

INSPECTION REPORT

STOKE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Lower Stoke, Rochester

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118315

Acting Headteacher: Miss R Smith

Reporting inspector: Mrs C Skinner
23160

Dates of inspection: 7th to 9th October 2002

Inspection number: 247869

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Allhallows Road Lower Stoke Nr. Rochester Kent
Postcode:	ME3 9SL
Telephone number:	01634 270268
Fax number:	01634 270268
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Stoke Community School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Wright
Date of previous inspection:	July 2000

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23160	Carole Skinner	Registered inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, music, physical education.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9691	Jon Vincent	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23434	Marie Gibbon	Team inspector	English, art, history, religious education, special educational needs, educational inclusion.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19142	Audrey Quinnell	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, geography, the foundation stage curriculum	

The inspection contractor was:

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

01227 273449

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 33 Kingsway
 London, WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stoke Community School caters for 84 pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 with similar numbers of girls and boys. It is much smaller than most primary schools. At the time of the inspection, four children were attending part-time in the Reception class. The school is currently undersubscribed and its roll is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. However, more children are due to start in the Reception class in January. Few pupils come from minority ethnic groups and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Twelve pupils (14 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs, two of whom have statements. This is below the national average. Most of these pupils have minor learning difficulties. Ten per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. There is a very high turnover of pupils: in the previous year 15 pupils joined the school and 21 left it at times other than those of the usual admission or transfer. In the past two years, six teachers have left the school and eight have been appointed, which is a very high turnover. The school has experienced difficulties with recruiting teachers. It is currently subject to a proposal for federation with another local school. Attainment on entry to the school is generally below that expected for the children's age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education for its pupils and has many good features. Good leadership and management by the headteacher and governing body have brought about improvement in standards, which are now as they should be in Year 2 and improving in Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, and good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory, and good in Years 1 and 2. Overall, the school gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, as a result of good teaching.
- The acting headteacher provides very good leadership and clear educational direction, and is supported well by governors and staff in the day-to-day management of the school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, their behaviour is good, and their personal development and relationships are very good as a result of good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school offers pupils a wide variety of interesting and stimulating learning opportunities, which are well planned and organised.
- The procedures for assessing, recording and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are very good and are used well to guide teachers in their planning.
- There is a very good partnership between the school and parents

What could be improved

- Standards in English, art and information and communication technology, which are below average in Year 6.
- The management roles of the acting deputy headteacher and those of recently appointed subject co-ordinators, which are currently in the early stages of development.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good improvement since it was last inspected in July 2000. The school's performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 has improved significantly, especially in English. Good improvement in the leadership and management of the school has been a key factor in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers now plan work effectively to meet the needs of lower, average and higher attaining pupils. The refinement of target setting for individual pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, has also helped to raise standards, as have more effective assessment procedures. The analysis of test data and rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning have been important factors in the school's improvement, which has been achieved against a background of high staff turnover, difficulties with recruiting teachers and uncertainty about the school's future. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	E	B	A
mathematics	E	E*	D	D
science	E	E*	C	C

Key

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

Standards in reading were above average in English in 2002 because 8 out of 13 pupils reached Level 4 (average) and another four reached Level 5 (above average). They were lower in mathematics because only nine reached Level 4 and three attained Level 5. In such small year groups, one pupil makes a significant difference to the school's overall performance. The school's performance in national tests is following an upward trend. The school exceeded its targets in English, but did not quite meet those in mathematics. It continues to set challenging targets for improvement. Inspection findings indicate that standards in the current Year 6 are below average in English, and average in mathematics and science. In English, standards are below average because there are very few higher attaining pupils and some whose reading and writing skills are not sufficiently well developed. Girls tend to do better than boys and the school has identified this as a priority for improvement. Pupils achieve average standards in design and technology, geography, history, physical education and religious education but standards in art and information and communication technology are below average. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, although pupils' rate of progress has been affected by high staff turnover and recruitment difficulties. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and reach average standards in all subjects except music, where, as in Year 6, there was not enough evidence to make a judgement. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, given the low standards on entry to the school. Children reach below average standards in communication, language and literacy, numeracy, creative development and physical development. Standards are average in personal and social development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show interest in all activities and concentrate well on their work. They enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are courteous and show respect for others. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, are keen to undertake jobs around the school and form very good relationships with each other and with adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is in line with the national average and there are few unauthorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

In the Year 1/2 class, teaching is very good, overall and helps pupils to make very good progress in their learning. Some good teaching was seen in every class, and there was a very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. The strongest feature of the teaching across the school is the consistently good use of target setting and ongoing assessment, which helps teachers to have a clear idea of how well pupils are progressing and what their individual needs are. Work is planned well to match the capabilities of lower, average and higher attaining pupils in each class. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory, overall, in Years 3 to 6. Good teaching in mathematics was seen in Years 5 and 6. The management of pupils' behaviour is generally good or very good, but slightly weaker in Years 3 and 4. In the Foundation Stage, expectations of the children are occasionally a little too high and activities too complicated for them to understand easily. Pupils generally show good levels of interest, concentration and independence, though this is a weaker aspect in Years 3 and 4. In Years 1 and 2, pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a very good pace and apply considerable effort to their work. These features of learning are also generally good in Years 5 and 6.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of	Good. Pupils of all ages benefit from a good range of experiences, which

the curriculum	are well planned to provide continuity in learning for pupils in mixed age classes. The curriculum is enriched by interesting extracurricular activities and effective links with the local community and other schools. There is very good provision for the pupils' personal and social development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There are good systems for identifying and supporting pupils who require additional help. Pupils have clear and appropriate targets for improvement, which are regularly reviewed. They receive good support in lessons and when withdrawn for specific help in small groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Collective worship makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, which are also enhanced by the school's very caring ethos. Social development is promoted very well through working co-operatively and opportunities for taking responsibility. Cultural development is satisfactorily planned for across the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and assessing their attainment and progress. The setting of targets for individual pupils in order to track their progress through the school is effective and helps teachers to monitor their performance carefully.

The school works very well in partnership with parents and this supports learning effectively.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, overall. The acting headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported very well by the co-ordinator for Years R, 1 and 2. They provide very good leadership in English and mathematics and have worked hard to address identified priorities for improvement. The management roles of the acting deputy headteacher and other teachers are not yet fully effective as most have joined the school recently. Good systems are in place to develop these roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They make an effective contribution to shaping the future direction of the school and act successfully as critical friends, while offering valuable support to the staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Very thorough analysis of the school's performance has identified appropriate priorities for improvement and strategies to bring this about. Governors and staff discuss ways forward and monitor progress closely. Rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is having a positive impact on raising standards of attainment.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Efficient financial planning and administration ensure that expenditure is focused on achieving educational priorities and is carefully monitored through the year. Regular reviews of expenditure and comparing the school's performance with that of other schools ensure that best value for money is obtained.

Staffing levels are satisfactory, but the school has had a very high turnover of staff in the past two years and has experienced difficulties with recruiting teachers. The accommodation is very good and this enhances learning. Resources are at least satisfactory in all subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations of their children. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school is well managed and led. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The very high turnover of teachers.

The inspection team agrees with most of the parents' positive views. Although some good teaching was seen in every class, it is not yet consistently good in the Foundation Stage or in Years 3 to 6. The inspection team also agrees with parents that the high turnover of teachers has had an adverse effect on the standards achieved by some pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. A significant number of children have poor skills in language, literacy, communication, numeracy and physical development when they enter the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning is satisfactory with some good features, and this helps children to make sound progress. Standards are below average at the end of the Reception year in communication, language and literacy, numeracy, physical development and creative development. Children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development because of the strong emphasis placed on this aspect and they achieve average standards by the end of Reception. They also make good progress and achieve average standards in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world, because they are given a broad range of first-hand experiences and practical activities.
2. In the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2002, the pupils' results were below average in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics when compared to all schools. Comparisons with similar schools show that the school's results were well below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Results have fluctuated from year to year, but have generally been below average. As small numbers of pupils take the tests each year (11 in 2002), one pupil makes a significant percentage difference to the school's figures and makes reliable comparisons with other schools more difficult. For example, in writing, nine of the 11 pupils reached Level 2 (the national average) in 2002 while in mathematics ten achieved this level. In writing, however, no pupil reached Level 3 (above average) while three pupils did so in mathematics. This largely accounted for the difference between the 'well below average' and 'average' judgements. In science, teachers' assessments showed broadly average standards at both Level 2 and Level 3.
3. After a rigorous analysis of the reasons for the lower than average standards in reading and writing, good strategies are being implemented to improve weaker areas. The inspection findings show that in Year 2 standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils had good teaching of basic skills in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 and are now building effectively on these. Work is planned well to meet the needs of lower, average and higher attaining pupils which helps them all to achieve well. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and very good teaching in the Year 1/2 class are helping to raise standards across the curriculum. Standards are in line with national expectations in all subjects where judgements were possible. There was insufficient evidence to form reliable judgements about standards in music. This represents good achievement for pupils.
4. Over the past few years, there have been fluctuating trends in the results of the national tests for Year 6 pupils. Although standards have generally been too low, they are now following an upward trend and there are strong signs of improvement. The school's results have also been affected by a very high turnover of pupils. In 2002, the pupils' results were above average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science when compared to all schools. Comparisons with similar schools show that results were well above average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. Twelve out of 13 pupils reached Level 4 (average) in both English and science, and four of these pupils reached Level 5. In mathematics, however, nine pupils reached Level 4 and three of these achieved Level 5. The school has rightly identified the reasons for the lower than average attainment in mathematics and has introduced appropriate strategies to address these, which are already having a positive effect on the progress pupils make. In 2002, the school exceeded its target for the percentage of pupils to reach Level 4 in English but fell slightly short of its target in mathematics.
5. The findings of this inspection show that standards in Year 6 are below average in English, and average in mathematics and science. In English, standards are below average because there are very few higher attaining pupils and quite a number who read hesitantly, are not secure in their understanding of phonics or spelling rules, and use a fairly limited range of vocabulary and sentence structures in their

writing. The quality of teaching is also stronger in mathematics and science for these pupils. Pupils also attain average standards in geography, history, design and technology, religious education and physical education. Standards in art and information and communication technology are below average because pupils in Year 6 have not had the breadth of experience over the past four years to enable them to reach the standards expected of 11 year olds. This situation is improving as a result of improvements in resources, curricular planning and teachers' expertise in those subjects. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Their rate of progress has been uneven because of the high turnover of teachers during the past few years and the lack of continuity in learning that this has caused.

6. The school's national test results show that boys have done better than girls in Year 2 over a three year period, while the reverse is true in Year 6. The school's own analysis of pupils' results has highlighted boys' underachievement as an issue to be addressed. Recent purchases include an additional range of reading books to interest and involve older boys in particular. The school is also aware of the need to provide boys with positive role models and has invited male writers and poets to work with pupils in school. It is too early to assess the impact of these strategies. However, no significant differences between boys' and girls' attainment were noted during this inspection.

7. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make steady and satisfactory progress against their targets and reach standards that are appropriate to their previous attainment. However, good progress is made by some pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties and by pupils who have statements of educational need. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are pleased with the effective support given to their children and the progress they make. The school also makes effective provision for higher attaining pupils and provides them with sufficiently demanding work to motivate them and sustain their interest and enthusiasm. There are good systems in place to support those pupils who enter the school part way through a school year or key stage. This ensures that teachers quickly identify their needs and are able to plan appropriate work for them, which enables pupils to make sound or good progress during their time in the school. Pupils from minority ethnic groups progress at the same rate as their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, responses to learning and behaviour have improved since the last inspection. Attitudes of children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are very good; they are good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils enjoy the safe and welcoming atmosphere that the school provides and consequently are eager to come to school. There are very good relationships between both pupils and adults built on mutual respect. Pupils show respect for each other and school property. They take responsibility seriously, feel valued and in general have a mature approach to their learning. They collaborate and co-operate willingly with their teachers and each other. This sense of community and purposeful collaboration noted as "beginning to become established" in the last inspection report is now firmly established in the school. Pupils with special educational needs also have positive attitudes towards school and form constructive relationships with adults and other pupils.

