

INSPECTION REPORT

LANGAFEL CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Longfield

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118711

Headteacher: Mrs Jean Craig

Reporting inspector: Mr David Amos
21712

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 February 2003

Inspection number: 247947

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: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Main Road
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Alan Strachan

Date of previous inspection: 17 November 1997

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30691	Kathleen Yates	Team inspector	Art Physical Education Foundation Stage	
16492	Robert Lever	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology Geography History	4. How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Attainment on entry to the reception class meets expectations, but there is a wide spread of ability. The school, which is larger than the average, admits pupils from a wide geographical area, but the local area is very mixed in socio-economic terms. Most pupils have some form of pre-school experience, with a large proportion attending a pre-school on the site. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is similar to the national average. The percentage of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is well above the national average and includes 16 who are currently educated in a unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, known as Class 7. The current percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is also close to the national average. There are more boys than girls. Nine pupils have English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with a number of significant strengths. It has recently undergone a period of considerable change in its teaching staff and a number of recruitment problems. There is now a more settled team and there are many examples of very good teaching throughout the school. This is yet to have its full impact on standards. The school is led very well by the headteacher and a supportive governing body and provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- It attains above average standards in mathematics, art and physical education
- It promotes very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships
- It provides high-quality support for pupils with autism and integrates the pupils from Class 7 well
- It provides good teaching throughout the school and effective support from learning-support assistants
- It provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum
- It provides a safe, secure and caring environment
- It is led very well by the headteacher, an effective senior management team and a supportive governing body

What could be improved

- Opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills in other subjects
- The consistency of targets set for individual pupils in English and mathematics
- The targets in the school development plan so that the school can evaluate the success of its work
- The role of co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and learning

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress overall since the last inspection and good progress in relation to the issues identified. It has improved the range of its communications with parents, although some still feel they would like more information. Planning has been significantly improved through the effective introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and the use of nationally recommended schemes of work for all subjects. The provision for pupils in Class 7 and their integration into the school are now major strengths. There is more monitoring of the work of the school now taking place, but this is an area that requires further development.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	E	C	C
Mathematics	C	D	A	A
Science	B	D	B	B

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

At Key Stage 2 the results of the standard assessment tests for 11-year-olds in 2002 show that pupils attained well above average standards in mathematics, above average standards in science and average standards in English. This is a similar picture when the results are compared to results similar schools. The trend of results is generally upward over a five-year period, with a significant dip in results in 2001. Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics due to the high-quality teaching and the emphasis given to mental calculation and numeracy generally. This is a similar picture to that seen during the course of the inspection.

The results of national tests for seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2002 show that pupils attained average standards in reading and mathematics but below average standards in writing. When compared with that in schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, attainment was below average in reading and mathematics, and well below average in writing. The results for writing were particularly low because no pupils gained the above-average Level 3 in the tests. The results show a downward trend in reading and writing for the past two years. However, observations of the current Year 2 pupils show that standards are higher this year. Pupils are achieving average standards overall for reading and writing, but a significant number are already attaining the higher Level 3. The standards observed in mathematics are above average, particularly in number. The improved standards are a result of the good and often very good teaching of this age group. In science, standards are also in line with the expectations for pupils of this age.

Standards in art and physical education are above average at both key stages. Teaching is good in both subjects and pupils also benefit from the wide range of opportunities offered in these subjects. Standards in information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography and religious education are in line with expectations, and pupils make satisfactory progress.

Pupils with autistic-spectrum disorder, pupils with other special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils' enthusiasm for school, and their interest and involvement in lessons make school an exciting place to be.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils know the rules well and sanctions are very effective. All pupils, regardless of their difficulties, are included and supported well by other pupils and adults in lessons and outside in the playground.
Personal development and	Very good. Mutual trust and respect are evident at all times. Pupils are

relationships	very keen to take responsibility and proud to carry out their tasks, which they do conscientiously and well.
Attendance	Satisfactory. This has improved over the last three months. Much of the absence was due to two pupils going away on holiday during the term and then not returning to the school.

The very positive attitudes and very good behaviour of the pupils are major contributory factors to the good learning observed during the inspection. The very good relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of the school's positive environment. The way in which the school strives to include all pupils is reflected in the mutual respect evident between pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Children are learning well in the reception class. Staff apply their very good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn to classroom organisation and management. Lessons have a clear focus on gaining basic skills and in learning to become independent.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed and there were many examples of very good teaching, with one literacy lesson seen in Year 2 being excellent. Of all the lessons observed just over one in five were satisfactory, three-quarters were good or better and just over a third were very good. Very good teaching is evident at both key stages. The good quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by the pupils. A particular strength of the teaching are the high expectations of the pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour – in more than half the lessons observed these were very good and sometimes excellent. Other major factors are good planning, a good match of work to pupils' different levels of ability, and a brisk pace to lessons.

The teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language. Effective support is provided in lessons by the learning-support assistants and, as a result, these pupils are engaged in their learning. The teachers employ very good strategies to include pupils with behavioural difficulties and are sensitive to their needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is very good access to the curriculum for all pupils. Planning is clear and matched well to the needs of all groups of pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They make good progress in lessons as a result of effective support from teachers and learning-support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	They make good progress in lessons as a result of effective support from teachers and learning-support assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. They sing with feeling in assemblies and are interested in other traditions and cultures. As a result of the school's family atmosphere, underpinned by strong Christian values and expectations, pupils' moral and social

development	development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers and learning-support assistants are very aware of needs of individual pupils and provide very effective support.

There is very good provision for pupils identified as having autistic-spectrum disorders who are integrated well into the life of the school, enjoying the curriculum opportunities provided. The quality and range of the curriculum are good and meet statutory requirements. The school has maintained the breadth and balance of the curriculum and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. It has a good partnership with parents and cares well for its pupils, providing a safe, secure and caring environment in which they can flourish.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior managers. There is also good support from knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinators, but their monitoring role is not as well developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very effective and fulfil their responsibilities well. They are very supportive of the school but have yet to ensure that they are fully able to measure the cost effectiveness of their decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The staff know their pupils very well and undertake suitable analyses of pupils' progress and the outcomes of their work. Monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place, but this area of the school's work is not as well developed.
The strategic use of resources	There are good resources for all subjects and they are used effectively. The very good learning-support assistants make a major contribution to the academic and personal progress of the pupils.

The school has a very good number of teaching staff, who are ably supported by an effective team of learning-support assistants. The very approachable and efficient administration staff, the willing site manager, effective midday supervisors and the sympathetic family-liaison officer complete the staff team, all making valuable contributions to the smooth running of the school. The school is led and managed well and has a clear vision for its future development. The school applies the principle of best value well when making major spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the behaviour and attitudes of the children the leadership and management of the school the good teaching that the school expects children to work hard the school helps children become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the amount of work given to their children information on how well their children are getting on how closely the school works with parents

The inspection team wholeheartedly agrees with the parents' positive views. Parents do receive a good number of opportunities to discuss their children's progress, and all staff are approachable should parents have any concerns. The amount of work given to children in school is appropriate. The school does provide homework, but this is not always consistent throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children start school in the reception classes their attainment varies widely but is average overall. By the time the children complete the Foundation Stage and join Year 1, a large number achieve the Early Learning Goals set for children of this age in personal and social development, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and mathematical, creative and physical development.
2. The results of national tests for seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2002 show that pupils attained average standards in reading and mathematics but below average standards in writing. When compared with that in schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, attainment was below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. The results for writing were particularly low because no pupils gained the above-average Level 3 in the tests. The results show a downward trend in reading and writing for the past two years. However, observations of the current Year 2 pupils show that standards are higher this year. Pupils are achieving average standards overall in reading and writing, but a significant number are already attaining the higher Level 3. The standards observed in mathematics are above average, particularly in number. The improved standards are a result of improved teaching for this age group, which is now good and often very good. In science, standards are also in line with the expectations set for pupils of this age.
3. At Key Stage 2 the results of the standard assessment tests for eleven-year-olds in 2002 show that pupils attained well above average standards in mathematics, above average standards in science and average standards in English. This is also the case when the results are compared to those in similar schools. The trend of results is generally upward over a five-year period, with a significant dip in results in 2001. Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics due to the high-quality teaching and the emphasis given to mental calculation and numeracy generally. In science, the pupils attain above average standards in scientific knowledge, but their ability to use and apply this when undertaking investigations is only satisfactory.
4. Standards in art and physical education are above average at both key stages. Teaching is good and pupils also benefit from the wide range of opportunities offered in these subjects.
5. Standards in design and technology, history, geography and religious education are in line with expectations, and pupils make satisfactory progress. In information and communication technology the pupils attain standards in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. However, opportunities to extend and develop these skills in other subject areas are not well developed.
6. Pupils identified as having autistic-spectrum disorders in Class 7 are making particularly good progress due to the high quality of teaching and their effective integration into other classes when appropriate.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets set within their individual education plans. This is due to teachers providing suitable activities well matched to pupils' needs and the very good support provided by the learning-support assistants during lessons. The school has a highly effective inclusion policy. Almost all the support offered to pupils with special educational needs takes place in class, ensuring that they have access to all areas of the curriculum and make good progress in all subjects. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from setting arrangements for mathematics. Pupils with specific educational or emotional needs make good progress during withdrawal lessons in the 'Sessions Room'.
8. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. More-able pupils are suitably challenged in lessons and the school is developing its provision for gifted and talented pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' very positive attitudes, recorded in the last report, continue to be one of the school's strengths. Christian values are evident in the lively yet purposeful atmosphere found throughout this church school community, where all, whatever their difficulties, play a full part in activities. Children love their school, the vast majority arriving on or before time in the morning, and their attendance is satisfactory when compared with national averages. Much of the absence percentage was caused by two pupils going on holiday during term time and never returning to the school.
10. Children settle very happily in the warm environment of the reception classes and register their own attendance. They want to please their teachers and quickly learn what is expected of them and to work and play sociably together. In other parts of the school registration provides a calm and purposeful start to the day.
11. Enthusiasm for lessons is evident in classrooms. Relationships are very good and pupils enjoy working, either independently or with their peers. They are interested and alert. Year 2 pupils were captivated by 'The Leopard's Story' and were eager to read alongside their teacher to find out what happened next. During a discussion on the framework for report writing, Year 5 pupils were intrigued to learn that not only did the word 'month' derive from 'moon', but that a lunar month was calculated by the time it takes for the moon to travel around the earth. One girl answered 'the guy with the belt' when asked which stars could be easily identified in the night sky at the moment. All this information added impetus to those writing space-technology investigation reports.
12. Behaviour is very good. Pupils know the rules and have discussed them in class. They quickly develop a strong sense of natural justice. Rewards such as the shield tokens, stickers and colour points are eagerly sought. Pupils are very proud to wear their star badges. Sharing their successes in assemblies, whether the rewards are for attitude or achievements, is an important occasion for all. Sanctions are effective and few pupils wish to upset their teachers. The school is a very integrated, inclusive and happy community, in which all feel welcomed. Mutual trust, dignity and respect are enjoyed and valued. There has only been one fixed-term exclusion in recent years.
13. The vast majority of pupils with special educational needs are very positive in their response to both staff and work. This is due to the good match of work to pupils' ability and the very good support given by the class support teachers. However, a very

small number of pupils with specific emotional needs do not always respond appropriately and are unable to focus on the task. Other pupils give very good support to their peers with special needs, celebrating their successes and happily including them in group activities.

