

INSPECTION REPORT

LINDEN GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ashford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118586

Headteacher: Mrs D French

Reporting inspector: Geoff Jones
11816

Dates of inspection: 12th -15th February 2001

Inspection number: 230760

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stanhope Road
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Steven Beasley

Date of previous inspection: 16th – 20th October 1995

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Eva Wilson 20653	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education Geography	
Peter Dexter 14976	Team inspector	Mathematics History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Linden Grove Primary School, for pupils aged from three to eleven years, has 445 pupils and is much bigger than most other primary schools. There are 17 classes: a nursery class, two speech and language units and 14 mainstream classes. It serves the Stanhope area of Ashford, which is almost entirely local authority housing and is a region of high unemployment and social problems. The school was the subject of an inspection from Her Majesty's Inspectorate and as a result it was judged to be in need of special measures. Following five subsequent inspections by the above body it was felt that the school had made sufficient progress to remove it from the list of those in special measures. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (39.3 per cent) is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is low compared with other schools. Almost two-thirds of the pupils in the school are identified as having special educational needs and 134 pupils need the help of outside specialists. This is extremely high compared with the national average. When pupils are first admitted to the school their attainment is very low, with many having low speaking and listening levels.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Standards of the school's eleven year olds have been generally rising over the past three years in English, mathematics and science due to improvements in the way the school assesses how well pupils are doing, resulting in a closer matching of work to their needs. This is especially true in Year 6 where the quality of teaching is particularly high. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and this also enables good achievements in their learning. With the majority of pupils having special educational needs this indicates that almost all pupils are achieving well. The work of the speech and language units is very good and enables pupils to make very good progress in their learning. The head teacher has a clear view of the direction the school should take in order to improve standards further. There is still work to be done on developing the role of subject co-ordinators in improving the provision for their area of the curriculum and in unifying the whole staff to work as a team rather than in separate key stages. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are effective and are beginning to raise standards.
- The good quality of the teaching and learning that enables pupils to achieve well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling good progress in learning.
- Pupils in the speech and language units achieve very well, resulting from very good teaching.
- The provision for pupils' social development is very good.
- The attitudes and behaviour of almost all of the pupils are good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science in the infants and juniors as well as in the Foundation Stage.
- Levels of attainment in information and communication technology for seven and eleven year olds.
- The role of subject co-ordinators in identifying strengths and weaknesses and improving the provision within their subjects.

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 October 1995. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. At that time nearly one third of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. This has now been reduced to three per cent. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now well managed enabling the pupils to make good progress in their learning. The role of the subject co-ordinators has not improved, as there is still no identification of strengths and weaknesses in the subjects they manage. Pupils' attainments in information and communication technology remain unsatisfactory for seven and eleven year olds but are rapidly improving since the installation of the computer suite. Assessment procedures have improved but the match of work to pupils needs does not extend to all subjects. There are still subjects, such as science, where the work planned does not meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding have improved in religious education at the end of both key stages. The quality of pupils' learning has improved from an unsatisfactory level in Key Stage 2 to the present good level.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven year olds based on National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E*	E*	E*	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E*	E*	E*	D	
Science	E	E*	E	B	

Over the past three years the school has steadily improved the proportion of pupils attaining the levels expected for their age in mathematics and science at the age of eleven. However, standards in English and mathematics, which over the last three years were in the lowest five per cent nationally, are well on course to improve in the coming tests. Compared with schools having a similar proportion of free meals the results show that the school's standards are below average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Pupils' skills in expressing themselves are very low when they are first admitted to the school and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is very high compared with the national average. This makes it difficult for the school even to reach close to the national averages in their annual test results. However, pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities and almost every pupil who is not on the register of special educational needs attained what is expected for their age. Levels of knowledge and understanding in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. Pupils' attainments are also below what is expected at the end of both key stages in information and communication technology, history and design and technology. Levels of attainment are sound in geography, art and design, music and physical education at the end of Key Stage 1. Key Stage 2 pupils' attainments in music and art and design are good and are very good in physical education. The school's targets for percentages of pupils attaining national expectations, set by the local education authority in English and mathematics, were all achieved last year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Almost all pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good overall. Most pupils behave well but a very small minority misbehave occasionally.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is sound. Pupils willingly take on responsibility. Older pupils undertake jobs such as running the school's recycling initiative and readily accept responsibility for general duties like acting as monitors and working in the assembly or dining hall. These jobs are done very effectively without fuss.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory and is below the national average.

The poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils has an adverse effect on their progress in learning. Following up absences as they occur has been approached in a systematic way for persistent offenders. Some parents are, as yet, unaware of the role they have to play in improving and encouraging high attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	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.

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school are good overall. The teaching of literacy is also good, particularly concerning basic skills in reading and writing, and contributes significantly to pupils' good achievements and to the good attitudes they have to their work. Teachers are knowledgeable of the numeracy strategy and the quality of their teaching is also good. Pupils learn well resulting from careful planning of lessons so that the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment are met. Sixty four per cent of the lessons seen were good or better and 24 per cent were very good or outstanding. Only three per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection were less than satisfactory. The weaknesses in teaching were concerned with a very slow pace to the lesson, the teacher's expectations of what the pupils could do were set at the wrong level resulting in loss of interest from the pupils, and not ensuring all pupils were listening when teachers were talking to them. Almost all pupils work hard, are interested in their lessons and concentrate well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning and pupils in the speech and language units learn very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The foundation curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is well organised and it provides a very well balanced programme of activities. The curriculum for the rest of the school is sound and provides a satisfactory range of activities for pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils in the speech and language units receive very good provision and make very good progress in their learning. Provision is good. Pupils are provided with carefully constructed individual educational plans. These are reviewed regularly and further targets set for pupils to improve. Pupils are well supported in the classrooms by classroom assistants and class teachers.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is well organised and secured by effective planning. It includes well-planned support within the school by learning support assistants and targeted support within the literacy hour. Pupils enjoy and value their weekly sessions with the visiting teacher and benefit from them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Teachers know the children in their class well and take appropriate steps with any problems that may occur. Pupils have good opportunities to undertake responsibility. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Provision for their spiritual and moral development is good and provision for their cultural development is sound. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about the ways of life of the different ethnic communities in Great Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are sound.

The school has developed an effective working relationship with parents with the exception of providing adequate information on how their children are getting on at school. There are regular and very informative newsletters written in a friendly, accessible style. Home-school agreements establish a useful link between parents and teachers.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher has a clear idea of the direction the school should go in to continue with improvements in pupils' standards. The deputy head teacher works closely with the head teacher but the role of subject co-ordinators needs to be developed to include monitoring and evaluating the subject to identify aspects that need improving.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors work hard for the benefit of the school. They meet together regularly to support the work of the school and monitor its work. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses but are not yet sufficiently involved in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Although teachers evaluate the success pupils are having in meeting their targets some co-ordinators do not yet evaluate the state of health in the different subjects of the curriculum. Insufficient evidence is available for making informed judgements on priorities for the school development plan in order to improve the work of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Teachers are deployed well. The school bursar and school secretary work very efficiently and provide a very good service for the school. The support assistants are well trained and work very closely with teachers to enable pupils to make good progress. The budget is used wisely to provide impetus for continuing improvement and learning resources are used to further pupils' understanding.

The staffing of the school is sufficient in number and expertise to cover collectively work in the National Curriculum and religious education. Teachers have good subject knowledge in the main areas of the curriculum and this contributes greatly towards the pupils' good learning. However, a small number of members of staff are insecure about teaching information and communication technology. The accommodation of the school is good and is used well. The school's learning resources are sufficient in quantity and quality and are used effectively to enhance pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily; it ensures that, whenever appropriate, decisions on purchases are made with best value in mind but it does not consult sufficiently with parents about their views on how the school could improve.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like coming to school. • The school expects children to work hard and do their best. • The teaching is good. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework children are expected to do. • Information about how their child is getting on at school. • The way the school involves parents.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views of parents. It disagrees with some of the main negative points arising from an analysis of the parents' questionnaire. The inspection team considers that arrangements for homework are reasonable; tasks are linked with the work covered in lessons and pupils' progress is enhanced as a result. The team agrees with parents' views about the usefulness of information provided by the school on how pupils are getting on at school. Written reports only mention what pupils have covered in the curriculum and not their strengths and weaknesses in each subject. The inspection team feel that the school works well with parents. The quality of information provided for parents is good, there is a good home-school agreement, newsletters are regular and informative and a number of parents now help with school activities such as school fetes or making resources for story telling.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery class at the age of three and move into the reception classes during the year in which they become five. Assessments when they transfer from the nursery to the reception classes show they have very low levels of attainment. Good quality teaching enables children to achieve well. However, by the end of the reception year standards of attainment are still well below the expected level for pupils of this age. By the time they are five, most of the children are not yet ready to commence work on the National Curriculum. Their standards in language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world are all well below what is expected and their personal, social and physical development has reached a level expected for their age. Children's creative development is good for their age.
2. In the most recent national tests for seven year olds, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are all well below the national average. In comparison with similar schools the school's results for seven year olds were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Teacher assessments of pupils' levels of attainment in science show that they are well below average overall. In the last set of national tests for eleven year olds, the school's results in English and mathematics were very low compared with national averages and were well below average in science. Compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals these results are more favourable and are just below average for English and mathematics and above average for science.
3. Standards of work seen during the inspection show an improvement over the above test results in Key Stage 2. Although standards overall in English are well below what is expected for eleven year olds, levels of attainment in reading have improved to just below average. A similar improvement was seen in mathematics and science and the standards are now just below average for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. It is also important to note that the school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Just over 60 per cent of the pupils in the school have special educational needs and approximately one third of the whole school has more severe problems with their learning and need the support of external specialists to facilitate progress. The outcome of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs is seen in low results in the annual national tests.
4. Pupils achieve well. Their achievements in Key Stage 1 are not quite as good as in Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and science, where their levels of attainment reflect the high proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register. In addition, the school's task of raising the standards in the school is made much more difficult by the comparatively high turnover of pupils in any single year. Nearly one in every seven pupils leaves the school every year. Pupils with special educational needs learn well and make good progress in relation to their abilities. This results from the effective support which teachers and learning support assistants provide. The school has made significant improvements to this aspect of pupils' education since the previous inspection. Pupils who speak English as well as their main language learn well in both key stages and make good progress.
5. The school's success at enabling pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding of literacy and numeracy is a result of hard work from teachers and pupils. This is exemplified by a recognition of the school's efforts when it was awarded the National Quality Mark for Basic Skills in June 1999.
6. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well below average in both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils listen to their teacher attentively but many are unable to remember words or phrases that have been discussed. Most pupils lack a sufficient range of vocabulary to

express their ideas clearly and mostly speak in short sentences. Key Stage 2 pupils listen more successfully but still lack the vocabulary necessary to be able to convey their ideas and feelings satisfactorily. Most find it difficult to organise their ideas while speaking. Seven year olds are not confident when reading. They are able to read familiar texts and their knowledge of letter sounds enables them to read simple words they have not seen before. However, many find it hard to build more complex words. The eleven year olds, whatever their level of attainment, have developed an enthusiasm for books which has emanated from good imaginative teaching in Year 6. Yet most do not read expressively nor do they understand written passages fully. They do, however, use a dictionary and a thesaurus to gain information but many are not sufficiently confident in so doing. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils write in short phrases and sequence their ideas when writing about things they have done but find it difficult to use full stops or capital letters. Eleven year old pupils attempt a much wider range of writing and produce letters, poems, factual accounts, imaginative stories and character studies. Few pupils use a wide variety of words and, although the school has identified spelling as a weakness and has improved standards, many pupils still spell frequently occurring words incorrectly in their own writing.

