils have been similar over the past four years. Test results indicate that the proportion of pupils who achieve at the higher levels in both tests is similar to national averages but the proportion that attain the average levels are below those nationally. This reflects the school's higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those who have statements of special educational need. The school's analysis of test results has identified that the number of boys who attain the higher levels in reading is below the level nationally and lower than the number of girls. The school has identified appropriate strategies to begin to address this issue, including the purchasing of a range of texts to interest boys in particular. Differences between the judgements of the inspection and the results of national tests are a result of significant variations in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs across different year groups. The proportion was very high in the Year 6 group in 2001, but lower in the current Year 6 group. Very ambitious targets were set for the attainment of Year 6 pupils in the 2001 test which the school was not able to achieve. Targets for the current group of eleven year olds provide a realistic and appropriate level of challenge.

85. Standards of speaking and listening are below average by the age of seven and average by the age of 11. In Years 1 and 2, pupils pay good attention in class and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other's responses. They reply readily and with interest to questions in class but only a small proportion of younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 extend their answers or readily use a range of vocabulary beyond the familiar. Higher attaining and some average pupils in these classes are often able to extend their responses with supportive and direct questioning. Some younger pupils speak very quietly and are not always audible to the rest of the class when responding. In Years 3 to 6, older pupils are confident in answering questions and offering their ideas in the supportive atmospheres of their ability groups. This is particularly evident in the lower attaining groups where the support of teaching assistants and class teachers ensures that all pupils are involved and participating in lesson activities. Older pupils use an appropriate range of language to talk about their work and, with encouragement, develop their responses in good detail. During the week of the inspection, there were too few opportunities for pupils to work together in groups and to discuss and develop their ideas collaboratively. However, teachers' planning indicates that these opportunities are offered, as are opportunities to speak to different audiences. Across the school, pupils regularly take part in school assemblies and in school productions, which help to develop their skills and confidence appropriately and enable them to be aware of a range of appropriate strategies for addressing different audiences.

86. By the age of seven and eleven, standards of reading are broadly average. In Year 2, most pupils handle books confidently and talk in simple detail about the books they are reading. Higher attaining pupils read their books confidently and with good regard for punctuation. Most pupils understand how to use their knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words but some are not always able to use their knowledge confidently in their reading. In Year 6, higher attaining pupils read an appropriate range of books fluently and expressively. They talk about the books they enjoy reading and the authors they prefer. Other pupils read with more variable degrees of fluency and confidence. In their reading in class, pupils are developing their abilities to discuss deeper ideas and meanings in the texts they are reading appropriately but they are not always able to do this without supportive questioning. At both key stages, pupils' range of reading is not always sufficiently wide or challenging. The school has identified that the proportion of higher attaining boys is lower than the proportion of higher attaining girls, when compared with schools nationally. It has begun to address the issue by developing the range of texts provided to ensure that boys' interests are included. Pupils' library skills are insufficiently developed. This is partly due to the organisation of the school's book resources and the lack of space to enable the school's resources to be located centrally. There are also insufficient planned programmes of work to develop pupils' library and research skills.

87. Standards of writing in Years 2 and 6 are average. The school has focused particularly on the development of writing skills in the last year. This has had a positive impact throughout the school and this is reflected in the improved test results by the age of seven. Pupils in Year 2 write for a good range of purposes. These include personal writing about topics such as holidays, narrative writing based on their reading and descriptive poems. Other aspects include brief autobiographies, instructional accounts on such topics as how to make buttered toast, Christmas lists and 'wanted' posters. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well and they write fluently and accurately using a good range of descriptive vocabulary. These pupils are beginning to select words for their interest and effect and to create more complex sentence structures. For example, these qualities were seen in Year 2 pupils' descriptions of the sky as 'like glittering velvet' and their feelings as 'I shivered all down my back'. Most pupils use lively language in their writing and are beginning to use words to create interest. They use basic punctuation regularly and the spelling of simple and some complex words is generally accurate. Most pupils have a sound awareness of sentence structures and write simple statement sentences independently. They are aware of capital letters and full stops but do not use them always regularly or correctly. Spelling of simple words is variable. In Year 2, most pupils write neatly and use a joined style of handwriting and some are beginning to achieve a fluent formation. Some pupils form letters clearly but their control over size and shape is more variable.

88. Pupils in Year 6 write for a good range of purposes and experiences. These include reports from different types of newspapers, descriptive writing about characters in their reading and book reviews. They complete biographies of such people as Martin Luther King, write poems based on the witches' spell in *Macbeth* and accounts of their own investigations on 'How to look after Yourself'. Higher attaining pupils write fluently and confidently. Their work is developed at a good length and they use a wide range of vocabulary appropriately. In the best writing, pupils are beginning to adapt their range of vocabulary and expression to meet the requirements of different genres and to use paragraphs regularly. Most pupils write at an appropriate length for the task and are beginning to use more formal expressions but these are not always soundly embedded in their work. Levels of accuracy in both spelling and punctuation are sometimes variable. There is some variability in the accuracy of both spelling and punctuation and some pupils need support to write accurately at any length. Presentation is generally good throughout the school and pupils take a pride in keeping their work neat and attractive.

89. Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good and some very good teaching was observed in the inspection. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to have been satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and what pupils are expected to know at different stages. Planning is detailed in all years and includes provision for the different ability levels within each teaching group. There is a very good partnership between the teachers and teaching assistants, which provides good levels of individual support for pupils. There is also very good use of the skills of the teaching assistants to provide wider support for the group with which they are working and to monitor individual pupils' responses and attention. Qualities of the best teaching were illustrated in a very good lesson in Year 3 where pupils were learning about the importance of reading accurately. The lesson was well planned and began briskly with the teacher's declaration that 'I am going to teach you to read!' followed by a brief outline of the learning objectives for the lesson and a well focused activity to reinforce the spelling of words using the sound 'ea'. The lesson moved quickly on to discussing sentences which used an unnecessary amount of detail, thus enabling the teacher to reinforce the main learning points and to maintain a very good level of attention and concentration. The pupils were set the task to follow instructions to make a paper aeroplane. There was a very good level of challenge while maintaining pupils' interest with an element of meaningful fun. The very good management of the group and the very good relationships ensured that pupils remained well involved with their tasks throughout the lesson. The lesson was brought to an effective conclusion with a self-assessment task by which pupils analysed how easy it was to make the aeroplane. By the end of the lesson, pupils had developed very well their abilities to read with greater accuracy and understanding.