9. Behaviour in and around the school is good. However, pupils' behaviour sometimes deteriorates when they are not sufficiently involved in a lesson. Pupils are courteous and polite both to one another and to adults. A pleasant, calm and friendly atmosphere is present throughout the whole school and voices are rarely raised. No bullying or oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and there have been no exclusions during the last year.

10. Pupils' personal development is very good and is constantly fostered by the school. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility include membership of the school council, early morning helpers, 'playground pals' and monitors at assembly. Personal development is further extended by the manner in which some of these responsibilities are applied for. An example of this is the system used to select members of the school council. Pupils write a formal letter of application, make an election speech and are interviewed by teachers and other pupils. Routine tasks are carried out with quiet efficiency and self-discipline and contribute well to the smooth running of the school.

11. Children in the Foundation Stage settle into school well and enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes to their work and play and are very well behaved. They are learning to interact well with each other. They have a good relationship with their teacher and other adults in the school. The teacher ensures that they have many good opportunities to develop independent learning.

12. Attendance is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence continues to be well below the national average. Attendance registers are completed correctly and comply with statutory requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The previous inspection found that the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall. It was good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The findings of this inspection are that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, and good in Years 1 and 2, including that for Year 1 pupils who are taught alongside Reception children. The strongest teaching was seen in the Year 1/2 class, where it is very good. Of the 29 lessons observed during the inspection, two were excellent, four were very good, 14 were good and seven were satisfactory. There were two unsatisfactory lessons, one in the Foundation Stage, and one in Years 3 to 6. Overall, there has been a good improvement since the previous inspection, and this has contributed significantly to raising the standards achieved by the pupils. The strongest feature of the teaching across the school is the consistently good use of target setting and ongoing assessment, which helps teachers to have a clear idea of how well pupils are progressing and what their individual needs are. This is very good in Year 1/2.

14. The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is good in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In science, teaching and learning are good throughout the school. This is because there is a good emphasis on experimental and investigative science, as well as imparting knowledge. In Years 1 and 2, there is good teaching in religious education, art and physical education. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects except history and music, where there was not enough evidence to make a judgement. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects, except music and physical education, where, again, there was insufficient evidence to form reliable judgements.

15. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with some good features. Of the four lessons seen for Foundation Stage children, two were good, one was satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Teaching of this quality means that the children learn at a rate appropriate to their abilities and they make satisfactory progress. The teacher, the teaching assistant and learning support assistant know the children very well as individuals and are skilled at developing warm relationships. When the experienced teacher assistant is in the class, there is good quality provision for the Foundation Stage children. The teacher's planning is good; it is carefully matched to the recommended Early Learning Goals and links appropriately to the subjects of the National Curriculum. The teacher plans well for indoor and outside play. The outdoor area adjoining the classroom is spacious and the teacher plans well for this to be an integral part of the daily activities. This helps to extend the children's independent learning well. The well-organised routines enable the children to become used to the pattern of the day and they respond well to the high expectations for behaviour, attentiveness and to follow instructions. All adults in the Reception/Year 1 class listen with interest to what the children have to say and, when working with them, demonstrate good skills in helping the children to develop their language for communication. Features of the satisfactory teaching relate to the teacher's inexperience with Foundation Stage children and a tendency to expect too much of them, given their low attainment on entry to the school. One lesson was unsatisfactory because the activities were inappropriate to the stage of the children's development and they sat for too long at a single activity.

16. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. This judgement includes Year 1 pupils in the Year R/1 class. It is very good in the Year 1/2 class, with some that is excellent. Of the 12 lessons observed, two were excellent, four were very good, four were good and two were satisfactory. The very good relationships between adults and pupils underpin the consistently good

management of pupils in lessons. This ensures that they all concentrate well on learning and are interested in what they do. Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop independence as they undertake different activities in the classroom and around the school. Teachers set targets for pupils to achieve and regularly assess how well they are progressing, giving praise and encouragement which helps to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The stronger features in the Year 1/2 class include the teacher's very good expertise in teaching younger pupils and her very effective teaching of basic skills, which takes into account the differing capabilities of both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The Year 1/2 teacher has suitably high expectations of her pupils and uses a very effective range of teaching methods, which help pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding at a good pace.

17. Several lessons in the Year 1/2 class illustrated the very good features of teaching seen during the inspection. Very good teaching of literacy skills was evident when pupils learned what makes a good fairy tale. They had valuable opportunities to express their ideas and skilful questioning led them to describe features of the story and give explanations for their views. In numeracy, the very good mental mathematics session showed how carefully the teacher aimed questions at individual pupils at their own level and how skilfully questions were framed to achieve the maximum impact on learning. Also in this lesson, there was very good development of pupils' social skills as they were encouraged to work together on a shared task: "I'd really like to hear you talking to each other and helping each other to learn". In a very well planned geography lesson, pupils at different levels of attainment were given tasks that matched their capabilities and the lesson made very good use of a range of interesting resources related to the pupils' visit to Broadstairs. A science lesson illustrated the very good emphasis on developing the vocabulary appropriate to each subject. The teacher's high expectations of the pupils were evident in every lesson and all lessons were very well planned and organised.

18. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, overall. Of the 13 lessons seen during the inspection, eight were good, four were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Good teaching was seen in both classes, but there was a higher proportion in the Year 5/6 class. In this class, the teacher has established high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and has a very good rapport with the pupils, which ensures that they apply themselves to their work and concentrate well. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the classroom, which has a good effect on learning. The management of pupils' behaviour presents more of a challenge in the Year 3/4 class, where some pupils find it difficult to listen, sit still and concentrate. This sometimes detracts from the quality of their learning. Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily in both classes. There is good teaching of basic skills, such as using different words to connect parts of a sentence, and including speech in stories. However, in the lessons seen, pupils began to be restless because the whole class session at the beginning of the lesson went on for too long. Numeracy skills are taught well in Year 5/6, where pupils are given plenty of opportunity to develop and explain a range of mental strategies and there is good teaching of specific skills in the main part of the lesson. These features are less effective in Year 3/4. The unsatisfactory physical education lesson in Year 5/6 resulted from inadequate resources to support teaching and insufficient planning to ensure that all pupils were able to practise and improve their skills.

19. Good features of teaching were illustrated in several lessons. In both classes, teachers plan lessons well to cater for pupils at all levels of attainment and they set and use targets for improvement effectively. In a good history lesson in Year 3/4, the teacher's good subject knowledge enabled her to make learning interesting for the pupils as she told them about the life and duties of Henry VIII. Skilful questioning about the qualities a good king would need led effectively to pupils composing an advertisement for the job a Tudor monarch. This lesson also illustrated the effective development of literacy skills through history. A science lesson in Year 5/6 provided a good example of how pupils' investigative skills are developed, as they predicted which materials would dissolve fastest in water and then devised and carried a fair test. Good emphasis on scientific vocabulary, skilful questioning and clear explanations all contributed to pupils extending their skills of scientific enquiry.

20. In all year groups, homework is used effectively to support learning. It includes reading, spelling and numeracy for all pupils and there are more formal assignments for pupils in Years 3 to 6, who have a homework diary. Homework is linked closely to what pupils are learning in school, as when pupils in Year 1/2 were asked to go on a 'shape hunt' on their way home from school and write down what they had seen. The mathematics co-ordinator has set up a library of games and activities for pupils to take home and share with their parents.

21. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, overall, but is good and often very good for older pupils in Years 1 and 2, and good where pupils in Key Stage 2 are withdrawn for additional support for literacy. Where teaching is good and very good, there is a very clear and effective focus on pupils' needs. The targets in pupils' individual education plans identify sharply the next small steps in pupils' learning. Where provision is less effective, teachers' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' knowledge and skills is not so secure. Lesson activities, while generally appropriate, do not consistently match pupils' needs. Learning support assistants and teaching assistants provide good support in lessons, in small group work and with individual pupils. Both teachers and assistants provide good support for pupils to develop confidence and positive attitudes to school and to their work. Skilled teaching assistants provide good support for the development of pupils' basic skills, as was seen in the session for older pupils on the Additional Literacy Support programme, and in the development of pupils' skills in painting in a Year 1/2 art lesson.

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

22. Overall, the school provides a good range of relevant and worthwhile opportunities that promote its aims well. The school's previous inspection made similarly positive judgements. The curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, and religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. Total weekly teaching time meets the needs of the curriculum and time allocations are appropriate for different subjects, including pupils' personal and social education.

23. While appropriate schemes of work are in place for all subjects, some subject policies do not fully reflect current practice. A key issue in the school's previous inspection was to develop the potential of assemblies and daily collective worship to be a focus for the school's community life and pupils' personal growth. The school has addressed this key issue well. Assemblies are planned and recorded according to a half-termly theme, which reflects a mainly Christian focus and provides a clear emphasis on social and moral issues. Representatives of local churches visit the school regularly to lead collective worship and pupils visit local churches for services of special celebration. Appropriate statutory requirements are fully in place.

24. The school uses as a framework the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and units from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance to provide a whole school curriculum map. Curricular planning provides well for the needs of mixed age classes and for further refinement, as indicated in the careful and effective monitoring of the headteacher and the coordinators of core subjects. The coordinators for some subjects are new to the role and are developing their monitoring of the curriculum appropriately. The school has begun the process of adapting and further refining the units of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority but this process is not yet complete in subjects such as history and art. Planning in all subjects includes useful assessment opportunities which help teachers to adapt their planning to meet pupils' needs more closely.

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum takes full account of the nationally recommended areas of learning. A strong emphasis is placed on good first-hand experiences. Appropriate focused teaching, linked to literacy and numeracy, is carefully planned for and introduced satisfactorily to the children. The spacious outside area is good and has a covered area, which is used well. Resources are satisfactory, but there is a limited range of appropriate outdoor equipment.

26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers' planning is generally effectively matched to the range of abilities in the class across the curriculum. Where the school identifies the need for further, more focused support, programmes such as the Additional Literacy and the Early Literacy Support programmes and the Springboard mathematics programmes are effective in supporting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. A key issue in the school's previous inspection was to improve provision for pupils with special education needs by sharpening the targets on pupils' individual education plans. Teachers now have clear guidance on the writing of pupils' targets and these are monitored by the co-ordinator regularly. While the school has made good progress in establishing useful procedures for writing pupils' targets, frequent staff changes have meant that the implementation of the procedures is not yet fully effective. Progress on this key issue has been satisfactory.

27. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully and satisfactorily implemented and teachers are confident in adapting it to meet the needs of pupils in the school. The literacy hour is having a positive effect on pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2, but older pupils in the school have experienced a significant number of staff changes and their learning has been less consistent as a result. The National Numeracy Strategy is generally being implemented well and is having a positive effect on raising standards. However, there is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' mental strategies in Years 3 and 4. Literacy and numeracy skills are appropriately developed across the curriculum. In subjects such as science, pupils make notes and lists and report formally on their scientific investigations. They make measurements when carrying out experiments and sometimes record their findings in graphs and tables. In history and geography pupils make appropriate use of their skills in information and communication technology to find information about such topics as Ancient Greece and Egypt. In their work on the Tudor period, pupils use word processing skills to present their work carefully and attractively. There are some missed opportunities for older pupils to develop the skills of organising and presenting an argument or presenting their ideas and opinions in subjects such as religious education, history and geography.

28. The curriculum offered by the school is enhanced by a good range of additional opportunities. A music specialist visits the school to teach singing. Visits to places of interest in the wider local area, such as Broadstairs, Rochester and the Chatham dockyards help to develop pupils' awareness of their own environment and community. In addition to visits to the local churches, there are appropriate experiences to develop pupils' appreciation of the culture of other communities such as visits to a local synagogue and a Sikh gurdwara. The school has a good range of after school and lunchtime clubs for pupils of all ages. Pupils are interested in what the school offers and around half of the pupils participate regularly in these activities. Opportunities include thinking skills, mathematics and gardening clubs. Pupils' sporting interests and skills are catered for well in netball and gymnastics clubs and through the school's links with Arsenal Football club. Older pupils take part in inter-schools sporting activities in the summer term.