7. Seven year old pupils are still developing their understanding of numbers. Most recognise odd and even numbers and can recall addition and subtraction facts up to ten. Many recognise and name two- and three-dimensional shapes and recognise simple fractions. Standards are rising but owing to the high number of pupils with special educational needs they are still well below what is expected for their age. By the time they are eleven, pupils add and subtract competently and multiply by 10 or 100 confidently. Higher attaining pupils successfully complete long multiplication computations and work accurately with decimals. Standards have risen at the end of Key Stage 2 due to the good quality teaching and as a result of introducing similar ability classes in numeracy lessons.
8. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' knowledge and understanding of basic scientific ideas is developed by providing them with opportunities to investigate and carry out simple experiments but their inability to discuss fully and share ideas with each other in order to draw conclusions hampers their progress. Key Stage 2 pupils increase their understanding of magnetic properties, know that most metals conduct heat and electricity effectively and understand the differences between liquids, solids and gases. Year 6 pupils know how to design an experiment that is a fair test of a hypothesis.
9. Levels of attainments in information and communication technology (ICT) are below the levels expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. The newly installed computer suite is already having a positive effect on improving pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding but, as yet, there has been insufficient time for a marked improvement to be apparent. Until the computer suite was available for pupils they had insufficient opportunities to develop ICT skills. By the age of eleven pupils lack specific skills and, similarly to Key Stage 1 pupils, have not had sufficient opportunities to practise. They are not confident about data handling and their understanding of spreadsheets remains limited. However, pupils use ICT to create their own writing, experiment with simple music compositions and know how to scan pictures and save their work.
10. Pupils' levels of attainment in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus throughout the school. Seven year olds know a variety of Bible stories and also have a satisfactory knowledge of other religions such as Judaism. Eleven year old pupils understand stories from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible in greater depth. They are beginning to acquire an understanding of Islam and the teachings in the Qur'an.
11. Pupils' attainments by the age of seven are above what is expected for their age in physical education. They reach the level expected for their age in geography, music and art and design but are below what is expected in history and design and technology. Attainments at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above what is expected nationally in physical education and above what is expected in music and art and design. Pupils' attainments meet with the levels

expected for their age in geography but below what is expected in design and technology and history.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupil's attitudes to the school and to their learning are good. In the nursery and in some lessons there are occasions when pupils' attitudes are very good because they respond with keenness and eagerness to the range of activities provided. In some infant and junior classes there are a few pupils who lose concentration easily and become distracted by others. In these cases teachers and support staff use skill and kindly patience to re-motivate pupils so they co-operate and become switched on again to learning. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about what the school provides; this is seen in their enjoyment of lessons and the sharing of tasks or resources with a partner. Pupils are confident to ask questions, taking turns to do so. They usually use appropriate procedures of putting up their hands to speak when answering questions and rarely have to be reminded not to call out unnecessarily. Pupils listen carefully in assembly and take an interest in seeing others receive gold awards with obvious pride.
13. Behaviour overall is good and in some classes it can be very good. A group of Year 5 pupils for example became excellent ambassadors for the school when awarded with a prize for their very good conduct whilst on a recent visit to the Channel Tunnel. In a few lessons some pupils engage in time wasting, trying to opt out of answering questions or working below the teacher's expectations. Good teaching and consistent behaviour management techniques such as reward and consequence strategies work effectively here. Teachers and pupils value praise and positive reinforcement of good behaviour. This ensures the school is a well-ordered and happy community where acknowledgement and praise of the individual is often heard. Movement around the school on corridors and staircases is calm, but personal property is often badly treated. Coats for example are often left where they fall. Pupils are well aware of school values and reward systems and clear about the way they should behave. Most are very polite because social skills are developing well. Behaviour in and out of lessons during the inspection was always appropriate and given the inclement weather, a remarkable achievement. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that behaviour is good. Appropriate exclusions from school occur when pupils exhaust the pastoral system and become a danger to themselves or others in the school. Good behaviour and positive pupil attitudes have been maintained since the previous inspection and make a major contribution to the quality of life in school.
14. Very good relationships are formed between pupils and staff. Pupils respect visitors and each other. They are learning to accept differences such as gender. This is seen in the evident kindness in the school, modelled by staff and copied by the pupils who readily support one another in classrooms and other areas of school life. There is some evidence of tension when pupils are not directly supervised, for example in the playground, but tempers never flare for long and friendships are soon made up. Pupils co-operate well during circle time and in other lessons designed to enhance their personal and social skills. Here, sensible views are expressed and confidences are shared because pupils trust their fellow classmates to listen to their expressed emotions in a mature fashion.
15. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The youngest pupils are introduced to responsibility well through their involvement in collecting scissors before cutting out pictures of important people from the past for example, or in tidying up at the end of a lesson. Some pupils carry out general duties like acting as monitors, litter picking and working in the assembly or dining hall. These jobs are done very effectively without fuss. This good system is not developed further as pupils move through the school. They are not expected to be responsible for organising aspects of their own learning, for example in setting targets for improvement in their class work or taking work home on a regular basis.

16. Attendance levels are unsatisfactory but have improved since the previous inspection. Registers are completed at appropriate times and systems are used to reduce the high level of absence for some pupils. The electronic registration tool is used to provide information for those pupils whose absence is a cause for concern and these absences are followed up either verbally or by written communication.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with a considerable number of strengths and few weaknesses. As a result, pupils make good progress in most subjects in all key stages. There were 96 lesson observations during the inspection, of which three were of too short a duration to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of the qualifying lessons seen. In 64 per cent it was good or better and in 24 per cent, it was very good or better. In three per cent of lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory. This quality of teaching is better than that seen during the last inspection when over 30 per cent of lessons observed were unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 in particular has improved since the last inspection.
18. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. It is consistently good in the nursery. As a result, children achieve well. The level of attainment upon entry to the reception classes is very low and by the end of the reception year standards of attainment have improved but are still well below the expected level for pupils of this age.
19. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum subjects are good in all subjects except in ICT where their level of expertise is variable across the school. Nevertheless, teachers demonstrate an enthusiastic attitude towards improving their own skills and this is a positive sign. Teaching of literacy and numeracy, and the progress that pupils make with their learning in these aspects, is also good. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects. An example of this was seen in an English lesson in Year 6 when the teacher provided a very interesting and informative lesson on a journalistic style of writing. As a result, pupils developed a clear understanding and grasp of particular aspects of the language specific to newspaper layout and design
20. The quality of planning is satisfactory overall but it does have strengths and weaknesses. In most lessons, teachers define what they expect pupils to achieve and make these objectives clear at the beginning of the lesson. This helps pupils develop a positive insight into how their own learning is progressing. A good example of this approach was seen in an ICT lesson in Year 4 on developing Celtic designs. Here the teacher made sure that pupils remembered previous learning on scanning pictures before setting clear targets for completion in the time remaining. However, in some subjects, such as science and history, teachers do not make sufficient allowance for pupils of different abilities when planning activities for them to achieve. This applies to higher attaining pupils in particular. As a result, they do not reach the maximum level of progress of which they are capable. However, where such differentiation of work for pupils of different abilities is good, as in a Year 6 geography lesson, all pupils make good progress with their learning.
21. Teachers make good use of a range of methods of organisation and teaching techniques to help pupils learn effectively. They use a mixture of approaches that include whole-class, group and individual teaching. A number of good examples were seen of positive ways in which teachers help pupils to learn effectively. In a Year 2 English lesson, questioning techniques were strong and stimulated pupils to think clearly and to discuss what they think about particular issues. In a Year 2 history lesson, pupils were reminded of earlier learning about the Great Fire of London before being introduced to new ideas. In an art lesson in Year 2, effective use was made of a whole-class session at the end to draw together aspects of pupils' learning.

22. Teachers' management of pupils is very good. This is because they are firm but also perceived to be fair. As a result, most pupils behave and respond positively to others and to their work. On occasions when pupils do not react in a reasonable manner, teachers respond quickly and professionally to ensure that the minimum of disruption occurs and lessons return to normal as soon as possible.
23. Teachers' use of support staff and resources is also good overall. The main exception to this has been, until recently, the lack of regular use of computers to help pupils with their learning. As a result, the progress that pupils have made with the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding of computer techniques to help them in their work and in their daily lives has been limited. However, since the recent introduction of the computer suite, teachers have started to take advantage of this facility with considerable enthusiasm and this weak area appears set to improve. In most subjects, teachers ensure that lessons move at a reasonable pace and this helps to ensure that pupils make the most of the time available. Where the pace is fast, as in a mathematics lesson on quick number recall in Year 6, pupils respond with enthusiasm and increase their rate of learning. A number of teachers make a habit of giving pupils set amounts of time to complete specific tasks. This is good practice and helps pupils to make the most of the time available to them. However, teachers are inconsistent in their approach to enabling pupils to be independent learners. In general pupils do not have sufficient knowledge about how well they are doing in their own learning and are not encouraged consistently to pursue their own lines of enquiry in different subjects as well as learning planned by their teacher.
24. The quality of teachers' daily assessment of pupils' work is secure when they make verbal comments to pupils during lessons. Most teachers make positive and constructive comments that help pupils to increase their learning. A number, but by no means all, do this with their written marking so pupils know what to do next to improve their work. Good examples of positive marking are seen in science in both Year 6 classes. The work that teachers set for homework is appropriate for pupils of this age.
25. Teachers keep informative records of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and follow a whole-school format to achieve this. In other subjects, systems of recording are variable and, generally, not up to the same standard. As a result, they are of limited value in providing appropriate information that will support future lesson planning.
26. Teachers provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language. In all three key stages, pupils with special educational needs learn well and make good progress in relation to their abilities. This results from the effective support that teachers and learning support assistants provide. The school has made significant improvements to this aspect of pupils' education since the previous inspection. Learning support assistants work with great commitment and effectiveness. The short-term targets that they work to are carefully planned to follow from those described in pupils' individual education plans. They are frequently reviewed and meticulously recorded.
27. Teachers provide regular work for pupils to do at home. This is usually connected with the content of a recent lesson and is helpful in supporting pupils' learning and improving standards. The homework ranges from reading activities, learning spellings or number patterns to written activities. Teachers arrange for parents to be aware of homework arrangements so that they are kept informed.

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

28. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage in the nursery and they immediately experience a well-planned active learning session, which includes all the early learning goals. The curriculum is appropriate to the needs of the children and addresses all the recommended areas of learning for pupils under five. Many pupils have very poor language skills on admission so there is a strong emphasis on language development at all times.

29. The school has restored a better balance to the statutory curriculum since September 2000. There are good curriculum structures for each year group and that enables teachers to plan all National Curriculum subjects and religious education in a well-balanced way. Further improvements to the planning in some subjects such as science and ICT are still needed to ensure that pupils build their skills systematically. The co-ordinators of some foundation subjects do not yet have a clear idea how to develop their subject further. In mathematics the recent provision of a computer suite has ensured that data handling is now covered fully.
30. In numeracy the recent organisation of pupils into classes of similar ability has been very effective. It has ensured a better balanced mathematics curriculum for pupils of all abilities. In literacy pupils are still taught in mixed ability classes, but grouped by ability within the class. This is satisfactory. Initiatives for literacy such as 'Teaching Talking', or daily spelling practice, are used well. The recent achievement of the Basic Skills Award highlights the school's commitment to raising standards in literacy and numeracy. However, the school has yet to analyse test results in sufficient depth to identify the reasons for the difference in attainments of boys and girls in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1.
31. The abilities of all pupils are assessed well using a range of tests for different age groups. Subsequently at least half of each year group is placed on the register of special educational needs, the majority of whom are boys. Unlike most other areas in the country, the local authority does not recommend that schools should include pupils whose special educational needs are not in the early stages of assessment. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above the national average. Each pupil then has an individual education plan with clear targets for improvement. These are used to plan suitable work in the classroom, using well-trained learning assistants to support individuals or small groups. As a result the provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is good.
32. Extra-curricular activities and links with the wider community are satisfactory. There is a small number of activities such as netball, football, and choir, but these are added to by Stanhope Parish Council and Ashford Borough Council. This has included mini-soccer training, a sponsored gardening club, a shared Summer Fête and a 'Brass Music Day'. The school takes part in competitive sports against other school teams. There are no instrumental activities at present, as there is no music co-ordinator.
33. The immediate secondary school, to which most pupils transfer, works closely with the head teacher. Transfer arrangements work well. The foundation teachers liaise with local pre-school playgroups, prior to the children entering the reception classes. There are very good working links with the Speech and Communication classes, and with a wide range of educational and health support services.
34. Pupils are given a good range of experiences in their personal, social and health programme. Each classroom follows the well set out school rules. When pupils sit in a circle for discussions they talk openly about anger or sadness, or being part of a 'gang' and the difficulties this may bring. Teachers are very successful in making sure pupils feel positive about themselves. They are very good role models, being calm, considerate and consistent. Teachers use a well thought out range of rewards for good behaviour which can lead to a good citizenship award. Anti-social conduct is dealt with swiftly and firmly. Overall the provision for personal, social and health education is good, and for social development it is very good, exemplified by the very good relationships throughout the school.
35. All adults at the school are committed to a sensitive and caring approach towards each other, and towards pupils which provides a very strong base for the spiritual and moral development for all pupils. The school values all pupils and in so doing it is teaching pupils to value themselves and others. This helps pupils to acquire personal beliefs and values appropriate for their age. They are taught self-control, self-respect, co-operation and respect for persons and property through everyday experiences in the classroom. Religious education lessons contribute to spiritual and moral development, as do the acts of collective worship. However,

these acts of worship vary in quality and they would be more consistent if there was a better, more detailed plan. Overall the provision for spiritual and moral education is good; its strength lies in the very good everyday personal examples in every classroom.

