

INSPECTION REPORT

HORSTED JUNIOR SCHOOL

Chatham

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118477

Headteacher: Mrs D Willis

Reporting inspector: Mr J Bald
17932

Dates of inspection: 24 - 28 January 2000

Inspection number: 190689

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Barberry Avenue Chatham Kent
Postcode:	ME5 9TF
Telephone number:	01634 861794
Fax number:	01634 681165
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs N Beavan
Date of previous inspection:	November 1966

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr J Bald	Registered inspector	English	How well is the school led and managed?
		Physical education	The school's results and achievements.
		Geography	How well are pupils taught?
		Special educational needs	
		English as an additional language	
Mrs A Bennett	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	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?
Mrs C Slade	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information and communications technology	
		History	
		Music	
Mr J Collins	Team inspector	Science	
		Art	
		Design and technology	
		Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

Open Book Inspections

6 East Point
High Street, Seal
Sevenoaks
Kent TN15 0EG

Tel No. 01732 761010

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7-10
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11-12
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13-14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14-16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17-18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18-19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20-23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24-32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Horsted Junior School is of average size, and shares its site with Horsted Infant School. There are 245 pupils on roll, with an even balance of boys and girls. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, 2.4 per cent, is above the national average, but their number is small, and none is in the early stages of learning English. The standards reached by pupils joining the school and its social and economic context are broadly average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is in line with the national average, and the school has an above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including 5 who attend the unit for pupils with physical disabilities. The school population also contains a good proportion of higher-attaining pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall quality of education provided by the school is very good. Pupils begin with broadly average standards, and have reached good standards by the time they leave. Standards are rising further, thanks to very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils reach good standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and behave well.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Assessment procedures and annual reports to parents are of outstanding quality.

What could be improved

- Teaching time is significantly lower than in most junior schools.
- There is a small but significant amount of poor teaching.
- There is some inconsistency in the use of homework and in setting personal targets for pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996, and since then has made very good progress. Standards were good overall at the time of the last inspection, and this position has improved. The quality of teaching was barely satisfactory, with weak teaching in over one lesson in five. This has been reduced to under one lesson in twenty, and teaching is now very good or excellent in well over half of all lessons. Low standards in design and technology have been dealt with, and standards are now good. The co-ordination of teachers' work is much more effective. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has shown a very good improvement. The main strengths identified during the last inspection have been maintained, though the short teaching week has put pressure on standards in some subjects. The headteacher's close personal attention to all of the areas of weakness identified in the last inspection report has been the most important factor in the school's improvement, and has been complemented by the outstanding work of the deputy headteacher in securing improvements in information and communications technology

(ICT), and in procedures for assessing pupils' work. Value for money was good at the time of the last inspection, and is now very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	A	B	B
mathematics	C	B	B	B
science	C	A	B	C

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

Inspection evidence indicates that standards in science have now improved, and are comparable with those in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs at the school make very good progress, and much of their work is at, or very close to, nationally expected standards by the time they leave. The overall trend in results shows a good rate of improvement, and the school has set demanding but realistic targets for further improvement. Work seen of continuing improvement in science, in mathematics and in English, particularly in reading. The school's system of grouping pupils according to their learning needs is helping to raise standards. Standards in information and communication technology are improving rapidly, and the work of older pupils now reaches the standard expected nationally. Standards are good in art, design and technology and religious education. Standards in other subjects are satisfactory, with good standards in swimming and in games, where there is a strong contribution from extra-curricular sport.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have excellent attitudes to school, work hard in lessons and complete homework conscientiously.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall. Excellent in almost all lessons, but some over-exuberance at times in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils welcome responsibility and treat each other with respect. There is a very friendly atmosphere in the school.
Attendance	Overall in line with national average attendance, but with a low rate of unauthorised absence.

Pupils who have physical disabilities have excellent attitudes to work, benefit from very good support from teaching assistants and from other pupils, and are particularly well integrated into all aspects of the life and work of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very 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.

Teaching was very good or excellent in 58 per cent of lessons, satisfactory or better in 96 per cent, and poor in 4 per cent. Four fifths of lessons were good or better. This high proportion of outstanding teaching is based on very detailed planning, dynamic presentation, and a very close match of work to pupils' learning needs in almost all classes. The overall quality of teaching in English and science is very good, and that in mathematics is good. Numeracy and literacy skills are very well taught throughout the school. The high quality of teaching has sustained satisfactory standards in history and geography despite limited teaching time. There is excellent teaching by specialist teachers of pupils with special educational needs, and very effective additional teaching from teaching assistants. The school took effective action to deal with the remaining poor teaching following feedback during the inspection. Teachers give generously of their time and talents in extra-curricular activities.

The high quality of teaching is closely reflected in pupils' learning, although the present team has not been together long enough for all of its work to be reflected in standards at eleven. Pupils work hard, take very good care in the presentation of their written work, and respond eagerly to teachers' questions. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, offer ideas in discussion to the best of their ability, and complete homework conscientiously.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum includes very good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT. Breadth and balance are satisfactory, and the content of the curriculum is very well related to pupils' needs. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good, and pupils from the Physical Disabilities Unit are very effectively included in all aspects of the life and work of the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good overall, though some individual pupils need to have work more closely matched to their specific learning needs in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school has high expectations of its pupils and very effective systems for promoting good behaviour and personal responsibility. Assemblies are very good overall, and often of excellent quality. Extra-curricular activities make a most important contribution to personal and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school has maintained its strength in this area since the last inspection.

The headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants know pupils and their families very well, and use this knowledge effectively in their care of the pupils. The school provides very good information for parents, including thoughtful and detailed annual reports. Standards

in history and geography are constrained by the short teaching week.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and other key staff are strongly committed to raising standards and provide very good leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors make an effective contribution to the direction of the school and have made a good contribution to its improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Test results are analysed closely and used to set demanding and realistic targets for improvement. These are reflected in teaching.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes excellent use of resources in teaching numeracy and literacy, and is making good use of its new computer suite.