29. The aims of the school are based firmly on equality of opportunity for all pupils. This is clearly reflected in the policies for racial equality and for gifted and talented pupils. The planning of the curriculum and the careful monitoring of its effectiveness make good provision for both higher and lower attaining pupils. Where pupils are withdrawn from class for additional support, there is very clear guidance as to their return to the class and the provision for them to catch up with any work they may have missed. In practice this works well because teachers and learning support assistants know pupils well and through close monitoring of their progress, have a good understanding of their needs. There are good arrangements for assessing the needs of pupils who enter the school part-way through a year or key stage and for checking their progress. The school's very good provision for pupils' personal and social education and its supportive and caring ethos ensure that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the school's curriculum.

30. The school provides very well for pupils' personal, social and health education. The ethos of the school places a very good emphasis on the value of each individual within the school community and this has a very good effect on pupils' self esteem and confidence. There are very good opportunities for pupils to work together in groups and pairs and for older pupils to undertake responsibilities. A very good

example of this is where pupils write letters of application for the role of Early Morning Helper. Pupils raise money for national charities such as the National Children's Home, which enhances their understanding of social responsibility. There is a carefully structured programme for teaching which identifies all the appropriate elements either within subject areas such as science or religious education, or discretely within 'circle time'. Elements of citizenship, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural, sex and drugs education are carefully identified across the curriculum. The school is also involved in the Healthy Schools initiative, which is raising pupils' awareness of healthy eating.

31. There are good links with the local community that make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils visit local churches and the older residents of the community. Representatives from the fire service and the police contribute to pupils' social and personal education. The school has benefited from donations from institutions and organisations such as the Parish council and a nearby power station to enhance the school's facilities and environment. Older pupils in the school are currently taking part in an air pollution survey conducted by the University of Greenwich.

32. The school has good links with both pre-school institutions and secondary schools to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. Pupils visit their new schools both as part of the official induction programme and to attend events such as a music festival and sporting tournaments. Staff from the secondary schools visit to discuss the pupils who will transfer to their schools and information is exchanged appropriately. There is a useful link with a local secondary school which gives good support to the school's provision for information and communication technology.

33. Overall the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The previous inspection made no specific judgement of this aspect but it indicated that provision was satisfactory. There has been a good improvement in this area of the school's provision because there is clear and specific planning and good guidance to help teachers identify elements which are included in other subjects.

34. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The ethos of the school and the atmosphere in assemblies and religious education lessons encourage good respect for the pupils' own beliefs and traditions and those of others. Teachers have good guidance on the elements of spiritual development which can be identified in different subject areas. Where teaching is very good and sometimes excellent, pupils are for example, encouraged to feel and share the very special nature and significance of religious artefacts, as in a lesson in Year 1/2 when pupils were learning about objects that are special to people of the Jewish faith. There are strong links with local churches which help pupils to share and experience the faith of the community in which they live.

35. Pupils' moral development is provided for well. The school's 'Golden Rules' have a high profile in all classrooms and all staff are consistent in their recognition of the rules and in their clear explanations of right and wrong. Moral themes are specifically planned for in assemblies and in the scheme of work for pupils' personal and social education. For example, in an assembly for younger pupils, some Year 2 pupils read out their thoughts about making the right choices: " When I feel angry I used to make the wrong choice and I used to kick people. Now I go to get help". The teacher used the story of *Angry Arthur* very effectively to help pupils understand unacceptable behaviour and how to control it. "What could Arthur have done? What advice can we give him?"

36. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and is a strength of the school. The supportive and caring ethos of the school and its aims and values place a strong emphasis on respect for all individuals in the school community. There is a well-planned programme for pupils' personal, social and health education which extends across the whole curriculum. Pupils are given very good opportunities for personal responsibility in their roles as school councillors, early morning helpers and 'playground pals'. All pupils are expected to take their classroom monitors' roles seriously because they are seen as privileges and as recognition of both their good behaviour and responsible attitudes. Staff have a positive approach to managing behaviour and act as very good role models themselves. The very good relationships in the school are a direct reflection of this very good provision.

37. The provision for pupils' cultural provision is satisfactory. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to be aware of their own community and western culture in general. Developing awareness of other cultures in pupils' lives and the preparation of pupils for life in a multicultural society, while satisfactory, are weaker elements. The whole school watches a performance of a local Christmas pantomime through the support of the Parents' Association. In their work in art, pupils explore an appropriate range of the work of well known artists as they develop their understanding of how colour can portray mood and atmosphere. Teachers make good use of traditional tales as a basis for their work in literacy and also as a stimulus for their work in other areas of the curriculum. Writers, such as David Higham, and poets such as John Rice have visited the school to talk about their work and to work alongside pupils to develop their skills. Pupils' awareness of different faiths is developed well through the curriculum for religious education and pupils visit a Jewish synagogue and a Sikh gurdwara. Teachers ensure that cultural diversity is appropriately represented in the library, both in displays and in the range of books. Older pupils have good opportunities to consider issues in the wider world, as when they read children's newsroom websites. Pupils also consider world issues through the 'What's in the News' topic as part of their work in geography, and in their personal and social development lessons. However there are some missed opportunities in some subjects such as art and music to more fully explore the contributions of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school looks after its pupils very well. The caring culture promoted by every staff member ensures pupils' well-being. This, together with the family atmosphere of the school, creates a secure environment where learning can flourish. Teachers know their pupils very well and are familiar with their background and circumstances. Support and guidance for pupils are very good. The school has a comprehensive child protection policy. The headteacher is the nominated child protection officer and has received appropriate training. A learning support assistant and the school secretary are nominated first-aiders.

39. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. The school has introduced an effective system that reminds parents of their responsibilities for their childrens' attendance at school. As a result of this initiative, the absence rate is falling.

40. The school has adopted the 'Golden Rules' as a set of whole school rules. These rules, prominent in all classrooms, underpin the good behaviour throughout the school. Class teachers and pupils write individual class rules at the beginning of each school year. Both teachers and pupils monitor the effectiveness of these rules. These measures, coupled with the examples set by all staff, ensure pupils meet and enjoy the high standards of behaviour expected from them.

41. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy supported by a governor with specific responsibility for health and safety matters. In addition, class teachers are very aware of their own responsibilities. There are regular risk assessments in addition to informal appraisals carried out on a day-to-day basis. A good example seen during the inspection was the site manager placing traffic cones to enclose a lay-by and thereby ensure the safety of pupils at the beginning and end of the school day.

42. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are good. The monitoring of pupils' personal development, although informal, is very good. Where concerns arise about pupils' individual development more formal procedures are adopted. Overall, procedures for assessing pupils' progress and ensuring their welfare are very good. The school values its pupils and looks after them very well.

43. The care and support for pupils with special educational needs are good. Pupils with special educational needs have good opportunities to take part in all school activities. Their contributions are valued highly and their achievements are recognised. There are good procedures for identifying pupils' needs when they enter the school and appropriate arrangements for the regular review of their progress. Clear and useful records are kept of their progress in relation to the targets set for them, and there is good

liaison with outside agencies, which provide support. Pupils are appropriately involved in discussing their targets.

44. Children in the Foundation Stage are cared for well. Induction procedures for children starting school are very good. In the term prior to starting in the Reception class, the children come into school each week to take part in a physical development lesson with the children who will be in their class when they start school. Each week, they attend an assembly and share a playtime with the children in the Year R/1 class. The Reception class teacher or the assistant goes into the pre-school group for half an hour each week to see the children in their own environment. All of these features help to build very good, positive relationships, which greatly help the children to feel secure and happy when they start in the school.

45. Assessment procedures are very good throughout the school. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is good for all subjects, including foundation subjects. The school has a very good assessment policy. Marking is consistent across the school. It is often congratulatory and has helpful comments on how pupils can improve their work in order to raise their standard of attainment.

46. The school has developed very close links with the on-site pre-school group. From the summer term 2001, agreement was made between the pre-school supervisor and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator for the pre-school group to adopt an agreed assessment procedure. The information is passed to the Reception teacher when the children start school and is used well to inform the teacher's planning for the first half term to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the children. A Foundation Stage Profile is started for each child during the second half term in school. There is good ongoing assessment of children through close observations and recording of their development throughout the Foundation Stage. A final Foundation Stage assessment, based on close observation, takes place in the summer term before the children enter Year 1.

47. In Years 1 to 6, there is a very good range of assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science. Teachers make good use of this information to raise standards of attainment in those subjects. The results of the statutory end of key stage tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 are analysed rigorously, and the information is used to inform future planning in order to raise pupils' attainment. The school has introduced targets for individual pupils in English and mathematics, which are linked to national curriculum levels. Each term, pupils are involved well with setting their own targets and these are also shared with their parents. Pupils who do not achieve their targets are provided with extra support to help them to succeed. In the summer of 2002, the school initiated a very good system for tracking individual pupils' progress from their initial assessment in the Reception class. There are half termly and termly assessments of units of work in all subjects to help teachers to plan for future work. These assessments show clearly what lower, average and higher attaining pupils in each class have achieved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The school places great importance on working in partnership with parents and does so very well. This message is stressed in the school prospectus and applied practically through the genuine 'open door' policy adopted by the school. It was noticeable during the inspection how the headteacher and other members of staff made themselves available to parents and carers at the start and close of the school day. Some parents spend time in school helping with various tasks and some help with school trips and with the running of after-school activities. The Parent Teacher Association is very active and gives support in many ways, including raising considerable amounts of money for use by the school in its many refurbishment projects. An example of this is the renovation of the school swimming pool and help with the running costs. The majority of parents who replied to the questionnaire say that the school works closely with them and all of them feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. Parents say that they feel very involved with school. Parents care for the school and enjoy what it provides for their children.

49. Communication between home and school is very good. There are regular newsletters and parents receive information every term on what their children will be learning and the targets set for them. There are formal consultation meetings each term where teachers, pupils and parents discuss and agree targets. The annual reports on pupils' progress are personalised and very detailed. These enable parents to evaluate their children's progress and provide a good example of the thorough way the school approaches its reporting responsibilities. The school prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are informative and fulfil all statutory requirements. The home/school agreement is in place.

50. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good. Parents say that the school is a 'model for others' and their support for the school is very strong. In their view the school is excellent. This very strong parental support and involvement combined with the efforts of the Parent Teacher Association greatly enhance pupils' learning opportunities.

51. Very good relationships with parents are quickly established when their children are about to start in the Reception class. Soon after the children start school, parents are invited to discuss their progress with the Reception class teacher and to hear about what their child will experience in the coming year. Parents are made to feel very welcome to come into the school to help or discuss their child's development.

52. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well-informed about their child's progress and are made fully aware of any changes to the support their child receives. They take part in regular meetings and in the reviews organised by the school to assess the progress their child is making against their individual targets. Parents appreciate the accessibility of all staff in the school on both an informal and formal basis. The school has made appropriate adjustments to its arrangements for liaising with parents as required by the new Code of Practice.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The previous inspection reported that the school was "soundly managed by the headteacher and governing body". There has been a good improvement since that time, and the leadership and management of the school are now good. At the time of this inspection, the former deputy headteacher had taken on the role of acting headteacher, and a new deputy had just been appointed. Both of these appointments are temporary pending the outcome of the proposed federation of this school with another local school. The very high turnover of staff that was reported by the last inspection has continued to affect the school adversely, in terms of continuity of learning for the pupils and the development of the role of subject leaders. The improvement in the leadership and management of the school is all the more significant because it has been achieved against a backdrop of high staff turnover, recruitment difficulties and uncertainty about the school's future, not only because of the proposal to federate, but also the plans to build an airport on the Hoo peninsula.

54. The acting headteacher provides very good leadership and clear direction for the school and is supported well by staff, governors and parents. She has a focused vision for the school which is not clouded by doubts about its future, and has created a strong team spirit amongst staff and governors, which has enabled considerable change to be brought about in a relatively short time. In some aspects of the management of the school, such as the school improvement plan and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, there has been very good improvement since April 2002. The school is well placed to continue to improve and has a good capacity to succeed.

55. The role of the deputy headteacher, who is new to the school, is yet to be determined. The co-ordinator for Years R, 1 and 2 is very effective in the role and makes a significant contribution to the management of the school. She has worked closely with the acting headteacher since April to address the priorities identified for improvement. The effectiveness of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and improving curricular provision varies from very good to adequate. The headteacher and Year R/1/2 co-ordinator provide very good models for other staff in leading development in English and mathematics. They have set high standards for other staff to follow and are providing effective support for new

teachers to help them develop their roles. Co-ordinators who are new to the post show a sound understanding of their role. There are very good systems in place to develop these roles further as teachers become more established in the school.

