

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Nonington Church of England Primary School**

Nonington

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118688

Head teacher: Mrs M E Thorn

Reporting inspector: Grace Marriott  
3674

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 247943  
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Street Nonington Dover
Postcode:	CT15 4LB
Telephone number:	01304 840348
Fax number:	01304 840348
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mark Kent
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3674	Grace Marriott	Registered inspector	Mathematics, Music, Information and communication technology, Educational inclusion	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
9595	Susan Cash	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23637	Jed Donnelly	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, Science, Special educational needs, Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
11982	Ray Morris	Team inspector	English, Art, Geography, Design and technology, History.	How well is the school led and managed?

Nonington Primary School is a Church of England school and therefore religious education and collective worship were inspected and reported on separately.

The inspection contractor was:

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Nonington Primary School is a very small Church of England Primary school near Dover in Kent. It currently has 83 pupils on roll, with more boys than girls. The school is larger than at the time of previous inspection with four classes where previously there were three. The pupils are overwhelmingly of white UK origins and no children have English as an additional language. The children come from a wide area and from very varied backgrounds. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average. Almost a third of pupils are on the register of special educational needs which is high. The main special needs are dyslexia and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some children started the Foundation Stage with above average knowledge and skills, but most were below average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is providing a sound education in a friendly and caring atmosphere. Standards vary from year to year but are broadly average. In general, pupils make steady progress and their achievement is satisfactory, particularly those who have been in the school since the Foundation Stage. The teaching is satisfactory overall, with strengths in the Foundation Stage and the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Head teacher and staff work well as a team. They, and the governors, are strongly committed to providing an education which enables every child to achieve to the best of his or her ability with the best possible facilities. The leadership and management are sound. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their education
- Reading is well taught and pupils enjoy books and stories
- Pupils learn to write grammatically accurate English and to spell and punctuate properly
- The school is well resourced for learning
- Extra-curricular activities are very good and give children a lot of opportunities to take part in music, drama, sport and other games

#### **What could be improved**

- Pupils need more opportunities to use and develop their writing skills
- Standards in science are not high enough
- Lesson planning does not always meet the needs of all pupils in the class, particularly middle and lower attainers
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to think and work independently

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in December 1998. Since then the improvement has been satisfactory overall and good in some areas, most notably the establishment of a separate class for the Foundation Stage. The school has benefited from a more stable staffing situation. The curriculum is much better planned and the schemes of work mean that the work builds much more systematically on what pupils have already done. The improvement in the Foundation Stage is too recent to have had an impact on

standards in the rest of the school and these are broadly similar to the standards at the last inspection.

## **STANDARDS**

## **STANDARDS**

The school is not required to publish its test results for 2002 because there were fewer than 10 pupils in the relevant year groups. Results in Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated in recent years but comparisons with the national results and those of similar schools must be treated with great caution because of the effect of very small year groups. For example in 2002 each Year 6 pupil's results were worth 12% of the school's total. In 2002, test results in Year 2 were above average in reading and mathematics, and well below average in writing. Pupils' achievement was satisfactory except in writing, when compared with their standards at the end of the Foundation Stage. The test results in Year 6 were well above the national average and the results of similar schools in English and in the top five per cent of schools in mathematics. They were below average in science. Almost all pupils achieved results which were consistent with their Year 2 test results. This represents satisfactory achievement overall.

By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are on track to reach the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> in reading, writing and mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, and in their personal and social development. Most children learn to work independently and to share and take turns well. In Years 1 to 6 current standards are broadly average in English, mathematics, and most other subjects, though below average in science. Pupils are achieving in line with what could be expected from their attainment in previous years. Pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress overall.

Literacy skills are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy reading and use their knowledge of letter sounds well to read unknown words. Written work is generally grammatically accurate but pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length. In mathematics, numeracy skills are satisfactory. Pupils add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately and, when given the opportunity to do so, apply their knowledge skills well. Pupils have sound skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and use these confidently.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school. Most are interested in lessons, are attentive and usually try their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave well in class and around the school. A few are less well behaved and can be immature and over-boisterous, particularly in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils generally get on well with each other and respond well when given to opportunities to take responsibility or show initiative.
Attendance	Most pupils attend regularly and punctually, though a few have less good attendance. Unauthorised absence is rare.

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<sup>1</sup> The early learning goals are what most children should have achieved by the time they start Year 1

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	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 Foundation Stage, the teaching and learning are good. There are particular strengths in the planning and provision of activities which lay the foundations for good reading, writing and number skills and develop good personal and social skills. Good questioning helps to probe the children's understanding and introduce them to new knowledge and skills. Assessment procedures provide a good range of useful information about how well the children are learning and their progress, and this is used effectively in planning the next steps in the work.

In Years 1 to 6 the teaching and learning were satisfactory overall with particular strengths in the teaching of older pupils. The main strengths in the good and very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 were in the planning of tasks which kept pupils interested and motivated and the very clear expectations for behaviour. In all classes, teaching assistants were almost always deployed effectively to work with small groups. Good planning of a two year rolling programme helps to make sure that work builds progressively on what pupils have already done and that they do not repeat work unnecessarily. The teaching of literacy skills is good. Reading is taught systematically and effectively, as are the technical skills of writing. However, teachers are not giving pupils enough opportunities to write at length and use their skills in other subjects. Numeracy is well-taught, though pupils need more opportunities to learn to think for themselves and work independently on problem solving activities and investigations. Teachers are increasingly using ICT in lessons and there was some very good whole class teaching of music in Year 5/6 using the inter-active whiteboard (a computer-controlled screen.).

Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, the pace of work tended to be slower and the activities were not as well matched to the need of all pupils, with the result that they did not achieve as much in lessons as they could have done. The teaching of science is affected by the limited amount of time given to the subject. This does not allow teachers to ensure that pupils consolidate their knowledge and skills.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a sound curriculum that meets legal requirements. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support and make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall the school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The provision for social development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are good and those for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are sound.

The school works hard to make good links with parents and most are happy with the care and education the school provides. The curriculum for the foundation stage is good. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education (RE), but the amount of time devoted to science is low and is having an impact on standards. Meaningful links between different subjects, for example art, mathematics and history, help to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall but the information could be used more effectively to set targets with pupils and match work to their needs.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The leadership and management are sound. The head teacher and staff work closely together to provide clear educational direction.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides good support for the school. Governors are fully involved in planning for the future
The school's evaluation of its performance	The head teacher monitors the school's work carefully and this has helped to improve those areas identified for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and expenditure is clearly linked to priorities in the school improvement plan

The school provides a good environment for teaching and learning despite its small size and somewhat cramped layout. Resources are good. The school is well staffed and the partnership between class teachers and teaching assistants is effective. The school achieves value for money in purchasing, but has not yet applied the principles of best value to evaluating the impact of spending decision on the standards pupils are achieving.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• Their children make good progress</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• They find it easy to approach staff with questions or concerns</li> <li>• The school has high expectations</li> <li>• Behaviour is good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework</li> <li>• The information for parents about how well their children are doing</li> <li>• How closely the school works with parents</li> <li>• Extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>