90. Relative weaknesses in teaching across the school which limit pupils' learning are where tasks are not closely matched to the ability of different groups in the class. The match of tasks to the often wide range of pupils of abilities is not always sufficiently challenging. In some lessons, the pace of the lesson is comfortable rather than challenging and this has an impact on the level of pupils' involvement in lesson activities and the amount of work achieved. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson where the teacher's slow pace of explanation at the beginning of the lesson contributed to the small number of pupils offering responses and to a polite, rather than enthusiastic, response to questions. During the week of the inspection, there were too few opportunities for pupils to develop their own lines of enquiry where they could arrive at their own conclusions and share these with the rest of the class. Most activities were individually based and discussions were led mostly by the teachers. There were missed opportunities to promote the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, for example, through focused, paired discussions. Teachers' planning indicates that these opportunities are given to pupils at other times but overall they are not sufficiently embedded in the regular practice of the school.

91. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy is fully implemented and is supported well by the Additional and Early Literacy Support programmes. The school has introduced an effective spelling programme which is very well organised and there is clear evidence to show that it is having a beneficial effect on pupils' individual standards and on the profile of the school as a whole. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from the organisation of teaching groups according to pupils' ability. This enables work to be more closely focused on their different levels of attainment. The school ensures that pupils understand the routines and procedures of national tests through 'booster' classes in both Years 2 and 6. Co-ordination in the subject is good. The co-ordinator is an experienced teacher who has a good understanding of the needs of the subject and has worked thoughtfully and effectively to identify priorities and to implement developments in the curriculum, including assessment procedures and the use of assessment data. The clear priority given to developing writing skills has had a positive impact on national test results even though these developments have been in place for a relatively short period of time. The additional priority of the development of reading skills has been clearly identified and a structured programme of development is already in place. The co-ordinator has effectively monitored teaching, planning and pupils' work through a series of well planned focuses, such as creative writing and the match of work to meet pupils' needs. There is, in addition, a good team ethos within the school, which enables teachers to share good practice and to give support when needed. Assessment procedures in the subject are good and link well with whole school procedures. The analysis of assessment data is very thorough and the use of this data to monitor and track the progress that pupils make is very good. However, processes in reading are insufficiently developed.

92. Resources for the subject are generally satisfactory and meet the needs of the curriculum appropriately. The school has benefited from, and appreciated, the generous support of the Parents' and Friends' Association which has helped to provide a wider range of new reading material throughout the school. However, the range and number of books do not always enable teachers to give additional reading opportunities to younger pupils beyond their reading scheme books or to provide a choice of attractive, stimulating reading for older pupils. The range of non-fiction in the school's reading areas is limited, particularly for older pupils, but is well supplemented by the resources available using CD ROM's and the Internet. The accommodation of the library across the three areas of the school also diminishes the impact of a range of books on pupils' learning. The use of information and communication technology generally in the subject is satisfactory but there are some missed opportunities for pupils to use computers to help them organise and present their work. Overall, pupils use their literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects, but opportunities to extend this further are not always taken. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through discussions of characters in texts pupils' read, their relationships and the society in which they live and a thoughtful exploration of descriptive language.

MATHEMATICS

93. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain average standards. This is broadly the same as the results achieved in the national tests for seven and eleven year olds in 2001. However, the wide distribution of ability in each year group, including a significant proportion with special and additional education needs, limits each year group's overall capacity to reach national standards. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 who are working below the average Level 4 work is high, reflecting the high number of pupils with complex special educational needs. Nevertheless, around 30 per cent of Year 6 pupils are attaining well above average standards by working at Level 5. A small percentage of pupils are working towards Level 6. Girls and boys achieve similar standards. Few pupils speak English as an additional language, but those who do, are well supported and make similar progress to others of the same age. Pupils with special and additional educational needs, including those with visual impairment, make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and very good progress in Years 3 to 6, where the arrangement of teaching groups by pupils' ability supports and enhances pupils' learning well.

94. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have a sound understanding of number. For example, older pupils confidently work on calculations to 30 trying division using four, seven, six, nine and five. Pupils explore time, shape and number satisfactorily. In Years 3 to 6, pupils gain a satisfactory understanding of all elements of the subject. In Year 5, pupils understand how inverse operations of numbers to 100 work. Most know that $51 - 22 = 29$ is the inverse of $22 + 29 = 51$. Pupils are encouraged well to apply their mathematical knowledge. For example, Year 6 pupils were challenged well in a problem solving activity. They selected random numbers and engaged in discussion about how to find a common divisibility pattern for seven and nine. Other pupils accurately worked out the length of ribbon required to make nine hats when one hat needed seven centimetres of ribbon and each metre costs a pound.

95. Achievement is sound by the age of seven and good by the age of 11. This is because of the overall good and systematic strategies for the teaching and learning of numeracy as pupils move through the school. Overall, achievement reflects the pattern of teaching and learning, being stronger in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. Throughout the school, achievement is carefully monitored due to a very good and rigorous system for tracking pupils' progress as they move from year to year. As a result, the vast majority of pupils make good progress and are achieving their full potential. Inclusion is a significant strength. Higher attaining pupils make good progress, especially in Years 3 to 6. They are well supported, particularly through the introduction of classes grouped by ability (setting) for numeracy and by the initiative to use individual education plans for those who have the potential to gain a Level 6 in the national tests. This represents a good response to part of the key issue identified at the last inspection.

96. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. Whilst standards remain broadly average, the number of pupils with special educational needs has further increased. The attainment of more able pupils has been maintained at well above average, with increased opportunities for the highest Level 6 attainment. This is due to the good decision to widen ability group teaching to include Years 3 and 4. Furthermore, very good assessment procedures, and their use, help teachers to plan work which is usually suitably challenging for all abilities. Pupils' attitudes show further improvement from good to very good. Whilst teaching remains good overall, the percentage of good, very good and excellent teaching has increased considerably. In 1997, 55 per cent of teaching was good or better, now this stands at 88 per cent. Moreover, the amount of very good teaching has increased from 15 per cent to 41 per cent, including one excellent lesson.

97. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but stronger in Years 3 to 6 where teaching and learning are both consistently good and sometimes very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. During the inspection week, consistently very good teaching was seen in the Year 4 sets. Further examples of very good practice are spread around the school with excellent teaching by the subject co-ordinator. Homework supports learning well. The behaviour of the pupils is very good and this means that time is not wasted within lessons. The management of pupils is good.

Work is regularly marked with many comments that praise pupils' efforts. However, really evaluative marking is often lacking, including comments for further challenges. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator demonstrates very good practice in many Year 3 books. Moreover, this marking is open-ended and time is given for pupils to check their work and further develop aspects. Across the school, the completion of clear, focused individual learning plans for mathematics ensures that the needs of higher attaining pupils in this subject are met well.

98. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are both satisfactory, with some examples of good and very good practice. The best feature of teaching is the positive relationships established between pupils and teachers. This improves pupils' learning by ensuring that they remain well motivated and keen to participate and eager to learn. Several features of good teaching were evident in a lesson to Year 2 pupils. The teacher had devised several meaningful and interesting ways for pupils to investigate division with plenty of opportunities for independent thinking, challenge and recording. The lesson was introduced clearly and group work was appropriate for pupils' different abilities. As a result of this good teaching, pupils worked at a good pace and with enjoyment and achieved well. Other features of good and very good teaching are the way that teachers use specific vocabulary as they explain work, thorough planning and the imaginative use of resources. Relative shortcomings in these year groups are where there is insufficient challenge in the oral starter to the lesson or the main activity. For example, a Year 1 lesson, pupils were helped to count only to ten, even though several could do this confidently.

99. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations, good subject knowledge and provide opportunities to help pupils to think for themselves. Across these years, the good overall teaching of number skills in numeracy lessons underpins pupils' growing ability to solve more complicated written problems as they move through the school. For example, in a very good Year 4 lesson, the highest attaining group quickly mastered the conversion of fractions to two place decimals because the teacher made learning very visual, clear and progressive by using a washing line with fraction and decimal number cards. The lesson was fast moving, which resulted in very good learning and much higher than average attainment as pupils used a range of 'Olympic' results for high jump, hurdles and javelin to calculate the awards for the bronze, silver and gold awards. This required pupils to add and subtract decimals to two places and then order the results, with the most able pupils working to three decimal places. A further strength in teaching which has a positive impact on pupils' learning is the support provided by knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching assistants. This was seen very clearly when, in a Year 3 lesson, very good support was given to a pupil with visual impairment as the group was exploring rounding numbers to make quick shopping calculations using ten pounds. Relative shortcomings in teaching in Years 3 to 6 are when opportunities are missed to plan work which pushes some average ability pupils just that little bit further.

100. Leadership and management are both very good. The co-ordinator is passionate about her subject and she has a clear vision for future developments. Documentation is of a very high standard. The monitoring and evaluation of the subject are resulting in better teaching and learning overall. The strong team approach between the headteacher, subject co-ordinator, Additional Educational Needs manager and other senior staff is ensuring that very good evaluation of test results is taking place. Moreover, the information gained from this is used very well to guide year groups in how to improve the quality of teaching, pupils' learning and curricular provision. In particular, this has had a striking impact on problem solving work, especially in Years 3 to 6. A minor weakness in the use of assessment data is that information from the local education authority's assessment on entry to the school programme is not as strong as other assessment information in helping to focus the teaching in Year 1. The use of information and communication technology is developing steadily to an average standard. Work in Year 5 demonstrates the good use of databases as pupils have used these to store and retrieve a range of personal data about themselves. Mathematics supports learning very well across the curriculum and is extremely well documented. Weaker aspects include how to develop skills

and knowledge through music and links with religious education. Strengths lie in the very good links with science and design and technology.

SCIENCE

101. Overall, pupils achieve average standards in Year 2 and Year 6. This judgement is similar to the standards reported for pupils at Key Stage 1 in the school's previous inspection but represent a decline at Key Stage 2 where attainment was judged to be above national expectations. However, since 1997, there have been a significant number of pupils with special educational needs entering the school at times other than the statutory entry time. The assessments made by teachers at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2001 were below average at Level 2 and above, but average at Level 3 and above. Pupils at Key Stage 2 reached average standards in the 2001 national tests at Level 4 and above and at Level 5 and above. The achievement of pupils, including those who have English as an additional language is good. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs benefit from the effective support of teachers and support staff and make good progress. The more able pupils make satisfactory progress. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

102. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily. The main strength in their achievement is in their knowledge of aspects of the human body and their understanding and appreciation of the importance of investigative work. For example, in Year 1, pupils' work showed that this aspect of the subject was appropriately taught and resulted in pupils thinking scientifically, making predictions and communicating ideas using appropriate scientific observations and diagrams.

103. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. In the last inspection, it was judged to have been good. A good Year 1/2 lesson about the properties of materials illustrated the strengths of the teaching at this key stage. The teacher introduced the lesson well by explaining its objectives clearly and emphasising the importance of using the correct scientific vocabulary. The lesson was planned and organised well. Good questioning such as 'What might happen if heat is added to the chocolate?' prompted pupils to make predictions and give explanations. Following on from a demonstration of heating chocolate in a microwave oven, the pupils were asked to think of what else could be turned from a solid to a liquid by heating. Group activities were well matched to the needs of pupils and well managed by the teacher and support staff by working with pupils on tasks such as observing the change in bread when toasted and eggs when heated. The teacher showed good scientific subject knowledge throughout the lesson and, with the good support of all staff, enabled pupils of all abilities to make good progress in this lesson.

104. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well. Older pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of electricity as they construct circuits showing how to change the brightness of the bulbs. They use conventional symbols to draw a diagram of a circuit and make simple switches from paper clips, split pins and foil and incorporate them into circuits with bulbs. Younger pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of humans. For example, they study the effects on the human body of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs and learn how these relate to personal health. They know that the heart acts as pump to circulate blood through vessels around the body and find out about the effect of exercise and rest on pulse rate

105. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good with a number of strengths that have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teaching was very good in two of the nine lessons seen. The analysis of pupils' work supports this judgement. In most lessons, the management of pupils is very good and the content is pitched at an appropriately challenging level. General strengths in the quality of teaching and learning are in planning and in the good support provided by learning support assistants. Teachers control and manage pupils very effectively and have high expectations of what they can achieve. The strengths of the teaching and its impact on learning were well illustrated in a very good lesson in the Year 3 / 4 class, based on the term's work on forces. The teacher commenced the lesson by skilfully questioning the pupils about their knowledge gained in previous lessons. Her high expectations meant that she insisted that the pupils answered by using accurate and

scientific vocabulary in their answers. The teacher captured and maintained the interest of all pupils by making very good use of time in discussion to make learning both relevant and enjoyable. After blowing up a balloon, letting it go and watching what happened, the teacher challenged the pupils by asking ‘How can I measure something that swirls round?’ ‘Can anyone think of any way we can make it go in a straight line?’ After listening to the pupils’ replies, the teacher carefully demonstrated how it could be done, by attaching the inflated balloon to a taut piece of string and letting it go. Following on from this, the teacher built on the pupils’ learning well by asking them to consider what would happen if more air was put into the balloon and how could the distance the balloon travelled be measured. The pupils decided to use a trundle wheel to measure the distance and learned the importance of making systematic observations to ensure that a test is fair.

106. Across the school, minor weaknesses in teaching that limit the quality of pupils’ learning are in the marking of pupils’ work, which is inconsistent and does not provide pupils with targets for improvement. There are also insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills or to use information and communication technology to enhance their learning. In a few lessons, there are missed opportunities to extend pupils’ ideas and record their observations in a wide variety of ways. For example, the use of undemanding worksheets that do not require pupils to use and apply their own knowledge to a task or to record their work in a sufficiently wide variety of ways. Activities are sometimes too closely directed by the teacher giving too few pupils the opportunity to participate in the investigations.

107. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and management through his knowledge and understanding of the subject. He monitors pupils’ work regularly and has had the opportunity to monitor teaching. There has been a good improvement in the subject since the school was last inspected. Although standards in Year 6 have declined from above average to average, this is the result of the high number of pupils with special educational needs who are now admitted to the school. However, pupils’ achievement in relation to their previous attainment is good. Assessment procedures have been reviewed and the school now has a portfolio of pupils’ assessed work. As a result of the newly developed assessment procedures, teachers are becoming more adept at using the information to set appropriate work for all pupils. Information and communication technology is, however, insufficiently used to support the teaching of the subject. This was identified in the school’s last inspection as being underdeveloped. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development, for example, through the study of the positive and harmful effects of drugs on the human body and the opportunity to visit Herne Bay to investigate a different habitat. Interest in the subject is promoted well as a science theatre group has presented a play in school dealing with light and forces and motion, and older pupils take part in a ‘Science Challenge’ sponsored by a local pharmaceutical company.

ART AND DESIGN

108. In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain average standards. This is similar to the judgement made at the last inspection. However, when pupils receive specialist teaching by the co-ordinator, work is of an above average standard. Girls and boys achieve similar satisfactory standards. Pupils with special and additional educational needs make appropriate progress overall. Nevertheless, artwork is not easy for some visually impaired pupils. Few pupils speak English as an additional language, but those who do, are fully competent in English and make similar progress to others of the same age. Overall achievement is satisfactory.

109. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school. At the last inspection, teaching was always satisfactory and often good. However, when the co-ordinator takes the lesson, standards and learning are consistently good, because she has a good knowledge of how to demonstrate and develop skills while also helping pupils to be imaginative and show individuality. Overall, teachers’ knowledge and understanding are satisfactory, as is the teaching of basic skills. Good teaching demonstrates high expectations and good learning of skills and creative effort. Pupils

really enjoy this work and show positive attitudes and very good concentration, often working at a good pace.

110. In Years 1 and 2, the way that teachers let pupils make choices about materials and techniques results in better creativity and higher overall standards. For example, younger pupils select and mix colours for themselves as they draw shell pictures. This work shows careful attention to close observation and subtle use of pastel shading to blend the blues and blacks of a mussel shell. In a good Year 1 lesson, the co-ordinator helped pupils to draw old and new cooking implements using a range of pastels to create the shimmery effect of stainless steel. In this lesson, inclusion was very good as a more able pupil achieved very high standards by sensitive encouragement from the teacher. Moreover, pupils with special educational needs were helped to improve their speaking skills as identified in their individual educational plans by describing the copper kettle and then by working on improving hand control skills by colouring using copper coloured oil pastels.

111. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are both satisfactory. Teachers ensure that pupils are taught appropriate techniques and have use of a good range of materials. For example, in Year 4, pupils have a growing knowledge of different artists, with some good learning about how to paint and create visual effects in the style of Monet. Here, strong links with information and communication technology show that pupils are thinking and learning for themselves, by trying out the effects of smudging. In Year 5, work linked to the Tudors and drawings by Turner is of average quality, but a few examples show real feeling for creating mood through subtle use of light shades. Some work from last year shows high standards in modelling and in silkscreen prints of leaves. This also includes metal and modelling material sculptures in the style of Giacometti and gargoyles that resulted from a workshop session with visiting artists.

112. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable, showing good overall leadership. She has a clear vision for development and the capacity to make further progress is good. Further work identified has included the completion of the policy and updating of the scheme of work. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Links between art and other curricular subjects are developing well, although there are missed opportunities to widen multicultural work. For example in Year 5, pupils learn how to make simple block prints but miss opportunities to link this to exploration of repeating patterns of Islamic art as part of their work on religious education. In this respect, links to work on pattern using information and control technology resources are also missed. Displays around the school are attractive and promote interest in the subject well. An art club, which included opportunities for talented pupils to learn more imaginative skills and techniques with the co-ordinator has been organised but this is temporarily suspended. Overall, there are too few visits to galleries to help raise standards further. Use of CD-ROM's and links with web sites are underdeveloped in art lessons. There are insufficient assessment procedures to help teachers to know how to challenge pupils. Higher attaining and especially talented pupils are beginning to be identified from Year 1, but individual education plans are underdeveloped. Local artists are now playing a wider part in helping pupils to experience different styles of art including work in three dimensions and using environmental beach materials. The co-ordinator has widened resources to include more multicultural picture packs, but access to stored resources is not easy.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Overall, by the age of seven and 11, pupils attain average standards. At the last inspection, standards were judged to have been above average across the school. Standards have fallen as a result of the drop in the quality of teaching and in the time allocation and emphasis given to this subject. Currently, girls and boys achieve similar satisfactory standards, as do those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs who are well supported often achieve average standards. Those with visual impairment are well supported and integrated into all aspects of learning. However, these pupils often make limited progress in line with the restraints of their vision. Inclusion is a significant strength of the work in this subject. For example, a pupil with special

educational needs designed the fastest buggy in one year group competition and was delighted with the performance in the speed trials testing. Moreover, this had a very positive effect on raising self-esteem. Overall achievement is satisfactory. There was evidence of good achievement following on from the recent 'design a buggy' competition.

114. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 2 and 6. At the last inspection, teaching was good or very good in half the lessons observed. A current strength in provision across the school is in the use of imaginative and carefully focused projects. An example of this, where pupils had to design and make a buggy which would move at speed across the hall, had taken place just before the time of the inspection. The school can be proud of this work. Work done to develop this topic illustrated several positive features of good teaching and learning. Pupils are able to design moving vehicles using a combination of pulleys, axles and battery operated parts, whilst also incorporating strong links to measurement and shape work for mathematics. In this project, planning was challenging showing high expectations for pupils of all abilities. Most significantly, it was achieved in a short space of time and demonstrates strong links with other subjects and the progressive development of design and modification skills from one year to the next. Furthermore, this shows that pupils evaluate their ideas and make adjustments to improve their work. For example, pupils in Year 6 realised that gluing a motor onto a lolly stick was not strong enough. Hence, the design was modified to incorporate an elastic band that was attached to the pulley and then around the motor. Following this, wires were connected to the battery and motor to effect movement of their buggies. Disassembling is satisfactory in Year 1, where pupils looked at envelope design before measuring and designing their own. A shortcoming in otherwise satisfactory teaching is where pupils do not select resources or methods of joining for themselves. Sometimes, designs are not planned on paper, nor do they take sufficient account of product evaluation.

115. Leadership is good overall, showing interest in the subject over a long period of time. Opportunities to help teachers to see model lessons are well established, although formal monitoring is weaker. The co-ordinator recognises the need to widen the use of computer technology and hopes to start a club to support gifted and talented pupils. The co-ordinator is well trained for the demands of the subject. The pace of development is satisfactory, although assessment procedures are not sufficiently formalised. Parental involvement in the subject is satisfactory including opportunities for pupils to support learning at home. Food technology is developing slowly and there are limited resources to support this work. In other aspects, resources are good and suitably stored, although the space is very cramped. Links with computer-aided technology are satisfactory, as pupils have used a range of simple control technology to support their learning. Links to pupils' personal and social development are very good, especially in learning to work with others and showing patience and tolerance when things do not go as well as they had hoped. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

116. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain average standards. These judgements have been made following observation of lessons in Years 3 to 6, a thorough analysis of pupils' workbooks and classroom displays and conversations with teachers and pupils. Owing to the way in which the curriculum is organised, no teaching could be observed in Years 1 and 2. The judgements made on attainment are the same as those of the previous OFSTED inspection when standards were also considered to be satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in the subject and their achievement is sound. Pupils with special or additional educational needs make satisfactory progress relative to their previous attainment. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

117. A strength in pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is their understanding of the need for maps. They map and follow directions around the school and its surroundings and sketch the route taken. Most pupils have a sound appreciation of features of their locality and knowledge of some more distant places. They study the nearby town of Herne Bay and note some of its main features

like the pier, the clock tower and the Dolphin Hotel, and look at the importance of the local Reculver Towers in regard to maritime navigation in the Thames Estuary. They demonstrate an awareness of localities beyond their own in their work on their holidays both at home and abroad. They demonstrate a good link with their writing work when describing their last holiday on a worksheet.

118. The strengths of pupils' achievement in Year 6 include their ability to use a variety of skills in their study of St Lucia. They consider the arguments for and against tourism and use their skills soundly to justify some of their observations and the judgements that they make. Most pupils are able to discuss and understand opposing viewpoints and are able to write a balanced report to reflect both sides of the argument using their writing skills appropriately. They are also able to use secondary sources like tourist information and other pamphlets as sources of evidence. Most pupils identify the location of St. Lucia in the Caribbean on a world map and they draw maps of the island with keys identifying the agricultural areas, rain forest, banana growing and urban areas. They understand the effect on the environment and people's lives brought about by tropical storms and hurricanes. Nearly all pupils use their data handling skills to construct line graphs indicating, for example, the difference in annual rainfall between London, St. Lucia and other West Indian Islands.

119. Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This judgement is the same as that of the previous OFSTED inspection. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' planning is good, detailed and effective in providing these classes with a wide, balanced curriculum. Pupils' work is neat and well presented but there is an over-emphasis on the use of worksheets in some classes. In the lessons observed in Years 3 to 6, teachers reminded pupils about their previous work and then introduced activities and new learning effectively. Lessons are well planned and appropriately matched to the different levels of pupils' ability in the class. Where teaching is good, teachers show very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and use questioning carefully, striking a good balance between giving information and allowing pupils the opportunity to practise their enquiry skills by formulating their own ideas. A minor shortcoming in otherwise satisfactory lessons is where activities are over directed by the teacher and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their own learning.

120. Leadership and management in the subject are good. The co-ordinator is experienced and well qualified and also has responsibility for history. The subject is monitored and evaluated mostly by scrutinising teachers' planning and looking at classroom displays, but there has been no opportunity to monitor and evaluate class teaching of the subject. The subject policy contains useful guidance for the teaching of geography to pupils with special and additional educational needs including a section on the needs of visually impaired pupils. A new scheme of work for all year groups is due to be introduced, based partly on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's recommendations but also relying on the co-ordinator's subject expertise. Resources are good, and field trips and visits to places of geographic interest and residential visits trip for the older pupils in Years 5 and 6 to Snowdonia and Somerset enhance these resources well.