56. The governors fulfil their statutory duties well and play an effective part in shaping the future direction of the school. They are kept well informed by the acting headteacher, and are confident to challenge and question, in order to fulfil their role as a critical friend. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work closely with the acting headteacher and staff to address identified areas for improvement. Governors' committees function effectively and make a good contribution to the management of the school. There is considerable evidence to show that governors visit the school regularly. Most have oversight of a particular subject, and meet with teachers to discuss the pupils' work, curricular planning and any improvements that are needed.

57. In the summer term 2002, a new school improvement plan was produced by the acting headteacher, in consultation with staff and governors, to replace the previous one, which had expired. The plan covers one year in detail and two more years in outline, and sets out the key priorities for the school to address. Priorities are clearly linked to the school's aims and there is a strong emphasis on raising standards across the curriculum. The school improvement plan provides a useful working document to guide staff and governors in planning future initiatives. Each target for improvement is based on a rigorous analysis of the areas for development, and a plan to overcome the reasons for perceived weaknesses. The plan also includes timescales, costs of implementing each task and criteria for judging its success. These criteria are not always measurable in terms of pupils' attainment. However, there are separate specific targets for individual pupils and groups to attain in each year group which are clearly related to whole school priorities.

58. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the school and taking steps to improve it. The headteacher, supported by the Local Education Authority, has set up very effective procedures for observing and giving feedback to teachers on the quality of their work. This is done each term by the headteacher and co-ordinator for Years R, 1 and 2. The arrangements for performance management form an integral part of these systems and also make an important contribution to raising standards. Performance targets are set for the headteacher and class teachers, which are directly linked to raising standards of achievement.

59. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is currently the headteacher. She has very good knowledge of pupils and the provision made by the school. This has enabled her, in the short time she has been in post, to ensure there are clear and effective procedures in place to track pupils' academic and personal progress and to maintain careful records of all dealings with outside agencies. In the school's previous inspection, a key issue for further development was the improvement of provision for pupils with special educational needs by sharpening the targets on their individual education plans and monitoring their progress more rigorously. The school has made good progress in addressing this key issue, particularly in the monitoring of pupils' progress. The school has a designated governor who has good knowledge of the school and whose effective involvement provides him with a good overview of the provision the school makes for pupils who have special educational needs. Funds allocated to the school are used to good effect and are supplemented by the school's own resources. The school's provision for special educational needs meets the new requirements of the Code of Practice.

60. The teacher responsible for the Foundation Stage is the Year 1/2 class teacher, who has a very good understanding of how young children learn. She provides very good support for the Year R/1 class teacher, who is new to the school. When the experienced teacher assistant is with the Year R/1 class, provision for the children is good, as she has received appropriate training, which enables her to have a very good understanding of the needs of young children. However, she is only timetabled to be with the class for half of the week.

61. Overall, the school uses its resources well to provide a sound and improving education for its pupils. Financial planning is good because it is clearly focused on raising standards. Financial

management and administration are good. The headteacher, administrative officer and finance committee monitor expenditure closely and efficiently. They regularly undertake reviews of expenditure to ensure that the school is achieving best value for money. The school evaluates its own performance in comparison with other similar schools and consults parents and pupils about their views. It makes effective use of specific grants to raise attainment, as in the setting up of a mathematics club and a thinking skills club. A gymnastics club, also funded through a government initiative, was introduced for pupils in Years R, 1 and 2 in response to teachers' assessments of children on entry to the school, which showed low attainment in physical development. The school has recently augmented its income by letting a room to the pre-school group and by letting the school house to tenants. The link with the pre-school group is having a beneficial effect on the children who later transfer into the school, as close liaison helps teachers to plan more effectively to meet their needs.

62. Overall, there are sufficient staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to meet the needs of the curriculum and to provide adequate support for pupils at all levels of attainment. The school has had significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitably experienced teachers and the very high turnover of staff over the past few years has inevitably affected adversely the quality of education provided for the pupils. At the time of this inspection, two of the five class teachers were new to the school and the two teachers who share the Year 3/4 class were in their second term. There is good support for staff who are new to the school. This was evident in the way the acting headteacher and Year R/1/2 co-ordinator had helped new teachers with planning lessons to ensure a smooth start to the term. Their monitoring of the new teachers is thorough and helpful.

63. Overall, the school's accommodation is very good. Classrooms are large, bright and well laid out. They are enhanced by colourful displays which celebrate pupils' achievements. The library is also large and attractively furnished and books are displayed to good effect. It provides a focal point for developing pupils' research and information and communication technology skills. The school has a large hall and a separate dining room. The premises are clean and well maintained, and this contributes to the school's welcoming ethos. The grounds are extensive and attractive, and include a pond and wildlife area and a swimming pool. Teachers make effective use of the grounds as an outdoor classroom. Both the indoor and outdoor accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage are very spacious. The classroom is brightly decorated, inviting and well organised.

64. The school has an adequate range and number of learning resources in most subjects. However, resources in music and physical education are adequate but in need of updating and repair. Learning resources for children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall, but the equipment for outdoor activities is limited. The school has a better than average ratio of computers to pupils and these are used well to support learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

(1) Improve the standards achieved in English, art and information and communication technology Years 3 to 6* by:

- continuing to improve the quality of teaching in these subjects
- developing the extent and effective use of the pupils' spoken vocabulary;
- further improving pupils' spelling and reading comprehension skills;
- extending the range of vocabulary and grammatical structures used by pupils in their writing;
- ensuring that all staff are trained and confident in teaching the schemes of work for art and information and communication technology;

(Paragraphs 5, 79-85, 87, 88, 106, 127, 129)

(2) Further develop the management role of the acting deputy headteacher and other staff with subject responsibilities by duplicating existing good practice.

(Paragraphs 53, 55, 116, 121, 126, 131, 135)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

1. Continuing to review and augment or replace resources, where necessary, to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum have a wide range of good quality resources to support teaching and learning.

(Paragraphs 64, 135, 139)

*denotes those items identified as priorities in the school improvement plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	4	14	7	2	0	0
Percentage	7	14	48	24	7	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	82
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	6	5	11
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys				
	Girls				
	Total	10	9	10	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (79)	82 (93)	91 (79)	
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys				
	Girls				
	Total	10	10	10	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (93)	91 (79)	91 (86)	
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)	

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

Where the number of boys or girls is fewer than ten, only totals are given.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	8	5	13
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys				
	Girls				
	Total	12	9	12	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (57)	69 (36)	92 (71)	
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys				
	Girls				
	Total	12	10	12	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (71)	77 (64)	92 (79)	
	National	73 (72)	(74)	(82)	

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	80	0	0
White – Irish		0	0
White – any other White background		0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean		0	0
Mixed – White and Black African		0	0
Mixed – White and Asian		0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian		0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani		0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi		0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background		0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean		0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background		0	0
Chinese		0	0
Any other ethnic group		0	0
No ethnic group recorded		0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	21

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	93

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	279439
Total expenditure	302076
Expenditure per pupil	3639
Balance brought forward from previous year	31400

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	84
Number of questionnaires returned	41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	22	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	25	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	28	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	48	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	33	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	15	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	45	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	78	23	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	35	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	45	3	10	8

Other issues raised by parents

A number of parents raised concerns about the recent high turnover of teachers and its impact on their children's learning. They stressed the need for greater stability and continuity and also voiced disquiet about the Local Education Authority's proposals for federation with another local school.

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

66. Children are admitted to the Reception/Year 1 class at the start of the autumn or spring term during the year in which they become five years old. They attend on a part-time basis for the first half term and then start full-time after the half term break. Most of the children have attended the on-site pre-school group before starting in the Year R/1 class. Their attainment on entry to the school is below average, and some have particularly poor skills in communication, language and literacy and numeracy when they start school.

67. The school has maintained the good curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage since its previous inspection. The well-organised day-to-day routines established by the teacher enable all children to feel secure and safe and to grow in confidence. The satisfactory teaching has some good features, and is having a positive impact on the children's learning. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory, although standards remain below average in most areas of learning. The children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development due to the very good emphasis placed on this aspect by everyone in the school and, by the end of the Reception year, reach average standards in this area of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. Children achieve average standards in this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve through praise, smiles and gestures. They work and play beside each other well and are learning to cooperate well with other children. They are aware of the teacher's high expectations of them and they respond well. Children show a good understanding of classroom procedures. When they come into class each morning, they attempt to write or copy their name in order to register, which helps them to gain in confidence. The teacher provides many good opportunities during the day for children to choose activities for themselves. This enhances their independent learning and they sustain concentration well for their age. They settle well to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, and show ability to concentrate for an appropriate length of time. The children attend to their personal hygiene appropriately and most are able to undress and dress themselves independently before and after physical development lessons.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Personal, social and emotional development is promoted very well in all areas of learning and the planning is thorough. Adults develop a warm, caring relationship with the children, which helps them to feel secure and to grow in confidence. The adults provide very good role models for the children, always treating each of them with courtesy and respect, to which they respond positively. There are very good opportunities to develop the children's independent learning. The children enjoy the many moments of fun and time for reflection, which helps to strengthen the bond between them.

Communication, language and literacy

70. A significant number of children have poor skills in communication, language and literacy when they enter the Foundation Stage. Most children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning, including those who have special educational needs. However, attainment remains below average by the end of the Foundation Stage, due to the children's well below average starting point. All adults make very good attempts to communicate with the children. They talk to the children individually, in groups and as a class to help them extend their vocabulary and start to use their language and communication skills for a range of purposes. Adults show the children that they value their efforts at communicating. The children

enjoy listening to stories, such as *Funny Bones*. They understand that pictures carry meaning and handle books correctly. However, their understanding that the spoken word and print can have the same meaning is limited. Linking phonic work with the name of the letter and with correct letter formation is good, as this helps to reinforce the children's understanding of both concepts. Although the children make a good attempt at copying their own name, they use developmental writing for their own writing. The acceptance of developmental writing is very good as this enables the children to be confident and to feel they are writers. Children are encouraged to take books home to practise their early reading skills.

71. The quality of teaching is mostly satisfactory with some good features. Good teaching was observed when the teacher worked for a short while with each of the children. She encouraged each child to use a finger to draw an O, first in the sand tray, then to 'sky write' it in the air before moving a ball bearing correctly around a plastic shape of the letter. She linked this very well to the practical experience of the child finding and holding an object, such as an orange, whilst naming the letter and saying the correct sound. However, teaching is less effective when the teacher pitches the work at too high a level for the children's stage of development. This was observed during a literacy lesson for Year R/1 pupils about the use of the contents and index pages in a non-fiction book. The teacher provides many opportunities to extend the children's communication skills. She encourages the children to listen attentively when either an adult or a child is speaking and to speak to the class about their own activities. The 'Toy Shop' role-play area has a counter and a display of toys, but lacks the structure and atmosphere that would encourage conversations with others. The children are provided with paper and pencils for a range of activities, including acting out the role of shopkeeper and writing a bill. The two assistants are used effectively to work with small groups. They are well briefed and assist the teacher in maintaining ongoing assessments of individual children's progress. A good emphasis on language development is evident throughout the whole programme of work.