The inspection team supported the parents' positive views of their children's attitudes and personal development. The teaching is satisfactory overall, though many lessons were good. The school tries to work closely with parents, but does not always succeed and a few parents do not feel well informed. End of year reports are sound overall. Though some do not give sufficient information about what the child can

do, most are well written and informative. The homework set is generally suitable for the age of pupils. The team felt that the extra-curricular activities are good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. When children start school, their range of knowledge, skills and understanding varies considerably from year to year. Some children started the Foundation Stage with above average knowledge and skills, but most were below average, particularly in the areas of language and communication, and for some boys, personal and social and emotional development. By the time they start Year 1, most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> in reading, writing and mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, and in their personal and social development. Boys and girls, including children with learning needs are achieving well because of the clearly focused teaching and wide range of learning opportunities available. They make particularly good progress in acquiring skills in reading, writing and number work and in their personal and social development. In a story session children were learning to listen carefully and to ask questions about the story. In a mathematics lesson they were learning about capacity and also how to take turns and share equipment. In another lesson the support and encouragement from an adult enabled children to describe accurately the conditions needed for seeds to grow. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children have learnt to work independently and to share and take turns.
2. Comparisons with the national results and those of similar schools must be treated with caution. Results in Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated in recent years, largely because of the effect of a very small year groups. For example in 2002 each Year 6 pupil's results were worth 12% of the school's total. In 2002, test results in Year 2 were above average in reading and mathematics, and well below average in writing. Pupils' achievement was satisfactory when compared with their standards at the end of the Foundation Stage. The test results in Year 6 were well above the national average and the results of similar schools in English and in the top five per cent of schools in mathematics. They were below average in science. Almost all pupils achieved results which were consistent with their Year 2 test results. This represents satisfactory achievement overall.
3. In Years 1 to 6 current standards are broadly average in English, mathematics, and most other subjects, though below average in science. Pupils are achieving in line with what could be expected from their attainment in previous years. Pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress overall.
4. Pupils start school with below average speaking and listening skills and need a considerable amount of support to improve these to the point where they are satisfactory overall. In the infant class pupils practised asking questions to discover the identity of a mystery animal. Although this was a difficult task, with help from the teacher and teaching assistant, they successfully asked simple questions. Older pupils were keen to put forward their own points of view but did not always listen to each other carefully enough. In all classes, pupils enjoy reading and use their knowledge of letter sounds well to read unknown words. By the time they are 11, most pupils talk confidently about their work and why they like particular books. However, many still have a comparatively narrow vocabulary. Teaching seen during the inspection was particularly effective in developing this when pupils were reading and discussing more demanding texts, such as the poem *The Skylark* by *Christina Rossett*.
5. Written work is generally grammatically accurate and handwriting is neat, correctly formed and legible. Pupils write carefully and pay attention to using correct spellings but are not given enough

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<sup>2</sup> The early learning goals are what most children should have achieved by the time they start Year 1

opportunities to write at length. For example, an exercise in which pupils wrote down the kind of words one would use arguing a case for or against something, was not followed with an opportunity for them to use what they had learnt to construct a written argument. Pupils had responded well to more demanding tasks in the upper junior class, such as writing an information leaflet for a leisure centre which required factual information and persuasive writing.

6. In mathematics, standards are average overall. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have secure number skills and add and subtract with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Higher-attainers are competent in adding and subtracting two digit numbers to 100, average-attainers are secure in addition and subtraction to 20. Lower-attainers are reasonably confident in addition, but not always in subtraction. Year 6 pupils also have secure computational skills and apply their knowledge and skills well when given the chance, though they do not have enough opportunities to do so. For example, above-average attainers were working very successfully on problems involving probability and were organising a range of data very systematically, using a computer-generated spreadsheet. They showed a clear understanding of statistical terms and were using them accurately. Average pupils were accurate at a simpler level, but below-average attainers were much less secure when dividing and using fractions.
7. In science, standards are below average and pupils are under-achieving. This is mainly because not enough time is given to the teaching of science. Most of the work is practical and in lessons pupils showed satisfactory skills in carrying out the experiments and activities. In Year 2, pupils investigating how seeds germinate used small magnifying glasses, describing what they could see and making satisfactory predictions about what might happen. In Year 6, pupils were satisfactorily developing their skills in observing, recording and explaining their observations using the correct scientific terms and vocabulary. However, in each year group the evidence from pupils' folders indicates very little recorded work, a lack of challenge, and standards which were below average. Pupils' experience in all aspects of the science curriculum is limited and they do not have enough time to acquire good knowledge and understanding.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because it is a friendly place and lessons are interesting. The youngest pupils are busy and interested in what they do. In the Year 3 and 4 class, pupils rolled dice sensibly in a mathematics lesson and co-operated well in pairs. They appreciate the wide range of opportunities, for sport, music and drama in particular, which the school offers. Their attitude to school is good.
9. Standards of behaviour are satisfactory overall. In lessons, behaviour is often good, especially when teaching fully engages pupils' attention and the tasks they are given to do are interesting and challenging. Pupils generally behave best when directly supervised: they find it more difficult to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning. Sometimes individual pupils find it difficult to behave appropriately, particularly when they are expected to listen to instructions or to do as they are asked quickly, and teachers have to be very firm with them. Pupils behave well in assemblies, listening attentively and arriving and departing sensibly. In the playground, their play can become over robust with play fighting and book bag 'fights', for example, but, despite the concerns of a small number of parents, there was no evidence during the inspection of bullying or intimidation. No pupil has been excluded for some time.
10. Relationships throughout the school are good. Most adults set a good example of positive support and caring concern. Pupils generally get on well with each other, with the older ones playing with and helping to look after the younger ones. Pupils are polite and considerate. There are sound opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative. Each class has monitors, while older

pupils are prefects and there is a head boy and head girl. Some pupils represent their peers on the school council. However, the over-use of work sheets limits the opportunities for pupils to show initiative in their work, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

11. Levels of attendance are slightly below the average for primary schools nationally, but, in a small school, the absence of one child can make a significant difference to the statistics. There are almost no unauthorised absences. Very few children have poor attendance: the school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer and the families concerned. Punctuality is good. Registers are marked promptly and efficiently.
12. These findings are broadly similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. Standards of behaviour are currently sometimes lower than those reported before, but pupils' positive attitudes to learning have been maintained, despite staff changes in the top class.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

13. All the teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and half the lessons were good or very good. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection when fifteen per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. The improvement is most noticeable in the Foundation Stage, where the teaching and learning are now good, with particular strengths in the planning and provision of activities which lay the foundations for good reading, writing and number skills and develop good personal and social skills. Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of children of this age and work together very well as a team. Good questioning helps to probe the children's understanding and introduce them to new knowledge and skills. In a discussion with children the questioning was helping pupils to express their likes and dislikes and to understand that people have different ideas and needs and these must be treated with respect. Staff use assessment well to identify children's needs, set targets and plan the next steps in the work, and track their progress from when they start school. In a lesson on measurement, the staff were carefully recording how the children had responded to the session, what they had said about the activities and what they were achieving. The improvement in the teaching in the Foundation Stage has not yet had time to affect standards higher up the school.
14. In Years 1 to 6 the teaching and learning were satisfactory overall with particular strengths in the teaching of older pupils. Good planning of a two year rolling programme helps to make sure that work builds progressively on what pupils have already done and that they do not repeat work unnecessarily. The main strengths in the good and very good teaching were in the planning of tasks which kept pupils interested and motivated and the very clear expectations for behaviour. Teaching assistants were almost always deployed effectively to work with small groups. Teachers are increasingly using ICT in lessons and there was some good whole class teaching of music in Year 5/6 using the computer controlled whiteboard. These strengths were most evident in Years 3 to 6.
15. Reading is taught systematically and effectively, Teachers provide a set of good examples as readers. Expressive reading of a 'big' book in an infant lesson, for example, encouraged pupils to join in and read with good expression. Pupils are taught that the meaning of a sentence can help them identify unfamiliar words in it. An example of this was observed in the upper junior class when pupils were reading from *The Night Mail* by *W H Auden*. This was a challenging task and the teaching assistant successfully helped them use clues from the text to sound out and eventually identify words like *Aberdeen* and *granite*.
16. The basic technical skills of writing are also taught systematically and some good teaching of spelling was seen, but teachers are not giving pupils enough opportunities to write at length in English or to use their skills in other subjects. In one English lesson, however, when pupils were re-drafting a poem they

had previously written to include alliteration, they responded enthusiastically and many produced writing of a good standard. Written work in other subjects often relies too heavily on worksheets which require pupils to fill in a few words rather than write at length.