14. Outside in the playgrounds behaviour, though exuberant, is good. Break time is a sociable occasion. All enjoy their freedom, some chat whilst eating their fruit, and others indulge in vigorous ball games when, occasionally some mishaps occur. Any incidents are dealt with quickly by vigilant supervisors.
15. Very good personal development is assured. From their time in reception all children are given opportunities to take responsibility and they carry out their tasks with pride, the youngest accompanied by an adult as they carefully take the registers to the office along the lengthy corridors. Pupils in Year 6 are on a rota to help adults in a variety of ways and, after lunch, some cheerfully wipe tables and sweep the hall alongside the midday supervisors. Others water plants, help Class 7 pupils and bring down the lunch trolleys. Through visiting speakers and carefully planned personal, social and health education they learn how to look after themselves and something of their duties as citizens in Britain's multi-cultural society. Discussion in one Year 6 class on 'Recognising risks in difficult situations' was honest, frank and well debated. The teacher asked provocative questions, whilst encouraging the 'right thing to do' and stressing that everyone deserves trust and a second chance. Pupils have run 'Bring and Buy' stalls to help the Blue Peter appeal, and sold cakes for other charities.
16. Although in its first year, the school council plays an important part in pupils' personal development. Former members regret that they cannot stand again, and recognise the importance of the council and that the school listens to their suggestions. Class representatives consult their peers, and the agenda for each fortnightly meeting results from their suggestions. Concerns such as the need for more shade in the Key Stage 2 playground and a piece of loose fencing in Key Stage 1 are reported. Representatives have to present their ideas; for example, a cooking club, to the headteacher, who considers carefully before allowing them to go ahead. Their latest initiative is to create a sensory garden within the outdoor classroom and they are investigating possibilities with the local garden centre.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good overall. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed and there were many examples of very good teaching, with one literacy lesson seen in Year 2 being excellent. Of all the lessons observed just over one in five were satisfactory, three-quarters were good or better and just over a third were very good. Very good teaching is evident at both key stages, although there is greater proportion of very good teaching at Key Stage 1, particularly in Year 2. Given the problems the school has had in recruiting and retaining teachers, with eight having left during the last two years, the standard of teaching remains high, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There has been a significant increase in the amount of very good teaching since the last inspection from just under one in five to just over one in three. The good quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by the pupils. A particular strength of the teaching are the high expectations of the pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour – in more than half the lessons observed these were very good and sometimes excellent.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and of those with English as an additional language is good. In lessons they are given a good level of support by

learning-support assistants and, as a result, are engaged in their learning. The teachers employ very good strategies to include pupils with behavioural difficulties and are sensitive to their needs. The school is using consistent and appropriate methods for writing Individual Education Plans; these have clear targets and are reviewed regularly. Pupils with special educational needs are clearly identified, and appropriate provisional targets are set. The teachers provide learning-support assistants with a good level of information about the pupils they are working with and the planned activities for each lesson. The pupils with special educational needs are confident about speaking in front of their class, and the teacher encourages them to answer questions and offer their ideas. The pupils from Class 7, who are included in some of the lessons in the main part of the school, are also supported effectively by teachers and classroom assistants. The teachers have good knowledge and understanding of autism. Teaching in Class 7 is very good. Further information relating to the unit can be found later in the report.

19. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall and sometimes very good. The teachers plan effectively together and then share the intentions and methods with the learning-support assistants. The teachers and support staff have good relationships and work well as a team. There is a very good emphasis on caring for others and the individual development of the children. The children's learning is enhanced by the secure environment created for them. There were many examples of good interactions between the staff and the children. For example, in a numeracy activity, when the children are building models of skyscrapers in order to understand the concept of 'shorter' and 'taller', the very good questions asked led to a good discussion by the children. They are confident to talk about what they are doing and why. For example, when building tunnels in the sand to demonstrate 'longer' and 'shorter', they talk about where the nearest long tunnel is, how dark it is inside and why it is a bit scary driving through it.
20. The children are very well managed and join in activities enthusiastically. Daily routines are very well established and the children are confident and eager to take part. During snack time, for example, two helper children ask their friends politely whether they would like orange and biscuits and then serve them and tidy up afterwards. The children behave well, are able to share equipment and toys and take responsibility for their learning during 'plan, do, review' times. The children are making good progress in early literacy and numeracy and the other areas of early learning. They have access to a covered, outside play area, which has a good range of resources, including wheeled toys. The teachers regularly assess the children and make very good use of this information to plan future activities.
21. Overall, teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. However, just over half of the lessons observed were very good and one in Year 2 was excellent. Of the other lessons observed over one in five were satisfactory. Generally the teachers have good knowledge of the subjects, plan their lessons well and teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy effectively. They have high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour and make good use of the resources available. They make good use of support staff, who are well informed and support groups of pupils or individual pupils with special educational needs. The teachers consistently provide activities that are interesting and match the learning needs of the pupils. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson the pupils enjoy writing simple descriptions of the wolf from the story of Red Riding Hood, such as, 'sharp fangs', 'hungry tummy' and 'beady eyes'. Where the teaching is exemplary in one Year 2 class, the teacher gives the pupils an excellent range of strategies to improve the quality of their writing. These pupils, when writing the beginning of a story based on a traditional African tale 'The Leopard's

Drum', are able to check and re-read their work to ensure that the sentences they are creating are correct and make sense. In a mathematics lesson in Year 2 the pupils are so interested in their work on identifying number patterns that they do not want the lesson to finish! At the beginning of the majority of lessons observed, the teachers explain very clearly what the pupils are going to be learning about and this helps them to make good progress. Teachers use questions effectively, which enables the pupils to explain what they have learned so far. This is illustrated in a religious-education lesson in Year 1 in which the pupils demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of Buddhism. In the one less successful lesson seen the unsatisfactory behaviour of the pupils hampered their progress.

22. Teaching is good overall in Key Stage 2. A third of lessons, however, were very good and just under a third were satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well, have good knowledge of the subjects and develop the pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy effectively. The teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve are high and pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged. For example, in one Year 4 English lesson the pupils were working on the use of the apostrophe and during some quick-fire questioning they were expected to identify whether it represented possession or omission. They rose to this challenge with a remarkable degree of accuracy. The setting by ability in mathematics in Year 6 benefits pupils of all abilities. The teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and foster very good attitudes to learning. An example of this was seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson about co-ordinates, in which the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were judged as excellent. This was due to the teacher's very effective use of praise and encouragement, and very good relationship with the pupils. They in turn made very good progress in the lesson. Teachers ensure that the pupils work at a good pace, remain on task and concentrate well. They identify clear learning objectives that are shared and understood by the pupils. A good range of strategies are used by the teachers to engage the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. For example, in Year 6 when looking at how to present the main points of an argument, the pupils were provided with a 'skeleton' to ensure that they included an introduction, two arguments 'for', two arguments 'against' and a conclusion. This resulted in good writing. The pupils in a Year 6 music lesson enjoyed brainstorming ideas for a rap, composing their lyrics to a rhythmic pattern.
23. Teaching of the core subjects is good overall. In English and science it is frequently very good and it varies from sound to very good in religious education. Teaching in art and design, geography and music is also good. The teaching of dance as part of physical education was very good. Too few lessons were observed in history to form a view on the subject. However, strengths were seen in a Year 3 history lesson in which the pupils were looking at aspects of Egyptian life and were able to address the questions 'What do we know? What can we guess? and What do we still need to find out?' when looking carefully at a scribe's pallet.
24. Throughout the school the pupils are managed very well and there is a good ethos for learning. A significant strength of the teaching are the very good relationships fostered by teachers with their pupils. Teachers are supported well by classroom assistants, who are briefed well and therefore work effectively with individuals or small groups. The teachers' use of assessment is satisfactory overall. They make good use of assessment to plan future learning activities. However, there are inconsistencies in English at both key stages, particularly in the use of target setting at individual level and involving the pupils in self-assessment. The marking of pupils' work is good overall, with many examples of specific developmental comments to help them improve their work. Homework is used by teachers to support learning and appropriately becomes more frequent as the pupils move into Key Stage 2. The use

of resources to enhance learning is good and they are satisfactory overall in range and quality.

25. In classes the teaching of special educational needs is good overall. Teachers plan work, which ensures that all pupils are fully included in the class lesson and use the additional staff very well. The learning-support assistants are very well briefed and are able to effectively support small groups of pupils, ensuring that they make good progress. For example, in a Year 4 lesson the learning-support assistant enabled a group of less focused pupils to concentrate well during the class introduction to a literacy lesson on similes. The learning-support assistant was familiar with the key vocabulary and knew what the pupils were expected to achieve. As a result the group were able to write amusing and appropriate lines for the class poem. The work of this group was celebrated in class alongside their peers, and the whole group experienced a real sense of achievement.
26. Where teaching is effective, teachers use questioning well to support the learning of all pupils. In a science lesson, for example, the teacher repeated questions and provided time for pupils to respond. Being required to use scientific terms accurately to describe their ideas about dissolving and saturation challenged more-able pupils. Teachers set very clear expectations for pupils. This has a positive impact on the their behaviour and attitudes in lessons.
27. Where there are weaknesses in teaching this is due to problems in managing the behaviour of a very small group of very difficult pupils. Occasionally there is an insufficient challenge for more-able pupils. For example, in some subjects, such as science, all pupils are expected to record their observations and findings in the same way or have work set that is at a similar level of scientific understanding to that of other pupils in the class.