Mathematical development

72. By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are below average in mathematical development, due to a significant number of children who have poor numeracy skills when they enter the school. The teacher is helping them to satisfactorily develop their mathematical understanding by providing a structured programme of practical experiences, which enables them to make sound progress. Children are learning to recognise the differences in sizes of many things and to use correct mathematical language to describe these. They are learning to use mathematical vocabulary such as 'big', 'little', 'tall' and 'short'. They count by rote numbers to ten and sing nursery rhymes and number jingles, which help to extend and reinforce their understanding. When acting out rhymes such as *Five currant buns in the baker's shop*, the children experience counting together with early addition and subtraction in a good, practical way. Adults provide good support by using correct mathematical vocabulary whenever this is appropriate, such as "Yes, you are shorter than the water container, but I am taller than it". The children experience working with sand and water, filling and emptying different sized containers. They enjoy handling plastic money in the 'Toy Shop', but do not yet have any concept of the value of the coins.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, it ranges from unsatisfactory to good. The planning is good and organised well. The teacher ensures that all adults use correct mathematical vocabulary, which helps the children to gain in their learning. Teaching and learning are good when the children undertake practical tasks which are appropriate for their stage of development. They make good progress when they take part in suitable practical activities, such as counting fir cones, cubes and cotton reels and linking this to the recognition of a written number. This extends their understanding of basic skills well. Skilful questioning reinforces the children's understanding and encourages them to organise their thoughts well. Teaching is unsatisfactory when the work is too abstract for the children to understand. This was observed when the children sat for a long time with the Year 1 pupils discussing objects that were 'narrow', 'tall', 'short', 'wide', 'low' or 'high' and the teacher wrote the lists on a chart. The children sat passively and were well behaved, but gained little from this experience.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. On entry to the school, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world is below average for their age. The teacher builds effectively on the children's knowledge, helping them to learn more about the world around them. Many activities are planned and organised well in order that the children can gain in their understanding through practical experiences. The children learn at first hand about the school surroundings and gain much from their visits to the school wildlife area. Visits to places of interest, such as Rochester and Broadstairs, help them to understand about different modes of transport, as well as the similarities and differences to their own locality. The practical task of pushing and pulling toys and materials helps them to realise the effect of these forces. They enjoy using their skills to explore and make models with construction toys and different materials.

75. The teaching and learning are good and most children are on course to achieve the expected standard by the end of the Foundation Stage. The teacher provides a good range of planned activities, most of which start with what the children already know, and this enables them to extend their understanding and knowledge of the world well. Skilful questioning, together with the use of correct vocabulary and practical exploration, extends the children's learning well.

Physical development

76. Many children enter the school with poor physical development and attainment is below average by the end of the Reception year. The spacious accommodation in the hall enables children to move freely in their physical development lessons. The teacher gives clear instructions and allows the children to demonstrate good examples of their work. They are making good gains in their development and understanding of the use of space and awareness of others. Their throwing and catching skills are weak and the teacher provides good opportunities to help the children to develop these skills. However, team games involving a complex sequence of movements are too advanced for the children's stage of development. Although the outdoor area is large, there is a limited amount of appropriate outdoor equipment to extend and enhance the children's physical development. Many children have weak pencil control. Although the teacher provides the children with many opportunities to develop their hand control through the use of a good range of mark-making tools, and cutting and gluing activities, most are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this part of their physical development. Children enjoy manipulating construction kits to make models of a tower and lorries. Most are able dress and undress themselves, but some need help with buttons and zips.

77. The teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. The teacher's planning is detailed and linked securely to the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is good when the activities are appropriate to the children's stage of development and provide them with a suitable amount of challenge to help to improve their physical skills.

Creative development

78. The children make satisfactory progress in developing their creative skills. Many enter the school with below average attainment in their creative development, and are unlikely to achieve the nationally recommended levels of attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage. The children enjoy a wide range of practical activities, which enable them to experiment and to explore creatively and imaginatively. For example, the children enjoy creating various patterns in play dough by rolling, twisting, pushing and pulling it. They enjoy mixing paints to explore how to make different shades of a colour. Role-play activities are carefully planned to enable the children to act out imaginary situations. However, resources are limited and there are few appropriate dressing-up clothes to extend their imaginative play. Children enjoy singing songs and rhymes and accompany their singing by playing a small range of percussion instruments. They can follow a simple rhythm set by the teacher clapping her hands. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Resources are organised well, although limited for some aspects of creative development.

ENGLISH

79. Overall, standards in English are average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. In the previous inspection, standards were judged to be above average in Year 2. However, the results of national tests

for Year 2 pupils in 2000 showed average attainment. Standards have remained the same in Year 6. The findings of this inspection differ from the results of the 2002 national tests for Year 2 pupils, when standards were below average in reading and well below average in writing. In Year 6, standards in the national tests were above average. Differences between inspection findings and the test results are partly attributable to the statistical differences produced by small year groups, but also to uneven progress because of high staff turnover.

80. Pupils enter the school with low standards in language, communication and literacy. They achieve well to reach average standards by the age of seven. Older pupils in the school achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. Similar achievement was observed in the school's previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs develop their confidence well in the school's supportive atmosphere while the development of their skills is satisfactory. The school has recently reviewed the process of setting pupils' individual targets and useful guidelines have been provided for staff. This improvement in provision has not yet had time to have a full impact on the rate at which pupils progress.

81. Standards in speaking and listening are below average in Year 2 and Year 6. The ethos of the school develops well pupils' trust and confidence in the classroom, from an early age. This gives them a good basis from which to be involved in taking part in class discussions and activities. Most pupils answer questions willingly and generally listen well to their teacher. A small minority of boys in Years 3 and 4 have weaker listening skills and are restless during some whole class sessions. Some higher attaining and average pupils are able to answer in good detail but most pupils need additional questions and prompts to help them extend their ideas and express their thoughts appropriately. The range of pupils' vocabulary is often based on the familiar and everyday, and as they move through the school this limits their ability to do justice to their ideas and thinking. Younger pupils enjoy reading aloud together as was seen during the inspection when pupils chanted enthusiastically with the giant 'Fee fi fo fum!' There are generally too few opportunities for older pupils to speak at increasing length and more formally to a range of audiences. However pupils benefit from opportunities such as the whole school production of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* to speak in front of larger audiences.

82. Standards of reading are average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils talk confidently about the book they are reading, giving brief summaries of what they have read. They read aloud clearly and accurately and show a good level of understanding of more complex vocabulary. Some average and below average readers, while able to make use of illustrations and the context of the book to help them in their reading, need support to make use of their knowledge of sounds. Pupils in Year 6 read the texts in class with generally sound comprehension. Higher attaining and average pupils are confident and often fluent readers. Lower attaining pupils, who form a significant proportion of the group, often read hesitantly and are not secure in their use of phonics. In Year 2, some higher attaining and average pupils are able to talk about their preferences and identify books they have enjoyed at home. In class, they identify simple differences between different versions of Jack and the Beanstalk. In Year 6, higher attaining pupils and some average pupils are beginning to make thoughtful comparisons between books and film versions, considering aspects of character and plot. The books pupils read in class are generally appropriate to their ability and there are good opportunities for them to borrow books from the school library. Time is allocated to 'Book Appreciation' throughout the school and there is a good emphasis on the enjoyment of reading and sharing experiences with the rest of the class.

83. Standards of writing are average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 write for an appropriate range of purposes and there are some effective links with reading and other subjects. Their work includes writing in science about electricity, annotating and labelling drawings, writing about their feelings when they get angry in personal and social education, and writing letters as the giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Higher attaining pupils use simple sentences confidently and some include more complex structures to express their thoughts and feelings. Average and lower attaining pupils communicate meaning clearly and some are able to construct simple sentences accurately. While there is some variation in the accurate use of basic punctuation and in the spelling of words which are beyond the

simple and everyday, most pupils are aware of sentence structure. From an analysis of Year 6 pupils' work in the previous year, indications are that pupils write for a good range of purposes, effectively linking with other subjects in the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to write at length and to develop the range and use of formal vocabulary are more limited. In Year 6, higher attaining pupils write with a lively range of expression and ideas, some using humour effectively. A few of these pupils think about and select interesting vocabulary and images. One pupil describes a dolphin, using lines such as, "Its rainbow spray ignites my love within, Dreamily gliding into the earth's haven". The majority of pupils, however, are developing ideas and vocabulary which are mainly straightforward and within the familiar range. The use of paragraphs is not yet secure and a number of pupils require additional support to develop more complex sentence structures accurately. There are significant weaknesses in the spelling of some lower attaining pupils. Most pupils use a neat joined handwriting and this is effectively developed in Year 2. However older pupils have not had consistently clear development of their skills and standards of handwriting are more variable.

84. Standards of literacy are average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. The development of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. In science, pupils from Year 2 onwards organise their investigative work formally with appropriate use of subject specific vocabulary. In information and communication technology, pupils in Year 3/4 use word processing skills to present their work on Tudor monarchs, and pupils in Year 6 use their knowledge of colour mixing and computer graphics to enhance the presentation of their poetry writing. Information retrieval skills are developed well in history, religious education and geography. However there are some missed opportunities for older pupils to write at length and develop their range of formal vocabulary.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, in Years 1 and 2, and some very good teaching was also seen in the Year 1/2 class. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. While no specific judgements were made on the teaching of English in the school's previous inspection, relatively stronger teaching was noted in Years 1 and 2. Similarly, as in the previous inspection, staff changes have had an impact on the achievement of older pupils. Strengths of the best teaching seen during the inspection in the Year 1/2 class are based on very productive and supportive relationships in the classroom with a strong partnership between the teaching assistant and the class teacher. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and a perceptive awareness of what pupils need to do to develop their skills. This results in well-planned lessons and interesting and stimulating use of resources. Activities are closely matched to pupils' needs.

86. These very good qualities were seen in a literacy lesson where the focus of the lesson was on the qualities of a good fairy tale, preparatory to writing a similar story. The lesson began purposefully with one of the pupils reading the objectives of the lesson to the rest of the class. Pupils took turns to read extracts from the story of *Jack and the Beanstalk* and the teacher ensured that pupils listened carefully by giving groups of pupils different listening tasks. The teacher and assistant valued all pupils' contributions and had high expectations of pupils' attention and their responses. As a result of this very good involvement, there was real enjoyment and appreciation of the story, even though it was already familiar to them. Skilful questioning established the most important features of the story and helped pupils to understand the reasons for their observations. Activities were clearly explained and incorporated pupils' individual targets effectively. This helped to ensure that, by the end of the lesson, pupils had developed very well their understanding of the special conventions of fairy tales and how to use these in their writing.

87. Weaknesses in teaching include overlong explanations and activities directed by the teacher, which lead to lack of attention and a decline in concentration. These features were seen in a Year 3/4 lesson where the teacher directed individual questions on the text being studied for too long and some less well motivated pupils became restless and inattentive. In a Year 5/6 lesson, the introductory and group activities did not match the needs of some average and lower attaining pupils closely enough. These

pupils needed considerable additional support and modification of the task to help them make appropriate progress.

88. Teachers' planning is detailed and includes activities for the different ability levels in each class. Teachers have secure knowledge of the different elements of the literacy strategy and use them appropriately. They mark pupils work supportively and most marking includes comments to help them improve their work. In the Year 1/2 class there is particularly good reference to pupils' individual literacy targets to help them move on to the next stages of learning. Target setting is beginning to provide a clear focus on what pupils need to know and do in order to improve their work, but its effectiveness is variable across the school. Teachers keep a good range of records in their assessment folders, which indicates effective ongoing assessment in lessons. Teachers and assistants provide well for the social and personal development of pupils with special educational needs. There is a good partnership to monitor pupils' responses and learning in lessons. Where pupils are withdrawn to have additional support, well-trained teaching assistants effectively deliver programmes such as the Additional Literacy programme, and in these sessions pupils achieve well. However, the close match of lesson activities to the literacy targets on pupils' individual education plans is not consistent in all classes.

89. The National Literacy Strategy forms the framework for well detailed planning in the subject. Additional programmes such as the Early Literacy and Additional Literacy programmes are taught well and are having a positive effect on pupils' skills. 'Booster' classes enable pupils to refine their skills more sharply prior to national tests. Assessment procedures in reading and writing are good but assessment of the development of pupils' listening and speaking skills is less effective. There is good use of the analysis of national and standardised tests to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs and to identify useful and relevant priorities for the subject. Coordination in the subject is very effective. This was also the judgement in the school's previous inspection. Monitoring of curricular planning, teaching and assessment in the subject is thorough, supportive and helps teachers, pupils and the curriculum move forward. The co-ordinator is the headteacher and her very good knowledge of pupils, staff and the curriculum enable her to set priorities for the subject which are relevant, realistic and provide a good level of challenge. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is satisfactory. The school organises Book Fairs, visits by well-known authors and poets, and visits to theatrical events such as a Christmas Pantomime to enhance pupils' experiences. In these ways the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

90. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain the standards expected for their age in numeracy and all other areas of mathematics. This represents a very good improvement in Year 6 since the last inspection, when standards were well below average. In Year 2, standards were judged to be above average, although the national test results for that year showed them to be average. In 2001, the results were well below average in Year 2 and in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally in Year 6. As a result of strategies introduced to address the weaknesses identified by a rigorous analysis of pupils' performance in the tests, there was a significant improvement in 2002. The proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching Level 2 or higher rose from 79 per cent to 91 per cent, while that achieving Level 3 increased from 14 per cent to 27 per cent. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils who attained Level 4 or higher rose from 36 per cent in 2001 to 69 per cent in 2002. Twenty-three per cent of pupils reached Level 5 in 2002 whereas none had the year before. Standards are clearly improving and there is a strong commitment across the school to continue this trend. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make sound progress overall. Those in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. In some year groups, boys do better than girls, in others the reverse is true. There is no clear pattern of underachievement by either, rather variations from year to year due to the small numbers of pupils involved.