The school's management is based on a very effective combination of teamwork and detailed planning, and it has begun to apply the principles of best value very effectively, both in evaluating its work and in making spending decisions. Accommodation and resources are adequate overall. Teachers are well qualified and experienced to teach the National Curriculum. Teaching assistants are very well deployed, and give very good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards are high and pupils make rapid progress. All pupils' work is valued, whatever their ability. The school encourages its pupils to become mature and responsible. Parents feel confident about contacting teachers if they have a question or a problem. The ways in which the school has improved in recent years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount and timescale of homework is not consistent between classes. The flow of information from the school. Annual reports on pupils' work. Changes occurring in school. Arrangements for recording morning lateness.

Parents' overall views of the school are very positive, and are reflected in the inspection findings. Negative comments were expressed by fewer parents, but the inspection team agrees that there is too much variation in homework between classes, and that arrangements for recording lateness in the morning are not clear. On the other hand, the inspection team judges that pupils' annual reports are very informative, with a strong personal touch, and that there are many opportunities for parents to view their children's work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards in English and mathematics are above national average levels and better than those achieved in most comparable schools. A high proportion of pupils exceed the nationally expected standard in national tests for eleven-year-olds, and similar standards were seen during the inspection. In science, a high proportion of eleven-year-olds reached the expected standard in the 1999 tests, but the proportion doing better than this was close to the national average. Older pupils' science work during the inspection was very good, following the introduction of grouping in science according to pupils' learning needs, and this indicates strongly that standards are rising. While there is some variation from year to year in the standards of seven-year-olds joining the school, their overall attainment at the time of the inspection was in line with national average levels, and only one seven-year-old had exceeded the nationally expected level in the 1999 national tests for writing. The results achieved by the school, particularly at the higher levels, represent very good progress from this starting point in literacy, and inspection evidence also shows very good progress in numeracy.
2. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are in line with nationally expected levels, and are improving rapidly, thanks to very good teaching and to pupils' enthusiasm and interest – for example, the new ICT suite was fully used by two shifts of pupils every lunchtime during the inspection. Standards in religious education are now above those reached in most schools, and pupils have good understanding of major world faiths as well as of Christianity. Pupils also reach above-average standards in art and in design and technology, where work is planned carefully to meet National Curriculum requirements and carried out by the pupils with care and skill. Standards in history and geography are satisfactory overall, with excellent work in individual lessons in history. Standards in music and physical education are satisfactory, although there is a very good contribution to work in singing from the school's large-scale musical productions, and to attainment in games in extra-curricular sport.
3. Pupils with special educational needs make very good overall progress in response to carefully planned teaching, with clear learning targets. Their progress is often excellent in literacy and numeracy lessons taught by specialist teachers, and benefits greatly from the work of teaching assistants in class lessons. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are not in the early stages of learning English. In common with other pupils from ethnic minorities, they make similar overall progress to other pupils in their classes, and only rarely is their work affected by difficulty with English. The school has begun to take appropriate action when this occurs. The school monitors the progress of boys and girls closely. While there has been no consistent disparity in the standards achieved in test results at eleven, it has detected a weakness in boys' literacy skills in Year 4 and taken appropriate action.
4. Gifted and talented pupils make very good progress in response to the high standards of work expected of them, both in classes in which pupils are grouped according to learning needs and in their other work. There is very good scope for musically talented pupils in the school's excellent annual productions.

5. Standards currently reached by pupils leaving the school represent a very good overall level of achievement, with frequent examples of high achievement on the part of both higher and lower-attaining pupils. The high standards of work in Year 5 indicate that this represents a strong trend of improvement, although standards are less consistently high in Years 3 and 4. While the number of pupils exceeding the expected standard in National Curriculum tests was not reported during the last inspection, work seen during this inspection strongly indicates a very good overall improvement, despite the slight fall in standards in history and geography.
6. The school's targets for further improvement have been carefully set by its senior managers and the governing body in consultation with the local authority. They represent a demanding goal which takes account of the composition of the school population, including the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The school has set itself the additional goal of raising the proportion of pupils exceeding the nationally expected standard in science, and was on track to achieve this at the time of the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. This area was a strength during the last inspection. Overall standards have been maintained, and the school has improved its procedures for promoting good behaviour. Pupils enjoy school and demonstrate very positive attitudes towards their work. In and out of the classroom they are fully involved, trying hard, presenting their work well and most completing homework to a good standard. Many enjoy researching, and take part eagerly in after-school and lunchtime clubs, many of which are over-subscribed. Pupils speak warmly about their experience of school, and appreciate the additional efforts teachers make on their behalf.
8. Behaviour is very good, and rises to an excellent standard in response to the best teaching when dynamic presentation grips pupils' imagination and inspires them to want to find out more for themselves. In assembly their behaviour is excellent: they are attentive, listening carefully and responding positively. They value the docket system which rewards good behaviour, and like the competitive inter-house element. Pupils play enthusiastically at breaks and lunchtimes, though at times some become over-exuberant; sometimes results in hurt feelings and knocks. Pupils treat the buildings and other school property as if it were their own. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
9. Pupils show much kindness in the course of the school day, and willingly respond to suggestions of how they can help others. Pupils with physical handicaps are fully integrated into the life of the school, and are very well-supported by teachers and other pupils. They are confident in their work and personal relationships. Pupils from ethnic minorities are also fully integrated into all aspects of the school's life and work, and contribute to its harmonious atmosphere.
10. Pupils in all years show that they are able to work together, and contribute to class rules. There is a good range of additional responsibilities for pupils in Year 6. Pupils take these seriously, and carry out their duties cheerfully and with confidence. Attendance is similar to that in most junior schools, but the level of unauthorised absence is low.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. Teaching is very good or better in almost three fifths of lessons, and excellent in almost a quarter. It is good or better in four lessons in five, and poor in under one lesson in twenty. The overall quality of teaching is very good, and results in learning of similar quality for both girls and boys in almost all classes throughout the school. During the last inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, and showed considerable variation between classes. Over one lesson in five was less than satisfactory. The current quality of teaching is a major improvement on this position, and the key to the high quality of education provided in the school.
12. English, science, information and communications technology and art are taught to a very good standard. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good, with examples of excellent teaching in the National Numeracy Strategy and in work with pupils with special educational needs. The limited amount of teaching observed in religious education was excellent, and there was excellent teaching in history in Year 6. The quality of teaching in physical education was good overall, with very good teaching of swimming and very good coaching in extra-curricular sport. The teaching of music observed was of a good standard, and complemented by excellent musical direction and singing coaching in a rehearsal for *Oklahoma*. The quality of teaching in the school's health and relationships programme ranges from excellent to satisfactory and is good overall. There was evidence of very good teaching in design and technology from pupils' work, but too little evidence of teaching in geography on which to base a secure judgement.
13. The generally high quality of teaching is based on clear planning and very high levels of understanding of subjects, combined with excellent classroom management and relationships. This results in a very purposeful working atmosphere among the pupils, and ensures very good learning. Teachers in most classes mark work to a very good standard, and keep detailed records of individual pupils' progress, for example through reading diaries. Displays are used effectively to encourage pupils to take a pride in their work and to promote learning. Where the teaching is very good or better, lessons are delivered in an atmosphere of shared interest and enjoyment, and often benefit from detailed research on the part of the teacher, for example on the development of the main shopping centres in Chatham. Lessons in which the teaching is satisfactory have clear and appropriate aims, but the range of learning tasks is sometimes limited, and the pace of work less brisk. The quality of learning is still satisfactory in these lessons, but progress is correspondingly slower. While the proportion of poor teaching is very small, this teaching is sufficiently weak in planning and relationships to bring pupils' progress to a halt. The headteacher took personal charge of the class in which this was occurring following feedback during the inspection and the quality of teaching and learning showed a dramatic improvement as a result.
14. The school has given high priority to the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and teaching in these areas is very well planned and delivered. Teachers use the school's practice of grouping pupils according to their learning needs to ensure demanding work for pupils of all levels of prior attainment. This is very effective in almost all classes, and particularly so in classes for older, lower-attaining pupils in English. There are, however, a small number of pupils at the lower margins of the higher-attaining sets in English who have problems with spelling and grammar, and who need work which is more closely matched to their needs in these areas.