17. Numeracy is well-taught and pupils have accurate computational skills. The mental mathematics starter activities are generally lively and encourage pupils to think quickly and trust the answers they work out in their heads. The plenary sessions at the end of lessons were used well to check how much pupils had learnt and give them opportunities to ask questions and develop their ideas more fully. Other aspects of mathematics are not given as much attention. In most lessons pupils' work was very carefully directed and they had few opportunities to learn to think for themselves and work independently on problem solving activities and investigations. When given the chance, as in a probability exercise and a task involving working out angles using a computer programme, they responded very constructively and could explain the methods they were using.
18. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, the pace of work tended to be slower and sometimes the introductory activities took too long. The tasks were not as well matched to the needs of all pupils, particularly the middle and lower-attainers, with the result that they did not achieve as much in lessons as they could have done. On occasion younger, higher-attaining pupils were not given the scope to achieve as much as they might have done. The teaching of science is affected by the limited amount of time given to the subject. Most of the practical work is satisfactory but the time allocation does not allow pupils to develop their own recording or investigative skills or allow teachers to ensure that pupils consolidate knowledge and skills.
19. Teaching and learning for pupils with learning difficulties is sound overall. Teachers know their pupils well and they develop a good relationship with them, which makes a positive contribution to their developing confidence and self-esteem. The school is aware of the need to give a higher profile to the use of the targets on pupils' individual education plans during the lesson and to involve them more fully in their evaluation. Learning support assistants are not always sufficiently engaged in challenging pupils through the use of materials adapted and matched more accurately to their individual needs. On a few occasions the match of work to ability was not precise enough and as a result slowed the pace of learning, which resulted in these pupils not learning enough.
20. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and use the information to judge what pupils have achieved, but the marking does not always give pupils a clear enough idea of how to improve their work or help teachers and pupils to set individual targets. In English and mathematics, teachers analyse test results and use the information to identify particular weaknesses and steps are taken to improve these. The work with other schools to compare examples of work and assess them against national levels of attainment is also helping to raise teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve.

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

21. Overall, the school provides a sound curriculum that has improved in many aspects since the previous inspection and meets legal requirements. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage has been greatly improved since the previous inspection. It is now well-planned and covers all the areas required. Planning is based on the national literacy and numeracy strategies and nationally recommended schemes of work in other subjects. These have been successfully adapted to meet the specific needs of a school with mixed-age classes. Co-ordinators now plan a two-year rolling programme for each class which ensures that all aspects of the National Curriculum are taught and that there is no unnecessary repetition. This has eliminated weaknesses in planning mentioned in the last report. The links between different subjects are exploited. For example, the work in art often supports subjects

such as history and geography. The use of ICT is developing well, particularly in English, mathematics and music, but there is scope to extend this further in subjects such as history and geography. The teaching time allocated to different subjects is adequate overall, though not enough time is given to science which is having an impact on the standards pupils are achieving.

22. Educational visits to places of interest, including studies of the locality considerably enrich the curriculum. The expertise of visitors, such as musicians, poets and members of the local community, broadens pupils' learning. Relationships with other schools are very constructive and the local small schools group has discussed provision for the Foundation Stage, personal social and health education (PHSE) and physical education (PE). The school has in the recent past had good links in science and design and technology with a local secondary school. These have lapsed because of transport difficulties but the school is keen to revive them.
23. A very good range of clubs and activities enriches pupils' learning at lunch times and out of school hours. Several clubs are available for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and the opportunities widen as pupils get older. Staff give generously of their time to organise clubs for chess, ICT and a wide range of sports and music. In addition, pupils have many opportunities to perform and compete. Older pupils go on short and longer residential visits. Sports teams participate very successfully in a range of competitions, often against much bigger schools.
24. The school uses a good range of external specialist advice and support for the many varied and challenging learning difficulties in the school. Pupils' needs are identified early and appropriate individual education plans are in place. Targets are regularly reviewed. The school is developing its expertise in improving children's skills in handling small tools, such as pencils, crayons and scissors, as part of work on preparing them for learning to write, with the help of the local health authority. This early intervention work is good though it has yet to make a full impact on standards.
25. The school makes good provision overall for pupils' personal development, as was found by the previous inspection. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Collective worship provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on and learn about moral and social issues. Prayers during the day provide occasions for thanksgiving. The school enjoys close links with the church and with Canterbury Cathedral. The head teacher has lately shared training on spirituality in lessons with her staff and the impact of this is evident, though some opportunities were missed, for example when too little time was given to consider a reflective poem.
26. Pupils are helped to develop a strong sense of right and wrong. For example, in a PHSE lesson, older pupils discussed how they would feel if someone kicked them or if a group 'ganged up' against them. They compared this with how they would feel if someone invited them to play or sat with them at lunchtime. The school behaviour code is made very clear and pupils are motivated to retain their 'Golden Time'. However, pupils do not discuss and set their own classroom rules which would further encourage them to take responsibility for their behaviour. Pupils are aware of environmental concerns and take good care of their own surroundings. Provision for moral development is good.
27. There are sound opportunities for pupils to develop socially. They work together in pairs and small groups during lessons. They are reminded to listen to each other and show respect and usually do, but do not always show enough understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others. The school council brings representatives from each age group together to discuss improvements to the school. They also meet regularly with pupils from other small schools, as do the various sports teams and the Year 6 pupils who will be leaving. They entertain local senior citizens and neighbours during the year, including an annual concert in the village hall, and take part in village events.

28. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good, particularly with respect to pupils' own culture. They listen attentively to the music in assembly and are told what it is, but the range of ethnic music and art is too limited. There is a wide range of musical activity for pupils to become involved in. School visits, for example to places of historic interest such as Dover Castle and Canterbury Cathedral, make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development, as well as being usefully integrated into their curriculum studies. Visitors to school have recently included poets, writers, puppeteers and theatre groups. The school is linked to a school in Gambia, for which it helps to raise money. RE lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of the major faiths of the world. However, pupils have limited opportunities to learn about life in multi-cultural Britain.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

29. This is a caring and supportive school, where all are helped to feel valued and secure, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In this small school, each child is well known by every adult and the children all know each other well. Child protection procedures are firmly in place, though staff have not had any recent training. The health, safety and welfare of pupils are assured through regular checks and appropriate training for staff.
30. The school has good systems for monitoring and encouraging attendance. Parents are phoned on the first day of absence if no explanation has been received. The Education Welfare Officer is involved in monitoring registers and supporting the very few families whose children's attendance causes concern.
31. Expectations of behaviour are made clear and misbehaviour is handled firmly in lessons. Most adults support the positive ethos of the school in the way they speak to pupils. Circle time and assemblies are used to reinforce the school's code of conduct and help pupils to be aware of how their behaviour affects others. Each class has its own reward system, which motivates pupils well. Even the oldest are keen to earn a 'warm fuzzy'. Loss of 'Golden Time' is regarded as a punishment to be avoided. Pupils are frequently reminded that they must tell an adult if they are being bullied or feeling unhappy. They are well supervised at break and lunchtimes and adults keep a close watch on pupils who are causing concern. Those who find it difficult to behave appropriately are supported well and their parents are involved in monitoring their behaviour, when necessary. The school keeps a record of more serious incidents of misbehaviour. It has good systems in place for monitoring behaviour and incidents of bullying. The school could do more to reduce the level of boisterous play, particularly among the boys and to encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their own behaviour.
32. The school has sound procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. This represents satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The school recognises the need to make better use of the information gained to ensure there is a sufficient level of challenge in the work planned for all, but particularly for lower attaining pupils. In the Foundation Stage class good use is made of assessment to guide teaching and learning. All staff make a positive contribution to observing what children can do and to the recording of gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Data are analysed, and targets are set for improvement, which are challenging.
33. Most teachers record pupils' achievements on the back of their lesson plans. Throughout the school targets are set in English and mathematics for each individual child, though pupils are not always as aware of these as they could be. The information from assessment is used satisfactorily in English and mathematics to track individual progress and plan appropriate work, but this is unsatisfactory in science. In all three subjects, the use of assessment to set targets for groups and individuals and plan appropriate work could be more effective. In most other subjects assessment has not been a priority

for development and relatively little formal assessing of pupils' knowledge and skills currently takes place.