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

28. Overall, the quality and range of the curriculum provided by the school are good and promote the aims of the school well. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum together with religious education, and conversational French is also taught. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and has maintained its breadth and balance since the previous inspection, although some aspects of information and communication technology identified for development at the previous inspection have not yet been addressed.
29. Overall the quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are good. The children are provided with a wide range of activities, which develop their basic skills well and help them to become more independent.
30. Provision is good for pupils' personal development. Health education and the use and misuse of medicines and drugs are taught as part of the curriculum for personal, social and health education and in science. Pupils are provided with accurate information, which promotes positive attitudes to a healthy lifestyle. Sex education is taught with clear aims and objectives and reflects well the school ethos. There are additional music lessons for a range of instruments through the Kent Music School. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and the school provides well for equality of opportunity.

31. Provision for pupils in Class 7 is very good. Teachers' lesson planning is clear and includes work for different groups of pupils in the class. There is very good access for pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and pupils from Class 7. All these groups of pupils are very well integrated and benefit from the very well structured support plans, which enable them to access the curriculum.
32. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place and there is an acceptable amount of time given to all subjects, including religious education. The provision for homework is satisfactory across the school and is appropriate to pupils' ages, although some parents would like more to be set. Long-term and medium-term planning is good and provides for coverage of all programmes of study. Weekly plans are detailed, focussing on key objectives for groups of pupils. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and appropriately resourced, and are having a good impact on standards.
33. The school offers a very good range of sporting and cultural clubs after school. The curriculum is enhanced through a good range of visits made by pupils and by visitors to the school. Pupils visit the local library, shops and parks and go further afield on very successful trips to the environmental studies centre at Horton Kirby, the Maidstone Museum and the Mick Jagger Centre. There are visits from artists and dancers from other cultures. The school makes use of the Kent Music Service and has hosted the Kent Children's University as part of its provision for gifted and talented pupils. It has plans to develop further its provision for pupils who may be gifted and talented.
34. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils and staff have appropriate links with the nursery, local playgroups and secondary schools, which help to prepare pupils well for their transfer. There are good links with outside agencies for pupils with special educational needs. The school has developed very good international links with schools in Holland, Germany and Sweden.
35. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. They sing with feeling, and their rendition of 'Here I am, Lord' in assembly was very moving because the words were obviously important to them. 'Kind and caring' were just two of the explanations offered in the Key Stage 1 assembly when pupils were asked what Jesus meant when he said 'Love one another'. Opportunities for spiritual enhancement spontaneously occur during the day; for example, the wonder and delight on reception children's faces as their teacher tested the ice on the pond in the outdoor classroom and they realised it could not easily be broken.
36. As a result of the school's warm family atmosphere, underpinned by the strong Christian ethos and high expectations, pupils' moral and social development is very good. They understand why rules are necessary and try hard to follow them. Unresolved disputes are settled with the help of the headteacher, who listens to both sides impartially and encourages pupils to resolve the matter for themselves. Pupils care for each other and are tolerant of all who have difficulties. Inclusion is a watchword at this school, and pupils in Class 7 take a full part in all activities, carefully supported by their peers. Lunch is a sociable occasion enjoyed by all.
37. The school provides well for pupils' cultural development and celebrates the diversity of other nations. A Sikh lady shares her saris with pupils, and in Year 4 they visit the Sikh temple. Pupils enjoy listening to music from their own and other countries, and are interested in learning about different faiths and traditions. A good working model of

an African 'talking' drum was created by one boy during a Year 5 lesson in design and technology. Conversational French is enjoyed, particularly by those in the French Club, who enjoyed a French luncheon party during the inspection. All enjoy using different media and trying to emulate various styles of painting in their art lessons. Through their visits to the Science Show, the Museum of Kent Life and The Mick Jagger Centre they develop a good understanding of their own culture. They understand that Britain is a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. Health, safety and pupils' welfare are very high priorities for the school, recently underlined by the appointment of a family liaison officer. Risk assessments are carried out regularly, recorded and monitored, and the site manager deals with what he can on his daily round. Staff trained in first aid are always on site and practice is good. Well-planned personal, social and health education lessons inform and alert pupils to the difficulties and dangers they may face in the world outside school. Very good children-protection procedures are followed; staff are aware of these issues, and communication with local agencies is very effective. Pastoral care is exemplary. Teachers and learning-support assistants are very aware of the needs of individual pupils and provide very effective support.
39. Assessment procedures are thorough, involving all teaching staff, and are monitored by the senior management team. Pupils' progress is tracked and reviewed regularly. The school tracks the progress of groups of pupils well, particularly in terms of gender, special educational needs and English as an additional language. Good use is made of this information to evaluate the progress these groups make.
40. A wealth of information about the progress made by all pupils is gathered and analysed in detail, but this data is not always used to best effect when planning for pupils' future progress. The practice of setting targets for the development of individual pupils' skills in the core subjects of English and mathematics is very important but has yet to have a consistent impact throughout the school. Pupils are set targets to improve, which are shared with parents and reviewed every term. However, these targets are not yet proving successful, for example a number of the older pupils could not remember what their individual targets were. This is currently limiting the progress of the pupils, as they are not clear as to the skills and knowledge needed to take them to the next stage in their development.
41. The school has very good and successful systems to promote and monitor attendance. Registers are scrutinised weekly and contact with the education welfare officer has been restored. The family liaison officer is in contact with families who need her assistance and has successfully improved the attendance and punctuality of a number of pupils. One hundred per cent class and individual attendance is celebrated in assemblies.
42. Very effective behaviour management techniques are practised by all staff. Pupils know what is expected of them and are proud to receive their stickers and tokens as rewards for academic achievement and positive attitudes. Sanctions, including putting names on the board and eventually being sent to the headteacher, are perceived as fair. Bullying behaviour and racist remarks are not tolerated. Exclusion is very rarely necessary.
43. The support and care of pupils with special educational needs in the main school are good. Staff are quick to identify and address needs as they arise and monitor pupils'

progress well. All teachers write good individual education plans, which identify preferred learning styles and set clear achievable targets. The staff monitor the progress pupils make towards achieving the individual targets regularly. Plans are reviewed thoroughly.

44. The school ensures pupils' very good personal development through high expectations that all will help and volunteer for tasks and the well-planned personal, social and health education lessons and, for the younger children, 'Circle Time' sessions. The many responsibilities willingly undertaken by even the youngest pupils, awareness of and actually organising events to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves, and membership of the school council all make major contributions to pupils' growing maturity and thoughtfulness as they progress through the school. Representatives of the police and other agencies visit to speak to them about the dangers and problems to be found outside their school environment. Pupils look forward with confidence to the next stage in their education. However, personal development is only recorded in annual reports, which makes monitoring more difficult, although teachers know pupils well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The school has a good partnership with parents. Parents are pleased that their children can attend this popular church school, and share its aims and ambitions for their children. Almost all have signed the home-school agreement, and a good relationship exists between school and home. Parents demonstrate their support through their good attendance at the three meetings and three open days they are invited to each year. Overwhelming numbers attend the popular school productions. Those who hear readers or otherwise assist teachers are well deployed and feel that they are appreciated. The majority try to help their children with work at home, and although use of the home/school contact or reading book is not consistent, it is an effective means of communication between home and school.
46. The quality of information parents receive is good. Weekly newsletters and other letters when necessary, with reply slips, are sent home. The prospectus, brochure and governors' annual report contain useful data. Annual reports are well regarded, although some do not contain sufficiently well-defined targets to show children how to improve their work. Parents find teachers approachable and know they can go to the administration staff or family welfare officer if they need further assistance. Those whose children have special educational or other needs are invited to reviews of individual education plans and they, as well as parents who speak English as an additional language, are very well informed. Parents of Class 7 children liaise directly with their teachers and are very pleased with the breadth of information and help they receive through the home-school book.
47. The school association, well organised by dedicated members, run a variety of fun and fund-raising events. These include the Summer Fayre, where teachers entertain, and a photograph records the one who took a bath in baked beans last year, as well as the Easter Egg hunt, pantomime, Nutcracker ballet and quiz nights. The association raised over £10,000 last year, which has been spent according to the headteacher's wish list, and has provided new computers, library books and the completion of the outside classroom. This has a very positive effect on the work of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The school is led very well. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has done so well through a difficult period of staff change and recruitment problems. She has a clear educational vision and is leading the school forward with the support of a high-quality senior management team and a dedicated team of staff. The school aims are very clear and guide its work appropriately. The headteacher, senior management team and governors have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
49. The school has developed an effective system for evaluating the performance of staff. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored effectively by the senior management team. However, the role of subject co-ordinators is not well developed in this area. Subject co-ordinators fulfil the other aspects of their management roles very well and are playing an important role in helping to raise standards.
50. The values promoted by the leadership and management of the school are put into practice both in lessons and in other contexts. This means that all pupils are effectively included, and both adults and pupils provide very good role models for this aspect of the school's work. Information gained from evaluating the progress of pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language is used to inform strategic decision-making. For example, the deployment of learning-support assistants is decided annually, and the leadership and management of the school ensure that these assistants are matched to the needs of pupils.
51. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is effective and manages the overall provision for special educational needs well. She uses the small amount of non-contact time efficiently to monitor the targets written by teachers, liaise with the governor with responsibility for special educational needs, meet with outside agencies and complete essential paperwork. Her effective management of special educational needs within the main school has ensured that the good provision for special educational needs reported in the previous inspection has been maintained.
52. The governing body is very knowledgeable and effective in its role. Governors play an effective part in shaping the educational direction of the school and fulfilling their accountability role. The governors meet their statutory requirements well. Financial planning is very good and budgetary decisions are based securely upon the identified priorities in the school development plan. Standards of financial planning and control have been maintained since the last inspection and remain good. Governors examine and discuss budget proposals appropriately and make regular checks on spending. At the same time, the headteacher and school bursar exercise good control of the budget within the limits agreed by governors. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purpose and there is careful attention to ensuring that the school achieves best value for its expenditure.
53. The school development plan contains many details of actions needed to support school improvement. The improvement items in the plan are appropriately developed from action plans produced by subject co-ordinators. However, there are no clear criteria in the plan to judge the successfulness of the school's work and, in particular, as to how this will improve standards. This also limits the ability of governors when measuring the cost effectiveness of their decisions.
54. Despite the recruitment difficulties the school is fully staffed with qualified teachers, ably assisted by well-trained and dedicated learning-support assistants. Class 7 has two committed teachers and learning support assistants trained to teach and assist

with the integration of pupils with autistic-spectrum disorder. Staff new to the school and newly-qualified teachers are supported well by established induction procedures. Students enjoy their work experience. Good performance-management interviews identify staff development needs and all are encouraged to go on courses. The very approachable and efficient administration staff, the willing site manager, the effective midday supervisors and the sympathetic family liaison officer complete the staff team, all making valuable contributions to the smooth running of the school.