36. Pupils are taught to appreciate the cultural traditions of the local area well. Pupils learn about different ways of life through the balanced curriculum, and in particular through a series of well planned visits. For example pupils from different age groups visit a diverse range of local places of interest such as an industrial bakery, Dungeness Power Station, the Science Museum and nearby nature reserves. When the school visited the Channel Tunnel Rail Link it won an award as the best behaved school. There are a small number of wider cultural links. For example Year 2 visited the synagogue at Rochester, and during the course of the inspection Year 3 classes attended a World Music Festival and clapped enthusiastically with Coco Xpress, a Latin band, playing salsa music, and Maambena, an African percussion band. Nevertheless all pupils would benefit if the school planned the teaching of these wider ethnic and cultural opportunities in a more systematic way.
37. Progress since the last report in the curriculum is satisfactory. The school day is much better organised, and there is now efficient use of time. Planning has improved in all subjects, and all subjects have satisfactory policies. The school has achieved its priority of adding breadth and balance to the curriculum appropriately.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. At the time of the previous inspection the school was judged to care well for its pupils. Now it is the case that some statutory requirements in relation to health and safety are not met and identification of risks has not been afforded sufficient priority. The full extent of these issues will be reported orally to the governing body. In addition the school's supply of drinking water fountains are inadequate.
39. Other areas for further development are. Although a senior staff member has responsibility for child protection issues, the role is underdeveloped because the policy is not yet fully complete. Most members of staff have received training on the procedures to be followed.
40. The support and guidance provided by the school are good. The youngest children are well prepared to enter school. Pupils are confident and happy to approach all staff for help and they seek guidance from their teachers and support assistants confidently. Teachers' pastoral care is constant and developed further through circle time. The school supports pupils with special educational needs and has effective measures to promote good behaviour. Parents see the benefits of this provision; 69 parents out of the 73 who returned the questionnaire reported that their children enjoyed school and were making good progress in their learning.
41. All teachers and members of the support staff make time to promote and encourage caring attitudes. Learning support assistants guide pupils well in their learning and this additional, skilled, help enables the school to identify and respond to specific welfare needs of the children. Pupils who need first aid whilst at school are cared for well and their parents are informed promptly. Midday assistants play their part in reporting lunchtime incidents but are presently outside the reward system and this limits their contribution to the pupils' personal development. The dining room is a cramped environment where noise levels rise due to chatter and the scraping of wooden chair legs as children dine. This unattractive setting, where chipped furniture is the norm, does not provide a quality dining experience and the difficulty that the midday assistants have in controlling the noise also detracts from a conducive atmosphere.
42. Parents are not provided with comparisons between the previous year's annual attendance rates and the national average so they are unaware of how the school compares. However, poor attendance is commented upon in pupils' annual written reports and members of staff

make home visits whenever attendance becomes a problem. These measures have enabled the school's attendance figures to improve since the previous inspection.

43. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good. This was evident when in one class a pupil obeyed the teacher's instruction immediately, on sight of the piece of chalk she was 'about' to write his name on the board with. A senior staff member deals well with the behaviour issues and he has parents' confidence. Because the principles of tolerance and fairness are well established, any form of unpleasantness or harassment is not tolerated and these incidents, when brought to teachers' attention, are dealt with effectively. Improving behaviour has priority in the school, and because of this there is a good range of rewards and stepped consequences with chances built in for pupils to improve and become increasingly self-disciplined.
44. The school has improved its procedures and practice for measuring and gauging pupils' attainment and progress to a satisfactory level since the previous inspection.
45. Whole-school systems, which show how well pupils are attaining in English and mathematics, are particularly good. Completion of this well-structured document is good at Key Stage 2 but inconsistent at Key Stage 1. Thorough analyses have been carried out on how well pupils are grasping spelling and developing writing. When children enter the nursery and reception classes their attainment levels are very carefully measured and recorded. Similarly, very good ongoing systems are used in the speech and language unit. Systems for measuring and recording how well pupils with special educational needs are achieving are good. Findings from all of these assessment activities contribute towards building a record for individual pupils, from which important information may be drawn readily. As yet, no whole-school assessment system has been established for other subjects.
46. Information gained from the above assessment procedures is used soundly to guide curricular planning particularly in English and mathematics. As a result of spelling analysis, a new system for teaching spelling has been adopted by the school. Writing analysis has resulted in targets being set for pupils throughout the school to ensure that their particular needs are met in teaching and that they are aware of what they need to do to improve. In English lessons, pupils have been arranged into ability groups so that learning may be matched in a very focused manner to their stage of development. Similarly pupils are arranged into sets for mathematics lessons.
47. To address the difference between boys' and girls' attainment in reading, when girls do better than boys, the school has set aside time every day for reading sessions which are guided by the class teacher and supported by classroom assistants. To motivate boys they are effectively grouped with girls for these sessions to provide good role models for reading. Fiction and non-fiction books, suitable and interesting for boys, have been purchased.
48. A very good document to guide teaching and learning of mathematics has been prepared and is about to be implemented. This is of very good quality and will help to ensure that the key learning objectives are addressed at the appropriate time, so that learning may be built upon systematically.
49. Planning for pupils who are under five is good and informed beneficially by early assessment information and weekly teacher observations. Similarly in the speech and language unit very good use is made of information to plan future learning. Pupils' individual education plans generally set clear, practical targets but, in a minority of cases, do not characterise pupils' needs in sufficient detail or with enough precision. They are reviewed carefully and with sufficient frequency.
50. When pupils with special educational needs are taught in small support groups or receive close support in ordinary lessons they progress well. However, in many lessons, while teachers remain closely aware of pupils' differing needs, they do not systematically plan with

these in mind. As a result, some pupils with special educational needs are given tasks to complete that are too difficult for them. This increases their dependence on support.

51. The school's special needs co-ordinator is well informed and enthusiastic. She manages procedures thoughtfully and securely. She works effectively with colleagues and is closely involved with all aspects of planning and provision. The informative monitoring of group provision for pupils with special educational needs that she has introduced could now usefully be extended to include the provision made during ordinary lessons.
52. The school maintains constructive links with a wide range of agencies concerned with provision for pupils with special educational needs, including the learning and behaviour services, the education psychology service, speech and sensory therapy services and the educational welfare service.
53. Across subjects, lessons are evaluated weekly, but the use made of the information to guide future planning is inconsistent. In curricular planning, use is made of information about pupils' results in the English, mathematics and science national tests and analyses have been the subject of staff meetings led by the relevant co-ordinators.
54. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The school has a good behaviour policy, which is implemented consistently throughout the school and results in an orderly, calm atmosphere. Behaviour is tracked when pupils have difficulty. A sanction system operates involving pink and red slips which carry specific penalties and which pupils strive to avoid. Weekly, at assemblies, certificates are awarded not only for academic achievement, but for good attitudes, effort, kindness and helpfulness. In classes pupils work towards receiving 'Golden Time', when they are allowed to choose a short activity which gives them pleasure. Occasions when pupils sit in a circle to discuss personal, social and moral aspects, contribute well to their development. Together, all of these strategies are effective in promoting the positive values towards which the school aspires.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The school has developed an effective working relationship with parents. The majority of parents report that there is a good partnership in place between this friendly school and themselves. This results in parents being generally satisfied but the information they are given about the progress their children make is insufficient. Some are also dissatisfied with the amount of homework set.
56. Parents find staff helpful and report that concerns or suggestions are always acted upon. Parents expressed their confidence in the head teacher and appreciate being consulted on a number of issues. Additionally, information helps parents to understand the school's responsibility for the welfare of its pupils. The quality of information provided for parents is good, and serves to inform about the daily life of the school. Despite the school's size, the importance placed on the exchange of information is clearly contributing to strengthening the links between home and school. Newsletters are frequent, and of impressive quality, as are published documents, which, except for omissions in the governor's annual report to parents, meet the required standard. The annual report to parents omits required information such as the details on the school's annual test results which is not sufficient to meet requirements. The exchange of information is promoted well because children enjoy preparatory induction visits and parents are consulted on school matters and events. There is scope to enlist parents' help and co-operation in improving attendance rates.
57. Although parents are satisfied with the quality of reports on pupils' progress, the inspection team judge these to be of unsatisfactory quality. Reports are provided each term but they do not include the pupil's strengths and weaknesses in each subject. Each report contains duplicated details of what has been covered during the term and simply an overall judgement on progress that is meant to cover all areas of the curriculum. This is an area where more

information is needed; reports need to inform parents of how their children are getting on in each subject giving details of what pupils do well and which aspects they are having difficulty with. This was of some concern to parents at the time of the previous inspection. The need for parents to support the school in improving attendance rates is important but this is not yet underpinned by informing parents regularly about whole school attendance figures.

58. Good links with parents have paid dividends because now parents of children with special educational needs are informed and consulted when reviews of provision occur. Parents were pleased to co-operate in drawing up and supporting well the home-school agreement. They value the regular opportunities provided to see school assemblies and concerts and make an effective contribution to the progress their children make with their reading at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The head teacher and key members of staff provide sound leadership. The head teacher has a clear idea of the direction the school should take in order to improve. Since the previous inspection assessment procedures have been improved and teachers now plan work that meets the needs of the pupils more consistently. This has been instrumental in improving standards, particularly in English and mathematics. However, some subject co-ordinators do not yet have a clear idea of pupils' overall levels of attainment and many are unsure of classroom practices in the key stage in which they are not teaching. There is no clear system for evaluating the curriculum in each subject and co-ordinators do not annually take stock of the state of health in their curriculum area throughout the school. Following the previous inspection, when over one third of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, a number of measures have been taken. The head teacher had to take some difficult decisions connected with the quality of teaching and resulting from this there have been considerable staff changes over the past few years. Very few of the teachers who taught at the school during the previous inspection still remain at the school. In addition, the head teacher and deputy head teacher have monitored lessons and a small number of teachers have had their lessons monitored by subject co-ordinators. These observations have been followed by feedback on the quality of the lessons in order to facilitate a continuous improvement in the quality of teaching. The previous unacceptable behaviour of some of the pupils was linked to the quality of teaching prevalent during the last inspection. As a result, a positive behaviour management programme was introduced and all teachers now adopt a consistent approach in the classrooms and around the school.
60. Standards have also been raised through the use of attainment tests and an analysis of the results of some of them. Interim annual assessment tests are administered to judge every pupil's progress in Key Stage 2 and separate English and mathematics tests are used to identify the extent that each pupil has progressed. Every pupil is set a target for individual attainment and class teachers are accountable for the outcomes of these, but areas where pupils' understanding is weaker are not identified sufficiently in all subjects so that improvements can be made during the following school year. Whole-school targets for improvement in standards are set each year and these are related very closely to results in the annual national tests. Although the school's latest test results were below the national average it has achieved the local authority's targets set for the end of both key stages. Almost all pupils who are not on the register of special educational needs achieved the levels expected for their age group.
61. The governing body works hard on behalf of the school and is ably led by the chairman. It holds regular meetings to make decisions concerned with the life of the school and to monitor the work of the school effectively. The school's budget is monitored regularly to ensure that the money allocated to the school is used wisely and that it keeps within the set financial boundaries. Appointed governors make regular inspections of the school premises with the site manager to make sure that there are no health and safety hazards for the pupils. However, there are a small number of potential difficulties that have been missed. In many respects the governing body works closely with the head teacher and deputy head teacher to

shape the direction of the school but, as yet, are not fully involved in deciding the content of the school development plan. Governors attend regular training sessions so that they can contribute fully to discussions about improving the work of the school. To keep themselves informed of the school's educational standards they monitor the school's results in the national tests each year and set targets for the following year.