34. The special educational need co-ordinator (SENCO) keeps detailed records and teachers are knowledgeable about pupils' individual learning needs and do their best to ensure they receive appropriate support and guidance. The teaching support offer good pastoral support and, when deployed most effectively, are helping to raise standards. There are regular meetings with outside agencies and the needs of the two statemented pupils are met.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

35. The majority of parents express positive views about the school. It has a good reputation in the area, particularly as a place where pupils who have not done well in other schools will be nurtured and helped. This reputation is well founded.
36. Parents say they are made to feel welcome and it is very easy for them to speak to members of staff about their children. There are many formal and informal opportunities for them to come into school and see the work their children are doing and parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in the review of provision for their children. Most parents feel well informed about the progress their children are making. Parents' positive views about the school were confirmed by the inspection. Concerns over the range of extra-curricular activities were not shared by inspectors, who judged that the provision is good. The school wants to work closely with parents, but there are a few individual cases where it has been less successful.
37. The school provides good information for parents. The newsletters keep them up-to-date with events in the school. End of year reports are variable and sound overall. Some do not give sufficient information about what the child can do: for example, in one class, English and mathematics reports did not cover all the different strands of the subjects. Most, however, were well written and informative. A strength is the termly interim reports which give a very useful over-view of pupils' attitudes and achievements during the term. Another good feature is the curriculum outline, which goes to every parent so that they know what their child will be studying in each subject. This enables them to support their child's learning with visits, reading and research.
38. Parents support the school well. They help with transport to sports matches and other events in which their children are taking part. Some help in the classroom with reading, for example. They make good use of opportunities to talk to teachers about their child's progress and to attend various performances and events at the school. The Friends of Nonington School is struggling to find enough people willing to organise events to raise funds for the school or provide social activities for the children, but when such events are organised they are supported well. Most parents hear their children read regularly, particularly when they are just starting to read, and although most support the school's homework programme, a significant minority do not.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

39. Leadership and management are sound. The Head teacher's purposeful leadership ensures clear educational direction. Her main priorities have been to improve teaching and learning and to establish the separate Foundation Stage. She has established a strong team ethos, and provided good leadership and training for inexperienced staff. This has meant that until recently there have been relatively few staff to whom she could delegate responsibility with the result that some areas, for example, the use of assessment and target-setting have not had as much attention as they might have done. In spite of this, and her part-time teaching commitment, she seeks to raise standards by monitoring teaching and

learning to ensure that pupils' progress is constantly being improved. The separate Foundation Stage has been established successfully.

40. The governing body provides good support and is well informed about school developments by the head teacher. Governors are regular visitors when the school is in session and have a good working partnership with the head teacher and staff. Each governor has responsibility for an area of the curriculum and a significant strength is their pattern of visits to observe teaching and discuss it with teachers, followed by a written account for discussion at the next governors' meeting. Governors know the school's strengths well but have a less thorough knowledge of how the school could improve. They work effectively in committees dealing with issues relating to premises, finance, curriculum, and staffing. Grants for specific purposes have been properly used to improve staffing and ICT resources. Funding for special educational needs is well used to ensure that pupils are fully included in learning and make satisfactory progress. Governors keep careful track of the school's finances and apply the principles of best value to all major items of expenditure, although there is no system in place to measure the impact of expenditure on pupils' progress and raising standards, or to compare its results and costs with similar schools. However, they have maintained a healthy budget while carrying out substantial improvements to the building which have made a significant difference to the education provided for pupils. The current budget surplus is high, but most of it is committed to paying for the recent additions to the building. All statutory duties are met conscientiously.
41. The clear plan for improving the school, drawn up jointly by the head teacher and governors has curriculum development as its main priority. The plan identifies who is responsible for each area and the financial implications for the school, but does not specify in sufficient detail how the success of the plan will be measured in terms of pupils' achievement. The Head teacher and staff keep a careful check on pupils' progress through regular testing, but they do not yet use this to set targets for individual pupils against which they can measure their improvement and the effectiveness of teaching. The school has good capacity to improve and the recent appointment of two teachers to management positions is a positive step to support this.
42. Staff morale and motivation are high. The head teacher makes good use of advice from local authority advisers who visit the school and, when time permits, other members of staff with particular skills share these by working alongside colleagues in their classrooms. All staff are involved in school improvement. Teachers who are responsible for particular subjects are encouraged to improve their expertise by attending local courses so that a wider range of knowledge can be drawn on to improve the work of the school. The school's aims and values are well reflected in its daily life. Professional development and training for teachers and teaching assistants are priorities with the result that staff feel valued and supported, and the school has been recognised as meeting the national standard for the Investors in People award. Induction for new staff, including the support given to newly qualified teachers, is good as are arrangements for performance management. These include all support staff as well as teachers. Teachers' development targets relate directly to improvements in pupils' learning.
43. The leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. The SENCO is part time and is mainly responsible for the administration of special educational needs provision and for ensuring that the teaching staff have the information they need. With just under four out of every ten pupils being identified as having learning difficulties, this is a demanding task. This level of support for teachers limits the further progress these pupils can make. The SENCO is aware of what needs improving and has the expertise to train staff further.
44. Although the school has limited space, the head teacher and governors have worked successfully to make optimum use of it. The establishment of a Foundation Stage classroom, though small, is a

significant improvement. The school is kept in good decorative order and is well equipped to meet the demands of the curriculum. Good use is made of modern technology in the efficient day to day administration. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To fulfil their aim to provide the best possible education for the pupils and, building on the successful establishment of the new Foundation Stage, the head teacher, staff and governors should work together to raise standards by:

- 1) Planning and providing more work in all subjects which gives pupils opportunities to use their good technical skills of writing and enables them to write in a range of styles and formats and for a variety of audiences and purposes;  
*Paragraphs 5 7 16 58 71 82 87 91*
- 2) Raising standards in science by allocating more curriculum time so that topics can be taught in greater depth to give pupils better levels of knowledge and more secure understanding;  
*Paragraphs 7 18 21*
- 3) Enabling all pupils to make good progress, though particularly the middle and lower attaining pupils, by
  - Consistently planning work at different levels of challenge which builds on pupils' current attainment,
  - Using assessment information more effectively to help set targets for individuals and groups of pupils;*Paragraphs 18 19 20 32 33 59 60 67*
- 4) Providing more problem solving and investigative activities in most subjects but particularly in mathematics, to develop pupils' ability to think and work independently.  
*Paragraphs 6 10 17 66 71 82 87 91*

### Minor issues

In addition the head teacher, staff and governors should include the following less significant issues in their action plan:

- 1) Encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their own behaviour and learning and deal more consistently with the over-boisterous play which is evident at times in the playground;  
*Paragraphs 9 31*
- 2) Develop further the use of ICT in subjects such as history and geography.  
*Paragraphs 21 79 84 88*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	10	13			
Percentage	0	12	38	50			