55. The school has very spacious accommodation for the numbers on roll, and the number of specialist rooms available, as a result of the building's conversion from a middle school, is a considerable asset. All rooms are well cleaned, but some of the outside decoration needs attention. It is unfortunate that the design and technology room can only be accessed through the reception class areas, and lessons in the hall are disturbed by pupils and adults needing to get from one end of the school to the other. The extensive grounds include hard courts, a covered swimming pool, a secure play area for reception children and another for those in Class 7. The sturdy wooden adventure-climbing equipment is very popular. The buildings are let for a variety of activities, but none impinge on pupils' use.
56. Resources for teaching all subjects of the National Curriculum are good and particularly so for English and science. There are good materials to support pupils with special educational or other needs, and the two large Class 7 rooms are very well resourced for those diagnosed with autistic-spectrum disorder. Many of the very good range of multi-sensory resources have been made by the teachers to suit specific individual needs. The attractive, large and well-catalogued library contains a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, as well as multi-cultural texts, which provides very good support for pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning further the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- a) continue the development of information and communication technology at both key stages by:
 - i) ensuring that the skills taught are used effectively in all curriculum areas.
 - ii) ensuring that at Key Stage 2 the elements of control and monitoring are given more emphasis. (paragraphs 126, 127)
 - b) ensure that there is a consistent approach to setting targets for individual pupils in English and mathematics. (paragraphs 40, 86, 96)
 - c) improve the management of the school by:
 - i) developing the monitoring role of co-ordinators so that they have a greater understanding of the effectiveness of the work in their subject.
 - ii) ensuring that the development plan contains measurable targets for pupil improvement so that the school can evaluate the success of its work. (paragraphs 49, 53)

UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER (CLASS 7)

58. The key issues identified in the previous inspection have been very successfully addressed. The unit is very well led and managed by an effective co-ordinator. The specialist skills and experience of the staff ensure that the unit makes very good provision for pupils with autism. Pupils work within a caring environment where their individual needs are addressed and success is celebrated. This view is supported by major stakeholders such as parents and the local education authority.
59. Due to the nature of pupils' disorders their attainment is limited and it is inappropriate to compare it with national comparative data. However, in a few subjects such as physical education and art, some pupils attain standards in line with their peers and national standards.
60. In English pupils take part in speaking and listening activities, which encourage social and communication skills. They learn to take turns, describe people's feelings and give instructions. They enjoy sharing a group story and many can read the text appropriately. During a group reading session in Key Stage 1 pupils could identify the author and read using loud and soft voices. During mathematics, most pupils work on individual tasks, some of which are recorded on sheets or in books. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to use a ruler to draw grids and plot co-ordinates. They are able to use tools such as number lines to count on and can recall number patterns well.
61. Pupils enjoy participating in practical activities such as science. They are able to use key words such as 'stretch', 'squeeze' and 'bend' to describe bread before and after toasting. In information and communication technology pupils make good progress in transferring information about the Globe Theatre from a database onto a computer to create a graph.
62. Overall, pupils make good progress in the unit. Individual work in the core subjects of mathematics and English shows appropriate progress over time and many pupils make good progress with basic reading skills. Pupils working in dance during mainstream lessons are making very good progress. In these lessons pupils follow instructions well and perform sequences comparable to those of their peers. The good progress achieved by pupils is due to the very effective planning and timetable arrangements organised by the staff. Progress towards individual and inclusion targets is well monitored and reviewed regularly.
63. The vast majority of pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They respond very well to the clear structures and direction given by staff in the unit. They take turns and learn to respond to each other and interact during language-and-communication lessons. Pupils show a good degree of independence in the unit. They are confident in selecting their own resources, and sustain interest in tasks without adult intervention for reasonable amounts of time. The vast majority of pupils are happy and confident to leave the unit to work in class. During lessons in the main school, they settle quickly to tasks and are eager to be part of the lesson, provided the learning-support assistant is nearby to offer reassurance and guidance when required.
64. The teaching for pupils with autism is always very good. Teachers give clear instructions and question well. High expectations are set for behaviour, and the consistent approach by staff enables pupils to function successfully within the clearly-defined boundaries. Good use is made of Makaton Signing by the specialist teacher to communicate when a pupil becomes agitated or requires additional explanation. Teachers have a very good range of skills, knowledge and strategies, which they use to prepare relevant multi-sensory activities. For example, during a religious-education

lesson about the story of 'The Feeding of the Five Thousand' pupils handled Christian fish symbols and then made their own fish in collage and salt dough.

65. The curriculum is very good. Pupils have access to the full National Curriculum, and activities are extremely well-matched to individual needs. Within the unit pupils have individual programmes of work in mathematics, English and science, which are linked closely to their individual education plans. This work is well structured with a very good range of practical resources which support pupils' varied learning styles. The unit makes provision for other National Curriculum subjects in class lessons in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Much of this work is done through practical tasks, with many opportunities to 'make and do'. In addition the unit provides effective social and communication lessons and regular de-stressing activities through movement and music. The pupils are very well cared for. Staff support pupils well in class, as they move around school and during break times. They keep a watchful eye, but allow maximum independence. For instance, mainstream staff know that if Class 7 pupils wear a particular badge they have been sent to do a special job independently. Pupils from Class 7 are well supported by older pupils in the main school who take it in turns to act as buddies in the playground.
66. The successful inclusion programme ensures that pupils have access to mainstream activities. The pupils have individual inclusion plans tailored to individual needs. The carefully-structured timetable ensures that pupils succeed during integrated sessions. A small number of pupils are almost fully integrated into mainstream classes for the vast majority of time. One pupil is member of the School Council. The work and achievements of the pupils in the unit are celebrated in the main school. For example, last year they performed to the whole school a successful class assembly about the 'Rainbow Fish'.
67. The accommodation in the unit and the resources are good. Good use is made of the space, although the full development of the Sensory Room has not yet been realised due to insufficient funds. Staff throughout the whole school have received training about autism, and specialist staff within the unit have benefited from in-depth training relating to autistic provision. Future training programmes will include the training of more staff in the use of Makaton Signing and providing mainstream staff with more strategies to use when working with autistic pupils.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	25	30	16	1	0	0
Percentage	1%	35%	41%	22%	1%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	386
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	58

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	23
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	64

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	17	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	20
	Girls	13	14	16
	Total	32	32	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (84)	82 (91)	92 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	19
	Girls	15	14	16
	Total	35	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (88)	87 (88)	90 (93)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	34	30	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	28	32
	Girls	24	29	29
	Total	49	57	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (65)	89 (62)	95 (78)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	29	28
	Girls	24	28	27
	Total	47	57	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (52)	89 (57)	86 (66)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	8
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	375
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.7:1
Average class size	22.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	25
Total aggregate hours worked per week	577

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	949028
Total expenditure	854316
Expenditure per pupil	2157
Balance brought forward from previous year	131259
Balance carried forward to next year	94712

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	386
Number of questionnaires returned	156

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	49	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	51	10	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	60	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	49	21	4	6
The teaching is good.	49	46	4	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	46	22	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	40	10	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	47	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	26	46	25	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	40	48	7	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	54	6	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	48	7	2	8

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

68. The provision for children in the reception classes is good and they have a good start to their education. They are provided with a rich curriculum and many stimulating activities, which are managed well. The majority of children enter the reception class with standards that are average, although there is a wide range of ability. Their skills in all areas of learning progress at a good pace. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1 it is likely that most children will achieve standards that are at the expected levels in all six areas of learning. A few may exceed this level and there are also a few who may not reach them. Pupils with learning difficulties, including speech problems, are supported well.
69. There is good teaching in the reception classes. The staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for young children and teach basic skills effectively. There are high expectations for what the children can achieve. Support staff are well-deployed and make a positive impact on the children's learning. Children work effectively through the good variety of enriching and well-presented activities. Procedures for recording how well children are doing are now good and information gained from assessment is used well to plan for further learning. The management of the children and their behaviour is very good and resources are used well.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. The children are growing in confidence and are keen to share their ideas and experiences. They have very good attitudes and behave very well, and relationships are very secure. The children are enthusiastic, motivated and keen to be involved in the range of interesting activities provided. They enjoy tasks they have chosen themselves and take pride in their achievements. Positive behaviour and good achievement are supported by tokens. Personal independence is encouraged in all activities; for example, when children choose in their daily planning sessions from a wide selection of activities and resources.

Communication, language and literacy

71. The children's skills are being promoted well. The majority of children are becoming more confident in initiating a conversation and in taking account of others' views. Most children speak in clear sentences and learning-support assistants ably support those who find some pronunciations difficult. Good use of questioning ensures that children are developing a wider vocabulary as they plan and review their daily activities. They are learning to link sounds to letters, and a few children are able to use their knowledge to write simple regular words. Children are beginning to hold a pencil and use it effectively to form recognisable letters. They listen carefully to parables in assembly. When their teacher reads them a letter sent from a class in Somerset, they busily engage in sending a reply. This is by way of zigzag books, which record their houses and the way they come to school both pictorially and where possible in writing. There are insufficient opportunities for them to handle books, or listen and respond to stories, rhymes and poems. This is having a limiting effect on the children's development of a love of books and their experience of a wide range of stories.