91. In Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100, but few can solve problems using numbers to 1000. They divide shapes into halves and quarters, identify odd and even numbers and solve simple money problems. Pupils identify and name a range of two-dimensional shapes, correctly describing

their properties, including those of irregular shapes: "It's got five sides but they're not the same". They recognise and name a cube, cuboid, sphere, cone and pyramid. More able pupils recognise which shapes have reflective symmetry.

92. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. In the lesson seen in the Year 1/2 class it was very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and implement it well. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary from an early stage. In a good lesson for Year R/1, the Year 1 pupils were learning to find objects which were 'taller' or 'shorter' than themselves and went on to look for things that were 'wider' or 'narrower'. Both teachers make very good use of the school environment to enrich pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding. In Year 1/2, pupils explored the school and grounds to find examples of two and three-dimensional shapes. There is a strong emphasis on teaching pupils knowledge, skills and understanding through practical activities, which helps to lay a firm foundation for future learning.

93. In Year 6, pupils work out calculations in their heads and explore different pencil and paper methods of multiplying large numbers. They understand fractions and decimals, identify the properties of three-dimensional shapes and know that the angles around a point total 360 degrees. Pupils apply their knowledge and skills when solving problems, but are not yet adept at working out quickly which mathematical operations to use. The previous inspection found that the level of accuracy of the lower attainers was poor. This is no longer the case, and pupils' work shows that they are becoming increasingly accurate in answering questions and solving problems. Similarly, there was insufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils. These pupils are now given work that challenges and extends their thinking and are encouraged to explore different ways of approaching a task. The previous report also found too little evidence of investigative mathematics. The school has identified this as an issue for each year group to address and sufficient time is now given for this aspect.

94. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, overall. It is good in the Year 5/6 class. Teaching is stronger in the Year 5/6 class because the first part of the lesson is more effective in developing pupils' mental mathematics strategies. In the lesson observed, the teacher began by presenting pupils with a problem that involved making a target number from three different digits and a choice of four mathematical signs. This appealed to and challenged pupils at different levels of attainment and required them to explain the strategies they had used and to find alternatives. The teacher's lively and humorous approach.. "Have you seen *Countdown*? Well, I'm Carol Vorderman today"..further motivated pupils and engaged their interest. There was good teaching of decimal notation in the main part of the lesson and well-planned activities for each group of pupils. This resulted in pupils working well independently to increase their understanding of fractions and decimals. In some lessons in Year 3/4, the first part of the lesson is not used effectively to develop pupils' mental strategies; in the lesson seen, it took the form of a mental mathematics test. The school has rightly identified the need for pupils to improve their performance in such tests, but other classes do not include this as part of the daily numeracy lesson.

95. In all year groups, teachers plan work well to meet the needs of lower, average and higher attaining pupils and set targets for each group to attain each term, assessing their progress towards them regularly. The pace of lessons is generally good, pupils are managed well and teachers encourage pupils to develop positive attitudes towards mathematics by their own enthusiasm and by making learning fun. Teaching assistants work effectively in partnership with teachers to support pupils' learning.

96. The very good lesson seen in Year 1/2 illustrates the best features of teaching in the subject. A very good mental mathematics 'starter' took the form of a 'loop' game, in which pupils had to concentrate hard to see if they had the next number in the 'loop': "I have 15; follow me if you have 10-2". There was very good development of mathematical vocabulary, such as 'minus', 'subtract' and 'take away' and less able pupils were supported well during this whole class activity by the teaching assistant. The pupils really enjoyed the introduction to the main activity, which was fun and held their attention well. While they sang the 'Izzy Wizzy' song, the teacher removed shapes from a box, one by one, and asked pupils to identify them. Questions were directed at individual pupils and they were asked to describe some of the

properties of the shape. There were simple shapes for the less able, while the higher attainers were challenged by different types of pentagon. Skilful questioning helped pupils to think for themselves and develop their understanding. When pupils were confused by an irregular pentagon, the teacher asked, "What can I do to work out what shape this is?" and this led higher attaining pupils to learn that shapes with five sides do not all look the same.

97. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to enhance learning. In Year R/1, the teacher used a computer program very effectively in the introductory mental activity for Year 1 pupils to help them predict the next number in a sequence. In Year 1/2, pupils used a program to identify and name three-dimensional shapes. In a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils used the computer to calculate amounts of money using different combinations of coins. Numeracy skills are developed appropriately through other subjects, as when pupils take measurements in science, record their findings in the form of tables and graphs, and explore shapes in design and technology when examining different types of packaging.

98. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership in the subject, both through her own very good expertise and practice, and through her involvement in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Improving standards in mathematics continues to be a priority in the school improvement plan. Working documents show there has been a very thorough audit of the standards being achieved in each year group and analysis of the reasons why they are not high enough. Steps have then been taken to address identified weaknesses. These include supporting staff with their planning and setting challenging half-termly targets for pupils' progress. Other very good initiatives include clubs for Years 3 to 6 designed to develop pupils' problem solving skills and increase their rates of progress. The co-ordinator has also attempted to involve parents more in their children's learning by sending home explanatory leaflets and inviting parents into school to see how numeracy is taught. Training for all staff to extend their understanding of how to integrate mathematics and information and communication technology has been effective in improving this aspect of learning. Assessment procedures are very good and the information gained is used well to guide teachers in their planning. The subject is well resourced. Numerous opportunities for pupils to work together, solving problems and playing mathematical games, make a good contribution to their social development as they learn to co-operate, share resources and play fairly.

SCIENCE

99. Standards in science are average in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well. This is similar to the good improvements achieved in the 2002 statutory end of key stage tests and is a very good improvement from the sharp decline in science results in 2000 and 2001. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve good standards compared with their previous attainment, as they receive good support in lessons. There has been a good improvement in investigative science throughout the school. This aspect of the subject was identified as a weakness by the previous inspection and is a priority in the current school improvement plan. The recording of pupils' work has also improved. This inspection finds no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, both of whom are achieving average standards.

100. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and promotes good progress. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject and this results in good learning in each aspect of the subject. Throughout the school, a strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of experimental and investigative science. Teachers' planning is good. It is clearly linked to National Curriculum levels and is matched to pupils' levels of understanding. There is a good balance between investigations, factual learning and recording. Throughout the school, pupils build a sound understanding of how the human body functions and the importance of diet for healthy living. They develop a sound knowledge of materials and their properties and of physical processes such as magnetism, forces, light and sound.

101. An effective aspect of science teaching is the opportunity for pupils to develop investigative skills by planning, predicting and reviewing their actions, and to work together to discuss and develop their own

ideas. This was demonstrated well in the Year 1/2 class, where pupils were inspired by the enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge of their teacher. Pupils were attentive and keen to hear about their challenge, which was to design and make a circuit game to beat their friends. Effective open-ended questioning helped all pupils to remember that metal conducts electricity, while other pupils explained that "conducts means electricity can pass through this" and "make sure there are no gaps in the circuit otherwise electricity will not pass through". Pupils know that a circuit needs a battery. The teacher showed pupils a straightforward circuit game. Pupils quickly explained how the game worked and that it would not work if the wrong answers were given, which showed their good understanding of circuits. They were then given the opportunity to work in pairs or small groups to design their own circuit game. Pupils chose their own equipment before drawing their design and devising the questions and answers. The more able pupils were given the extra challenge to set out their planning in a more complex format and to give reasons as to what would happen if the wrong answers are given. These pupils recorded their work very well, setting out their plans in a logical way with a list of equipment, a diagram for the design and predictions of how it would work. Pupils worked very well together, while the teacher provided appropriate support for a small group of lower attaining pupils. The teacher emphasised the importance of using the correct scientific vocabulary when pupils were asked to give an explanation of their work. This not only improved the pupils' knowledge and understanding but also enabled the teacher to recognise any misconceptions the pupils had and helped to clear them up.

102. Pupils in Year 3-4 are learning about the importance of a healthy diet. As part of their science work, they have kept a diary of foods that they have eaten over a period of five days. They have looked at the purposes of teeth and at the differences in carnivores and herbivores teeth and jaw formation. They have studied and can label a diagram of the human skeleton.

103. The management of pupils is good and the content of lessons is pitched at an appropriately challenging level. The strength of the teaching of science and its impact on learning were illustrated well in a good lesson in the Year 5/6 class, based on an experiment to find out what makes materials dissolve faster. Pupils knew the difference between dissolving and disappearing. They used correct scientific vocabulary, such as 'variables', 'constant', 'predict', and 'fair test'. After a short discussion about which part of the experiment would be the constant and which the variable, pupils chose an ingredient for their constant, such as coffee, granulated sugar, castor sugar, table salt and coarse salt. They worked well together in small groups to plan, predict, investigate, record and evaluate their experiment. The most able pupils set out their planning in a logical sequence, using scientific vocabulary, drew and labelled resources and stated exact measurements before starting their experiment. The teacher provided good support for pupils, including those with special educational needs, through effective, open-ended questioning. He maintained the interest of all pupils by making very good use of resources to make learning both relevant and enjoyable. Pupils were engrossed in their experiments and they made good progress, as a calm, purposeful, learning atmosphere was maintained throughout the lesson. The high expectations of the teacher were clearly evident and illustrated by the intention that pupils should devise their own investigation. The level of interest was high and was maintained by allowing the pupils to explore and undertake an investigation for themselves. The teacher maintained a brisk pace and ensured that scientific vocabulary was understood well.

104. Pupils in Year 5/6 use information and communication technology effectively to produce fact sheets to share their knowledge about micro-organisms. They download pictures from the Internet to enhance their work, such as "human neutrophil; blood cells, which eat and kill bacteria to stop people getting infections".

105. The co-ordinator for science is new to the role and has very good subject knowledge. She is providing good support for colleagues. She has started to monitor teaching and has led a training day for staff on investigative science. She is aware that the policy is due for review and requires updating. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines, but is adapted to the needs of the school to ensure an investigative approach. Assessment procedures are very good and assessment is used well to inform

teachers' planning. Assessments are undertaken at the end of each unit of work and are closely linked to National Curriculum levels. Appropriate links with numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology were evident during the inspection. Learning resources are good for science. The school wildlife area is used well to enhance pupils' scientific knowledge. Visits to the local power station and visits to the school by the Astrodome and members of the University of Greenwich are helping to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of science. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as pupils have many opportunities to work together, consider environmental issues and learn about the importance of scientific knowledge in everyday life.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Standards in art are average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. No judgement was made by the school's previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs attain similar standards to other pupils because they are well supported by their teachers and assistants. Pupils achieve well to reach average standards in Years 1 and 2 but their progress slows in Years 3 to 6 and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 have not had their skills developed in sufficient progression due to staff changes. There have also been significant improvements in curricular planning over the last two years, which have enabled younger pupils to develop a more secure foundation in their skills and experiences.