15. Teachers of pupils who have special educational needs have excellent understanding of their learning difficulties and of patterns of progress, and use this to set clear learning targets, which pupils regularly meet. The teaching of these pupils has an excellent balance of challenge and support, and the small group teaching by specialist teachers is of excellent overall quality, leading to learning of high quality and justified pride in pupils' work. It is very effectively supported by teaching of high quality from teaching assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are represented in all ability groups for the subject, and benefit equally from the generally high quality of teaching. A small number have problems with the grammar and spelling of written English which are similar, but not identical, to those listed in the previous paragraph. Following feedback, the school began to address these issues during the inspection.

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

16. The school has given due priority to the national literacy and numeracy strategies, and this is improving standards. The governors have produced a revised curriculum policy to ensure that there is sufficient time for science, information and communications technology (ICT), and religious education, and statutory requirements are met. The curriculum has adequate breadth and balance, and its content is very closely related to pupils' needs. Nevertheless, the time available for teaching each week is substantially shorter than in most junior schools, and the lack of teaching time has resulted in a fall in standards in history and geography since last inspection. Homework is set in all classes. At its best, it is very good, and homework diaries are used very well to communicate with parents. In some classes, however, homework is set much less regularly, and the diaries are not completed consistently. The concerns of some parents about this issue prior to the inspection were borne out, although there was also evidence of a good response from teachers in cases where pupils had found some homework too difficult.
17. Pupils with special educational needs, including those who are physically disabled, have a very good curriculum. They have full access to all subjects of the National Curriculum, and increasingly effective access to ICT. This is complemented by very well-designed individual education plans for pupils who need them. These are regularly reviewed and updated to an exemplary standard. Higher-attaining pupils benefit from the curriculum offered in the higher ability sets in English, mathematics and science, which enables them to reach high standards. Some additional provision for younger gifted and talented pupils is, however, isolated from the main body of the curriculum. It remains satisfactory, but its effectiveness is significantly reduced as a result of this.
18. Curriculum provision outside the working day is very good. There is a variety of after school clubs, including gym, crafts and recorders. The environmental club is over-subscribed, and maintains the school garden. An extremely well attended choir and drama club meets weekly to prepare for performances of popular musicals, which are very well received by the community. The quality of coaching and production of these events is an outstanding educational experience for all who take part in them. Competitive team sports such as table tennis and football are a regular feature, and the school has a good record in competitions, particularly in netball. Good use is made of interesting venues outside the classroom to extend the curriculum. Extra-curricular computer clubs are provided on a rota basis each

lunchtime, and make full use of the computer suite.