HISTORY

121. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average which was also the judgement made in the school's previous inspection. All pupils achieve satisfactorily but pupils with special educational needs and those with visual impairment achieve well because they receive good support from teaching assistants and their teachers. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

122. Across the school, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but with some good features. Several of the strengths in teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 were observed in a Year 2 lesson where pupils developed well their understanding of how the lives of Victorian children were different from their own. The teacher began the lesson with the creation of a 'living' time line with two pupils representing Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth holding a rope to represent the century between. This involved the pupils well in the lesson activities and helped to consolidate pupils' understanding of chronology and some of the vocabulary used to refer to time. The teacher used

questions well to help pupils to make observations from pictures of a Victorian school room and to broaden pupils' understanding of the range of sources they might use to find out more information about the Victorian age. As a result of this good preparation, pupils were able to work effectively with a range of material to develop their ideas and knowledge, through their own investigations.

123. In Years 3 to 6, there is a good focus on pupils developing their knowledge and understanding of some of the main features of the period they are studying. As part of their studies of different periods, pupils are given a good number of opportunities to extend their knowledge through their own research and information retrieval. This was evident in Year 6 pupils' work on Tudor architecture where pupils used appropriate terminology to describe some of the particular features of houses in the 16th century. In their work on Britain in the 1930s, pupils are given opportunities to explore the feelings and reaction of children who were evacuated during the war. In discussions, pupils are able to link these events with some members of their own families. In a good lesson in Year 3, the teacher focused well on the use of key questions to help pupils develop their own conclusions about why the sea was important to the Ancient Greeks. This focus on pupils working independently to find answers to key questions was not so evident in older pupils' work and there were some missed opportunities to explore some issues in detail. Pupils' written work is well presented and pupils' pride in their work is evident.

124. Co-ordination in the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator for the subject has a good understanding of the needs of the subject and has recently reviewed the curriculum planning to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. These include useful guidelines for teachers' expectations with assessment clearly linked to planning. However, these have not been extended fully across the school. The co-ordinator has monitored pupils' work and teachers' planning but has not had opportunities to monitor teaching. Assessment procedures in the subject are satisfactory with a focus on the areas covered and any particular strengths in historical skills. These procedures are still being implemented and are not yet being used to support the development of the curriculum. The co-ordinator is developing a useful portfolio of work assessed according to National Curriculum criteria in order to give teachers a better appreciation of the standards that pupils are achieving. The school's own resources in the subject are satisfactory and are well supplemented by teachers' own materials. Good use is made of information and communication technology to explore the range of information available from such sources as the British Museum. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to such places of local historical interest as Hever Castle, Victorian sites in Herne Bay and the Roman Museum in Canterbury. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development in its exploration of cultures in the past and a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. In Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve average standards. This was also the judgement at the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve similar standards to those of other pupils.

126. The achievement of all pupils, including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is satisfactory. Across the school, pupils' achievement in this subject is significantly enhanced by the access that some pupils have to computers at home. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in all aspects of the subject, including word processing, control and modelling. The main achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6, as seen during the time of the inspection, is their use of programs to help their understanding of appreciation of aspects of mathematics. For example, pupils in Year 6 were confidently completing a spreadsheet showing how to calculate, using a mathematical formula, the area and perimeter of rectangles. Pupils in Year 4 construct branching databases to set up procedures to identify the characteristics of different objects. The main achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is in their use of art based programs. Pupils in Year

1 drew pictures of their houses and coloured them using stipple and colour-filling techniques and pupils in Year 2 'painted' pictures of themselves on the computer screen.

127. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory. In the lessons observed during the inspection, a significant proportion of good teaching was observed but, in one lesson, teaching was unsatisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, in over half the lessons, teaching was good. This improvement in the quality of teaching has been the result partly of recent whole school information and communication technology training but more importantly as a result of the installation and operation of the computer suite from the autumn term 2001. Most teachers have become comfortable with its work and this has led to a substantial rise in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in a relatively short time. However, the use of the suite has not had time to have a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve.

128. Across the school, pupils are managed well. The speed and orderliness with which pupils are brought to the computer suite, listen attentively to the teacher's introductions and settle quickly to their own computer work ensures that time is used well to maximise pupils' learning. Pupils' positive response to lessons and their good attitudes and behaviour enhance the quality of their learning. Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and a strength across the school is the way in which teachers introduce subject specific vocabulary effectively. This ensures that new ideas and words are thoroughly reinforced and soon become commonplace in pupils' own conversations. Lessons have a clear structure. Most begin with an introduction, main activity part, and a plenary. Some lessons in the computer suite are relatively short, but teachers ensure that all time is used well.

129. Across the school, pupils with visual impairment and special educational needs are supported well. Pupils with visual impairment have use of specially modified large print computers and they are supported and encouraged well as they work. Pupils with special educational needs use appropriate software for their needs. For example, one pupil in Year 6 was well challenged and motivated as he used a language program which tested the speed and accuracy of his spelling skills.

130. Other strengths in teaching which have a good impact on pupils' learning are where clear links are established with pupils' previous work and with work in other subjects. This ensures that pupils are aware of how their new learning is based on what they have done before. Instructions are given clearly, and in the best lessons, teachers widen pupils' appreciation of the strengths and limitations of information and communication technology. Occasionally, teachers lack sufficient knowledge, confidence and expertise. This is especially evident in lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory. Here, teachers are unsure and this leads to uncertainties in the management of pupils and restlessness and inattention by a significant minority of pupils. This limits their learning and that of others. The effectiveness of several teachers' introductions was limited by teachers having to demonstrate procedures on a small screen which not all pupils could see clearly.