62. Parents are not approached by the school for their views on how the school could be improved or for suggestions on useful developments that might be helpful. Whenever possible the school ensures that decisions on purchases are made with best value in mind.
63. The school development plan is satisfactory and succinct. It contains a number of appropriate initiatives to improve the work of the school and there is evidence that the previous plan has been evaluated and the results linked with the present plan. The individual initiatives are linked closely to the school budget so that finances are available when necessary. The various objectives are not linked sufficiently closely with the criteria identified to judge whether they have been successful or not. Sometimes the criteria involve a further objective instead of acting solely as an indicator of success. This often makes it impossible to make a judgement on the degree of success the initiative has had.
64. The school's special needs co-ordinator is well informed and enthusiastic. She manages procedures thoughtfully and securely. She works effectively with colleagues and is closely involved with all aspects of planning and provision. The informative monitoring of group provision for pupils with special educational needs which she has introduced is having a positive effect on levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. As yet, this has not been extended to include the provision made during ordinary lessons.
65. The grant used for pupils with special educational needs is used sensibly and has resulted in pupils making good progress in their learning. The money allocated for professional training of the staff is used wisely to improve the work of the school. Teachers attend relevant courses that are linked with the needs of the school and classroom, and learning support assistants have been trained in supporting pupils' learning effectively and in management of pupils' behaviour.
66. The school uses new technology well. An optical system is used to record pupils' attendance and to identify patterns in absences. Staff use computers to manage the school budget very effectively and school records are stored using ICT and quickly retrieved when necessary. Plans have already been made for assessments of pupils' achievements to be stored in appropriate computer programs and used to predict their future levels of attainment and to set suitable targets.
67. The aims of the school are reflected well in its work. Pupils are encouraged successfully to tolerate the views of others and acquire knowledge, skills and understanding related to the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, pupils are not yet given sufficient opportunities to develop independence in their learning.
68. There are sufficient teachers and an appropriate number of support staff to enable the pupils to make progress in their learning of the National Curriculum. The school's accommodation is good and learning resources are satisfactory. Teachers new to the school are inducted informally and newly qualified teachers have a good formal introduction involving discussions on their teaching performance with one of five trained mentors and release from class teaching responsibilities to observe experienced teachers in the classroom. The school has made sound progress in developing teaching and learning through performance management processes, which are already arranged and in place.

The Speech and Language Unit

69. The speech and language unit caters for pupils aged five to eleven who have a statement of special educational needs due to severe speech, language and communication difficulties. There are currently 22 pupils on roll and many of them have additional special needs, such as dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder, impaired hearing, allergies and asthma. The unit is housed in new attractive classroom accommodation in the school with two well-equipped classrooms and a spacious area for speech and language therapy. Pupils are referred to the unit from other schools by the LEA and come from a wide catchment area which includes Ashford, Folkestone and Tenterden. The majority of pupils are transported to school in taxis or minibuses.
70. Attainment of pupils in the speech and language unit are very low compared with national expectations. Therefore, this section of the report focuses on how well pupils achieve in lessons and in relation to their individual education plans and speech and language therapy plans. Given their very special needs, pupils in both key stages achieve very well in literacy, numeracy, science, ICT, religious education, physical education and other foundation subjects taught in the unit. Pupils improve their ability to communicate very well, particularly in speaking, listening and writing because the curriculum is highly relevant with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, with a particular emphasis on developing communication skills. This includes social interaction skills, and the development of vocabulary and speech with very good specialist support from the speech and language therapist. By age seven, pupils know their letter sounds, they sound out, read and spell common words, they listen and speak confidently and write simple sentences legibly in a cursive script. By age eleven, pupils read and spell key words in topics, write stories using full stops, capital letters, commas and speech marks and express their main ideas in class discussions. Pupils therefore make very good progress in their use of spoken and written sentences within all subjects because skills of communication are enhanced as key words for reading and spelling are taught within all topics.
71. Pupils also make good progress when included in mainstream school lessons. For example in a Year 3 religious education lesson, a pupil wrote a clear sequence of sentences about the story of David and Goliath and read it out with confidence to the rest of the class. Pupils with poor co-ordination and muscle tone such as dyspraxia, make very good progress in controlling scissors when cutting and using a pencil for writing. All pupils make very good progress towards targets set in individual education plans and speech and language therapy programmes.
72. The quality of teaching at both key stages is very good so that pupils learn very well and make very good progress. Teachers have particularly high expectations for language development and develop pupils' communication skills well through the use of signs, symbols and objects of reference. They provide very clear instructions to pupils so that they listen carefully, follow instructions precisely and learn how to communicate more effectively. Teachers, the speech and language therapist and support assistants also systematically monitor pupils' progress very well, especially in language and communication, so that all pupils know precisely how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve. Teachers, support assistants and the speech and language therapist also work very well together, providing very good individual support to enhance pupils learning. Pupils therefore show display high levels of concentration, try very hard and persist when they face a difficulty
73. Lessons are well organised with a rich variety of activities and are always brisk and lively. For example in a science lesson, Year 1 pupils were shown photographs of a wind farm and were asked to explain what causes the blades of the wind turbine to move. They were then shown a toy windmill and proceeded to blow on it. Pupils noticed that their breath made it spin round and were then invited to make their own windmills. The teacher took the pupils outside to the playground and they proceeded to investigate the effects of wind power on their windmills. Pupils also used tennis rackets and detergent, forcing the rackets through the wind to make

bubbles. They were able to learn very effectively from their investigations and worked very well together. All pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lesson, experiencing a sense of wonder throughout their activities. Finally pupils helped their teacher to clear the equipment away at the end of the lesson showing very good personal development. Teachers make good use of resources, although more use could be made of computers to research such topics in history. Behaviour is always managed very well and all staff maintain very good relationships with their pupils. As a result, pupils behave very well and show great respect for staff and towards each other.

74. There are good opportunities to enrich the curriculum through the Christmas concert and participation in visits and sports event with mainstream pupils. There are very good and clear links in curriculum planning between the provision specified on pupils' statements of special educational needs, individual education plan targets, and speech and language therapy objectives. These are incorporated fully into pupils' individual learning plans. Pupils have good opportunities to learn alongside their peers in the mainstream school. All pupils are included into mainstream classes for a minimum of three foundation subjects, including physical education and religious education. Some pupils attend full time, initially with support which is gradually phased out. Further opportunities could be provided, but there are currently not enough support assistants to facilitate such opportunities.
75. The systems for assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are very good and these are very well used in planning. Very good individual education plans are formulated and reviewed each half term. Legal requirements for annual reviews and reporting to parents on pupils' achievements are fully met. The speech and language therapist carries out a full diagnostic assessment in consultation with teachers and learning support assistants to establish a baseline of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in speech and vocabulary. She then formulates a specific speech and language therapy programme for each pupil using this information very effectively. The speech and language therapist also liaises closely with outside agencies such as the occupational therapists to fine tune specific programmes for particular pupils with additional special educational needs. Progress is systematically reviewed and recorded on a weekly basis. However, assessment information is not always taken fully into account in subject planning within mainstream classes
76. Parents regard the provision of the unit very highly and are pleased that their children are there. They have the opportunity to become fully involved in annual and individual education plan reviews and parents receive good information on their children's achievements in the annual reports. However, insufficient information is provided to parents on the work of the unit and termly reports to parents only outline curriculum coverage with insufficient detail on the progress pupils are making in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
77. The head of the unit provides good leadership and manages the provision well. Members of staff are well trained but there are not enough learning support assistants to support more inclusion opportunities for pupils. There is insufficient liaison between the special needs co-ordinator and the head of the unit to ensure greater opportunities for inclusion and more effective planning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further and ensure good progress for all pupils, the head teacher, staff and governors should:

Improve standards further in English throughout the school by:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their speaking skills; (90)
- targeting questions to involve all pupils during lessons; (91)
- placing greater emphasis on imaginative writing and on widening pupils' vocabulary and range of expression; (94)
- improving the accuracy of pupils' spelling and punctuation. (89)

Improve standards further in mathematics throughout the school by:

- ensuring all assessment records are kept up to date and used fully in Key Stage 1; (103)
- analysing test results further to identify areas for raising the achievement of boys; (100)
- developing the marking policy to include individual targets for each pupil's improvement. (106)

Raise standards in science even further by:

- ensuring work is planned that meets the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment; (114)
- making sure that teachers' marking makes clear how pupils can improve; (114)
- developing a system of recorded assessment that helps identify each pupil's progress; (114)
- focusing on the need for pupils to explore, explain and record. (113)

Build on the recent developments in information and communication technology by:

- increasing the provision for all pupils to practise skills regularly; (137, 142)
- developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider aspects of information and communication technology apart from computers; (142)
- ensuring activities are planned that meet the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment; (141)
- developing records that help identify individual progress of pupils. (143)

Improve the management of the school further by:

- ensuring that information on the strengths and weaknesses in different subjects is used to inform discussion of the development plan in order to improve the work of the school; (59)
- improving the role of the subject co-ordinator to include monitoring and evaluation in the subject in order to improve pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. (59)

The following minor points for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- improve the practice and provision connected with pupils' welfare by implementing comprehensive risk assessment; (38)
- improve the quality of written reports to parents to include the pupil's strengths and weaknesses in each subject. (57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

96

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	21	38	32	2	1	0

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

3% of lessons were not graded

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	51	382
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	150

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	40
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	211

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	57

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.1
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	27	29	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	22
	Girls	24	22	24
	Total	39	37	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (76)	66 (81)	82 (89)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	19	19
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	39	43	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (73)	77 (73)	77 (83)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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
	2000	24	29	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	19
	Girls	12	13	22
	Total	24	24	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (29)	45 (34)	77 (34)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	19
	Girls	13	16	22
	Total	25	28	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (28)	54 (34)	79 (34)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	385
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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	7	1
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: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	24.25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	540

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25 (FTE)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	896,269
Total expenditure	878,335
Expenditure per pupil	1974
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,934
Balance carried forward to next year	33,868

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	434
Number of questionnaires returned	73

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	28	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	39	5	4	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	41	7	3	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	37	16	3	12
The teaching is good.	59	26	8	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	37	16	3	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	27	7	1	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	37	4	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	38	34	21	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	48	33	7	5	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	41	10	0	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	51	10	3	10

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

78. Children enter the nursery after their third birthday on a part-time basis. They move to one of the two reception classes during the year in which they become five in September or January. Some children transfer to other primary schools nearer to their home. There are two intakes of children in the nursery and reception classes, one in September and the other in January. The school has very good induction arrangements, which provide a caring introduction to school life for both children and their parents. These include a private interview, when parents meet the Foundation Stage co-ordinator and contribute valuable information which is later used well in planning to meet children's needs. The co-ordinator also gives a talk to parents about the nursery and reception curriculum, homework and the school's routines and rules. Parents are given a useful pack of materials for future reference.
79. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is consistently good in the nursery. As a result children achieve well. Due to the very low attainment level upon entry to the reception classes, by the end of the reception year standards of attainment are still well below the expected level for children of this age in most areas of learning. However, they reach expected levels in personal and social skills and in physical development. This is a major triumph and is directly attributable to the good teaching quality and the highly effective management in the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

80. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given very high priority and as a result, they achieve very well and attain standards equal to those expected for this age group by the end of the reception year. Children are treated with great respect and kindness. They are shown very good examples to follow by both teaching and non-teaching staff. Additionally, teachers use effective strategies for managing children and in so doing form very good, trusting relationships with them. As a result, children behave well, work hard and build confidence and self-esteem effectively. Just the right amount of assistance is given so that they develop independence and self care skills satisfactorily. They are given good, well-structured opportunities to work and play together. Children relate well to each other and they know and follow the classroom routines and rules satisfactorily. In developing an awareness of cultures and traditions, they take part happily and profitably in the Nativity play and the Chinese New Year celebrations.