19. Provision for equality of access and opportunity is excellent. Respect for all individuals is central to the school's ethos and practice. The daily presence of fully integrated physically handicapped pupils from the unit reinforces the school's attitude to caring and respect for everyone. The health and relationships curriculum is very detailed and includes full and effective provision for sex education and for teaching on the misuse of drugs.
20. Shortcomings identified during the last inspection in planning for progression and continuity in the curriculum have been very effectively addressed. The planning for English and mathematics is now tightly structured through the national literacy and numeracy strategies, and planning for other subjects has benefited both from the school's excellent arrangements for assessing pupils' work, and from its use of the new schemes of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.
21. Provision for spiritual development is very good and has shown major improvement since the last inspection. There is a clear policy statement, and its principles are consistently carried into practice. Assemblies, often led by community church leaders, usually have a strong spiritual element, and there are very good opportunities for reflection in the curriculum, for example in a Year 6 class for pupils with special educational needs considering educational issues raised by Dickens through the character of Wackford Squeers.
22. The school's provision for moral development is also very good. Pupils are explicitly and effectively taught right from wrong, and every class develops its own set of rules for sharing life in the classroom. The school's behaviour management policy is used consistently, and motivates pupils to behave well. Good behaviour is acknowledged and rewarded with much-prized docketts, and the award of these is very closely monitored by the headteacher. Behaviour awards are presented during celebration assemblies, which are very well attended by parents.
23. The school provides very well for pupils' social development through a broad range of productive opportunities for co-operative and collaborative learning throughout the curriculum. Their teachers set excellent examples of good humoured, caring and respectful behaviour. A friendly, sociable, atmosphere pervades the school, with only rare examples of boisterous behaviour on the part of some boys. Some assemblies are very effectively based on mixed-age group activities. In one outstanding example, organised by the deputy headteacher, pupils had brought mementoes and awards which were important to their families to share with the pupils in their group and the whole school. A mother contributed a moving account of the importance of her family to her.
24. Year 6 pupils have many opportunities to take on social responsibilities, as house captains, vice-captains, and monitors. They have a week-long residential visit, which last year was held in Bath. Pupils staff the office at lunchtime, manage borrowing facilities in the library and collate the docket award system. Personal initiative is encouraged, and pupils organise successful charity fund raising events. All pupils take responsibility for housekeeping tasks in their classroom.
25. Cultural provision is good. The English curriculum is rich in cultural opportunities through poetry and literature which includes work on Shakespeare as well as Dickens. There is an annual visit from a professional drama group, and frequent

theatre visits, sometimes locally but also in London. Pupils regularly perform a musical for parents, and more than 60 pupils are currently rehearsing for *Oklahoma*. The work of famous artists is regularly used to extend pupils' understanding of visual styles. World cultures are well represented through the religious education curriculum, geography, history and English.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

26. As at the time of the last inspection, arrangements for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. All the adults in the school know the pupils well. Classroom assistants play a valuable and significant role in supporting and caring for pupils throughout the day. They work well with teachers in the classrooms, and take very good care of pupils who are injured or unwell. Those pupils with physical disabilities are very well supported, and fully and naturally integrated into the life of the school.
27. Class teachers and the headteacher have a good all-round knowledge of the pupils, and work with other agencies when necessary to safeguard their welfare. The school health and safety policy is appropriate, and reviews of the building and site are held regularly. Governors hold copies of these reviews off-site, and so their effectiveness could not be judged. A few small items of health and safety concern were mentioned to the headteacher during the inspection.
28. The school monitors attendance regularly, and advises the education welfare officer of any concerns. The introduction of a late book has improved punctuality, but the time of register closure needs to be more clearly established and publicised to parents. Teachers need to be reminded that attendance registers are legal documents and that they should make sure that alterations are correctly annotated. The school's docket system to reward good behaviour is now working well, and proving to be an effective incentive to pupils. Teachers encourage a busy atmosphere in classrooms, and so pupils relax somewhat noisily as they let off steam in the playground, where provision for more creative play is limited. Parents and pupils agree that the procedures which exist to deal with any bullying are effective.
29. There has been a great improvement in school's assessment policy since the time of the last inspection. It is now excellent, and this is a major factor in raising standards. The system is highly detailed, and used to identify strengths and weaknesses both in individual pupils and in standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science. This information is used both to determine focal points for teaching, and to set individual targets for pupils. These targets are almost always appropriate, but are sometimes overtaken in pupils' work without new targets being set, and the system is not operating effectively in all classes. Older pupils are encouraged to write their own targets, and motivate themselves.
30. The health and relationships programme, praised at the time of the last inspection, continues to be effective and contributes to pupils' rounded and mature thinking. Aspects of personal development are effectively threaded through many lessons, encouraged by teachers' high expectations of their pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

31. Parents are very happy with the high standards which the school helps their children to achieve. They feel that teachers and classroom assistants know them really well, and value the work of each child, whatever their ability. They have regular and frequent opportunities to see their children's work, and have confidence in the teachers' ability to resolve most difficulties. A very good number attend class assemblies, and afterwards visit their child's classroom.
32. The school provides very good quality end of year reports, which successfully evaluate a pupil's progress and identify areas for further improvement. A homework diary is used effectively by some teachers to communicate in detail with parents, and to acknowledge and value their contribution to their child's progress. For these families, homework is under control and managed well, and a firm partnership with parents is established which helps pupils to achieve well. However, this good practice is not consistent throughout the school.
33. The school provides good formal and informal opportunities for parents to discuss the curriculum and their children's work. They were invited to an information evening about the National Numeracy Strategy, and consulted during the drafting of the home-school agreement. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very effectively involved in all aspects of their child's education and receive very good information on progress. Some parents are concerned at inconsistency in the use of homework between classes, particularly if their child is in a lower ability group, and others do not feel that the school's arrangements for recording lateness in the morning are clear. These concerns were confirmed by inspection evidence, though the school's overall use of homework is good, and almost all parents encourage their children to complete it.
34. The school was working well in this area at the time of the last inspection, but the level of satisfaction expressed by parents has increased, and good improvements have been made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

35. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other key staff are fully committed to promoting the highest possible standards through teaching of the highest possible quality. The headteacher's approach to the weaknesses in the quality of education identified during the previous inspection has been systematic, determined and effective. It has been based on a most detailed and thorough action plan, and is the major factor in the very good improvement achieved by the school. Teaching is monitored regularly and with a clear emphasis on the school's priorities for the curriculum. All teachers during the inspection expressed appreciation for the quality and sensitivity of this monitoring, which was often used to promote their professional development. At the same time, the headteacher has been prepared to use competency procedures where the quality of teaching has remained unsatisfactory. As a result, weaknesses in teaching have been very substantially reduced, and the quality of teamwork among teachers, teaching assistants, and all adults working at the school is very high.
36. The school development plan is a most effective working document, with clear and realistic priorities and targets and very good procedures for evaluating progress. The school's approach to evaluating the quality of its work is excellent, and it makes particularly good use of information from assessment to identify and deal with

emerging problems before these are reflected in the results of eleven-year-olds. The leadership of the deputy headteacher is particularly important here. The governors are fully informed of all aspects of the school's work, and contribute to monitoring and target-setting. They carry out their work to a good standard, and are effectively involved in discussions on targets between the school and the local authority.