131. The subject is managed very well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. He has a clear view of the required developments in the subject and has devised a comprehensive development plan. Teachers are supported well by a useful policy and guidelines statement which has been recently revised. The school has sensibly adapted units from the nationally recommended scheme of work. These have been substantially revised following the introduction of the computer suite in the autumn term 2001. Monitoring and assessment procedures are sound. Pupils' interest in the subject is enhanced by several planned initiatives. Contact with a school in Hong Kong has been used by pupils in Years 5 to set up E-mail pen-friends, and the further development of the school's web site provides the opportunity for some Year 6 to add sport and pupils' news to the site. A computer group for older pupils meets during some lunchtimes. The key issue at the previous inspection which advised the school to strengthen the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum has been addressed satisfactorily. Links are already evident with aspects of numeracy, literacy and history. However, the full, planned use of information and communication technology skills across all subjects has not been achieved.

MUSIC

132. Standards achieved in Year 6 are below average. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in Year 2. During the week of the inspection, it was only possible to observe one lesson in Year 4. Judgements are, therefore, based on the lesson seen, a scrutiny of teachers' planning, discussions with teachers and pupils in Year 6 and observations of pupils' singing in assemblies. In the school's previous inspection, standards were average in both Year 6 and Year 2.

133. Across the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily in their singing. The school provides good encouragement for pupils to develop confidence in singing together in school assemblies and in school productions in which all pupils are involved during the year. As a result, pupils sing with appropriate regard for rhythm and melody and most are able to use their voices tunefully. They are encouraged to be aware of the meaning of what they are singing and to form words clearly. This was seen in one school assembly during the week of the inspection when pupils sang 'Feel the Warmth of the Sun on the Earth' effectively in two parts. However, overall achievement across the school is unsatisfactory. This is due mainly to the organisation of the curriculum. In Years 5 and 6, the amount of time allocated to the teaching of music is lower than in most schools and the curriculum currently in place does not allow sufficiently for older pupils' listening and appraising of music or for the development of their composition skills. The school has recognised these limitations and has already put a new policy in place and developed curriculum units which appropriately reflect the requirements of Curriculum 2000. However, these have only been recently implemented in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language benefit from the effective support they receive from teaching assistants and this helps them to consolidate their progress well. However, their rate of achievement is similar to other pupils due to the organisation of the curriculum.

134. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. However, the effect of the insufficient curricular time allocated in Years 3 to 6, and the lack of a detailed curriculum means that the quality of teaching in Year 3 to Year 6 is unsatisfactory. In the single lesson seen in Year 4, teaching was good. The teacher was confident and effective in using her own voice to lead a good 'warm up' activity which encouraged pupils to participate with interest and enjoyment. The lesson had been carefully planned and organised and resulted in a brisk, purposeful pace, which helped pupils to pay good attention and to participate well. Teaching assistants gave good support to pupils with special educational needs helping them to take part in their turn and to be well involved in both singing and playing simple percussion instruments. As a result, by the end of the lesson, there had been good consolidation of pupils' skills in using their voices and in their abilities to follow an irregular rhythm. However, in Year 6, pupils' skills and experiences are too limited. Discussions with pupils indicate that opportunities for them to listen to a range of music and to develop their knowledge of a range of instruments and the effects they achieve are not sufficiently developed. The school has identified the need to further develop some teachers' confidence and expertise in the subject.

135. The headteacher is currently co-ordinating the subject. She has a good understanding of the needs of the subject. As a specialist in the subject she has identified clear, relevant priorities for the development of the subject and has begun the process of developing and implementing a reviewed curriculum and systems of assessment. She has monitored teaching and teachers' planning and identified areas for further training and development. The implementation of the reviewed curriculum is only just beginning in Years 1 and 2 and has not had time to have a full impact on pupils' skills and experiences. The revised curriculum has not been introduced to Years 3 to 6. Resources in the subject are satisfactory with an appropriate range of tuned and untuned instruments but the range of recorded music to support pupils' appraising of music and the use of information and communication technology in the subject is limited. The school provides a good range of opportunities to enhance the provision of the curriculum. The school participates in local area 'singalong' sessions and each of the three sections of the school presents its own productions during the year for other members of the school and for

parents and visitors. Good use has been made of grant funds to purchase a range of brass instruments and subsidised lessons for the instruments. These opportunities have been enthusiastically taken up by pupils and their first concert was performed in the local church carol service at Christmas. Opportunities to learn other instruments such as the piano are well established in the school. A school choir has recently been re-established and is well supported. Visiting musicians and musical groups visit the school to perform to pupils and to enhance their experiences.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain average standards in all elements of the subject. However, it is difficult for the school to be sure of the standards pupils reach in swimming by the end of Year 6 because there is no detailed curriculum for this aspect of the subject and no records of pupils' achievement. The current judgements on attainment represent a drop since the last inspection when standards were judged to have been above average at both key stages. This difference is partly due to the smaller amount of time allocated to the subject and a rise in the numbers of pupils with additional educational needs. Progress and achievement, including that by pupils with special and additional educational needs, and those with English as an additional language are good, due to the quality of teaching in both key stages. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls due to a good policy of equal access and opportunity to all aspects of curriculum.

137. An important strength of pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is that most are able to perform simple under-arm throwing and catching exercises with a ball or beanbag, varying the height and strength of the throw. They all have a good awareness of safety in their lessons, especially when collecting or returning apparatus or equipment. They show a sound understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies by understanding the necessity for 'warm up' and 'cool down' sessions at the beginning and end of lessons. They confidently demonstrate their exercises to the rest of the class and observe their classmates' performance in order to improve their own, but their ability to comment and discuss their own and others' performances is relatively underdeveloped. Nearly all show an awareness of using space in the outside playground.

138. The strength of pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is the way in which older pupils demonstrate the ability to practise and improve their performance in gymnastics. They are nearly all able to find imaginative solutions in developing their own sequences of balance and they work safely, either individually or with a partner. All show a good awareness of safety aspects as they assemble and use equipment. In their games activities, pupils discuss what rules or elements are needed in games to make them 'fair' and how they can be arranged to ensure that all participate, including those pupils with additional or special educational needs. They participate keenly in large or small team games and are able to discuss team tactics and what worked and what did not. Most pupils, of this age group, can sustain energetic activity over a short period of time and can explain the effect of exercise on their bodies.

139. Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, with some very good features. This judgement is the same as the finding of the previous OFSTED inspection. In Years 1 and 2, teachers explain the lesson's objectives and as pupils warm up, teachers draw pupils' attention to the effect of exercise on the body. Teachers are actively involved in lessons encouraging pupils and using them well to demonstrate good performance. Class teachers and teaching assistants ensure that all pupils take part equally in all activities. For example, in an indoor games lesson, a teaching assistant supported a pupil with visual impairment very well and allowed them to participate enthusiastically and energetically in the lesson.

140. In Years 3 to 6, teachers work hard to create a welcoming and creative atmosphere in their lessons. One teacher in Year 3 played an effective piano accompaniment to create the right atmosphere for pupils to use their imaginations well in their gymnastics routines. Pupils were then keen to demonstrate their 'best' balances to their classmates. A strength at this key stage is the efficient and sensible way that pupils erect, use and return all the large apparatus and equipment they

need for their lesson with the minimum of lost lesson time. A further strength in the teaching at this key stage is the very good use of teaching assistants in lessons to ensure that pupils of all abilities are included in nearly all the activities. Although all teachers include a 'warm up' and 'cool down' element in their lessons, they do not always remind pupils about the reason for this. Also, pupils are given many opportunities to demonstrate their performance to the rest of the class, but they are not always given the opportunity to comment on these performances.

141. The subject is well managed by the subject co-ordinator who is keen and enthusiastic. A subject policy is in place and contains useful guidance for teachers in the main elements of the subject. There are sound procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress overall, but this does not include the swimming element of the subject. The use of this assessment information to guide curricular planning is still relatively under developed. The co-ordinator has had the opportunity to monitor some classes during lessons and teachers' planning is regularly monitored. A wide range of resources is available for teaching the subject covering all aspects of the subject. However, the size and depth of the small school swimming pool limit the scope and capability of performance, especially for upper school pupils and it is only used for about half a term each year. The curriculum is enhanced by extracurricular provision for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in after school sports clubs covering, netball, soccer, rounders and cricket. The clubs are organised by various members of staff and parents, and a specialist gymnastics coach working with pupils of all age groups further enhances the curriculum, although parents have to pay for this. A cricket coach from the Kent County Cricket team has provided tuition for older pupils in the summer term. Both Years 5 and 6 pupils participate in residential visits to outdoor activity centres during the summer. The school takes part in regular soccer and netball matches with local schools and the school's netball team won a local tournament during the inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. In Years 2 and 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This finding is similar to that of the previous inspection. The wholly inclusive ethos of the school underpins the teaching of religious education very well. All pupils, including those with English as an additional language and the higher attaining pupils, make satisfactory progress in the subject as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in all activities and make good progress. No differences in the attainment of boys and girls were observed.

143. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In the previous inspection no clear judgement was made on the quality of teaching. Teachers ensure that pupils have the opportunity of learning about a range of world faiths. For example, pupils in Year 2 acquire an appropriate knowledge of the Bible and of the stories Jesus told. They use their knowledge of the Christmas story to retell it in their own words and learn that their love can be shown by giving presents such as friendship, help and hugs. They also acquire a simple understanding of Hinduism and the special places they use for worship in their own homes. In the one Year 1 lesson observed, the teacher demonstrated sound subject knowledge and this enhanced the quality of the pupils' vocabulary especially when referring to religious artefacts and aspects of how Jewish people express their beliefs in practice. For example, they know that the Mezuzah is a special promise the Jewish people make and that it is an important part of their lives. The pupils made and signed their own special 'class' promise that they placed in a small box and fixed to a doorpost in the classroom. This they use as their own Mezuzah, to touch as they go in and out of the classroom to remind them of the promise they made. A minor weakness shown in the analysis of pupils' work is that the quality of writing and recording skills is not sufficiently developed.

144. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but with some good features. Where teaching is good, pupils are well managed and teachers and classroom assistants show very good awareness of social inclusion. Pupils are stimulated into concentrating well during question and answer sessions and the questions they ask show that they consider carefully and try to

make connections in their learning. Teachers successfully create an atmosphere in which pupils can talk about the mysteries of life and share their experiences. This was well illustrated in a Year 6 lesson in which the teacher sensitively introduced the pupils to what Jesus had to endure during the Crucifixion. Astute questioning challenged the pupils well, ‘What do you think He thought was going to happen to Him?’ ‘Was He frightened of death?’ asked the teacher. The pupils displayed a mature grasp of the feelings Jesus may have had and put forward ideas such as ‘Upset but ashamed’, ‘powerless’, ‘confused’. In this lesson, the teacher provided pupils with the opportunity to study the contrasting impressions of the Crucifixion by artists such as Dali and Rubens. A further strength in teaching is the development of pupils’ listening and speaking skills through the opportunity for informal discussion. A good example of this was observed in the Year 5/6 class when pupils were discussing the story of Muhammad and the old lady. At the end of the lesson when the teacher brought the lesson together, the pupils spoke of what the story had taught them and voiced thoughts such as ‘It taught me that you shouldn’t retaliate in anger’.

145. The headteacher, who has taken on responsibility for the subject while the co-ordinator is on maternity leave, has a clear and knowledgeable oversight of the subject. The school also benefits from a number of staff who are confident in the teaching of religious education. The scheme of work is detailed and takes full account of the changes made to the Kent Agreed Syllabus 2000. The subject clearly benefits from its own stock of teaching aids and artefacts that includes special copies of the Bible for the visually impaired pupils. Assessment procedures have been identified as an area for development. This is appropriate because the current provision does not fulfil the important role of supporting pupils’ progress. There is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology as a tool for enhancing the pupils’ learning. There are good links with the local churches and clergy and older pupils attend the Cathedral Day in Canterbury during which they explore the workings of the Cathedral. However, there are few visits or visitors of other faiths to enrich the curriculum. Displays around the school help promote pupils’ awareness of the world’s great faiths such as Islam and Judaism. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, when they consider how they should recognise the moral values of Christianity. For example, as they apply the story of the ‘Good Samaritan’ to life today, teachers in Year 3 skilfully involved the pupils in considering how the work of charities such as Oxfam and Christian Aid help to care for other people. Also pupils have the opportunity to reflect on how different religious beliefs affect personal behaviour. Their studies of some of the world’s great faiths help them to consider values and traditions other than their own.