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care must be taken in interpreting the information as each lesson represents four percentage points.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	83
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	27

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

*Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) and Key Stage 2 (Year 6) the school is not required to publish its test results because there were fewer than 10 pupils in each of the year groups.*

***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	81		
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian			
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded			

***Teachers and classes*** (FTE means full-time equivalent).

***Financial information***

**Qualified teachers and classes: Y R– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.1
Average class size	20.5

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	252829
Total expenditure	200095
Expenditure per pupil	3078
Balance brought forward from previous year	36323
Balance carried forward to next year	89057

***Recruitment of teachers*** (FTE means full-time equivalent).

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
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)	

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

83

Number of questionnaires returned

35

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	11	3	9	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	26	3	3	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	37	9	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	49	17	3	3
The teaching is good.	54	34	3	9	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	26	9	9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	14	3	9	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	31	3	3	9
The school works closely with parents.	43	34	14	9	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	34	6	9	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	37	6	9	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	38	9	12	0

## **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**

45. Although some children are above average, overall the attainment is below what is typical of children of this age, particularly in the areas of language and communication and for some boys, personal and social and emotional development. By the time they start Year 1, most children are on course to achieve the expected levels in all the areas of learning. Boys and girls, including children with learning needs are achieving well because of the good, clearly focused teaching in all the areas of learning, and the wide range of learning opportunities provided. The good relationships with parents, high expectations of what each child can achieve and the teacher's very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum all help children to learn and achieve well.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

46. A significant number of children enter the Foundation Stage class with personal and social skills that are below those found nationally. Children make good progress and most achieve the expected levels by the time they leave the Foundation Stage class. Teachers place much emphasis on the development of independence and the skills needed to work and play together, to give children a sense of self-worth and a feeling of achievement. For example, children work together to clear up at the end of activities. Routines are quickly established and children know there are rules to follow and clear expectations of behaviour. Some children find it difficult to settle into activities, because their understanding of language is poor and they find it hard to follow instructions, but adults' skilled support help them to understand the social rules of taking turns, listening to others and carrying out instructions. When learning about plants, they showed that they know the rules for sitting in a circle and taking turns in speaking. Their concentration improves so that most children sit and participate in assemblies and short group sessions though, at times a few still need adult support to cope with a group situation.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

47. Children make good progress because of the good teaching. Staff plan well together to include reading, writing, speaking and listening in every activity. Children are on track to reach the expected levels. When they start school many children use single words, nod or remain silent, while only a few more confident children offer longer responses, including simple sentences. With skilled prompts, some children develop simple conversations whilst playing with an adult or older children. Staff plan creatively to develop early reading, writing and imaginative play. Children use crayons and pencils in different activities and attempt their own writing and letters. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. Staff read to the children and use questions very skilfully to help them understand stories. Children enjoy selecting their own books and sitting on the cushions to 'read' with a friend. Adults work very hard to persuade children to respond and this helps children develop their thinking and speaking skills through games and rhymes.
48. Children make good progress in recognising letters and sounds because they are provided with a stimulating environment of words and pictures. More able children read words and simple books. The writing areas are the most popular areas in the rooms and children concentrate well when they write their letters, birthday cards and stories, looking carefully at letters and words around the room.

## **Mathematical development**

49. Most children are likely to achieve the expected level in mathematical development. They make good progress because numeracy is taught well through many practical games and tasks. Every opportunity is taken to include counting and ‘how many?’ into any activity. For example, “How many bounces can you do with the ball?” Staff make sure that each area of learning provides opportunities for children to acquire a mathematical vocabulary. For example, when playing in the sand, children were talking about heavy and light or seeing which was the tallest or smallest tower when building. When singing, they thought about whether they had more or fewer buns or bottles. Some joined in counting to five and made groups of beans to match these numbers. More able children write numbers to eight correctly and write addition sums to seven by counting out groups of beans accurately. Staff plan well-organized numeracy lessons and provide challenging tasks that are matched well to what the children have already learnt.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

50. Children achieve well and most will reach the expected levels by the time they leave the Foundation Stage class. Staff attract children’s interest and curiosity and stimulate learning through exciting activities and discussions. For example, children used their magnifying glasses to examine a variety of beans thoroughly, calling “Come and look at this one.” One group looked carefully at a range at the roots and stem of a plant and discovered where potatoes and onions come from.
51. Staff use the planting of cress seeds well to extend children’s understanding, and to encourage them to talk about what they are doing. “I think they need sunlight, soil and water,” explained one child and they recall that the water and ‘good things’ are taken up in the roots. Children learnt to make choices and experiment with construction materials. They used the mouse confidently to change pictures and drawings on the computer. There are many daily opportunities for children to develop their thinking skills through structured play and exploration.

## **Physical development**

52. The majority of children make good progress and attain the expected levels. Children made imaginative and active use of the equipment in the outdoor area, moving with confidence on wheeled toys and climbing and swinging with agility from apparatus at different levels. They experimented with hoops and balls, and worked out how to get in and out of large boxes. Children learn to use tools for modelling, building, painting, and making collages or models with confidence. They were trying very hard to follow instructions for the careful folding of paper to make kites. The wide range of activities provided means that children increase their dexterity with paintbrushes and tools such as scissors.

## **Creative development**

53. Children make good progress and most will attain the expected level. Very good imaginative activities in the classroom and outside encourage language development, social play and other skills. Children enjoyed finger and hand printing and use glue spreaders enthusiastically to glue their dried beans to make a picture of an adult’s face. They thoughtfully moulded and pushed dough into shapes and worked hard on their observational drawings of plants and bulbs. Children play imaginatively in the home corner or in the sand. They enjoy learning new songs and rhymes or exploring a range of instruments.



## ENGLISH

54. Test results in Year 2 have varied significantly from year to year largely because of differences in the different year groups. In 2002, the test results were above average for reading whereas current standards are average. This, however, represents satisfactory achievement for each year group. The test results in 2002 in writing were well below average, which was unsatisfactory. Standards of writing in the current year group are average and their achievement is satisfactory, because more emphasis is being placed on teaching writing. More still needs to be done, however, to ensure that this improvement is secure. In the 2002 tests for 11 year olds, results were well above the average nationally and compared with similar schools. Currently, in Year 6 standards are broadly average and for these pupils this is satisfactory achievement. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall.
55. Pupils start school with below average speaking and listening skills, but teaching ensures satisfactory achievement. Teachers ensure that opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their skills in a range of situations. They question pupils carefully during lessons to encourage accurate listening and help them improve their vocabulary. In the infant class, for example, pupils were shown photographs of how the roots of a plant develop over a period of time and asked to describe what was happening. The teacher provided terms, such as *sprout* and *spread out*, to help them express themselves. In a game played later in the lesson pupils practised asking questions to discover the identity of a mystery animal. Although this was a difficult task, with help from the teacher and teaching assistant they successfully asked simple questions. Pupils in the lower junior class were asked to discuss attitudes towards men and women and the teacher was careful to use the word *stereotype* to improve the pupils' vocabulary. They responded enthusiastically to this but also found it difficult to listen carefully to each other's comments. Higher attaining pupils could explain the reasons for their opinions, but not in depth. By the time they are 11, most pupils talk confidently about their work and why they like particular books. However, many middle and lower attaining pupils still have a comparatively narrow vocabulary and their standards in speaking and listening remain below average. Teaching seen during the inspection was more effective in developing this when pupils were reading and discussing more demanding texts, such as the poem *The Skylark* by *Christina Rossetti*, than when spending time reading tongue twisters.
56. Reading is systematically taught through the daily literacy lesson. As a result overall standards are average and pupils are achieving well compared with their attainment when they started school or when they joined the school later. They are taught to recognise whole words and to use their knowledge of letter sounds to build up more difficult ones. In an infant lesson, the teacher provided good support to pupils as they attempted to read the titles on pages of a book on plants. She sounded the letters herself so that pupils could copy these and eventually complete the words themselves. Pupils are taught that the meaning of a sentence can help them identify unfamiliar words in it. An example of this was observed in the upper junior class when pupils were reading from *The Night Mail* by *W H Auden*. This was a challenging task and the teaching assistant successfully helped them use clues from the text to sound out and eventually identify words like *Aberdeen* and *granite*. Pupils are taught how to use non-fiction books using clues such as bold type, captions and the contents and index pages. In an infant literacy lesson many already knew about these and could explain why a glossary is provided. Additional opportunities are provided for pupils to read for pleasure and once they have mastered basic skills they are encouraged to sample a wide range of books, including non-fiction, and keep a record of their reading in simple diaries. Class libraries are well stocked with good quality books and this, combined with the encouragement to read widely, is the reason one recently arrived pupil gave for liking the school more than a previous one. Teachers provide good role models as readers. Expressive reading of a 'big' book by the teacher in an infant lesson, for example, encouraged pupils to join in and read with good expression, while the different emphasis placed on