37. While the cost of educating each pupil is above average, this is the result of additional money for the special unit. Otherwise, the cost is in line with national average levels. The school's finances are very efficiently administered, with very good long-term planning which has enabled costly new initiatives, such as the computer suite, to be funded effectively. The headteacher applies the principles of best value very effectively in consultation with colleagues and with the governing body, and has obtained good value for money for the school in projects such as the chair lift for people with disabilities and the refurbishment of parts of the building. The school makes excellent use of information technology in its budgeting and administration.
38. The school has sufficient teachers, with a good range of qualifications and experience to teach the National Curriculum and to promote the progress of pupils with special educational needs, including those from the Physical Disabilities Unit. Teaching assistants are well-qualified and experienced. There are good resources for English, mathematics, science and information technology, and adequate resources for other subjects, although the range of musical instruments is limited. Class libraries are adequate and well-used, but the resources in the school library offer limited opportunities for pupils to develop more advanced research skills. Accommodation is adequate, with good access for people with disabilities.
39. The standards reached by the pupils, including those with special educational needs, and the overall quality of education provided, indicate that Horsted Junior School is very effective in its work, and gives very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40. The pattern of improvement established by the school since the last inspection, and its effective critical evaluation of its own work, provide a very good basis for further progress. The headteacher and governors should take the following steps to build on their achievement:
 - (1) Ensure that there is sufficient teaching time in the week for pupils to reach good standards in all subjects, by
 - reviewing the length of the teaching week;
 - carefully assessing the time allocated to each subject of the National Curriculum;
 - ensuring that the non-fiction content of the literacy hour is co-ordinated with the curriculum for other subjects. (Paragraphs 16, 47, 63-65)
 - (2) Take further action to eliminate the small amount of poor teaching which remains by extending monitoring procedures to include reviews of pupils' work and of progress over time as well as lesson observations. (Paragraphs 13, 51, 74)

- (3) Improve the consistency of procedures for setting individual learning targets and for homework, by
- ensuring that systems are manageable and easily understood;
 - integrating targets more consistently with the marking of pupils' work;
 - monitoring homework and homework diaries. (Paragraphs 16, 29, 46)

The school should also consider the following minor areas for action:

- (1) Further refine the match of work in English lessons to meet the needs of lower-attaining pupils in higher ability groups. (Paragraphs 14, 45)
- (2) Improve procedures for identifying and recording lateness in the morning. (Paragraph 28)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
24	33	22	16	0	4	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	245
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	45

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	87

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
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 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	37	30	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	29	33
	Girls	22	21	25
	Total	50	50	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (74)	75 (64)	87 (85)
	National	70 (65)	64 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	33	33
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	52	56	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (67)	84 (52)	85 (90)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	227
Any other minority ethnic group	16

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	30.6

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	212

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	410,200
Total expenditure	414,642
Expenditure per pupil	1,659
Balance brought forward from previous year	28,118
Balance carried forward to next year	23,676

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	245
Number of questionnaires returned	94

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	43	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	51	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	52	13	4	0
The teaching is good.	53	40	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	51	14	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	41	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	36	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	49	15	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	44	47	5	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	45	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	47	9	3	2

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE

CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

41. Eleven-year-olds reach good standards in national tests, both in national average terms and in comparison with similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard compares favourably with the national average figure, though the difference is not great enough to reach statistical significance. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard is well above average. Standards reached by pupils joining the school at seven are broadly in line with those expected nationally. They are good for reading, but only just in line in speaking and listening and in writing, where few pupils do better than the nationally expected standard. Most of the pupils who have special educational needs have difficulties with reading and writing.
42. The results at eleven represent very good overall progress and reflect the high quality of learning observed in English lessons, some of which, particularly in Year 5, has yet to be reflected in national test results. Overall attainment at the time of the last inspection was satisfactory, with good standards in writing, but only satisfactory standards in reading. Current standards indicate a very good rate of improvement in reading and a good improvement in writing, including very good improvement for higher attaining pupils and those with special needs. The overall rate of improvement since the last inspection has been very good, and a weakness in teaching key skills has been very effectively tackled. Pupils learning English as an additional language are represented in all ability groups. None are in the early stages of learning English, and the quality of their learning is similar to that of the other pupils in their groups.
43. Pupils in Year 6 speak about their work confidently and in good detail on subjects that interest them. While relatively few opportunities for more sustained speaking and listening were observed during the inspection, higher attaining pupils discussed the books they were reading in very good detail and gave accurate oral summaries of information from a range of sources. This work was well above nationally expected standards, and reflected learning of very high quality. Pupils in Year 5 could also discuss complex issues in a literacy lesson devoted to grammar, with very good attention to detail. Using priorities identified in assessment, teachers in all classes were paying close attention to the development of vocabulary. This resulted in very good learning wherever it occurred, with excellent progress among pupils with special educational needs in Year 6. Overall, progress and learning in speaking and listening are good and are continuing to improve.
44. Standards in reading are very good. By the time they move on to secondary school, a very high proportion of pupils read to the nationally expected standard, with good fluency, accuracy and understanding. Higher attaining pupils often read to an excellent standard, tackling adult texts with a good level of understanding and paying attention to more subtle aspects of meaning in complex texts. Those in Year 5 showed a high level of analytic skill in their reading, for example in their understanding of the distinctive characteristics of myths and legends. Pupils of average and lower attainment, including those who have special educational needs, read texts appropriate to their age with very good levels of fluency and accuracy, can support points they make by referring to the text, and use and locate ideas and information fluently. Some pupils with special educational needs were reading extracts from Dickens with a good level of understanding as part of the National

Literacy Strategy. There were, however, relatively few examples of sustained independent research based on reading, and the library is not well equipped to support this. Overall, however, the quality of learning in reading is very good.