107. Observations and pupils' work indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Good teaching was seen in both lessons observed during the inspection. In a good lesson in the Year 3/4 class, the focus was observational drawing of a range of metal objects. The teacher used questions well to help pupils clarify and develop their understanding of elements such as shape, shading and pattern before they started their work. She also explained clearly how to use soft pencils and how to achieve different effects. As a result of an effective, clear and well-paced introduction, pupils were fully involved and eager to begin their tasks. In the ensuing discussion in small groups, pupils made simple observations using an appropriate range of descriptive vocabulary. Some observed decorative patterns and differences and changes in shapes, and some higher attaining pupils commented on reflections in spoons. One pupil said he had to "concentrate very hard" to look at objects. These productive discussions enabled pupils to begin drawing with a more secure understanding of how to approach their work. Some higher attaining pupils showed a good awareness of shape, proportion and line in their sketches of a spiral candlestick. By the end of the lesson, as a result of this good involvement and concentration, pupils had developed their observational skills well and were beginning to think about comparing differing shapes.

108. In a good Year 2 lesson, a group of pupils were completing their portraits of the giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The teaching assistant who supported this group was skilful in her use of questions to help pupils make decisions about what kind of giant they were going to paint. She gave good guidance as to the correct use of poster paints to make skin colour and as to the use of different sized brushes to achieve different effects. As a result, pupils were able to create detailed effects such as the shape of eyebrows, the position of glasses and the painting of a beard.

109. This careful focus on good observational skills and awareness of colour is a reflection of the strands of the curriculum which have recently been reviewed and restructured. Teaching and planning in the subject reflect these good practices well. Pupils throughout the school have focused on observational drawing and their work shows that they understand the importance of careful observation of shape and form and the range of marks pencils can make. Some higher attaining older pupils use shading to create the detailed pattern of shells. All pupils have explored colour, colour mixing and the use of colour to create atmosphere. Pupils in the Year 1/2 class have made good use of information and communication technology to explore how colour can be used to create soft landscapes after observing the work of well known artists. Pupils use a range of different materials to create three-dimensional effects when they make mini-beasts in textiles in Year 2 and create sculptures using natural materials in Year 4.

110. Planning for the subject is detailed and based on the national guidelines. In the strands on which the school has focused, the planning has been adapted well to meet the needs of pupils in the school and

teachers have received training in these areas. Further training has been arranged to correspond with the further review and development of the curriculum. There are good arrangements to assess termly the development of pupils' skills which are linked to National Curriculum levels and to corresponding strands of the curriculum. There are some effective links with other subjects such as literacy, in the development of pupils' descriptive and evaluative language, and science and history to provide the stimulus for observational drawings.

111. The co-ordinator for the subject is the acting headteacher who has a personal enthusiasm for the subject and high expectations for its further development across the school. She understands the needs of the subject well and has made good progress with the development for the curriculum in a relatively short time. She monitors planning in the subject carefully and is creating a useful portfolio of pupils' work. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to support pupils' skills and understanding. Resources meet the needs of the curriculum satisfactorily. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe lessons in the Year 1/2 and 3/4 classes, due to timetabling arrangements. Judgements are based on these observations and an analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers. The evidence indicates that pupils reach average standards in Years 2 and 6. No judgement was made on design and technology in the previous inspection report. Pupils' achievement in the subject is satisfactory, including pupils who have special educational needs, who receive appropriate support in class.

113. The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory, overall, and some good and very good teaching was observed during the inspection. The very good Year 1/2 lesson was part of a series of lessons to explore different aspects of a car before making their own model. This lesson was to develop pupils' ideas for their own vehicle by exploring how to join wheels and axles. The teacher reinforced pupils' earlier learning very effectively through skilful questioning, before moving them on to the next part of their task. They had previously had first hand experience of looking at real cars with special reference to the wheels and had also used construction kits to make models with wheels and axles. The teacher clearly explained that the purpose of the lesson was for pupils to use a range of materials to find out which would be best to make an axle with wheels. Pupils knew that this was in preparation for designing and making their own vehicle in a future lesson. The teacher had prepared two different types of axles with wheels, one with bright silver wheels and one with red wheels. The pupils quickly realised that, although the colours were attractive, this was unimportant. Very good questioning extended pupils' learning about axles and wheels. They learned that in order for the vehicle to be able to move, the structure must allow the wheels to turn and be strong enough to hold the completed model. The pupils had very good attitudes to learning and worked well in pairs. They experimented well with three different sizes of wheels and axles, and analysed what makes an effective structure. Six higher attaining pupils understood the need for a constant aspect in their investigations in order for the test to be fair. During the activity, the teacher provided very good support for a small group of lower attaining pupils, effectively using open-ended questioning to extend their thinking. By the end of the lesson, pupils were able to explain and give reasons for their choice of certain wheels and axles, such as "this axle is strong and does not bend; we can attach the wheels easily to the axle and they move well along the ground".

114. An analysis of teachers' planning shows that pupils are given a broad range of experiences in designing and making. Year 3/4 pupils explore packaging and understand why cubes and cuboids are useful shapes for packaging. They learn how to cut, score and assemble the net of a three-dimensional shape before designing their own nets for different shapes. The teaching places an appropriate emphasis on the design process. Pupils make detailed plans for their designs, label sketches and list the components

needed to make their product. Higher attaining pupils show exact measurements on their drawings and give reasons for the shape and size. Previously, they have looked at ways of improving the school environment and have designed a seat and table for the school wildlife area.

115. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 design and develop their ideas for a pair of slippers. After looking at a range of slippers, pupils sketch their ideas, label each part and write a list of instructions to make the slippers. They make a template by drawing around their feet and enlarge this by ten millimetres to allow for the seams. They use the template to make a prototype pair of slippers from an inexpensive material to judge if they need to make any adjustments before cutting out the more expensive felt. In earlier work, they have designed and made windmills and carousels. They have used card, wood, saws, hot glue and solder for different aspects of their models. Pupils used motors to make the windmills turn and resistors to slow the cars. They raced some of the cars to see how far they could travel. They use information and communication technology well to enhance their completed designs for display purposes.

116. The co-ordinator for design and technology is new to the school. He is aware that the policy requires reviewing and updating and has sound ideas about the future development of the subject. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines and provides a helpful framework for staff. To date, the co-ordinator's monitoring of the subject has been through informal discussions with colleagues. Resources are adequate. Assessment procedures are very good and are undertaken at the end of each unit of work. Assessment is used well to inform teachers' planning. Design and technology makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they work cooperatively with others.

GEOGRAPHY

117. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe the teaching of geography in the Year 1/2 class. Judgements are based on the observed lesson, analysis of pupils' work throughout the school, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils. The evidence indicates that standards are average in Years 2 and 6. The previous report made no judgement about geography. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support in the classroom and work is well matched to their needs, enabling them to make satisfactory progress.

118. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils in Year 1/2 have a sound understanding of their local area. Recent visits to Broadstairs and Rochester provided them with first hand knowledge of other areas in Kent. They now have a sound understanding of some of the features of other localities and are learning to express their ideas about places, people and the environment using geographical vocabulary. This is enabling them to realise which features are similar to their own locality and which are different, such as contrasting their village with a seaside town and a historic city. Pupils use secondary evidence, such as leaflets, photographs and books, to extend their understanding about the castle and the cathedral in Rochester. They are using their new found geographical knowledge to make a brochure for the Year R/1 class, who are to visit Rochester later in the year. This provides good links with English, helping pupils to use their literacy skills for a real purpose. Pupils draw simple maps, such as their route to school, to extend their understanding of the geographical features of the local area. They use information and communication technology satisfactorily to enhance the presentation of their geography work.

119. Pupils in Year 3/4 use a sound range of geographical skills to help them to understand about their local environment and compare this with Chembakolli village in India. As part of their study of the wildlife area in the school grounds, they have looked at ways of improving the environment. Their geographical skills are linked well with their literacy and design and technology skills.

120. Pupils in Year 5/6 use correct geographical vocabulary to explain their sound understanding of the water cycle. They have made a detailed study of rivers around the world and explain features from the source to the mouth of a river, using correctly terms such as 'oxbow lake' and 'tributaries'. They compare features of the River Thames with the Mississippi River and give sound reasons for the Thames barrier and how the filters work. Pupils undertake research projects and make good use of secondary sources of

evidence, such as the Internet to download information about the weather. The weather station within the school grounds provides pupils with a good source of information about the weather and the effects of pollution upon the environment. A member from the University of Greenwich regularly comes to gather information from the weather station and works closely with the pupils to extend their learning about the weather. After watching a video about pupils from another school, who recorded weather patterns, pupils were inspired to make their own study of weather patterns.

121. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the role and provides sound support for staff. She has consulted with teachers about the geography curriculum and has ordered appropriate new resources to enhance the pupils' learning. She realises the need to review and update the policy and plans to do this in conjunction with the staff. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines but is very closely linked to the local area. It is linked well to the National Curriculum programmes of study and is being implemented satisfactorily. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment to inform curricular planning are good. Resources are satisfactory. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the study of the environment and other cultures.

HISTORY

122. During the inspection it was not possible to see lessons in Years 1 and 2 due to timetabling arrangements. Judgements are based on lessons seen in the other years, an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers. Indications are that standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6. No judgements were made on the subject by the previous inspection. All pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school, including pupils with special educational needs. The good support these pupils receive from teachers and teaching assistants and the good and often very good relationships in the classroom enable these pupils to achieve at the same rate as their peers. Older pupils in the school have received more variable experiences in the past due to staff changes and this has had an adverse impact on the development of their skills, particularly in relation to literacy.

123. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although good lessons were seen during the inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching in Years 1 and 2. The good qualities of teaching and learning were illustrated well in the lessons in the Year 3/4 class and in the Year 5/6 class. Pupils in Year 3/4 were learning about Henry V111. The teacher built effectively on pupils' earlier learning through skilful questioning in a brief introductory session. Pupils were involved well as the lesson progressed because the planned activities were interesting. There were good opportunities for them to use their existing knowledge to select activities which might be appropriate to a Tudor monarch. As a result of careful questioning the teacher was able to extend and develop pupils' understanding of some of the aspects of power and state in which the king would be involved. By the end of the lesson, pupils were able to create posters advertising for applicants for the post of a Tudor monarch, which showed that they had an appropriate understanding of the role of Henry V111.

124. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 carried out research for information on the gods and goddesses of Ancient Greece. Resources were well matched to the varying levels of literacy in the class and to the task which the teacher had set. This enabled all pupils to be productive in their learning and to concentrate well. Some pupils worked independently, making effective use of information and communication technology to develop their understanding. As a result of good management of the class and effective support for lower attaining pupils, all pupils made good progress. The plenary session at the end of the lesson was well used to consolidate pupils' understanding of how they might use resources more effectively to extend and develop their knowledge.

125. An analysis of pupils' recorded work from the previous year indicates that there are some missed opportunities to develop pupils' skills of writing at length and in a variety of contexts. This is also the case with older pupils' use of the more formal expressions and sentence structures used in discursive writing. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their understanding of chronology appropriately in their work on changes in their own lives and in their observations about old and new objects. Good use is made of visits

to places such as Broadstairs where pupils were able to gather evidence about the past on features such as the pier.

126. The curriculum is well planned and reflects national guidelines. The school has begun the process of adapting these to meet pupils' needs and to make the best use of the opportunities of the local area. The curriculum provides good, clearly identified opportunities for assessing pupils' learning, linked to National Curriculum levels. The co-ordinator for the subject is new to the role but has identified clear and relevant priorities, such as the provision of a structured programme to ensure progression in the development of pupils' skills through the school. She has monitored teachers' planning to ensure that the curriculum is covered and appropriately resourced. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places of interest such as Broadstairs, Leeds Castle and Rochester. Some older members of the local community have talked to pupils about changes in the school since their own school days. Resources in the subject are satisfactory because they are supplemented well through the Museum Loan Service and the Library Service. The co-ordinator has identified the need to further develop the school's own range of artefacts. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support the development of pupils' information retrieval skills. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development as they learn about aspects of their cultural heritage and work together to carry out research.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

127. Standards are average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 because pupils are given an appropriate range of experiences, which help them to develop a sound understanding of the different ways information and communication technology can be used in everyday life. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is unsatisfactory because children have not had a sufficiently broad range of experiences to enable them to reach national expectations in all aspects of the subject by the time they leave the school. These judgements also include pupils with special educational needs. These weaknesses were also identified at the time of the last inspection. However, a clear focus on improving curricular provision and providing training for all staff is already beginning to have a good impact on the standards pupils are achieving and the progress they are making.