certain words provided helpful clues so that pupils fully understood the meaning. The school has a very small library in which books are classified under the Dewey system. However, not all the pupils spoken to by inspectors had a secure understanding of how this works and would therefore find it difficult to access information quickly in a larger library.

57. The technical skills of writing are taught effectively. Pupils' handwriting is generally neat, correctly formed and legible and most have a fluent, cursive hand. They write carefully and pay attention to using correct spellings which are systematically taught. Very good teaching of spelling was seen in an upper junior lesson when pupils were taught the rule, and its exceptions, for using *i* and *e* together in a word. Not only was a mnemonic provided to help pupils remember, but they were also shown how the shape of their mouth when saying the words out loud could help them identify which followed the rule and which didn't.
58. Work seen in the infants' books was predominantly 'diary' writing. There were few examples of writing for a particular purpose such as giving instructions for making something or explaining what had been done in a science investigation. A wider range of writing is being taught in the lower junior class, but insufficient time has been devoted to pupils consolidating their skills and writing at length. An exercise in which pupils wrote down the kind of words one would use arguing a case for or against something, for example, was not followed with an opportunity for them actually to construct a written argument. More demanding tasks have recently been introduced in the upper junior class such as writing an information leaflet for a leisure centre which required factual information and persuasive writing. Pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to refine their written work, although good practice was seen in a lesson when pupils were re-drafting a poem they had previously written to include alliteration. They responded enthusiastically and many produced writing of a good standard. Written work in other subjects often relies too heavily on work sheets which require pupils to fill in a few words rather than write at length. As a result most pupils generally do not have enough opportunities to achieve the highest standard of which they are capable.
59. Teaching is satisfactory in the infant class and good in the junior classes. Although this is an improvement on the last inspection, it has not yet had time to make a significant difference to standards. Lessons are carefully planned and pupils of different abilities are provided with work matched to their individual needs. An inter-active whiteboard was used to good effect in the upper junior class and pupils quickly improved their understanding of quotation marks as a result. The best teaching observed during the inspection was lively and ensured a brisk pace to the lesson so that time was well used. Teachers explained at the beginning of the lesson what was to be taught, although they did not always relate this to what the pupils would be able to do at the end of it. Pupils' were well managed and poor behaviour was dealt with promptly and in a positive manner. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teaching assistants are well briefed to provide good support for pupils with special educational needs.
60. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, the task set for some groups of pupils was not well matched to their needs or the balance of the lesson meant that too much time was spent on an introductory activity and not enough on the main part of the lesson when most of the learning was planned to take place. Sometimes the grouping of pupils in the infant class was not as effective as it could have been in promoting high levels of achievement. Teachers mark work conscientiously, although their written comments do not provide enough guidance to the pupils on how they can improve their work.
61. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory. Teachers have joined another local school to compare examples of work and assess them against national levels of attainment. This makes an important contribution to the school's efforts to raise standards. Tests are used to identify particular

weaknesses and steps are taken to improve these. Information is not used as effectively as it could be to set annual targets for each pupil, against which progress can then be carefully checked. Although they have individual writing targets for daily use, pupils are not always familiar with these so their impact is limited.

62. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. Teaching plans are checked, and resources are good. Good use is made of local authority advisers to raise standards. The school provides enrichment activities through visiting storytellers, book weeks and the use of male visitors to provide positive role models for boys. Information technology is used to support learning and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and spiritual education. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

63. Results of the 2002 tests for seven year olds were above average overall and better than the results of similar schools. The results of the Year 6 tests in 2002 were very high (in the top five per cent of schools nationally) and very good when compared with the same pupils' results at the end of Year 2. Standards can vary from year to year because of the small number in each cohort. Recent results have been slightly better overall than at the time of the last inspection.
64. The current Year 2 pupils are working at an average level overall. They have secure number skills and add and subtract with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Higher-attainers are competent in adding and subtracting two digit numbers to 100, average-attainers are secure in addition and subtraction to 20. Lower-attainers are reasonably confident in addition, but not always in subtraction. Most pupils have a good understanding of different two and three dimensional shapes and describe them in terms of the number of sides or faces. The work in lesson and in pupils' books showed that they are less confident and accurate in applying their knowledge in practical work or in solving simple problems. Overall, boys' and girls' results are similar. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, though some Year 1 pupils could cope with more of the Year 2 work.
65. Standards in Year 6 are not as high as they were last year because the school has fewer potentially higher-attainers. Standards are close to the average overall and pupils are achieving at a level which is consistent with their previous work. Their standards in numeracy are average, and they use their computational knowledge and skills accurately. Above-average attainers were working very successfully on probability problems and were organising a range of data very systematically, using a computer-generated spreadsheet. They showed a clear understanding of statistical terms and were using them accurately. Their calculations were accurate. Average-attaining pupils were accurate at a simpler level, but below average pupils were much less secure when dividing and using fractions. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Teachers brief teaching assistants well to support pupils with special educational needs to ensure that they can participate fully in lessons. The work is generally appropriately matched to their needs.
66. Teaching is satisfactory in the infant class and good in the junior classes. In all classes, teachers plan lessons carefully using the two-year programme to ensure systematic coverage of the National Curriculum. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing numeracy and these skills are well-taught, though pupils are not always given enough opportunity to apply their knowledge in problem-solving and investigative activities. Teachers use a good range of strategies to motivate pupils and keep their attention. These include lively mental mathematics sessions at the start of lessons and a variety of activities during lessons which keep the pace of lessons brisk. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and pupils respond particularly well to interesting activities and a good level of challenge. In the good lessons observed in the juniors, a thorough approach in the starter activity

ensured that pupils fully understood what was expected of them and gave them confidence to start the main task. In the lesson on compass points the practical work demonstrated very clearly what pupils needed to know. Similarly, in the lesson on data collection the whole-class introduction was being used effectively to re-inforce and extend pupils' understanding and their ability to apply what they knew. ICT was being used effectively in the lower junior class to help pupils to consolidate their knowledge of the properties of angles and learn to estimate accurately the size of different angles.