45. Eleven-year-olds reach above-average standards in writing. Higher-attaining pupils reach very good standards and make very good progress in response to teaching in ability groups which is very well matched to their needs. Other older pupils use neat, joined writing and almost all write well-constructed short texts, though many still have some spelling problems. The writing of pupils who have special educational needs benefits greatly from the high quality of specialist teaching they receive, and is often at, or very close to, the nationally expected standard. The overall quality of learning is very good, but a relatively small number of lower-attaining pupils in upper sets have not consolidated the basic skills of writing sufficiently to benefit fully from more advanced work. These pupils make satisfactory to good progress, but their learning is less consistent.
46. The quality of teaching in English ranges from satisfactory to excellent, and is very good overall. The excellent teaching, in some Year 6 classes and in specialist teaching for pupils who have special educational needs, is very carefully planned to match the learning needs of all of the pupils in the group and very well paced, with particularly clear and effective explanations of points of difficulty. Where the teaching is very good, it employs a thoughtful approach which presents pupils with demanding work in a context which makes it easily accessible to them, and makes very good use of information from assessment to identify points which need to be developed. Work is marked consistently, and in most classes to a very high standard. This contributes to learning, particularly in Years 5 and 6, by giving pupils an accurate reflection of their current performance and information on ways of improving it. Reading records are consistently kept, and at their best, in one Year 3 class, contain very good detailed notes on pupils' progress. Some other reading records are less detailed, however, and there is similar inconsistency in the use of homework, which is excellent in some classes, particularly for higher-attaining pupils, and good overall, but has inconsistencies in some classes which limit its contribution to learning. There are similar inconsistencies in the school's system of personal targets for pupils, which is difficult to manage and sometimes by-passed in teachers' marking. In the minority of classes in which teaching is sound rather than good or better, work is thoroughly planned, but less effectively matched to the full range of learning needs within a group.
47. Work in English is co-ordinated to a high standard and the co-ordinator provides very effective support and training to colleagues. The school uses the National Literacy Strategy very well, and teaching is closely and effectively monitored. Reading and writing in subjects other than English makes a good overall contribution to literacy. The best writing tasks, for example in history and design and technology, provide very good opportunities for imaginative work, though this is not consistent between classes. The practice of setting pupils according to the standards they have reached and their learning needs is contributing to raising standards, though learning tasks do not always fully match the learning needs of weaker pupils in the higher sets, and this limits the quality of their learning. Resources for literacy have been carefully and effectively chosen, and the school is beginning to make very effective use of the ICT suite in teaching older pupils.

MATHEMATICS

48. Standards at eleven, both in national tests and in work observed during the inspection, are above national average levels in all aspects of the subject. In 1999, a high proportion of pupils, well over a third, exceeded the expected standard in national tests. While standards were above average at the time of the last inspection, the standards currently achieved, particularly among higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, indicate a good rate of improvement.
49. The overall quality of learning in mathematics is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. There is excellent learning in individual lessons, both in the National Numeracy Strategy and in specialist lessons for pupils with special educational needs, and these pupils' learning also benefits from effective support in class from teaching assistants. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in response to additional teaching from the special needs co-ordinator. There is, however, a small but significant pocket of poor learning where teaching is poor.
50. Pupils' attitudes to their mathematics lessons are very good. They concentrate well for long periods and work well collaboratively when asked to do so. Whilst they particularly enjoy mental number work and try to do their calculations very quickly in their heads, they also show good levels of persistence when solving more complex problems. Behaviour is almost always excellent, and very good overall.
51. The quality of teaching is good overall, and very good in three tenths of lessons. There is some excellent teaching in Year 4, but some poor teaching in Year 3. The teaching in the best lessons is carried out with humour, energy and infectious pleasure in the subject. The pace and variety of lessons helps pupils to concentrate well over long periods. Work is usually matched well to individual needs and good teachers express ideas clearly, extending and consolidating pupils' knowledge and understanding of processes. Tables are learned by regular chanting and teaching to gain secure and flexible understanding. Reverse processes such as addition and subtraction and multiplication and division are taught explicitly. The school's emphasis on teaching detailed vocabulary gives pupils a sound and varied language base for expressing mathematical ideas accurately and for developing deeper understanding. Where teaching is poor, the class is not effectively managed and work is not effectively matched to pupils' learning needs. Explanations are ineffective, and pupils often do not understand what they should be doing. While the proportion of such teaching is small, no effective learning takes place when it occurs.
52. The broad mathematical curriculum, which comprehensively covers the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, makes an important contribution to progress. Co-ordination of the subject is very effective. The school has fully adopted the National Numeracy Strategy and is teaching it well, and there is an effective contribution to mathematics from work in other subjects, including design and technology and statistical work in history. Resources are very well-chosen, and include personal white boards on which pupils eagerly record mental calculations. A particularly effective innovation has been to provide every pupil with a personal mathematics learning kit, containing a number line, a hundred square and other useful memory aids. The setting of Years 4, 5 and 6 by ability for mathematics during the past two years has improved standards, particularly among higher attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs. Ambitious but realistic targets have been set to raise standards in mathematics further during the next two years.