Mathematical development

72. Mathematical skills are developing well. The staff plan this area of learning very well and provide a good range of experiences through play, which enhance the children's learning about numbers. Children go out into the playground to measure longer and shorter lines and in conjunction with the class topic of 'Homes' they build skyscrapers from construction kits to demonstrate their understanding of higher and lower levels. On instruction from the teacher children get into lines of three, four and five, and then they are able to say which is the longer/shorter of two lines and the longest of all three.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Children are encouraged to explore, discover, form ideas and solve problems themselves, leading to increased independence and self-confidence. This is balanced with adult-directed activities where they learn key skills and form good relationships with peers and adults. Children notice similarities and differences in their topic of 'Homes'. They are able to classify different types of houses as detached, semi-detached, terraced, bungalows or flats. They compare this knowledge with the homes of Aborigine children in Australia. They discover where Somerset is on a large map and learn that it is 200 miles away. The children use information and communication technology satisfactorily as they select and move from a side panel items such as clouds, flowers, a pond and a fish to improve the environment of their house.

Physical development

74. Since the last inspection the outdoor area has been improved. Children now have direct access to an enclosed playground, and part of this area is now covered, allowing children to play when conditions are wet. Resources are now adequate. Children move about with due regard to space, obstacles and their peers when they participate in timetabled lessons using wheeled toys, and large and small apparatus in their outdoor play area. Teachers promote listening and numeracy skills well in an outdoor parachute game where they invite children to go under the parachute if they have more than three windows in their house. Hand control is developing at a good pace. Children have a good range of experiences to develop the strength in the small muscles in their hands; for example, those working in the sand use diggers to build a road to connect the new houses being built. They explore malleable materials as they pat, squeeze, and roll dough to make jam tarts.

Creative development

75. This is promoted well and the children's skills are developing effectively. They explore media and materials in their creative work, and eagerly recount how they have made models of their houses by turning a box inside out, joining it together again by using glue and then painting it. The children's imaginative play is developing well as they play in the home corner and make up their own stories which feature the family which lives in that home.

ENGLISH

76. Standards have varied from year to year since the last inspection and are currently in line with national expectations at both key stages, except in writing at Key Stage 1, which has shown a downward trend. This apparent decline is due to the fact that no pupils gained the higher Level 3 in their writing tests at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages.

77. In last year's National Curriculum tests and tasks for seven-year-olds, pupils' attainment was in line with the national average for reading and below the national average for writing. When compared to that in similar schools the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 or above was below national expectations in reading and well below national expectations in writing. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was in line with national averages for reading and below national averages for writing. The teachers' assessments were slightly higher than these results. There has been a downward trend in reading and writing over the last two years. However, the performance of the pupils over the last three years shows that they exceeded the national averages for reading and writing. Girls performed less well than girls nationally in reading and writing, but this does not reflect any trend over time.
78. Results for eleven-year olds in 2002 were in line with the national average for English. When compared to those in similar schools they are also in line with national expectations. The progress of these pupils from their results at the end of Key Stage 1 is just below national expectations. The trend in performance in English over the last three years has been in line with the national average, except for a decline in 2001. The performance of boys during this period was in line with the national average for boys, whilst girls exceeded the national average for girls. Evidence gained during the inspection, through classroom observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work, reflects these test results, except that there has been good progress in writing made in Year 2.
79. By the age of seven, the pupils are making sound progress in speaking, and overall they listen very attentively to their teacher and each other. Pupils in Year 2 can talk in sentences when their teachers ask questions that require more than one-word answers. They very much enjoy listening to stories and poems and are keen to offer their ideas and answer questions. This is particularly evident in Year 2, where the pupils were listening and responding to the African tale 'The Leopard's Drum'. For example, the pupils, explaining how different characters in the story could trick the leopard and take his drum, included 'the snake could crawl up to leopard, get inside the drum and roll it away'. In a Year 1 class there was a good example of 'hot seating' during which the pupils volunteered to sit in front of the class and describe their favourite character from a traditional tale whilst the rest of the class guess who it is. Teachers generally encourage the pupils to speak clearly and use interesting vocabulary.
80. Seven-year-olds read a range of books with increasing accuracy, and the more able are developing a very good level of fluency and are enjoying reading Harry Potter. The pupils enjoy sharing texts during whole-class sessions and can read along with their teacher when asked. They demonstrate sound understanding of what they are reading, can retell familiar stories such as 'Little Red Riding Hood' in Year 1 and attempt unfamiliar words by looking at the sounds of the letters. The pupils are able to identify the title, author and illustrator of books they are reading and some can make sensible predictions about what might happen next. The pupils in Year 1 are developing a good understanding of characters in stories and can use simple words to describe the big bad wolf. In one Year 2 class the pupils are developing knowledge and understanding of the settings for stories and, together with their teacher, can suggest an exciting opening; for example, 'In a land far away there lived a leopard with a huge, magnificent zigzag drum.'
81. When writing, the pupils are using capital letters and full stops with increasing accuracy. They can spell simple words and make justifiable attempts at more difficult words. The teachers use a range of effective strategies to develop the pupils' writing;

for example, in Year 2 they have a 'sandwich structure' in which they write the beginning, the middle (described by a pupil as 'the meaty bit in the story') and the end. The pupils are encouraged to re-read their work to check that their sentences make sense and that their handwriting, spelling and punctuation are correct. The pupils' handwriting in Year 2 is developing well; many are able to join up their writing neatly. They make a good attempt to use punctuation, including speech marks, commas and exclamation marks, although not yet consistently correctly. They are developing their understanding of different kinds of writing and can, for example, write a set of instructions on how to clean your teeth.

82. By the age of eleven, the pupils' speaking skills are often good and they listen very well. They speak clearly and confidently and show understanding in discussions. The pupils can describe events, responding very well to questioning offering ideas, suggestions and opinions. They listen very attentively to their teachers and each other. There were many occasions when pupils of all abilities were keen to read out their work; for example, the children in a Year 4 class who all wanted to read the monster poem they had written using similes. The pupils in Year 6 offer good ideas and suggestions for constructing an argument about whether the time has come to ban cars from the centre of towns and cities.
83. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are reading at an appropriate level and the more able are reading at a very good level. They enjoy a broad range of authors and different genres. The more able pupils can offer excellent knowledge, understanding and opinions about books they have read and their favourite authors such as Lemony Snicket, Tim Bowler and JK Rowling. They can talk confidently about plot and character – retelling the favourite part of the book they are currently reading. The pupils in Key Stage 2 like to read at home, and in Years 3 and 4 there are often school books from the colour-coded range. The older pupils, however, prefer to read their own books at home, reflecting their personal taste and enjoyment. During literacy lessons the pupils show awareness of how different texts are structured and organised and can identify formal and informal style. In a Year 6 lesson they demonstrate good understanding in presenting an argument for banning mobile phones at school and how the passive tense and third person can be used to good effect. The pupils in Year 5 are developing the idea of empathy and offer the wolf's point of view in recounting what happens in the story of 'The Three Little Pigs'.
84. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 have good library skills, can access the school's classification system – knowing where to find, for example, books on health, mountains and volcanoes. They know how to use contents and indexes to access specific information. They identify the blurb on the back of fictional texts as a good way of finding out whether they will like the book. In Year 5 the pupils are developing understanding of how to use dramatic convention to excite the audience.
85. Pupils in Key Stage 2 write for a wide variety of purposes and audiences, and there are many examples of good writing displayed around the school. These include, in Year 6, fact files for creatures and letters written from the character William's point of view in 'Goodnight, Mr Tom' and poetry about spells, using rhyming couplets on how to make people die. In Year 5 the pupils are writing stories in the style of myths and legends; for example, 'How pain came into the world'. Pupils in Year 4 have written leaflets containing information about Henry VIII and his wives. Year 3 pupils have used computer technology to write newspaper articles about Ancient Egyptian treasure. The pupils are developing a sound understanding of grammatical features such as the use of paragraphs and punctuation, and frequently speech marks are used correctly. The oldest pupils can write complex sentences using a range of interesting

connectives. They can plan and develop their ideas effectively, choosing adjectives and vocabulary for effect. The pupils in Year 6 can take notes and convert them into structured writing; for example, in a fact file about Meerkats. The spelling of many words is correct, except in the case of less able pupils who make some common errors, but these are often justifiable attempts. Handwriting is developing well in most cases and many pupils are creating their own style. However, there are examples of the pupils returning to printed writing instead of joined up. Pupils apply their literacy skills in other subjects; for example, in history, when they write notes about the life of Edward VI, and in geography when researching information about a specific mountain range.

86. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages, with a high proportion of very good teaching seen in lessons during the inspection throughout the school. In one Year 2 lesson the teaching of literacy was excellent. The teachers have good knowledge of the subject and plan effectively from the National Literacy Strategy objectives. These objectives are shared clearly with the pupils, usually displayed and written by Key Stage 2 pupils, who understand what they are learning and what is expected of them. Overall, throughout the school, teachers manage the pupils very well and this results in very good behaviour. Generally they identify activities, which match the different ability levels and ages of the pupils. This means that there is a suitable amount of challenge for the pupils and they are interested and motivated to learn. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and use a good range of different strategies and approaches, which help them to make good progress in lessons. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher demonstrates writing of a discussion text very well, showing the features of a balanced argument. This enables the pupils to produce good opening paragraphs using a range of connectives; for example, 'consequently'. In Year 1 the pupils are organised very effectively in mixed-ability pairs to brainstorm descriptions, which they record on their whiteboards. The teachers give clear instructions and explanations, and many of the pupils can work productively on independent activities and tasks. Teachers ask good questions of the pupils to draw out their understanding and further their knowledge. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and foster enthusiasm for learning. For example, in a Year 5 lesson the teacher kindles great interest in the use of a glossary as part of pupils' work on report writing. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported by teachers, and classroom assistants are used effectively to support individuals or groups. Pupils' work is regularly marked and some have developmental comments that explain how they can improve their work. Many of the pupils have individual improvement targets for literacy, but they are often not aware of them, and the targets set are not used consistently in lessons by teachers or pupils. Some of these targets are written in the front of the pupils' books. Others; for example, in Year 6, are written on cards stuck at the back of the books. In some other year groups they are not visible to the pupils at all. Sound use is made of homework to follow up work in lessons, particularly with the older pupils, and younger pupils are expected to read regularly at home.
87. The pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good overall and in one lesson they were excellent. These very good attitudes, which the school has worked very hard to achieve, contribute to the good progress the pupils are making in literacy. They settle to work quickly, concentrate well, listen to the teacher and each other and are quiet when required to be. This leads to a calm, purposeful working environment, which is very conducive to learning. In the Year 2 lesson, where the pupils' attitudes were exemplary, they were all eager to work on their story openings, and their concentration did not waver throughout the lesson.