128. In Years 1 and 2, pupils know how to program a toy robot in order to control its movements around a simple course. Pupils in Year 2 use a word processor to write messages and stories, and create pictures and patterns to illustrate their work. They combined text and graphics effectively to present their work following a visit to Broadstairs. Pupils in Year 2 also collect and enter information on to a data handling program to show which are the favourite foods of their class. It was not possible to observe teaching in the Year 1/2 class but indications are that the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is at least satisfactory. A good feature is the comprehensive planning of each unit of work, which shows clearly how pupils will be taught specific skills in progression. In addition, teachers plan effectively to incorporate information and communication technology into other subjects, as well as devoting a set time each week for pupils to learn and practise new skills. A good example was seen a mathematics lesson in Year 1/2, where the teacher carefully planned an opportunity for pupils to use a shape recognition program to reinforce their knowledge of three-dimensional shapes. The teaching assistant also used a digital camera to record shapes in the environment that pupils identified on a walk around the school.

129. In Year 6, pupils use computers to present information in different forms. For example, they write newspaper articles entitled "Horrible Hurricane" and produce fact sheets about micro-organisms which combine text and graphics in an eye-catching format, using clip art and a variety of fonts, colours and styles. They also design an attractive background against which to type their poems after a visit to the wildlife area. Other aspects of the subject are less well developed, such as the use of spreadsheets, and the monitoring and control of external events. Although pupils use the Internet to download information, they have not, until recently, had the opportunity to communicate via e-mail. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, and sometimes good, as in the lesson seen in Year 5/6. In this lesson, the pupils made good progress in investigating databases. The teacher's good subject

knowledge was communicated effectively to the pupils through clear explanations and skilful questioning. This encouraged pupils to think for themselves and experiment with the database. The teacher's frequent intervention as pupils progressed through the task ensured that all were using the database correctly to find the information required.

130. A good feature of the teaching throughout the school is the detailed planning of each unit of work, which shows how pupils' knowledge and skills will be increased from week to week. There is good ongoing assessment of pupils' progress, which takes account of their differing levels of attainment. Teachers make effective use of the mini-suite of five computers in the library as well as the computers in each classroom, which were used well during the inspection. There is a good balance between teaching specific skills and using information and communication technology as a cross-curricular tool. For example, in addition to the lesson seen, pupils in Year 5/6 use CD-ROMs for research purposes in history and retrieve information from the Internet in science. Teachers make effective use of assistants to support pupils' learning. This was evident in the Year 5/6 lesson, when the large class had to be split into two groups, one using computers and the other pencil and paper methods to find the same information. The teacher effectively used this situation to enable pupils to compare the two methods and assess the relative effectiveness of each, and the assistant provided good support for the pupils who remained in the classroom.

131. There has been good progress in improving curricular planning, which now shows full coverage of the required statutory curriculum and appropriate progression in the development of skills. Assessment procedures are now good and show clearly what lower, average and higher attaining pupils have achieved. The co-ordinator is new to the role, but has a clear idea of where improvement is needed and how this is to be brought about. Since the acting headteacher was appointed, there has been a rigorous analysis of the standards achieved by pupils in each year group and of the reasons for the slow progress made by pupils in the past. This identified the need for staff training and improvement in resources as key priorities for the school improvement plan. The acting headteacher then worked closely with staff to ensure that there was a specific weekly teaching time and also effective links with other subjects in their planned lessons. These two improvements are already having a significant impact on raising standards. A very good focus on the use of information and communication technology in numeracy lessons at a recent staff training day has resulted in greatly improved use of computer programs to support pupils' learning in all aspects of the subject. There is a very strong commitment to improvement in the subject amongst all staff. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social and cultural development as they learn about the importance of information and communication technology and its impact on our lives, and work together to explore computer programs.

MUSIC

132. It was not possible to make judgements about standards in music in Years 2 and 6 as no lessons were observed and other evidence was very limited. One lesson was seen in the Year 3/4 class and pupils sang in assembly. Pupils' singing was of an average standard in assembly, but pupils in Years 3 and 4 attained below average standards in the lesson seen. They experienced difficulty in maintaining a steady beat while accompanying their singing with percussion instruments. In other aspects of the subject, such as composition and listening to and appreciating music, there was not enough evidence to form reliable judgements. The previous inspection also made no judgements about standards in music.

133. There was also insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning in music. In the lesson observed during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory. The lesson was well planned, musical instruments were readily available and the teacher made effective use of information and communication technology to support learning, although difficulties with the computer somewhat interrupted the flow of the lesson. Curricular planning in the subject, which follows national guidelines, shows that pupils have a broad range of experiences. For example, pupils in Year 2 learn about pitch by playing chime bars with notes an octave apart, use body percussion for repeated rhythms, listen to music that includes changes of pitch and eventually compose their own music to represent a dragon walking, using high and low sounds.

In Year 6, pupils listen to excerpts of classical music which illustrate major and minor scales and explore scale patterns in songs. This leads to pupils eventually composing their own music using the knowledge they have acquired.

134. There is a planned focus on developing pupils' understanding of musical elements and terminology such as tempo, timbre and dynamics as they get older, but the planning is not yet sufficiently refined to ensure that these elements are taught in progression from year to year. Opportunities for pupils to learn about music from different cultures are carefully linked to their work in history, geography and religious education. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 listen and respond to Tudor music in a link with their history topic.

135. The co-ordinator is new to the school and has not yet formulated a plan for the development of the subject. It is currently not a priority in the school improvement plan and has not been so for some time. Curricular planning ensures coverage of all musical elements but it does not show clearly enough how knowledge, skills and understanding are to be developed in clear progression from one year to the next. Although the school bases its overall planning on national guidelines, a variety of commercial schemes of work are used in different year groups. How these are interpreted depends to a large extent on individual teachers' expertise, which is relatively limited. There is no music specialist in the school, but pupils benefit from a weekly singing lesson from a retired teacher. There are good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievement in the subject. These show clearly what lower, average and higher attaining pupils should achieve in each unit of work. Resources in the subject are adequate but in need of updating and repair, and they include computer programs. The use of information and communication technology to enhance learning is satisfactory. The curriculum is enhanced by opportunities for pupils to participate a local music festival. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development as they learn to appreciate a range of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. Standards in physical education are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational make satisfactory progress and enjoy participating in physical activities. No judgement about standards was made by the previous inspection.

137. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2. Lessons are well planned and organised and teachers have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. A relative weakness is that, on occasions, these expectations are a little too high, given the pupils' weak skills when they start school. A lesson in the Year 1/2 class illustrated many of the features of the good teaching. There was very good development of pupils' independence, responsibility and teamwork as they were expected to carry equipment safely and set it up with the minimum of input from the teacher. They had clearly been taught very well to do this. The lesson built effectively on pupils' previous learning as they began to incorporate rotation into their movement on and across apparatus. The teacher placed a good emphasis on finishing off movements well and gave more challenging tasks to those who could cope with them: "Can you find a way of rotating two parts of your body?" The teacher and assistant worked effectively together ensuring that all pupils were encouraged, guided and supervised. The teacher's very good management of the class enabled all pupils to learn well. As a result of the good teaching, the pupils were able to develop a range of movements on the apparatus and devise more varied ways of incorporating rotation into their movements.

138. It is not possible to make a reliable judgement about the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 as only one lesson was seen in Year 5/6 and that was unsatisfactory. Indications are that teaching is usually satisfactory, as pupils have reached average standards by Year 6. Curricular planning shows good coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum, including swimming, and pupils show interest and enthusiasm for physical education. The lesson seen was part of a recently introduced unit on basketball skills. There were not enough resources to enable all pupils to take a full part in the lesson, and it was not

well planned to make the most of what was available. This resulted in pupils spending too much time waiting for a turn and observing others rather than improving their own skills. Their behaviour deteriorated during the middle part of the lesson because they were not fully involved in physical activity. The lesson improved towards the end when the pupils practised passing and intercepting in groups of three, which showed that their skills in these aspects were satisfactory.

139. The co-ordinator has taken over responsibility for the subject recently and is already providing good leadership and clear direction for its development, even though it is not currently a priority in the school improvement plan. She checks colleagues' termly plans and meets with them to discuss how they will teach the planned units of work. There are good assessment procedures to record the attainment of lower, average and higher attaining pupils. A good range of extracurricular activities includes a gymnastics club for pupils in Years R, 1 and 2, which almost all attend, and a soccer skills club led by members of the Arsenal Football Club. There are also clubs for netball and athletics at different times of the year. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit an outdoor pursuits centre and the school takes part in a local athletics competition. Parents make a significant contribution by raising funds to maintain the swimming pool. Their next project is to fund a climbing frame and safe surface for the playground. There is a good emphasis on developing playground games. Lunchtime supervisors have been trained to teach pupils a variety of games, as have some older pupils known as 'playground pals'. The subject is adequately resourced overall, but does not have enough good quality large balls. Gymnastics mats are rather old and worn. Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development as they learn the qualities of sportsmanship and have the opportunity to meet pupils from other schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. In Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The school's previous inspection report made no judgement on standards. Judgements are based on lessons seen in the Year 1/2 and Year 5/6 classes, analysis of pupils' work in both the current and previous years, teachers' planning and the contribution made by collective worship. The school has a caring and supportive ethos, which encourages pupils to respect the ideas and opinions of others. Together with collective worship, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs are involved well in lessons and achieve well, especially when they receive carefully focused support.

141. Taking all evidence into account, the quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. However, an excellent lesson was seen in the Year 1/2 class and a good lesson in the Year 5/6 class. Pupils have trust and confidence in their teachers and other adults in the classroom. This encourages them to take a full part in all activities and to develop confidence in offering their ideas and responses. In the Year 1/2 lesson, pupils learned about objects that are special to the Jewish faith. The very good relationships in the class, and effective questioning and teaching strategies ensured that pupils had a secure knowledge and understanding of aspects of the Jewish faith. The teacher usefully linked class rules with the laws laid down in the Torah and discussed why they were important. A very special atmosphere of respect and reverence was created when the teacher showed pupils two Mezuzah. She explained why they were important to the people who owned them and took pupils to the classroom door to demonstrate where they would be placed. Pupils were intensely interested and involved in these experiences because the teacher understood how to make meaningful connections in pupils' minds and how to use her very good subject knowledge effectively. This was illustrated well in her use of the class scroll and motto 'Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until your good is better and your better best.' She explained that it was like a Mezuzah for them near the door of the classroom. By the end of the lesson, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development had been significantly enhanced.

142. Older pupils in the school are given good opportunities to consider how the rules laid down by the prophet Muhammed can have relevance in their lives today. The teacher's clear use of some of the special terms to refer to the Muslim faith and his guidance for pupils' thinking gave good support to some

younger pupils and those lower attaining pupils who were not confident in discussing more abstract ideas. As a result, pupils' understanding of moral issues and the rules which are implicit in their own lives, developed well by the end of the lesson. An analysis of older pupils' recorded work indicates that there are some missed opportunities for pupils to develop their responses and ideas in greater depth and detail and this inhibits some aspects of their personal responses.

143. Good links with local churches and their representatives help pupils to build an appropriate understanding of the traditions and beliefs of the Christian religion as they move through the school. Collective worship supports pupils' learning in religious education well. Pupils visit local churches for the major celebrations in the Christian calendar. A strength of the provision for religious education in the school is the sensitivity and respect that teachers and pupils show towards the feelings, beliefs and opinions of others. There are useful links with other areas of the curriculum, such as in literacy, speaking and listening and art. For example, pupils in the Year 1/2 class make close observational drawings and paintings of the plaited Shabbat loaf eaten by Jewish families. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is still in its early stages.

144. The subject is well led by the acting headteacher, who has ensured that planning in the subject is sufficiently detailed and reflects the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There are useful arrangements for the termly assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge, linked to the attainment levels provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Guidance. Planning in the subject and pupils' work are regularly and carefully monitored. The subject is appropriately enhanced by planned visits to a local synagogue and a Sikh gurdwara and members of the local community visit the school to talk about the celebration of Diwali and its importance to the Hindu faith. These aspects make a very good contribution to the pupils' cultural development. Resources meet the requirements of the curriculum and are given a high profile in displays around the school.