SCIENCE

53. Eleven-year-olds reach standards which are, overall, well above those expected nationally. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was high, but the proportion doing better than this was in line with the national average. The best work of higher-attaining pupils during the inspection was very good. This, combined with the good standards reached by pupils of average and lower attainment, indicates an improvement on the standards reached in the 1999 tests. Standards during the last inspection were good, though there were weaknesses in experimental and investigative work. Higher-attaining pupils were not making consistently good progress and there was some unsatisfactory teaching. The present standards and quality of education in science show a very good improvement on this position.
54. The quality of learning is very good. Pupils know how to plan and conduct a fair experiment, have extensive knowledge of scientific facts, and make very good use of scientific vocabulary. They have a very detailed knowledge of the process of the pollination and dispersal of seeds in Year 6. Year 5 pupils have detailed knowledge of the heart and its functions, and make very good use of line graphs and bar charts. Year 4 pupils show a good understanding of insulation and make well reasoned choices in selecting apparatus to insulate an ice cube. They understand how to record findings on structured tables, effectively building on good introductory work in Year 3. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is very good and excellent in Year 6, where it leads to a standard of work which is often in line with the nationally expected standard.
55. The learning of all pupils benefits greatly from their own commitment to high achievement. This is reflected both in their careful written work, which contains notes of well ordered and logical investigations, and in very good participation in experiments and in discussion of results.
56. The teaching of science during the inspection was very good overall. It was never less than good, and almost always very good or better. Explanation and demonstration are very well paced and give pupils good time for experiment and investigation. The teaching pays particular attention to those pupils with special needs and is largely responsible for the excellent integration of all pupils in this area of the curriculum. The teaching is based both on excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject, and on flair and imaginative presentation. In the area of seed dispersal, for example, pupils were set a challenging task of demonstrating, by means of working models, three ways in which seeds travel from the parent plant. Their ingenuity drew 'awe and wonder' from observing adults! This task, closely linked with design and technology, reinforced learning so effectively that pupils without exception could explain very clearly the processes involved.
57. Co-ordination is of very high quality. The range of learning opportunities is very wide but the very careful planning allows for maximum coverage, which is very evident from the work analysis. The very good assessment procedures inform planning and allow pupils to develop their individual strengths. Resources are good and readily available, and there is an excellent spirit of teamwork among the teachers.

ART

58. Standards and progress are good, with some very good work which is reflected in displays throughout the school. Standards during the last inspection were satisfactory, but there were significant inconsistencies in teaching and in pupils' progress. The present standards and provision represent a very good improvement between inspections.
59. Pupils have a very good sense of colour, mixing colours well and understanding the effects colours have on each other. A large-scale three dimensional space display, very carefully constructed from scrap materials, is very impressive. The quality of learning is very good, and includes very good illustrated booklets based on '*Toad of Toad Hall*' in Year 6, and closely observed drawing cut flowers from life in Year 5. These benefited from very effective explanation and demonstration from the teacher, and contained some very pleasing textural effects combined with a feeling of depth with accuracy in shape. Year 4 pupils had just begun to make collage portraits of a high standard using the shapes of vegetables, fruit and flowers. This work called for a great deal of patience, skill, and concentration. In Years 3 and 4 some very effective and lifelike pastel portraits of schoolchildren also showed learning of very high quality.
60. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers give pupils a very clear idea of what is to be achieved, and demonstrate work to a high standard. Very good oral feedback and assessment encourage pupils' critical abilities and contribute to speaking and listening skills. Planning throughout the school is very well thought-out, and makes very good provision for developing skills in choosing and using a range of resources and media.
61. Co-ordination is very effective, and there is a very good scheme of work, which introduces pupils to a wide variety of skills and techniques. Policy, planning and organisation always pay specific attention to pupils with special educational needs, and contribute to very good progress among these pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

62. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but pupils' work on display shows good standards and learning. There is a good display of travel in space, with rockets very carefully constructed by pupils using a range of materials, and some excellent travel brochures in Year 6, carefully designed, beautifully illustrated and well constructed. The subject is well co-ordinated, with good schemes of work. Standards during the last inspection were low. They have now improved substantially and are good in both designing and making.

GEOGRAPHY

63. Most classes were being taught history rather than geography in the half-term during which the inspection took place, and there was insufficient evidence on which to base a fully secure judgement on standards. Discussions with older pupils, however, strongly suggested that their knowledge, skills and understanding of the geography which they had studied were in line with those achieved in most schools nationally. Most, on the other hand, needed considerable prompting and support before they could recall the work they had done – for example, on map references – and the range they had studied was somewhat limited. The pupils had enjoyed their work in geography and had good attitudes to the subject.
64. Standards during the last inspection were good, and the slight fall since then reflects the reduced teaching time for the subject. Work in geography is enhanced by a flourishing Environmental Club.

HISTORY

65. Observation of history was limited during the inspection, but was supplemented by discussions and analysis of pupils' work. Standards in history have declined from good to satisfactory since the last inspection, for the same reason as standards in geography.
66. Pupils make satisfactory progress over time in their knowledge and understanding of key periods in history as they move through the school. The youngest pupils explore with interest the enduring effects on the British Isles of invasion by the Vikings and Romans. They understand the role of archaeologists in gathering evidence from the past, and are particularly interested in how Roman and Celtic warriors were dressed. Pupils carefully create their own mosaic designs in the Roman style. Older pupils appreciate the importance of the afterlife to Ancient Egyptians and how and why the River Nile dominated their civilisation. Through continuing historical study of Ancient Greece and the Tudor Dynasty pupils gain an increasing awareness of the chronology of events and of important figures in history. Year 6 pupils use facsimiles of first hand historical evidence in the form of 1841 census logs to explore the place of birth of Chatham householders. They draw pertinent conclusions from their evidence and raise questions concerning social cause and effect.
67. The quality of teaching was excellent in the only lesson observed. The teacher's outstanding subject knowledge enabled her to think clearly on her feet, and by challenging, open questioning she skilfully steered pupils towards the discoveries she wanted them to make. The enthusiasm and pace of the lesson maintained pupils' interest and concentration throughout, and resulted in excellent learning. Resources were very well chosen and prepared to meet the learning objectives and to interest and extend pupils' historical thinking. The teacher's high expectations ensured that pupils' work was presented neatly and graphically, providing a useful database from which conclusions may be easily drawn. All teachers keep detailed assessment information on pupils' understanding within key areas of the topics they are studying.
68. Co-ordination of work in history is effective, and the school is developing a good collection of resources, including ICT resources and excellent resources on local

history based on investigations undertaken by the co-ordinator.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