Communication, language and literacy

81. Basic communication, language and literacy skills are taught well and promoted conscientiously throughout all areas of learning. Nonetheless, due to their very low starting point, children's attainment levels are well below expectations by the end of the reception year. They have limited vocabulary with which to express themselves and many have unclear articulation. However, due to their confidence being built so effectively most children have a go at answering questions. Contributing to discussions is more difficult, but with skilled encouragement children succeed. In one of the reception classes not enough opportunity is given to develop this particular skill; instead, questions encourage simple, one-word answers.
82. Children enjoy listening to stories such as 'Little Rabbit Foo Foo' and 'Rainbow Fish'. An appropriate focus is placed on vocabulary, story sequencing, characters and plot, and good use is made of resources such as pictures and toys to aid children's understanding. There is good scope for children to learn initial sounds through a variety of activities, rhymes and jingles. By the end of the reception year most children recognise their own name and write it accurately, holding the pencil properly. Some children are beginning to read very simple texts but the majority do not gain the level of reading skills and independence expected for their

age. It is the same in writing. Children write by copying over or under their teachers' writing but few write simple, regular words and one or two simple sentences with sufficient independence. This is not helped in one of the reception classes when writing activities and tasks are not set to match children's different abilities, but instead the same level of task is given to all. When this happens, the more able children do not make sufficient progress.

Mathematical development

83. Teaching of basic mathematical skills is good, enabling children to achieve well. Classroom assistants contribute significantly here as they support activities very well so that children are gainfully occupied and move forward in their learning. Despite this good provision, children attain standards in mathematical development that are well below those expected for their age, due mainly to their very low starting point. Lack of good mathematical resources, such as counting equipment, visual aids and up-to-date games for use by reception children, also detracts from attainment. Only the higher attaining children count, quantify, order, recognise and write numbers to 10 and beyond. Most children are becoming familiar with quantities only to 5 and have difficulty in matching numerals to amounts. They also have difficulty in writing the numerals independently. Mathematical language and problem-solving skills are promoted well as children work and play. For example, while playing in the water, they compare more and less amounts and when baking they count the number of chocolate squares needed to cover the marshmallow dipsticks.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. Children enter the nursery with very poor general knowledge, but due to good teaching and a rich variety of opportunities they achieve well in developing knowledge and understanding of the world. However, by the end of the reception year they attain standards well below expectations for their age. Fittingly, children are given very good, first-hand, experiences. They visit a zoo, a rare-breeds farm, the seaside and a garden centre. They walk in the woodlands by the school and observe seasonal changes and wildlife such as birds and squirrels. They collect autumn leaves, cones and fallen twigs to focus discussions and remind them of their walks. They plant bulbs and seeds and observe their growth. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed more rapidly as a direct result of such experiences. People from the community such as the nurse and fireman come into school to tell the children about their work. By comparing old and new toys they begin to be aware of the past. They choose resources successfully and build junk model hibernating boxes for hedgehogs. They use computer programmes to support reading and number work and are beginning to operate the mouse successfully. All the time language is being promoted rigorously.

Physical development

85. Physical development is nurtured very well and as a result children attain standards equal to those expected by the end of the reception year. Every day they use an assortment of large apparatus for climbing and balancing and demonstrate secure body management skills. They use balls for throwing, catching and kicking appropriately. They play a variety of circle games when they sing and take turns. All the time they are encouraged to move safely noticing the position of others and the space around them. They move with appropriate co-ordination showing secure running, jumping and skipping movements. In strengthening fingers the school follows a very careful scheme which links usefully to the development of handwriting. Children use a good variety of tools and toys to aid this development. As a result they hold small equipment firmly.

Creative development

86. Teaching of artistic skills is good and as a result, children achieve very well. By the end of the reception year they attain standards just a little below those expected for their age. Stimulating

activities in art, music, drama and imaginative play nurture skills very well. Children learn to mix paint and apply it to make colourful self-portraits. Using card combs they paint wavy sea patterns and with corks and pieces of wood print sunflowers to pleasing effects. They learn techniques such as marbling to good effect and mould clay into shell and fish shapes suitably. For numerous reasons they choose and apply a wide variety of collage materials interestingly. The nursery children visit a neighbouring sensory unit where they gain greatly by looking, listening, touching and smelling. In dance lessons they listen to music and look at pictures to inspire them to move creatively. However, in one of the reception classes, there is an inclination to give too much direction and not enough freedom to be imaginative and as a result their creative development is not enhanced. Generally children are suitably motivated and support is gauged accurately enabling them to develop very well. As a result they concentrate well and gain great enjoyment from their tasks and activities.

87. The early years department is very well led and managed by a co-ordinator who has very good knowledge and understanding of how young children think and learn. She is very knowledgeable about the curriculum and is highly trained in current initiatives. Methods for measuring progress and attainment are good and include comments made while observing children at work. Information gained through such activities is used profitably in planning to meet children's needs. The co-ordinator oversees the reception teachers' planning and has begun to monitor teaching. However, in one class, not enough focus is given to ensuring that curricular delivery will meet the expectations of the early learning goals at the end of the reception stage. The co-ordinator is aware of the shortage of resources for use by the reception children and has plans to remedy it.

ENGLISH

88. Pupils' standards in the latest national English tests are well below the national average at the ages of seven and eleven. The results of the most recent national tests show that seven year old pupils' attainments in reading and writing is close to the average found in schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals but not necessarily with such an extremely high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. This finding is confirmed by analysis of pupils' recent work, lesson observations and discussions with pupils which all show that pupils are achieving well. At the age of eleven, pupils' attainment in the national tests is just below average compared with schools of similar type. The extremely high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the pupils in the two speech and language units have affected the standards negatively. It is important to note that nearly all pupils on the register of special educational needs attained the levels expected for their age in the most recent annual national tests.
89. Some weaknesses highlighted in the previous report, for example in spelling and handwriting, remain. However, some of the weaknesses in teaching, especially those associated with planning and expectations, have been successfully resolved. The literacy hour is now successfully implemented. It enables all teachers to plan confidently, sure of the ground they are to cover and the order in which knowledge and skills are to be taught. Teachers' expectations are now better informed and, as a result, lessons are generally better matched to the overall needs of the class. However, some weaknesses persist in the precision with which tasks are matched to the needs of individual pupils. At the time of the previous report, teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 and sound at Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was found during this inspection. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 with a third of lessons being good or better. At Key Stage 2, the teaching of English is good overall and very good in both Year 6 classes. This is closely reflected in the pattern of pupils' achievement in relation to their abilities. Notably, the very good teaching in Year 6 is mirrored by an upturn in pupils' achievement and enthusiasm.
90. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well below average at both key stages. By the age of seven, most pupils listen carefully to the teacher and follow spoken instructions appropriately. However, while pupils are attentive to teachers, many do not accurately recall

words or sentences that have been discussed and shared. Many find it difficult to concentrate for more than a few minutes. All but a small minority of pupils find difficulty in conversing at a level appropriate for their age, for example, when discussing the books they read. Most pupils use a restricted vocabulary and cannot, for example, find the words to describe characters in a book they have read and enjoyed. Most pupils speak in brief, simple sentences. This limits their ability to handle ideas. By the time they are eleven, pupils listen with greater accuracy and sustain concentration much better. However, with few exceptions, pupils still lack the range of vocabulary needed to do justice to their ideas and feelings. Most have difficulty in speaking at any length and in organising ideas while speaking. These weaknesses limit pupils' capacity to express their opinions clearly.

91. Teachers have identified pupils' speaking and listening as a key area for improvement. In some lessons in both key stages, teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to listen sensitively and improve their confidence in speaking. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2, the teacher modulated her voice to draw pupils' attention to subtleties of meaning in a shared text. Many pupils responded to this by varying their own reading of the passage in a way that accurately reflected events and aspects of character. In two very good lessons in Year 6, teachers questioned pupils about the characteristics of journalistic style in a way that extended pupils' vocabulary and required them to formulate explanations. Many teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to improve their speaking and listening in lessons other than English. However, few teachers make the best of use of plenary sessions during the literacy hour. In most observed lessons, insufficient time was allowed for the final plenary to be effective in consolidating and extending learning. In almost all English lessons, teachers choose the pupils who raise their hands to answer questions and allow others to remain passive. As a result, many pupils are denied an important opportunity to develop confidence in speaking. In most lessons, more varied, better targeted questioning is required to ensure that all pupils benefit fully from discussions.
92. Pupils' attainment in reading is well below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. By the time they are seven, most pupils recognise a range of commonly occurring words and can read familiar texts but few are confident in approaching books that they do not already know. Most pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words. However, while most pupils recognise the sounds associated with individual letters, many do not know the sounds that groups of letters make and consequently find it difficult to build words. Many pupils identify passages or characters they like in a familiar story and more able readers identify favourite books saying what they like about them. However, few pupils have the confidence and range of expression to talk about their reading in suitable depth. Pupils of all abilities clearly enjoy reading and take pride in their achievements. This reflects teachers' success in communicating to pupils the importance of reading and the pleasure it gives.
93. By the time they are eleven, pupils of all abilities show great enthusiasm for books. This results primarily from the thoughtful, imaginative teaching in Year 6, which opens pupils' eyes to a range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and plays. Teachers have been careful to provide a wide range of books that match pupils' differing interests and abilities. Most pupils in Year 6 speak of visiting the local library to choose books for pleasure or research. Many take obvious delight in humorous verse or in the characters and unfolding events in stories, telling how they return to favourite books again and again. Most pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are confident and fluent with books that are familiar and relatively undemanding for their age. However, at least half of all pupils make too many mistakes when reading and few bring their reading to life by means of appropriate expression. Many pupils understand the overall sense of suitably matched texts but find it difficult to draw conclusions or justify their opinions by referring to words or passages they have read. Pupils are able to use a dictionary and thesaurus effectively and use a number of resources, including the Internet, to gain information. However, they are generally not confident or independent in doing so.