88. The curriculum for English is broad and balanced overall, except in information and communication technology, which was rarely used in the lessons observed. The curriculum provides a good framework for the teaching of reading and writing, and good coverage of the National Literacy Strategy objectives, and the unit planning recently introduced is effective. There is consistency in the curriculum provided for the pupils in parallel classes in the same year groups. The teachers have good subject knowledge and effective strategies for teaching literacy. The curriculum is enriched by texts from the pupils' own cultural traditions and from other cultures. The leadership and management of the subject are sound – there is an acting co-ordinator for this role due to the long-term absence of the substantive post holder. The acting co-ordinator took up this responsibility in December 2002 and the support co-ordinator took up her role in January 2003. They have been doing a good job in the very short time since they started 'caretaking' the role. The school analyses standards in test results to identify areas for development and plan effective action to improve provision and teaching. Assessment systems and procedures are good, particularly in relation to informing future planning. There is therefore a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and raising standards in writing is a priority for improvement in the school development plan.
89. The literacy co-ordinator provides an annual plan outlining three key targets, the actions to be taken and success criteria. The targets and success criteria are not easily measurable in order to evaluate improvement and progress that have been made and any further action needed. The co-ordinator also provides a very detailed annual report covering progress made on the issues identified in the previous report, current developments in literacy, curricular issues and financial planning, and identifies future developments. The headteacher and senior management team have monitored the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons. However, the substantive co-ordinator does not feel that there have been sufficient opportunities for her to do likewise, specifically in relation to the teaching and learning of literacy. The school benefits from having its own bookshop, which is open on a weekly basis, an extra-curricular story club for the pupils in Key Stage 1 and a library club. There is a large, well-resourced library and overall the resources available for English throughout the school are satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

90. Standards of mathematics are good throughout the school, particularly in Key Stage 2, and pupils are making good progress. The main factors which contribute to these high standards are the good and often very good teaching, the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the very good attitudes of the pupils to the subject.
91. The national standardised tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 show that the pupils' attainment was average when compared to that in all schools nationally and below average when compared to that of schools with similar pupils. From evidence gained during the inspection the standards of the current Year 2 pupils are at least in line with expectations, and a significant number are working at the above average Level 3, particularly in number. In the national tests for 11-year-olds the pupils attained well above average standards both nationally and in relation to those in similar schools.
92. More-able pupils are attaining better standards as a result of being given more-challenging work. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well because they have regular support from learning-support assistants, which allows them to be fully included in lessons.

93. All pupils experience the full range of mathematics and achieve particularly good standards in number. At Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils can add and subtract numbers up to 20, and more-able pupils are confident with numbers up to 100. In mental and oral practice activities many pupils confidently use number bonds to ten, and add and subtract two-digit numbers. Seven-year-olds name correctly common two- and three-dimensional shapes. At Key Stage 2, pupils show enthusiasm for mental and oral activities, have a good grasp of calculations and are confident when converting fractions to decimals. Higher-attaining pupils recognise the equivalence between fractions, decimals and percentages. Many Year 6 pupils are working on aspects of mathematics at levels higher than would be expected; for instance, plotting co-ordinates in all four quadrants. Pupils also show a very good understanding of appropriate mathematical vocabulary.
94. The quality of teaching is one of the major contributory factors to the high standards achieved. At Key Stage 1 all the lessons observed were good and a third were very good. At Key Stage 2 over half the lessons were good or better and nearly a quarter were very good. The main reasons for the high quality of teaching are numerous. Teachers plan their lessons well and share the learning intentions of the lessons with the pupils. They show good subject knowledge and consistently stress the importance of using the correct mathematical vocabulary. Lessons are taught at a very brisk pace, especially when the pupils are set demanding mental calculations and the work set is well matched to their abilities, thereby presenting a good challenge. Questioning of pupils is very effective, draws out their understanding and helps them explain the methods they have used to solve the problem. The setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is generally effective, but there are some occasions when the tasks given to different sets are not at sufficiently different levels of difficulty. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good and this ensures that little time is wasted during the lesson. The close partnership between the class teacher and the learning-support assistants is very effective, particularly in providing support for pupils with special educational needs.
95. These qualities were evident in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were investigating what happened when they added combinations of odd and even numbers. There was a very good pace to the lesson, with the teacher using an egg timer to show the pupils how much time was allowed. They responded well to the challenge and were trying to write as many sums as they possibly could in the time allowed. The difficulty of the numbers used had been set by the teacher on well-prepared work sheets and challenged all levels of ability. At the end of the lesson pupils were able to pick out the patterns observed in their answers. A similar high-quality example was observed in a lower-ability set in Year 6 when pupils were plotting shapes by using co-ordinates in all four quadrants. The pace of the lesson was very brisk and the pupils were kept on task with a very good mixture of praise and good-natured cajoling! In this lesson the very good relationship between the teacher and the pupils was the key to the successful learning that took place.
96. Pupils show good levels of concentration and apply themselves well to tasks. The very good relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils are focused on the content of lessons and therefore learn more. Pupils of all abilities and ages comment that they enjoy their mathematics lessons and this is a strength of the subject. Pupils are set targets for improving their mathematical ability. However, these targets are not consistently set and used throughout the school and pupils themselves are not clear about what their targets are.

97. The mathematics co-ordinator is very efficient and enthusiastic. She carries out an annual analysis of pupils' test papers that provides valuable information on areas of strength and weakness in the curriculum. This has been followed up with in-service training for all staff. The analysis also helps to decide on appropriate sets for pupils in upper junior classes. Monitoring of mathematics teaching is carried out effectively by the headteacher and co-ordinator. Resources are good and used well by all staff.

SCIENCE

98. At the end of both key stages, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. There are strengths in knowledge and understanding of science, whilst standards in experimental and investigative science are satisfactory.
99. In the statutory teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2002, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was below the national average. The percentage reaching the higher levels was in line with the average for all schools nationally. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was below the average for similar schools, but the percentage reaching the higher levels was average. These assessments indicate that standards in experimental and investigative science are lower than in the knowledge and understanding elements.
100. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2002, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was above the national average, and the percentage reaching the higher levels was also above the national average. In comparison with those in similar schools, the pupils' results were above average. These results are an improvement on those of 2001, when achievement dropped sharply. However, over time the results follow the upward trend in standards seen nationally.
101. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can undertake simple practical activities related to light and forces. For example, they are able to name a range of sources of light and describe how a shadow is made. They know how to make a bulb light in a circuit. They are able to sort everyday objects into groups and describe how materials such as water change as a result of heating or cooling. When involved in practical work, such as baking cakes, the majority of pupils are able to describe changes to the cake mixture, using vocabulary such as 'powder', 'liquid', 'sticky' and 'spongy'. Pupils are able to make simple measurements, using metres and strides to compare the distance travelled by model vehicles.
102. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are able to describe the main functions of plant organs such as the stamen, stigma and ovary. They know the differences between solids, gases and liquids and can describe scientific ideas such as dissolving and saturation, following a study of materials. Many pupils can describe the apparent movement of the sun across the sky and know that the earth spins on its own axis as it orbits the sun. Their previous work and observations in lessons indicate that nearly all pupils gain knowledge at a good rate. The rate at which they gain skills for working scientifically is satisfactory. Most pupils are able to describe how to alter one variable as part of a fair test. They make predictions and present their observations on charts and tables. There are weaknesses in the pupils' use of a range of measurements and data handling. Their use and levels of achievement of these skills in science are below those they reach in mathematics. Some pupils also have difficulty in evaluating their own investigations and suggesting improvements.
103. The quality of teaching is good, with some very good teaching observed at both key stages. Where teaching is effective, the lesson is well structured and good links are

made with previous learning. For example, in one lesson pupils were encouraged to use their knowledge of how different materials dissolve to plan an investigation to find out what may affect the speed at which sugar dissolves. In lessons, teachers use a range of methods to help pupils learn. There are good planned opportunities for whole-class teaching, and group and individual work. This helps to maintain the good pace of lessons. In a lesson exploring light and shadows, the teacher used a story effectively with the whole class to engage pupils' interest before they then worked in small groups to investigate how shadows could be made. In another lesson, good use was made of ongoing feedback to pupils throughout the lesson to maintain motivation and clarify the next steps in learning. In pupils' books, particularly in Key Stage 1, there are some very good examples of teachers' comments that assess their knowledge and understanding very accurately. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and this has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. For example, in a lesson on planning an investigation the teacher challenged pupils to use the correct scientific vocabulary when explaining their ideas about materials. In the same lesson, the teacher repeated questions and provided time for pupils with special educational needs to respond. Teachers ensure that appropriate resources are available for pupils to use and this means that no time is lost in lessons. A strength of teaching is the deployment of learning-support assistants. They provide very effective support for pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language, and those who are integrated from Class 7. As a result, these pupils make good progress and are fully included in science lessons.

104. Where there are weaknesses in teaching this is due to insufficient challenge for more-able pupils. For example, in too many lessons all pupils are expected to record their observations and findings in the same way. In these lessons, more-able pupils also generally have work set that is at a similar level of scientific understanding to that of other pupils in the class. This is particularly so in work observed at Key Stage 2 during the inspection.
105. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour in science at both key stages are very good. Teachers contribute to this by providing very good opportunities for pupils to co-operate and work together. They make their expectations very clear and praise pupils' learning and efforts. This both encourages and motivates pupils. Pupils' written work is of a good standard in science and indicates the pride and care pupils give to the presentation of their work.
106. The school has adopted the national programmes of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. These provide a good support for teachers' planning and are used effectively by teachers to plan work together for different classes in the same year-group. There are some weaknesses in the school's current planning for science. Although some links are made with information and communication technology, such as the use of PowerPoint by pupils to devise a presentation on aspects of healthy eating in Year 6, insufficient links are made with information and communication technology as part of ongoing work throughout the year. Where links are made, sometimes these are both inappropriate and inaccurate, such as the use of information and communication technology to produce pie charts to show saturation points of different materials. In this case, pie charts were not appropriate and the work presented was inaccurate since it did not show clearly the information intended. The use of information and communication technology for data logging is underdeveloped. Links with skills and knowledge taught in mathematics are also underdeveloped at present. Good links are made, however, with design and technology, and there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their scientific knowledge in, for example, a design and technology project on musical instruments.