69. Standards are improving rapidly, and the quality of learning in the subject is now very good. Eleven-year-olds reach the standard expected nationally, a similar finding to that of the last inspection, but standards among younger pupils, and the consistency of learning between classes, have been significantly improved. The school is also beginning to use ICT much more extensively to support learning in other subjects.
70. In Year 3, pupils log on and off from programs and use a simple graphics program effectively to combine illustrations with text. In Year 4, they begin to explore the internet, and use an art program well to experiment and make colourful name plates, using cut and paste techniques. Some pupils had recently had their first experience of a music software program. In Year 5, pupils create their own files and store their work, and use spreadsheets confidently. By Year 6, pupils use an encyclopaedia for reference purposes and are confident with cutting and pasting text. They confidently gather information about birds, using a well designed worksheet to guide their data search, and have fluent desk-top publishing skills.
71. The high quality of teaching is due to the very effective lead given by the co-ordinator, who undertakes much of the work personally as well as training colleagues. Expectations are high, and are effectively communicated to pupils, who do their very best to meet them. There are clear learning targets for each lesson, supported by clear explanations and very good use of the tutorial computer. The pace of work is brisk, and pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of using expensive resources effectively. The computer club at lunchtime and the environmental club are full, and both clubs' use of the computer suite contributes to the current improvement in standards.
72. The school has put much recent effort into developing its ICT resources, and is now well-equipped. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work was introduced last year and is proving effective. While there is still some under-use of the equipment, this position is improving rapidly, thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, who is also running regular training for teachers and assistants.

MUSIC

73. While limited observation was possible during the inspection, overall standards among eleven-year-olds are broadly in line with those reached in most schools in performing, composing, listening and appraising. These standards are similar to those reached during the last inspection, but are being achieved with less teaching time.
74. The quality of teaching ranges from good to poor, and is satisfactory overall. The good teaching uses published pre-recorded materials in a thoughtful way, and enables pupils to listen to, practise and perform traditional jazz songs. Pupils catch the mood of the music well, and begin to understand syncopated rhythm. They work well in groups, and perform their interpretation of the songs well to the whole

class, which keeps rhythm in support. The poor teaching uses pre-recorded materials much less effectively, and classroom control is very weak, so that pupils choose whether or not to follow directions. Behaviour in these circumstances suffers, and learning is effectively brought to a halt. The school's other recorded evidence of its work shows that this teaching constitutes a small minority of the whole.

75. Daily assemblies form a significant part of the musical curriculum. Each week pupils hear the work of a particular composer and learn about his or her life and times. Pupils sing hymns well together, and a musical mantra is sometimes used effectively to facilitate a quietly reflective mood.
76. The school's extra-curricular musical productions are a long-established strength, and benefit greatly from the outstanding singing and direction of the two teachers who lead them. The range of other extra-curricular music is satisfactory, and includes choirs and recorder clubs. The reduced music curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements, but music from a variety of cultures is under-represented in the school's recorded music collection. Whilst the provision of pitched and unpitched musical instruments is satisfactory overall, there are no keyboards, and resources are not easily accessible.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

77. Standards in the National Curriculum for physical education are in line with those achieved in most schools. Pupils in Year 6, for example, combine dance movements and steps to create an effect, and make constructive comments about their work to the standard expected for pupils of their age. There was, however, some variation in the standards reached in the two Year 6 lessons observed, due to a more enthusiastic and energetic response from one of the classes. The work-rate of some higher-attaining pupils was only just satisfactory, and limited their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, are fully integrated into the subject and effectively supported. They respond well, and this leads to very good learning. The school has, however, particular strengths in swimming, where a substantial proportion of pupils exceed the nationally recommended standard of swimming 25 metres, and in games, where their performance in netball and football benefits from skilled coaching in extra-curricular clubs.
78. This pattern of achievement is similar to that reported during the last inspection, but shows consolidation and extension of the extra-curricular work. Swimming, which was not separately reported during the last inspection, is now a strength.
79. The quality of teaching is very good in swimming. It was sound, with good features, the other lessons seen during the inspection. The very good swimming teaching is based on extensive personal experience and skill on the part of the teachers, and is carried on at a brisk pace that leads to enjoyable lessons, leaving pupils fully exercised. Where the teaching is sound, lessons are carefully planned to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. They contain a good balance of activities to develop and consolidate skills, and offer pupils good opportunities to reflect on their work. However, they lack a sense of pace and urgency, which leaves much of the outcome dependent on the response of pupils, and there is no clear goal for pupils to have reached by the end of the lesson.

80. The school has adequate arrangements for co-ordinating work in the subject, but in practice much is left to the skills and enthusiasm of individual teachers, which at their best are an important strength. The provision of an hour's work each week ensures that lessons are long enough to contain a balance of activities and to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

81. Standards and learning in religious education are very good, and well above the expected standard in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This represents a very good improvement on the satisfactory standards recorded during the last inspection.
82. Pupils have good understanding of the main tenets of Christianity and Judaism, and make very good progress in understanding more technical concepts such as the Holy Spirit. Older pupils have very good understanding of the moral and social components of the syllabus, for example of the depth and meaning of friendship. The quality of learning is enhanced by pupils' willingness to contribute to discussions and by their confidence in asking questions. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported and make progress in line with that of others in their class.
83. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent, and is very good overall. Lessons are clearly planned and discussions are managed well, with well-focused questions that promote and re-inforce learning. Extension work is carefully planned, though it is not always successfully integrated with the rest of the pupils' work.
84. Co-ordination is very effective, and there is an excellent policy and scheme of work based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus. There are many books and bibles and a good supply of artefacts. Learning throughout the school is monitored and assessed very effectively.