94. Pupils' attainment in writing is well below the national average at both key stages. By the time they are seven, most pupils write in simple phrases and find it difficult to write soundly structured sentences without support. Pupils sequence ideas, for example, when telling their news, but rarely use full stops or capital letters correctly. The content of most pupils' writing is limited to simple accounts drawn from their recent experience or parts of a shared story. By the time they are eleven, pupils cover a broader range of writing including, for example, stories, character studies, letters to complain or inform and factual accounts. More able pupils show suitable adaptation of style to purpose. Most pupils sequence ideas logically and write soundly formed sentences. However, few pupils use a sufficient variety of words and expressions. As a result, their descriptive and imaginative writing is underdeveloped. Few pupils write sentences that link ideas in a sufficiently complex way. This limits their capacity to handle ideas in writing at a suitable level. Teachers are seeking to improve this, for example by teaching pupils a range of connecting words, but so far pupils have not built these features into their own writing. Teachers in both key stages work hard to enrich pupils' vocabulary and range of expression, for example through shared reading. However, teachers plan too few opportunities for pupils to practise extending their own writing and developing its imaginative qualities.
95. The school has identified spelling as a particular area of weakness and an intensive programme has produced significant improvements in pupils' measured spelling attainments. Nevertheless, in their own writing pupils still spell many commonly occurring words incorrectly. Many pupils at Key Stage 1 lack any logical approach to spelling new words. This parallels the insecurity they experience in reading when trying to build unfamiliar words from sounds. Pupils at both key stages make numerous grammatical errors and have not gained a suitable grasp of punctuation. While many pupils attain a better level of accuracy in exercises focusing on a single aspect of usage, for example punctuation, this is rarely carried over to their own writing. Teachers' marking, while positive and encouraging in tone, is not always constructive or informative for pupils. When, as in some lessons, it is supported by close discussion between teacher and pupil, it helps pupils improve. Many teachers encourage pupils to re-draft their work. This is also useful in improving the presentation and accuracy of pupils writing. The literacy hour is proving valuable in introducing pupils to a range of texts and in focusing pupils' attention on features of language, for example the use of paragraphs. However, much of the writing seen during the literacy hour does not call enough on pupils to develop their own thinking and articulate it in their own words. Pupils' handwriting is often poor. Some pupils in Year 2 and most in Year 6 write a clearly legible joined script, but there is significant variation between the handwriting in different classes in the same age group and no clear improvement through the school. More attention needs to be given to ensuring that the recently adopted handwriting scheme is consistently implemented.
96. Pupils with special educational needs learn successfully during most English lessons because they are very well supported. Teachers group pupils carefully to bring about a better match of work to pupils' abilities. This is generally effective, but in some lessons, insufficient attention is paid in the tasks set to significant differences in pupils' individual abilities. As a result, some pupils require almost continuous support if they are to finish their work. This limits their independence and results in ineffective learning.
97. Pupils behave well in lessons at both key stages. They get on well with one another and, especially at the end of Key Stage 2, co-operate and support each other very effectively. At both key stages, pupils settle quickly to their work and are generally well organized. They are enthusiastic about their work and try hard to achieve their best. These qualities reflect teachers' secure management, their success in engaging with pupils and the very good relationships that prevail in most lessons.
98. The subject co-ordinator is effective and well informed. She provides a very good example of successful practice in her own teaching. She has a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and has used this to plan appropriate action to improve pupils' speaking, listening and spelling. A programme of monitoring teaching and learning has

begun but so far has had little impact as only five classes have been covered. Monitoring needs to be extended to include all classes to ensure that plans for improvement are systematically implemented.

MATHEMATICS

99. The results of the 2000 statutory assessments show that the percentage of pupils in Year 2 reaching the expected level for their age is well below the national average. The results for the higher attaining pupils are slightly better, but are still below the average. Girls outperformed boys. Standards have fallen each year between 1998 and 2000. When compared to similar schools these results are above average. However, an examination of pupils' current work confirms that standards are beginning to rise again.
100. The test results in 2000 show that the numbers of all pupils reaching the expected level for their age in Year 6 is very low when compared to schools nationally. However, they are just below average when compared to similar schools. Girls' results are usually better than boys. Results have risen moderately each year since 1998. A scrutiny of pupils' work confirms standards continue to rise steadily.
101. There is an above average number of pupils with learning difficulties with many more boys than girls on the register of special educational needs. For example in a Key Stage 1 class 14 pupils out of 22 had special needs, 11 of whom were boys. In a Key Stage 2 ability set 28 of the 29 pupils were on this register, 20 of whom were boys. All of these pupils have individual education plans and the learning support assistants work closely and effectively with individuals and small groups.
102. Progress since the last report has been satisfactory in a number of areas. The computer suite ensures all pupils now have consistent access to data handling and, although standards are below national expectation, progress is being made. Planning is now good in both key stages and the numeracy strategy is now taught effectively. Although there are still occasions when some pupils are not challenged, the organisation of pupils into ability groups in Key Stage 2 is working well. Progress for pupils with special needs has improved from satisfactory to good.
103. However, some of the issues in the last report, although partly addressed, still need further development. Marking contains praise, but more diagnostic comments are required. Targets for improvement are identified through a very good and detailed tracking process for both classes and individuals, but these are not used to best effect. For example Key Stage 1 records are not yet up to date, even though pupils are half way through the school year. In Key Stage 2 there are very good strategies to monitor each individual pupil's progress, but they have yet to be used. There is no analysis of any assessments to try to identify the particular difficulties boys may have in learning in numeracy when compared to girls. As a result there is no specific strategy to deal with the high number of boys on the register of special educational needs.
104. By the age of seven pupils are still developing their understanding of numbers. They recognise odd and even numbers, are able to recall some addition and subtraction facts to ten, and can use this knowledge in simple everyday problems. Pupils recognise simple fractions. However, in all of these operations the majority of pupils need time to think, but with good prompting from the teacher, or assistants, they usually get most of the answers correct. They recognise common two- and three-dimensional shapes, can identify a line of symmetry, and most remember triangle, square, circle and rectangle as well as cube, pyramid and sphere. Standards are rising, but because of the high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties they remain well below national averages.
105. Standards have risen in Key Stage 2 mainly as a result of the good teaching of older pupils and the introduction of similar ability classes in numeracy. The school has set a challenging target of six out of ten pupils to achieve an average standard or above in national tests in

2001. Pupils in a higher ability class at the end of Key Stage 2 know table facts to 10 x 10 and recall them quickly and accurately. Pupils' books contain a range of further work in number. For example they work with confidence in such number operations as 522×31 or 14.28×8 or $7684 \div 9$, expressing the answer as a decimal. They apply this knowledge to a range of everyday problems. In shape work they measure angles accurately, draw angles to the nearest degree, construct shapes, and calculate areas and volumes. In the lowest ability class, with every pupil but one on the register of special needs, these pupils multiply numbers such as 326 by 10 or 100 confidently. They measure and draw angles, such as 75° or 135° , accurately and independently. Although standards are still below national expectations, overall they are rising more quickly than before and this confirms satisfactory progress in pupils' achievements since Key Stage 1.

106. The quality of teaching is good overall, and very good in Year 6. All teachers plan their numeracy lessons well, setting out what they expect pupils to learn clearly. Resources such as overhead projectors, whiteboards or number squares are chosen carefully and used well. Relationships with pupils are often very good, and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Learning support assistants work confidently with individuals, or small groups of pupils. Questions are used very effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and their answers are valued and rewarded with praise and encouragement. In the very best lessons there is demanding content and a vigorous pace so that learning is challenging and rewarding. Where, on the very small number of occasions, lessons are unsatisfactory work is not matched to pupils' abilities appropriately, and as a consequence pupils either learn too little, or cannot understand what they are supposed to be doing. Further developments are needed in all classes in marking and assessment.

107. Pupils try hard in all lessons. They listen to explanations and respond to teachers' questions with enthusiasm. They persevere when they are set tasks to do, and show an interest in numbers. Their work is neat and set out clearly. Pupils help each other, and listen to each other's answers respectfully, even when mistakes are made. They contribute to their own learning well.

108. The co-ordinator assumed responsibility for mathematics in September. A number of initiatives are now in place but they need further development. There has been a concentration on Years 5 and 6 for monitoring of teaching quality. As yet, there has been very little monitoring of teaching in other year groups. This needs to be introduced, together with subsequent discussions and written reviews on the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching so that the quality can be improved further. Government initiatives for improving the understanding and skills of pupils during after-school activities have not yet been implemented.

SCIENCE

109. Standards are below average by the time pupils are seven and eleven years of age. These are similar to those identified at the last inspection. Teachers' assessments for pupils who were seven and eleven in 2000 indicate test results well below average compared with all schools. However, compared with similar schools, results were above average by the time pupils left at eleven. There has been a sharp rise in the level of knowledge and understanding of pupils as they reach eleven and this is due to the high quality of teaching in Year 6 in particular.

110. Most pupils make satisfactory progress because the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However, both progress and teaching are better in Key Stage 2 because more teachers at this level focus on a fast pace of learning, a clear step-by-step progression and a greater emphasis on developing pupils' ability to think for themselves through scientific approaches of prediction and analysis. Pupils with special educational needs, and with English as an additional language, make good progress because learning support assistants work closely with teachers to ensure that these pupils gain the maximum value from their lessons.

111. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of this subject that enables them to extend pupils' learning of various aspects of science with confidence. The quality of teachers' planning is secure in that the objectives of lessons are clearly thought through, identified and taught effectively. However, the main weakness lies in the lack of teachers' understanding of the need to plan different levels of work for pupils of varying abilities, particularly for higher attaining pupils. As a result, although these pupils make satisfactory progress with their learning, it should be better. A further weakness in the use of longer term planning is evident in Key Stage 1 where some work in Year 1 is very similar to that in Year 2 in terms of difficulty. This lessens the degree of progress that pupils make with their learning, as with work of the division of various materials into groups, for example.
112. Most teachers expect pupils to listen carefully and work hard and they use a variety of methods successfully to ensure that this happens. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 begin to identify the relationship between the speed of toy cars and the gradient of ramps as they increase their knowledge and understanding of the effect of gravity. They work together happily on various experiments because teachers provide them with suitable opportunities to explore and test out various ideas. Teachers are aware of the need to continue to focus on the development of pupils' ability to think for themselves, to work out their own solutions and to learn to predict what may happen. Pupils lack confidence in speaking out and sharing their opinions with others and their range of vocabulary is limited.
113. In Year 3, pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of the various properties of magnets. They carry out experiments with enthusiasm because teachers make clear to them what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Pupils learn about the conductivity of various materials in Year 4 and increase the depth of their understanding of the differences between gases, liquids and solids in Year 5. By Year 6, they become increasingly confident in their ability to carry out an investigation as they test out variations in pulse rate as a result of exercise. Teaching at this level is of high quality for a number of reasons that include perceptive and probing questioning techniques that encourage pupils to think ahead and work out possible predictions of what might happen. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to suggest ways of carrying out scientific investigations followed by the task of explaining how and why they had done it that way.
114. The way in which records are kept to inform teachers about how well pupils are achieving in science is unsatisfactory. At present, although verbal assessment on a one-to-one basis with pupils is good, detailed written records on how well individual pupils have mastered specific aspects of science are not in place. This affects teachers' planning of lessons and makes it difficult to ensure that the activities planned match the needs of the pupils. The quality of marking of pupils' work is also variable. Where it is good, as in Year 6, written comments make clear to pupils how they may improve their work but this is not common practice throughout the school. Teachers do not make sufficient use of computer programs to enhance pupils' learning in this subject, particularly with reference to collating and recording results for further analysis.
115. The co-ordinator for science is having a positive effect on the development of this subject because he has a very clear understanding of what his role involves. He leads by example and provides in-class support through demonstration lessons and guidance for in-service training, for example. Resources have been greatly increased and suitably catalogued for ease of use and he has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done next for the subject to improve.