Assessment in science is good and teachers complete an attainment record annually for each pupil. This is used effectively by the subject leader to gain an overview of standards in the school. The subject leader for science is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She has a very good overview of the subject and has identified appropriate areas for further improvement. The subject leader recognises that the systematic and rigorous monitoring of standards and teaching is an area for development. The resources available for the subject are very good. There is a very good range of resources and these are stored efficiently in a central area for teachers to access at the appropriate time.

ART AND DESIGN

107. Standards are above expectations throughout the school, and pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well over time. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
108. Effective links are frequently made with other curriculum subjects. For example, in a Year 2 class, where the teaching of art was particularly successful, a story based on African culture entitled 'The Leopard's Drum' was used as a stimulus so that pupils became aware of pattern in the wider environment. In a previous lesson pupils had experimented with strips of tissue paper to produce colourful striped patterns. They look carefully at patterns in fabrics and correctly identify triangles, diamonds and squares and zigzags. In this lesson there was a particularly good balance of teacher demonstration and pupil participation. Following the teacher's careful demonstration pupils learned to hold a pencil at an angle, and carefully drew a design on a tile, using just sufficient pressure to form a definite groove. Their art techniques were further developed as they learned how to use rollers and a tray to transfer ink, first onto a print block and then to another surface. This required total concentration and a very steady hand, and most pupils met with success. They enjoyed this activity immensely and were totally engrossed in their work. At the end of the activity time was spent very productively as pupils were given good opportunities to discuss and evaluate their own work and celebrate the achievements of others.
109. In a Year 4 class, pupils used blending and smudging techniques very successfully in their investigation of the use of pastels to create different shades of the same colour. The teacher successfully linked this technique to the history topic as the pupils demonstrated their ability to produce some very detailed and accurate representations of Tudor royal portraits. Throughout the school, pupils are making good use of sketchbooks; for example, Year 6 have produced some very detailed and brightly illustrated designs for hats which were being made during the inspection.
110. Throughout the school, almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, are well behaved. They share resources sensibly, and are keen to be involved. Learning-support assistants support those pupils who have behavioural difficulties very effectively.
111. Teachers know and understand how to teach art in an inspiring way. Lessons are very carefully planned to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of art. Resources for art are plentiful and of good quality. However, the monitoring of teaching of art is still at an early stage of development and there is little use of information and communication technology in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards attained in design and technology are in line with those normally found at the end of both key stages, and pupils make sound progress. This is a similar position to that at the time of the previous inspection.
113. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can manipulate simple tools and use basic cutting and joining skills, as when they design and make their own glove puppets. They are able to draw objects such as a model vehicle from different viewpoints. In discussion they are able to explain their designs and use labelled drawings to communicate their ideas. Many pupils take a pride in finishing their work well, such as when they made careful choices about materials to be used to complete a glove puppet. Pupils at Key Stage 2 use labelled diagrams and successfully generate design proposals following research. For example, when designing biscuits, pupils collated information from consumers to inform their own designs and considered features such as appearance, taste and texture. Older pupils applied a similar process to the designing and making of pencil cases. Some pupils have a good understanding of the design process. For example, they were able to discuss how they researched ideas for designing a musical instrument and how they tried out ideas to see what was possible. These pupils were very clear about the design criteria for their instruments and gave good attention to the final appearance of the product. A few pupils are able to evaluate their finished product against the design criteria. Generally, the use of evaluation is a weaker area of pupils' understanding in design and technology. Pupils have too few opportunities to evaluate their designs as the work progresses. When evaluating a product at the end of a piece of work, evaluations tend to be a description of the design-and-make process rather than a sharp focus on the criteria for the product. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the previous inspection.
114. The quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons in detail and this ensures a good balance between time for designing and making. Teachers use ongoing assessment successfully to focus on areas where pupils require additional support, as when difficulties with stitching were discussed at the beginning of a lesson with younger pupils. Resources are used effectively to help pupils collect information to develop their own designs, such as the display of a range of different puppets in the Year 2 classes. Teaching is particularly effective where introductions to lessons are short and clear expectations are set, giving appropriate attention to the need for health and safety when using equipment like needles and hot glue guns. As a result of these clear expectations, pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. They are encouraged by teachers and persevere to complete their work. Learning-support assistants are effectively deployed in lessons and provide good support for pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those who are integrated from Class 7. As a result of this support, these groups of pupils make good progress in their learning.
115. A weakness in teaching are the inconsistent opportunities provided for pupils to evaluate their work as they progress and to make well-informed decisions about what could be changed or improved. Although some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work on the completion of a product, many pupils would benefit from greater opportunities to discuss their work with others to collate a range of views before being asked to complete an evaluation sheet individually.
116. A good range of work is planned for in design and technology throughout the school. Pupils have opportunities to work with paper, card, wood, textiles and food. Although the school has adopted the national scheme of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, there are weaknesses in long-term planning. This is because there are long gaps between units of work in design and technology. This

affects the progress pupils make in developing their skills and knowledge in certain areas of the subject. For example, some pupils in Year 6 had difficulty measuring accurately and cutting wood to construct a simple chassis frame using wood and card for a controllable vehicle. These pupils had not used this method of construction for several terms. Whilst links with science are good, as in the case of science work on sound being applied to a unit of work on musical instruments in design and technology, links with other subjects such as mathematics and information and communication technology are less well developed. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory as no consistent record keeping is in place throughout the school to enable the school to have a sufficient overview of standards. The subject leader provides good support for teachers' planning and the provision of resources. Resources provided for design and technology are good. The accommodation available for the subject is good since the school benefits from specific rooms for food technology and practical work. The school recognises that the systematic monitoring of standards and teaching in design and technology is an area requiring further improvement.

GEOGRAPHY

117. The school has maintained the sound standards found at the time of the previous inspection. Judgements are based on the evidence of a few lessons, previous work, discussions with teachers and pupils, and the school's planning.
118. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, but other evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory. The analysis of work shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have appropriate early map-work skills. The teaching successfully uses the pupils' own local knowledge and they have drawn maps in their study of the imaginary Isle of Struay. Discussion with Year 2 shows that pupils have knowledge of localities beyond their own and can talk at length about some of the places they, and Langabear, have visited. They can talk about what is attractive in Longfield and also about what they do not like. They compare the features of the country and towns using appropriate geographical terms for their age.
119. At Key Stage 2 teaching and learning are good, which is better than at the time of the previous inspection. Previous work shows that Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of river systems and, on a visit to the Horton Kirby Centre, have carried out field studies. They investigated the features of the river and measured the speed of flow. In investigations they have employed primary and secondary sources of evidence and used appropriate geographical vocabulary. In the lesson seen the teacher provided an interesting range of strategies and had a lively delivery. Pupils were interested and motivated, and worked well in groups. Year 5 pupils are knowledgeable about their local area and know how people can damage and improve the environment. As an exercise in persuasive speaking, pupils have conducted a local survey into the traffic problems in the village and put forward various arguments in a role-play situation. This was most successful as they realised that every solution did not please everyone and raised further problems. It also extended their opportunities for speaking. In a very good Year 4 lesson pupils learnt about life in the Indian village of Chembakolli. They identified similarities and differences between life in the village and life in this country. They concentrated particularly on the role of women.
120. Management of the subject is satisfactory and the co-ordinator has successfully introduced new guidelines. She monitors planning and pupils' work but has little opportunity to monitor teaching. The curriculum is appropriately enhanced by visits

into the local environment and a residential visit for Year 6. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they become aware of environmental issues and look at other countries and cultures. Langabear's letters and postcards from his travels support writing well, as do written accounts of studies.

HISTORY

121. Standards in history are in line with national expectations at both key stages. This judgement is lower than at the time of the previous inspection, when they were above expectations. All pupils make sound progress as they move through the school.
122. As only one lesson was seen at Key Stage 2, no judgements can be made on the overall quality of teaching and learning. Teachers planned the Year 2 lessons well and pupils showed good knowledge of the Great Fire of London. They spoke clearly about sources of evidence and how people find out about times beyond living memory. They have produced some interesting work on the diary of Samuel Pepys. Previous work showed graphic description of conditions in Scutari hospital during the Crimean War. Year 1 pupils are beginning to develop their sense of chronology in their study of old toys. An interesting teddy-bear time-line stretches from 1948 to the present time. One child's writing explains, 'My mummy's teddy Snowball is 37 years old. She loves him.'
123. In a successful Year 3 lesson the teacher asked searching questions to extend pupils' skills of research from objects and pictures. They enjoyed the lesson and were enthusiastic about the topic on the Ancient Egyptians. Work was well displayed with an exciting range of artefacts. Previous work in Year 6 shows a sound understanding of the Aztec civilisation. Diaries of daily life give good opportunities for extended writing. A time line of the period supports numeracy. Pupils know that the Aztecs were very religious people and that they worshipped a variety of gods.
124. The co-ordinator looks at planning but has not had opportunities to monitor teaching. Literacy skills are developed through the use of historical language and good opportunities for writing. Numeracy skills are evident in a range of time lines. The Internet and CD-ROMs are used for research across the school. Displays are stimulating focal points; for example, on the Egyptians and 'Old Toys', and there are some exciting artefacts. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their understanding of the legacy of ancient civilisations for modern society, discussions about the morality of actions carried out in the past, and the encouragement of group and pair work in researching information. The curriculum is enriched by visits to museums and places of local interest.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Standards meet expectations in Year 2 in all aspects of the subject. Pupils show appropriate skills across the curriculum. The good teaching they receive enables them to enter, retrieve and store their work. They are taught how to produce text and pictures and to handle and display simple data. By using a controllable toy they are learning to write simple procedures to make it move in a pre-determined way. Pupils in a Year 1 lesson handled data and made graphical representation from the results of a traffic census.

126. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven they have good levels of skill in handling text and data, and communicating information. Skills in controlling events and sensing physical changes are low as the school at present lacks some resources. It is aware that these parts of the curriculum are not being covered, but plans are in hand to make sure that they are taught in the near future, when the ordered resources arrive. Information and communication technology is used to support basic skills in mathematics, and publishing work across the curriculum supports English well. Its use is being developed across the curriculum in discrete lessons, but classroom computers were not well used during the inspection.
127. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and is now good across the school. Teachers plan their work well in line with national guidelines, and pupils are now building systematically on their knowledge and skills in information and communication. Teachers are confident users of computers and impart their skills well to the pupils. They make very good use of the projector and interactive white board for whole-class teaching in the computer suite. In a very good Year 6 lesson the teacher developed pupils' skills in using a spreadsheet and set some challenging work, which led to above-average standards. Previous work showed that pupils across the key stage could handle and combine text, graphics and data well. By the age of eleven they show an awareness of their audience when producing a multi-media presentation. Across the curriculum pupils are beginning to use multi-media and the Internet to access information but have not had the opportunity to control devices or monitor external events.
128. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership. All aspects of the programme of study are planned for, but some areas have yet to be covered fully. The subject enhances pupils' personal and social development – they work well in pairs sharing tasks, sensibly discuss which options they will choose and relate positively to peers and adults alike. Although the computer suite provides a valuable resource, it is a little crowded for the larger classes. The computer technician provides very good support for teachers and pupils.

FRENCH

129. Conversational French is taught throughout the school with specifically designated periods in Key Stage 2. From a brief number of observations it is clear that French is taught effectively and that the pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn a different language. The new co-ordinator for the subject is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She has a clear plan for the development of the subject and is currently writing a new scheme of work. The co-ordinator also runs a French club, which is well attended and is providing many very good opportunities for pupils to develop their conversational skills further.

MUSIC

130. It was not possible to observe music being taught at Key Stage 1 and, therefore, it is not possible to evaluate standards of attainment. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally. Progress for these pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, is good. The improvement since the last inspection is good.
131. Pupils in a Year 3 class can sing 'Jelly On The Plate' together tunefully, and try to beat out the rhythm with un-tuned instruments but with varying degrees of accuracy. This variation is due in part to a lack of clarity in instructions given by the teacher and

occasional incorrect modelling of the rhythm. The pupils in a Year 5 class can warm up by performing effectively a four-part performance with sounds and movements from 'The Merry Go Round'. They go on to sing a Jamaican song 'Lost My Gold Ring' in four parts, clapping and clicking the beats with rhythmic accuracy. They listen very attentively to South African singing from Ladysmith Black Mambazo and are able to recall and identify the strong beats in the music. The pupils can use a range of un-tuned instruments to perform a three-beat pattern with developing control and accuracy. The pupils in a Year 6 class brainstorm ideas for a rap and can compose their lyrics to a set rhythmic pattern. They are able to use simple musical notation to record their rap. All the pupils rehearse and practise their rap, and each group performs well in front of their audience of classmates.

132. Teaching in music is good overall. In most cases there is a brisk pace to the lesson and an effective warm-up activity. The teachers have good relationships with the pupils and use humour appropriately to maintain interest and motivation. Mainly the teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic, providing learning activities that the pupils enjoy and match their learning needs. They interact effectively with groups when they are rehearsing and practising – encouraging them, and giving positive feedback and ideas to improve. There was an example of the good use of recording pupils' performance in Year 6 to listen to their work and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. The pupils have very positive attitudes and join in lessons and assembly eagerly; they are enthusiastic and confident in performance. They behave very well in most of the music lessons seen in Key Stage 2. The music curriculum is broad and well balanced. The published scheme of work provided gives a very good range of teaching and learning opportunities. Assemblies make a good contribution to provision in music. In a whole-school assembly, for example, pupils listen with interest to music by Haydn when they enter the hall and tunefully sing a song accompanied by a piano and recorders. They also sing unaccompanied with actions in time, in tune and with good rhythm. The curriculum is enhanced by extra-curricular clubs, two for recorders and one for choir, and also by peripatetic music tuition for the guitar, piano, keyboard and flute. There are a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to listen to and appreciate music from their own traditions and also from other cultures. Visitors to the school, such as an Indian drummer, have been very successful and there are plans for follow-up workshops. The pupils give regular performances outside the school, including the carol concert in the town centre and an annual performance along with other local schools at the local secondary school.
133. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is a music specialist and is able and enthusiastic. She contributes to the school improvement plan, identifying two key priorities for improvement. In addition she provides an annual report that gives a clear account of the current developments. Plans are monitored and a small number of lessons observed. Following these, support and training are offered. She has liaised effectively with the local music adviser and this has resulted in a new music scheme being introduced. The new scheme has been effective in supporting the teachers in planning successful lessons. Training for the whole staff has been provided and now there is much less emphasis on the use of taped music in lessons.
134. There are very good facilities available for music. The school benefits from a well-resourced and spacious performing arts studio, which is used well. There are a number of staff with a background or an interest in music who are enthusiastic and promote a love of music, all of which have a positive effect on standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. Standards are above expectations throughout the school, and pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well over time. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
136. Athletics and games skills are well developed and pupils are able to enjoy the two extensive playing fields, and netball and tennis courts when weather permits. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances attainment in physical education. School teams have been very successful in competitions.
137. In a Year 1 lesson effective links are made with the history project on toys through the ages. Pupils demonstrate their ability to employ movement in an imaginative way as they shake and flap selected parts of their bodies like a rag doll, or march stiffly like a soldier. Other pupils confidently adapt their movements to a sense of rhythm as they represent a clockwork train. They demonstrate the movement of carriages as they 'wiggle' on a slow and winding track. Then they gather speed as they go downhill in time to the music. In a link with religious education Year 4 pupils enthusiastically perform a dance which depicts a row of lights to celebrate the Indian festival of Diwali. This includes spinning on the spot, hand gestures and walking patterns. There are good opportunities for pupils to improve performance.
138. There was a brisk start to the gymnastics lesson seen as pupils warmed up appropriately. Pupils demonstrated competently how 'counterbalance' is achieved by making up, practising and refining a sequence of movements with a partner.
139. Overall, the teaching of physical education is good throughout the school. Lessons are properly structured to ensure progress in skills development. Teachers make good links with previous lessons and at the beginning of the current lesson they share with the pupils the targets to be aimed for. Pupils respond well to this involvement, concentrate on the objectives and make good progress. Overall the management of the pupils is good; they are very well behaved and respectful of one another, including their peers with special educational needs, and most lessons move at a good pace. When there is poor behaviour in a lesson it is because of a very few pupils who have behavioural problems and find difficulty in integrating successfully. Good use is made of learning-support assistants who help those pupils with special educational needs by clarifying targets and suggesting ways of adapting movements to their needs. Where pupils with autistic-spectrum disorder are integrated into class lessons, they enjoy the activities and are well behaved.
140. Teachers know their pupils well and encourage them to work to the best of their ability. Good efforts are praised and teachers use pupils well to demonstrate good practice so that others may learn from their example.
141. All staff now have a heightened awareness of health and safety. Pupils demonstrate their competence in working well in pairs to assemble and put apparatus away, with due regard for safety elements.
142. The resources for teaching physical education are good and the plans for redesigning playgrounds will enhance pupils' learning. The swimming pool is used to maximum advantage during the summer months and adaptations are being made for all pupils, including those with disabilities, to enjoy this facility. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school. The monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

143. At the end of both key stages, standards of attainment are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
144. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound knowledge of some of the distinctive features of different religions. They know, for example, the importance of Rama in Hinduism, about ceremonies such as Divali and the use of diva lamps, and about the importance of celebrations such as Christmas. Pupils are able to explain in simple terms the meaning of some religious stories. For example, they can retell the story of the Prodigal Son. They respond sensitively to the feelings of others by, for example, discussing jealousy in relation to their everyday life and experiences.
145. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know about sacred places such as a church and a mosque. They have an appreciation of how the actions of inspirational people like Mother Theresa have been based on their faith. Pupils extend their knowledge of world religions and are able to list some similarities between them, such as the importance of the Bible in Christianity, the Qur'an in Islam and the Torah in Judaism. They know the key features of world religions and can name some major figures associated with them. Pupils appreciate the meaning of belonging to a religious community and how this may influence people's behaviour and attitudes. They are able to list a range of communities to which they belong.
146. No teaching of religious education was observed at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good. The most effective teaching is characterised by secure subject knowledge and detailed planning which ensures that learning is carefully sequenced during the lesson. Skilful questioning is used to challenge pupils to use knowledge that has been taught in a previous lesson. Introductions to lessons are short and focused with a range of methods used to engage pupils. In a lesson as part of a unit of study about Buddhism, for example, the teacher provided various pictures of Buddha and challenged the pupils to work in pairs to discuss the position of Buddha's arms. This was then extended to consider the importance of Buddha's hand gestures and the meanings that may be attributed to them. Effective teaching takes place in an atmosphere of mutual respect where the views of pupils are valued. Teachers successfully ensure that pupils with special educational needs are included in the lesson and provide appropriate support for them. In the most successful lessons, teachers also ensure that pupils are clear about what is expected by the end of the lesson and discuss with them how they will know whether they have been successful.
147. The pupils' attitudes towards religious education are good. They show interest in the lessons and enjoy opportunities to discuss ideas with each other. They co-operate very well in small group work as a result of the teachers' very clear expectations. The majority of pupils take pride in presenting their work well and make sound progress in improving their knowledge about religion.
148. The subject leader, who is currently the headteacher, has provided good support for teachers' planning. The school makes good use of links with the parish church and visits to Rochester Cathedral and the Gurdwara in Gravesend to support pupils' learning. Resources for the subject are good and recently new books have been purchased to support teaching. These are of a good quality and are already being used by teachers. Although some monitoring of planning and teaching has taken place, there is no opportunity to systematically gain an overview of teaching and learning across the school. This remains an area for development from the time of

the last inspection. The school also recognises that assessment and recording procedures in the subject need to be developed further.