67. In both good and satisfactory lessons the whole-class sessions at the end of lessons were good. They enabled teachers to check what pupils had learnt by using well-targeted questions. Teachers were also using this session to encourage pupils to develop their answers more fully and pose their own questions. Where the teaching was satisfactory, the pace was slower and the match of work to pupils' needs was not as good. Sometimes the middle and lower-attainers found it difficult to understand what was expected. Pupils tended to become restless and, though relationships were still good, more time had to be spent on managing behaviour.
68. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Teachers mark work conscientiously, although their written comments do not often provide enough guidance to the pupils on how they can improve their work or help teachers and pupils to set targets. Class work and test results are used to identify particular weaknesses and plan the curriculum accordingly. Mathematics is satisfactorily led and managed. Planning is well-co-ordinated across the school and the school is very much aware of what has been improved and where further improvement is needed. The development of problem solving and the practical application of mathematics are the main priorities. Information technology is being used satisfactorily and increasingly to support learning and help pupils develop their mathematical skills still further. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## SCIENCE

69. Current standards in science are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils are not achieving as well as they should, or as well as they do in English and mathematics. This is mainly because the school does not give enough time to the teaching of science and therefore many topics are not studied in enough depth. Comparing levels of attainment in science from year to year is unreliable because of the low numbers of pupils in the year groups. However, at the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be satisfactory overall, so this represents a decline.
70. Pupils are generally positive about science and enjoy the practical activities. The work seen in lessons was broadly satisfactory. In Year 2 pupils were learning that a plant is a living thing and name parts of the plant such as the stalk, leaf and stem. Some also knew that leaves store food for the plant and that they need water and sunlight to grow. Pupils had good opportunities to investigate and explore cress seeds growing. They were using small magnifying glasses, describing what they could see and making satisfactory observations about what might happen. Similarly in Year 6 pupils the practical work seen was satisfactory. Pupils were developing their skills in observing, recording and explaining their observations using the correct scientific terms and vocabulary. Higher-attaining pupils knew about photosynthesis and the role of chlorophyll, the green pigment in leaves. Other pupils knew about germination and described the life cycle of a seed through the food chain. Pupils drew the different elements of the cycle and labelled them correctly. They were also using ICT satisfactorily to record their findings. However, in each year group the evidence from pupils' folders indicates very little recorded work, a lack of challenge and standards which were below average.
71. Though few science lessons were taking place during the inspection, in those that could be observed, the teaching and learning were satisfactory. The staff had chosen to concentrate on practical work and the main strengths of the teaching were in the investigative work and the good range of

questioning to check pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teaching did not always match work accurately to the needs of those pupils with learning difficulties, though higher-attainers were achieving at a satisfactory level. However, the work in books showed the comparatively small amount of work covered, an over-reliance on worksheets to record the results of experiments or investigations and consequently gaps in pupils' knowledge.

72. The subject leadership is sound and provides support and encouragement to colleagues. The pupils benefit from the support of a local company through visits to their work place and in resourcing. Older pupils also take part in field trips. However, these activities have not yet had a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. Pupils' gains in knowledge and understanding of science are assessed, but the information is not being used consistently enough to track pupils' progress and plan appropriate work. The school has recently reviewed the curriculum in science to take account of mixed age classes and has improved it by introducing a two-year rolling programme which makes coverage of the National Curriculum more systematic.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

73. It was only possible to observe one art lesson during the inspection so judgements are based mainly on the work on display and in pupils' books. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. A similar judgement was made at the previous inspection.
74. The school provides a good curriculum so that pupils work with a variety of materials and develop the skills for using them. All pupils are encouraged to draw in a range of situations and this forms the basis for other forms of picture making. In the infant class, for example, pupils had drawn lively, bold pictures of houses in the village. By the time pupils reach Year 6 their drawings from a field trip to Sandwich show far more detail, and individual parts of buildings are drawn in better proportion. Pupils use sketch books to practise drawing and to produce draft designs for their ideas in design technology. However, these do not appear to be used consistently through the school and so are not as valuable as they might be for providing evidence of pupils' progress.
75. First hand observation also forms the basis of pupils' work with paint. From painting flowers in the infant class, pupils in the lower junior class progress to representing the oriental designs on a silk scarf in a mixture of paint and felt pen. They also begin to experiment with different brushstrokes and colour to depict surface texture in paintings based on a range of photographic examples. Older pupils develop their skill further through studying work by established artists such as *Clarice Cliffe* and successfully adopt her style and colours in their own paintings.
76. Printmaking is systematically taught. Infant pupils begin by making simple press prints using polystyrene tiles and a single colour. This develops in the lower juniors through the use of textured objects to make multi-coloured prints and leads into basic screen printing. Older pupils then move on to printing and tie-dying textiles.
77. A good start is made on three dimensional work in the infant class. Pupils begin by decorating large stones with small pieces of fabric or other material to create imaginary creatures. These demonstrate painstaking work which develops skills of cutting and sticking as well as their imagination. Clay is also used to make simple figures of animals. There is less evidence of this work being developed as pupils move up the school. Although the oldest pupils were making large pictures of houses from card and a variety of materials for a frieze depicting the village this did not extend their skills beyond straightforward cutting and sticking on a larger scale.

78. Observation of lessons during the inspection was too brief to make a secure judgement on teaching though the evidence from pupils' work indicates that it is sound. In the lesson seen, the teacher made good use of questioning to draw attention to the similarities and differences in the techniques being used and this prompted pupils' to compare theirs with an example from Africa on display in the hall. She developed their vocabulary by using the word *juxtaposition* in the discussion and as a result they compared their current work with the results of printing methods they had previously used.
79. Resources for teaching are good and used imaginatively. The subject is managed effectively but procedures for assessing progress are at an early stage. The lack of examples of pupils' work kept as evidence makes it difficult for teachers to compare progress against national expectations and therefore limits opportunities to engage in discussion about improving standards. There was little evidence of information technology being used. However, the subject's contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is good. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. Two lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on the standards achieved in the lessons and on the quality of other finished work together with that seen in pupils' books. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This represents improvement since the last inspection when the progress of infant pupils was unsatisfactory.
81. Infants begin to understand the principles of levers and rods when they make an *alphabet book* about animals. They make cardboard animals move on the page by using paper fasteners and card to make simple rods, levers and discs. Pupils are taught to measure carefully and use saws safely for cutting soft wood. In the one infant lesson observed, pupils constructed North American Indian tipis from paper and dowel after experimenting with small models made from drinking straws and paper. Year 2 pupils explained that the legs of the frame were spread out to make it stable and why they had chosen to use sticky tape rather than string to join them together. This aspect of their work is further extended in Years 3 and 4 when pupils relate the levers, ball and socket and hinge joints seen in simple machines to those in the human body. They also have opportunities to learn how hydraulic pressure is used to move machines and to experiment with this in their own models, while older pupils make working models using electric motors and cogs. Pupils are enthusiastic and co-operate well in lessons.
82. Although pupils have opportunities to experiment with the design of their models before they make them, they are not always expected to explain these in detail or to list materials needed for each stage of construction. This restricts their learning in the subject and needs to be developed, along with the greater opportunities to evaluate what they have done and how it could be improved.
83. Teaching is sound. In both the lessons observed teachers linked their teaching to real examples of design. They had planned to use good questions to consolidate and assess pupils' understanding of what they had learnt, although, in one, insufficient time was allowed for using them. Valuable additional opportunities are provided for pupils' learning. In the infant class, for example, the teacher used the internet for pupils to research North American Indian artwork to add to their tipis, while pupils in the oldest class were challenged to find out when the Industrial Revolution took place. Teaching is enriched through a whole school technology day when older pupils work co-operatively with younger ones. Together they have made working models of machines with construction kits. Another good stimulus for learning came through a link with a local secondary school where pupils work together to create large masks for use in a parade.

84. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The overview of work provides advice and guidance when necessary to colleagues. Resources are satisfactory but ICT is underused. For example, opportunities are not provided for pupils to reproduce designs using computers, or to use them to control the machines they make. Co-operative working on practical tasks provides good opportunities for pupils' social development. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

85. It was not possible to observe any teaching during the inspection. Judgements were made, therefore, by looking at examples of work in books and classroom displays, and through discussion with teachers. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations.
86. In the infant class pupils study their local area and are beginning to understand how this is represented in maps and plans. A useful display of local maps and aerial photographs of the village helps them in their understanding. Pupils have created a simple plan of the school site with the location of different plants in connection with their work in science. A particularly useful computer program is used to support this understanding so that, for example, a Year 1 pupil successfully manipulated parts of a plan to make an accurate representation of a picture of a garden.
87. The use of national guidelines for the school's scheme of work ensures that older pupils study different locations in this and another country. Year 5 and 6 pupils, for example, compare their own very rural village with the town of Sandwich which provides a comparatively urban environment, and with the aid of line drawing, produce closely observed pictures of buildings to illustrate some of the differences. The water cycle and the effect of water on the landscape is partly studied through observation and practical investigation, for example observing how water drains from the school roof and plotting the rate at which a puddle evaporates after rain. Although the study of coastlines and erosion understandably necessitates the use of worksheets to provide basic knowledge, opportunities for pupils to acquire more advanced geographical understanding and skills are limited by this approach. Few examples were seen which required pupils to interpret evidence they had collected or to consider the effect of human activity on the environment.
88. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school's policy and scheme of work have been recently updated, and there is a useful subject development plan which will review resources and arrangements for monitoring standards of work. The intention to collect examples of work to compare with nationally expected standards will be a significant help in the school's efforts to raise standards. Limited use is made of ICT. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

89. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection but evidence from this and scrutiny of pupils' work shows standards to be in line with national expectations.
90. By Year 2, pupils show an increasing understanding of how the present differs from the past. This was well demonstrated in the lesson seen when a Year 2 pupil talked about photographs of her family and how these related to a very helpful display of photographs of the school going back to Victorian times. Through reading a 'big' book about the lives of Victorian children pupils identified similarities and differences between schools then and now. For example, they recognised that classrooms then had a picture of Queen Victoria but theirs only has a picture of her in the 'pretend' Victorian classroom and they do not have a picture of the Queen in their classrooms. Pupils have many first

hand experiences to aid their learning. They study history through learning about toys and homes, observing how these have changed over the years. The provision of writing slates and pencils in the lesson provided a very real experience to help them compare Victorian school life with their own. A particularly meaningful event was the recent visit of an ex-pupil who appears, aged 4 years, in an old photograph of the school.

91. Junior pupils study periods from ancient Egyptian history, Roman and Viking invasions through to World War II and Britain since the 1950s. The school uses local loan collections to provide interesting historical items and a range of good quality books. As a result, by Year 6 pupils described homes, clothing and other aspects of life in past times. However, much of this is done with the aid of work sheets which limit their opportunities to write and express their own opinions about what they have done. It also provides little information for teachers to use for assessing what pupils know and understand about history. Currently, the work does not develop understanding of how historical information can be interpreted in various ways or of how the present has been influenced by past events. As a result, although achievement is satisfactory overall, the needs of higher ability pupils are not being adequately met.
92. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school's policy and scheme of work have been recently updated, and there is a useful subject development plan for monitoring standards of work. The collection of examples of work to compare with nationally expected standards will be a significant help in the school's efforts to raise standards. Little use is made information technology in teaching the subject. The school uses the war memorial in the village church in connection with Remembrance Day and this makes a very strong contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

93. As at the last inspection, no direct teaching of ICT was seen but there was considerable use of it in a number of lessons in other subjects. The judgements are therefore based on observing pupils using ICT, work on display, teachers' planning documents and discussion with staff. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in music, ICT is being used regularly and successfully to support learning. Work on display included word processing and the results of scientific and mathematical investigations. The use in art, design and technology, history and geography is more limited.
94. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. Younger pupils use ICT confidently, operating the mouse and following instructions carefully. In the older classes pupils were using mathematical programs successfully to support their work on angles and a spreadsheet to display accurately in graphical forms the results of their probability investigations. In the Year 5/6 class the computer controlled, inter-active whiteboard was being used very effectively in both English and music to extend pupils' knowledge and skills and increase their confidence. In the music lesson the level of challenge was high and pupils had to concentrate very hard to follow and copy the rhythm and beat. In science pupils were using computers to record their findings. Most pupils were making steady progress and were achieving satisfactorily. It is not possible to make a judgement of teaching based on direct observation, but it is clear from pupils' work and the way in which they use ICT in lessons, that the teaching is at least sound and covers all aspects of the National Curriculum.
95. The recently appointed co-ordinator has inherited a good development plan. Staff have had access to suitable training and are confident in the use of ICT in lessons. The improvement since the last inspection has been at least satisfactory and good in terms of resources. These have improved

significantly since the last inspection with the addition of the inter-active whiteboard, Internet links and a digital camera. An 'Internet Café' at lunch time on one day each week gives older pupils well-supervised access to the Internet and has established links with pupils in a school in Bristol.

## **MUSIC**

96. During the inspection it was not possible to see music being taught in most classes, but it is clear from the displays, the range of activities and the subject planning, that music plays an important part of the life of the school. In the one lesson which could be observed the standard was average overall. Pupils were enthusiastic about the lesson and were keen to use the computer-controlled whiteboard to show their practical skills and their knowledge of rhythm and beat. They listened attentively to the music of Peer Gynt and displayed their impressions of the music very forcefully in art work. They were achieving well. The teaching was good and was introducing the pupils to the technical language and the structure of music effectively.
97. The planning for music is good and based on clear guidance and subject knowledge. Links with other subjects such as English, history, and mathematics, are made very explicit and are effective in supporting work in these subjects. There was also some good large-scale art work on the themes of the music being studied in each class such as the Carnival of the Animals, Scheherazade and Peer Gynt. Pupils have many opportunities to learn instruments, to perform in front of the school and take part in a range of musical activities. Resources for music are satisfactory overall, with some good ICT resources. The co-ordinator has a very clear view of how the subject should develop and good plans for this.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

98. Standards in physical education are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. Older pupils continue to have good access to range of extra-curricular activities that include football and athletics.
99. In Year 2, pupils are developing basic skills of hockey. In one lesson they travelled through a space, around an obstacle course and demonstrated close control of the ball. They enjoyed the competitive nature of the activities. Pupils moved around safely and purposefully, introduced individuality into their sequences and listened carefully to instructions. In games, pupils have developed basic ball control skills. Some pass a ball to a partner in a controlled way and stop it with one foot. Most pupils understand why it is important to start and finish sessions with gentle exercise.
100. In Year 6, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in all aspects of the subject. Pupils demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the skills and techniques needed to improve and control their cricket skills. Most pupils are competent at throwing, catching, dribbling and passing. They have made good progress in working co-operatively in pairs and in small groups. They combine the appropriate skills in small team games. All pupils have opportunities to learn to swim in Years 2 to 6 and by the time they leave the school the majority swim competently.
101. Teaching and learning were satisfactory. In the two lessons observed, the planned activities made good use of equipment and built on what pupils had already learnt. However, at times there was not enough direct teaching of skills and pupils were not physically active enough. Pupils also do not have enough opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others.

102. The leadership and management of the subject were satisfactory. A good range of extra-curricular activities that take place after school, and residential experiences where pupils learn a range of outdoor pursuit skills, such as abseiling and canoeing enhance the curriculum. All pupils have the opportunity to be included in all events and neither boys nor girls dominate individual sports. A coach from the local county cricket team visits the school to take lessons and his specialist subject knowledge extends pupils learning by providing greater challenge. The school makes good use of the field and playground but the hall is too small for team games and gymnastics for older pupils. The school deserves credit for finding suitable local accommodation where these skills can be taught.