ART AND DESIGN

116. Attainments of seven year olds meet with the levels expected for their age and those of eleven year olds are above the level expected. This shows an improvement over the previous inspection, when standards were as expected in Key Stage 1 but below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. There is now a scheme of work in place to aid teachers in their planning, but all teachers do not consistently follow this and this presents difficulties in ensuring that pupils receive experiences that enable them to develop their skills and knowledge. There are also still too few opportunities for pupils to work in three dimensions. Year 4 pupils made small three-dimensional chairs but other similar work is rare. However, although pupils are not provided with a full range of experiences the quality of the two-dimensional work is high.
117. Key Stage 1 pupils have produced a range of sound quality pencil drawings. For example, they have produced good quality drawings of flowers that have been carefully observed and recorded. They mix paint colours carefully to produce a variety of shades. For instance, in one good lesson they used red, yellow and blue paint to make different shades of green, orange, purple and brown. Such activities give pupils valuable experiences that develop a sense of colour and the skills to produce them. These skills have led to the ability to use ranges of colour in different contexts. Year 2 pupils produced interesting silhouettes of buildings done on a red background with different hues of red and yellow to represent the Great Fire of London. They use ICT to produce and print coloured patterns of shapes as a way of combining the skills they have learned during ICT lessons with art lessons.
118. Eleven year old pupils develop an understanding of different styles and art techniques. They examine and discuss a variety of paintings and exchange views on how appropriate different techniques are to convey the appropriate mood of the paintings. They are taught directly and successfully how to use the techniques and then produce their own efforts at reproducing moods and pictures using a range of styles. They are taught to paint competently in the styles of different well-known artists. For example, they produce paintings in the style of Monet copying his beach theme. Year 5 paintings of shoes, bottles and vases are also of good quality. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils attempt and produce good quality observational drawings of the patterns in the soles of shoes. They understand that artwork has practical uses by using their designs for real purposes. They use their previously designed patterns for making small samples of wallpaper and curtains or bathroom tiles and coffee mugs.
119. Teachers use sketchbooks effectively to enable Key Stage 2 pupils to develop their drawing skills. The quality of teaching is sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers adopt useful strategies to enable pupils to consolidate their skills. For example, a Year 2 teacher encouraged pupils to paint small circles of different shades of colour and record next to them how the shades were produced. This enabled pupils to remember the process more easily and to reproduce the colours in the future. Some teachers use a good range of resources to give pupils a rich range of visual experiences. A Year 6 teacher, for instance, showed the pupils a wide range of paintings on the same theme. The different ways artists had depicted trees provided pupils with a valuable lesson on the variety of techniques and styles that artists use. Questions are usually open ended, giving pupils opportunities to air their own views on the paintings and enable them to grow in confidence as they realise that their personal view is acceptable and valued.
120. The art and design co-ordinator has been recently appointed. A newly produced policy is still in draft form and has not yet been fully discussed by the staff nor ratified by the governors. Plans have been monitored but, as yet, no feedback has been given on their quality.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. Standards in design and technology are below average at the end of both key stages, though there is an upturn in attainment in Year 6. This differs from the findings of the previous report, when standards were judged to be average at Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. At that time, a weakness was identified in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2. This weakness is no longer found. The arrangement of the timetable allowed only two design and technology lessons to be seen during the current inspection, one in each key stage. These lessons, together with discussion with pupils and a review of pupils' past work all confirm that the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 has improved since the last inspection and is good.
122. Year 2 pupils made vehicles of their own design. The teacher had prepared the pupils well, giving them a good understanding of the steps that precede making. Pupils had first drawn their vehicle, paying attention to detail and labelling its different parts. They had tested out different wheel and axle arrangements and studied technical vocabulary such as engine, axle and chassis. With the teacher's help, they agreed two key design criteria: that the wheels must go round properly and that the vehicle should not break apart. Pupils constructed their vehicle, selecting materials and shaping and joining components in different ways. They discussed and solved emergent problems, such as how to adjust the vehicle's height off the ground by varying the size of wheel or the positioning of the axle. Pupils then began to evaluate their work, saying whether they were pleased with it, whether it worked as they had planned and if they would change anything. Pupils gained great satisfaction from the lesson. They enjoyed their work and were eager to explain the details of their vehicle. They worked safely and, during the practical tasks, with suitable independence. However, at all stages in the process that required reading or writing, pupils were very dependent on the guidance of the teacher and learning support assistant. The generally effective learning that pupils achieved reflected the quality of teaching. The lesson was well organised and interesting for pupils. The practical tasks were complemented by opportunities to plan, reflect and evaluate. This extended pupils' understanding of the design process and gave them the satisfaction of seeing their own work through from inception to final product.
123. The lesson seen in Year 6 was very good and promoted high quality learning across a full range of understanding and skills. Pupils of all abilities made a cover to protect a plant from the elements. Again, the lesson was preceded by well-planned initial design and careful trialling of key components. Pupils produced suitably accurate drawings showing exact measurements. They built components and evaluated them to determine how the angles of their structure should be joined and braced. Pupils agreed the criteria that their structure had to satisfy and carefully planned to work within the constraints set by available materials. Working to their plans and using their earlier experience, they measured, shaped and jointed materials to make products of which they were justifiably proud. In evaluating their work, pupils identified ways in which they would improve their product or process, for example by measuring more accurately, using materials differently or managing their time better. All pupils worked safely and behaved very well. They were keen to talk about their work and to explain the process by which their product had been designed and made. A strong feature of pupils' very good attitudes was their readiness to support and co-operate with one another. The high quality of learning and very good attitudes seen in this lesson resulted from very good teaching. Each aspect of the process was given careful thought. The teacher encouraged pupils to speculate about ways of doing things, valued their suggestions and often built on them. He showed pupils how to develop and complete a process of design and making, giving full attention to each part of the process. By means of skilful questioning he encouraged pupils to evaluate and adapt their product as it developed. He used the open-ended nature of the tasks to promote greater flexibility of thinking, effective group work and increased personal independence.
124. The previous inspection found that the curriculum in design and technology was insufficiently planned, covered and monitored. There are still some significant weaknesses with the implementation of the curriculum. The school now uses nationally available guidelines to

provide structure and impetus to learning. These are useful in clarifying for teachers the ground that is to be covered and the order in which knowledge and skills are to be taught. However, they have only recently been introduced and so far have had little impact on the design and technology curriculum as a whole. The subject co-ordinator has held post for only a few months and so far there has been little effective promotion of the subject and no monitoring. Observation of lessons, a review of pupils' work and discussion with pupils reveal isolated examples of effective learning against a background of underdevelopment. There are marked differences in the work followed by pupils in different classes within the same year group and most pupils at both key stages gain insufficient experience of design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

125. Since the previous inspection, pupils' standards of attainment have risen: they are now at the levels expected for seven and eleven year olds, whereas pupils' attainments were previously below the levels expected.
126. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, build geographical skills, knowledge and understanding well. There are two significant reasons for this. Firstly, the subject is very well led and managed by a co-ordinator who has put in place a highly structured policy and scheme of work which guide teaching and learning very well. The scheme of work is mapped out meticulously enabling teachers to develop learning meaningfully, by building on previous learning. Secondly, and to some degree consequently, the quality of teaching has improved.
127. Overall the quality of teaching is good. In Year 6 teaching is particularly good as it is highly focused and learning is matched well to pupils' specific needs and abilities. This raised quality of teaching is reflected in pupils' good attitudes to their work, good behaviour and, as indicated above, increased attainment levels. Teachers have especially good pupil management skills. In all classes, the school's behaviour policy is successfully implemented and teachers have very good relationships with pupils, which result in a purposeful and orderly learning environment. Pupils work well together and carry out tasks with good application and commitment. Good examples of this include Year 6 pupils' useful communication about aerial photographs and Year 3 pupils' profitable discussions about weather reports. In both cases pupils carry out their tasks responsibly and eagerly.
128. The work planned enables pupils to develop well. Pupils in Year 2 know about places beyond their own locality, such as Tocuaro in Mexico. They locate it on the world map, and compare features of landscape, weather and life there, with those of Ashford. They use photographs and maps usefully in their studies and begin to build geographical vocabulary such as fields, mountains and roads. Using large-scale maps of the British Isles, Year 3 pupils locate successfully the main countries and capital cities and use the mapping key successfully to apply weather symbols. Year 6 pupils concentrate very well on the task of finding information from aerial photographs. They identify whether the photograph was taken from an oblique or vertical angle, use well, previously learned vocabulary of rivers, and identify features of the landscape, weather and settlements. They continue to add to their vocabulary. Tasks set for Year 3 and 6 pupils are particularly successful because they are set at different levels of difficulty to match pupils' different abilities. Such specific provision is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils' understanding of how and why places change is not developed well enough, due to less focus being given to this aspect of learning.
129. The co-ordinator has audited the school's resources thoroughly and added to them, ensuring that they match exactly the areas of learning being covered. They have been sorted and labelled carefully so that they may be located readily by teachers. So far the co-ordinator's opportunities for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching have been limited to checking teachers' planning and advising them on how to improve curricular provision. Likewise methods for gauging how well pupils are learning have not yet been put in place. Both of these practices are insufficient in ensuring that learning is maximised. However the latter will shortly

be addressed as a priority in the co-ordinator's second set of targets for improving the subject, having most successfully achieved the first with very good effect upon teaching and learning.

HISTORY

130. Although only a small number of lessons were seen during the inspection there was sufficient further evidence from pupils' previous work, teachers' planning, photographs and current displays to confirm that the history curriculum covers the required ground.
131. In Key Stage 1 pupils' levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in history are below national expectations. During the inspection pupils aged seven were learning about the Great Fire of London. Pupils recalled considerable detail about Samuel Pepys, the date of the event, where it started and why it spread. They are able to explain these details well verbally, but when they ask questions, or communicate their ideas in writing, or try to read and use other sources of information, it is clear many find this very difficult. However, the small number of higher attaining pupils writes their own accounts of historical events. A particularly good example of this was the display of eyewitness accounts, which were imaginatively charred and torn to represent their rescue from the Great Fire.
132. A similar good display in Year 6 was about a Victorian Day, organised in the school by the class teachers. Pupils had written on 'slates' their twelve times table, under a heading 'Quarrelsome Persons are Dangerous'. Individuals had researched 'The Power of Steam' or 'The Industrial Revolution'. In discussion they are able to recall details of the day, which they enjoyed hugely. They recall facts and dates and discuss them readily. Although pupils are developing an understanding of chronology, can recall some main events, and recognise similarities and differences, they find it harder to give reasons for changes and their consequent results. They are beginning to use their literacy skills in research. However, pupils are much better at explaining their ideas verbally, and many still find it difficult to select and combine information from different sources. As a result teachers still rely too much on photocopied information in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainments are below national expectations but their achievements are sound based on the low starting point when they first are admitted to the school.
133. In the small number of lessons seen, and from an examination of pupils' work and displays around the school, teaching was good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of history and teach with enthusiasm. They use questions well to involve all pupils and skilfully encourage the less confident to contribute. Relationships are very good and the learning atmosphere is quiet, as pupils try hard to complete their work. Teachers plan their lessons well, and resources such as posters, pictures or videos support learning effectively. However, there is still too much reliance on photocopied worksheets in Key Stage 2. More opportunities should be introduced for pupils to write in their own words and to select different sources of information.
134. Pupils enjoy history. They talk readily about the past and express their ideas, knowledge and feelings enthusiastically. They find writing and recording tasks much harder than verbal discussions.
135. Progress since the last report has been satisfactory. Resources have improved to a satisfactory level. Teachers set learning objectives, plan carefully and all teaching seen was at least satisfactory or better. A scheme of work is in place and the curriculum map confirms history is taught in all classes. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the use of investigative skills at the end of Key Stage 2.
136. The scheme of work has been in place for some time, and there have been new ideas and resources introduced since its completion. The scheme now needs review and updating to take full advantage of these more recent developments.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

137. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is below the level expected for pupils both at seven and eleven years of age. The quality of pupils' use, knowledge and understanding of the subject has improved since the last inspection although, until the recent introduction of the new ICT suite, progress has remained unsatisfactory. There were two main reasons for this. Insufficient planning for direct teaching of the subject has meant that specific skills have not been introduced or built upon as pupils move from year to year. Furthermore, pupils have not had regular experience on computers to enable them to develop their skills and to use this ability to support their work in other areas of the curriculum.
138. However, the good news is the recent very positive development that is now occurring as a direct result of the recent commissioning of the new computer suite. This, combined with the rapid growth in the enthusiasm of teachers to make full use of this facility, and to increase their own overall knowledge and skills as soon as possible, has led to positive direct teaching of ICT being observed during the inspection week.
139. The quality of teaching is now at a satisfactory level as is the progress that pupils now make with their learning. This is mainly because teachers are starting to make regular use of the computer suite through which to teach whole-class lessons on specific skills. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress mainly because of the one-to-one help they receive from learning support assistants during whole-class lessons. Pupils in Year 1 develop their ability to alter the size of fonts and change the colours of their letters. They are encouraged to talk to each other about their work to discuss various ways of achieving their objectives and this is a developing strength as one of the methods of teaching now being applied throughout the school. In Year 2, pupils increase their knowledge of the use of specific keys to enable them to arrange text in different forms to make it easier to read. They are hesitant in their use of the keyboard because they have, until recently, lacked regular practice opportunities to develop these skills. However, teachers make their objectives clear at the beginning of the lesson and this helps to ensure that pupils know what they are expected to achieve.
140. In Year 3, pupils learn that computer programs can be used in various ways as they experiment with simple musical composition based upon pictorial representations of their work. Pupils throughout the school enjoy working together in the computer suite and discuss their progress sensibly with each other. However, most teachers do not make sure that pupils stop work and listen directly when whole-class instruction is in progress. As a result, pupils miss important teaching points. These have to be repeated and the rate of progress is less effective as a result. By Year 4, pupils learn to scan pictures as with their work with Celtic designs. They develop the ability to colour various sections of their designs and to save their work for future use. When the pace of lessons is fast, as with the Celtic work, teachers set clear time targets for completion of various parts of the lesson. This encourages pupils to concentrate on the task in hand and to work hard throughout.
141. In Year 5, pupils experience spreadsheets for the first time. They are introduced to the concept of simple formulae and the idea that computers will respond to specific instructions given the correct information. Although teachers plan effectively for whole-class lessons in general, as in other year groups, most teachers do not plan in sufficient detail the work at different levels of complexity for pupils of different ICT capabilities. As a result, this does not enhance their acquisition of new skills, knowledge and understanding, in particular of higher attaining pupils.
142. By Year 6, pupils know about a range of uses of ICT but they lack the specific skills and practice to put these to good effect. They are not clear about how to use a database to provide them with specific information and their understanding of spreadsheets remains limited. A few are competent in their use of e-mail but most are unable to make regular and effective use of

ICT skills to support their work in other subjects. Their knowledge and understanding of how ICT is used to support life in the wider world outside school is also limited.

143. At present, teachers do not make consistent use of a whole-school system for recording what individual pupils can and cannot do in ICT. This detracts from teachers' ability to guide and prepare pupils for the next stage of their learning. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge and personal expertise of this subject and understands what needs to be done next to improve teaching and standards further. He provides valuable help to teachers as required through personal intervention and through the development of training days and recorded guidance as with the 'red book', for example.

MUSIC

144. The attainments of pupils are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above the level expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 2. Seven year old pupils can clap rhythms copied from their teacher, sing well-known songs and accompany these using percussion instruments. They interpret simple symbols written on a flipchart by their teacher when playing musical instruments. These represent long and short sounds and pupils are able to interpret these competently. Eleven year old pupils compose music on selected themes using a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. They use recurring ostinato themes in their music very effectively to produce an appropriate feeling. For example, in a Year 6 class pupils composed very good quality music using the journey of a small stream expanding to a powerful river. They use body percussion, poetry and percussive music to perform their compositions very effectively. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory sound pictures with the aid of a variety of instruments and using large-scale pictures of the work of well-known artists as a stimulus. Older Key Stage 2 pupils sing enthusiastically and with feeling. They sing in tune with a good sense of pulse. They understand the use of dynamics in the music in order to interpret the lyrics expressively. Pupils' levels of attainment show a good improvement on the previous inspection's findings which judged them to be low compared with what was expected for seven and eleven year old pupils.
145. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and this results in a good pace of working amongst the pupils and good creative effort. This also leads to a good attitude towards work on the part of the pupils and a lively interest in the lesson. Good strategies are used to ensure that pupils acquire musical skills and knowledge. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils are challenged to make different sounds with percussion instruments to illustrate the difference between soft and loud and long and short sounds. The teacher, for instance, asked pupils to make a soft and long sound or a short and loud sound. This enabled pupils to translate their understanding into practice. Teachers plan carefully and make certain they have a clear aim for what the pupils should learn during the lesson. Because pupils know the purpose of the lesson and know how they have fared in achieving the teacher's aim they develop a satisfactory knowledge of their own learning. Teachers support pupils with special needs well and enable them to learn effectively. Pupils from the speech and language units also make good progress in their learning of music. They are integrated regularly and successfully into appropriate mainstream classes with the good support of a special needs assistant. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are higher in Key Stage 2 and this results in a higher level of attainment and more successful learning. For example, a Year 6 class was expected to be able to compose good quality music containing a repetitive theme that linked with different parts of a narrative. Pupils rose to the challenge well and produced music of high quality.
146. There is no co-ordinator for music at present. However, a number of members of staff are enthusiastic about music education and this results in appropriate musical experiences being provided for pupils. For example, the school choir participates in the local music festival each year, and small ensembles of adult musicians play for pupils to enable them to experience listening to a range of music and instruments. In addition, pupils perform their own music during Friday morning assemblies, and during the week of the inspection a professional music

group played music from different cultures. Teachers have had little professional training on music teaching and some Key Stage 1 teachers are not fully confident during music lessons. The quality and range of musical instruments is satisfactory but the quantity is insufficient for all pupils to experience playing them during lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Owing to the arrangement of the school timetable it was not possible to observe any games lessons in Key Stage 1 or athletics, games and dance in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainments are above the levels expected for seven year olds in gymnastics and dance. Attainments in gymnastics are well above the levels expected for eleven year olds and are on course to be close to the expected levels in swimming. Pupils' attainments have improved since the previous inspection of the school. At the time of the previous inspection overall levels of attainment were close to national expectations at the end of both key stages.
148. By the age of seven pupils are able to balance very competently on different parts of their body and to transfer this skill when traversing combinations of physical education equipment. For example, they climb up wooden slopes and metal ladders with or without the use of their hands and travel over and under vaulting stools or metal frames. They develop expression, rhythm and movement in dance through improvisation. They use their bodies and faces to express their feelings satisfactorily and to improve their performance of items such as the 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Pupils move around the hall effectively and work in small groups to improve their work successfully.
149. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils respond very well to excellent teaching and work very well together to construct sequences of gymnastic movements in twos or threes. The elements of their sequences flow smoothly into each other and they work very closely in unison. They show good timing, watch each other carefully to keep their movements synchronised and have good finishing skills. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson pupils performed complex movements, sometimes using mirror images of each other in parts of the sequence and at other times working very much in harmony. They jumped, twisted and rolled in a variety of ways producing short but varied performances that were a pleasure to watch. As part of the pupils' work in gymnastics they are given good opportunities to develop co-operation with others when working in pairs or as part of a group. They do this well by discussing, trying things out, practising sequences and advising each other on how their performance could be improved.
150. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good in both key stages. However, in Key Stage 2 there was an example of outstanding teaching in one of the Year 6 classes. The teaching in Key Stage 1 uses good strategies to enhance pupils' progress. Teachers give very clear instructions so that pupils know exactly what is required and the teachers' enthusiasm is passed to the pupils who are keen to extend their ideas and skills. Some lessons encompass other subjects in the curriculum and this helps to link pupils' learning with, for example, literacy. For instance, a large class story book was used to introduce a physical education lesson as a basis for dance and drama. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and plan activities that develop and extend skills. Even in Key Stage 1 teachers expect pupils to be able to plan and perform a series of linked movements during gymnastics lessons. This leads to a more rapid acquisition of skills through hard work and a high level of challenge. The good teaching in Key Stage 2 enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. Lessons are planned well and pupils are given very clear teaching on the safety aspects of physical education lessons. Good opportunities are made throughout the lessons for pupils to assess how their sequences have improved. This clearly focuses pupils' thoughts on making their best efforts during the lesson in order to make progress and gives them a good insight and knowledge of their own learning. Teachers participate fully in warm-up sessions, joining in with pupils' activities and demonstrating what to do. This provides a feeling of security for the pupils and has the effect of increasing their confidence and self-esteem. The quality of teaching compared with the previous inspection has improved. It ranged previously between

good and poor. The teaching no longer lacks challenge for pupils; there is now a good range of activities planned that extend pupils' learning and acquisition of skills.

151. The co-ordinator ensures that physical education is provided for the pupils in a satisfactory manner. This shows definite improvement since the last inspection when it was judged that the subject was not being effectively managed. Members of staff have received training in sports teaching and the resources for pupils' learning are sufficient in quality and quantity for them to make progress in acquiring and improving their skills. Pupils from the speech and language units are integrated into physical education lessons very successfully and this provides them with good opportunities to develop their learning. All elements of the physical education curriculum are covered well by the school. Key Stage 2 pupils receive swimming lessons when they are in Years 3, 4 and 5 and are transported to a council-run pool each week when it is the turn of their age group. Pupils have the chance to take part in competitive football and netball games involving pupils from other schools. Ashford Sports Association runs football and netball clubs very usefully as after-school activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

152. Since the previous inspection, pupils' standards of attainment have risen: they now meet the requirements at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, when at the time of the last inspection they were below the standards expected for both seven and eleven year olds.

153. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, build skills, knowledge and understanding well. This increased level of attainment is due to the improved quality of teaching throughout the school.

154. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are focused well and guided from the outset by clear learning objectives. In the best lessons these are shared with pupils enabling them to be aware immediately of what they are expected to concentrate on. As well as this, teachers have very good pupil management skills, which mean that lessons, as well as being focused clearly, are conducted in an orderly and purposeful atmosphere. Teachers expect pupils to behave well, which they do; relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Discussions flourish in this calm background and play an important and profitable part of lessons in all classes. Pupils from the youngest to the oldest explore the meaning of Bible, Torah and Qur'an stories. The youngest pupils consider the behaviour of the 'Prodigal Son' and the effect of it upon his hard-working brother, while older pupils talk about ways of applying the commandment, 'Love Thy Neighbour', to their own lives. Teachers value the opinions of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and speech and language difficulties. This gives them confidence to contribute to discussions and serves well in building feelings of self-worth. Other teaching strategies equally as good are used, such as varying groupings of pupils effectively for different purposes and pitching questions to involve pupils of all abilities. As a result, pupils have good, positive attitudes towards their work and spiritual, moral and social development is good.

155. With such good, careful provision, including tasks and visits which promote the learning objectives well, both infant and junior pupils attain the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Infant pupils know a variety of stories from the Bible such as 'The Good Samaritan'. They are encouraged to respect and know about world religions such as Judaism and are enthusiastic about their visit to a local synagogue where they learn at first hand about the ark, Torah, menorah and kippah. Back at school they make posters, successfully giving information about these and other significant features of Judaism. Older pupils look in greater depth at stories from both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. They make comparisons between different translations of well-known stories such as 'David and Goliath'. They concentrate on the two great commandments and how to interpret them regarding their own life. They visit a local church, name the different parts and understand how the building is used for different Christian celebrations and ceremonies such as Easter, Christmas, weddings and funerals. Pupils know that followers of Islam are called Muslims, that the mosque is their

special place of worship and the Qur'an their holy book. Basic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are promoted well in the tasks and activities undertaken in religious education throughout the school.

156. For teachers to plan and deliver the religious education curriculum as successfully as they do is the result of their high level of commitment because they have very little structured guidance to assist them, other than the locally agreed syllabus. The policy is in draft form and the scheme of work has yet to be formulated. This is due to the subject having had temporary or no leadership at all for the past few years. A new co-ordinator, with enthusiasm for the subject, has been appointed very recently. However, there is much to be done to establish secure structures to guide and support teaching and learning firmly. Not surprisingly, the absence of such structured guidance results in instances of learning being pitched at the wrong level. For example, pupils of Years 4 and 6 explore the Ten Commandments at a very similar level. The monitoring role of the co-ordinator has also yet to be developed, as too have the arrangements for measuring pupils' attainment and progress. A start has been made on building up resources for the subject but these are not stored carefully enough to preserve them in good condition for future use. Additionally they are not easily accessible to teachers as the resources room has yet to be organised.