

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. ETHELBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Ramsgate

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118764

Headteacher: Mr. Martin Clinton

Reporting inspector: Mr. Robert Greatrex
19 924

Dates of inspection: 11 - 14 June 2001

Inspection number: 191832

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

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Dane Park Road
Ramsgate
Kent

Postcode: CT11 7LS

Telephone number: 01843 585555

Fax number: 01843 570689

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. Robin Carter

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19924	Robert Greatrex	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
5565	Bimla Thakur	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography History Equal opportunities Pupils for whom English is an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
3349	Jacqueline Ikin	Team inspector	English Music Children under five	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd.
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Ethelbert's is a medium-sized urban Catholic primary school with 216 boys and girls on roll, from four to eleven years of age. The pupils' attainment levels when they join the school cover a wide range but are generally below average. There are 95 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, a high proportion. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties. Although only one of these pupils has a Statement of Special Educational Need, a further nine receive a similar level of support through the local education authority's 'route one' scheme. The vast majority of the pupils are white and a very small proportion speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Ethelbert's fulfils effectively the aims in its mission statement, to develop its pupils spiritually and socially, as well as intellectually. Standards vary from year to year but the vast majority of pupils do well at the school, whatever their abilities when they joined. The quality of teaching is good. The school is well led and managed, overall. Pupils and staff work well together; pupils have positive attitudes to their school and work, and there is a real sense of community. This is beneficial to pupils' learning. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Standards in singing are exceptionally high.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The aims and values in the mission statement are clearly reflected in the school's day-to-day life and work. The sense of community is strong. Staff know and care for their pupils very well. Pupils respond positively and care for one another.
- Pupils' personal development is very good, their spiritual development excellent.

What could be improved

- Standards in speaking, which are too low.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than English.
- Subject co-ordinators' role.
- Accommodation for children under five and the library is inadequate.

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 improvements since it was previously inspected in 1997. All of the areas of concern then have been dealt with. Training and changes in personnel have improved the quality of teaching, which is now good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is much improved. Teachers, and the well-trained learning support assistants, teach and guide these pupils well so that they make good progress. Teaching is monitored more regularly so that staff can be offered any training they need. Minor weaknesses in subjects have been resolved. Teaching and learning in design and technology and information and communication technology is good. The use of the latter in other subjects is very good. National initiatives in literacy and numeracy have been implemented fully and effectively. Other changes to the curriculum are being introduced at a sensible rate. In some classes the school is beginning to look at how key thinking skills can be taught. This, too, is beneficial to pupils' learning. Given these improvements, the good quality teaching and clear educational direction, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds based on average points scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	E	B	A
mathematics	B	E	D	C
science	B	E	C	B

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

Overall standards reached by eleven-year-olds in 2000 vary between subjects because of the relatively large differences in the proportions reaching levels above that expected by this age. The proportion reaching the level expected was well above average in English, average in mathematics and within the top 5 per cent in the country in science. These results are very good, particularly given the pupils' attainment levels when they first joined the school. However, the proportion of pupils reaching a higher level was much lower; average in English, but well below average in mathematics and science. This lowers overall scores. When results are compared with pupils from similar schools, they were well above average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics. The school reached the target set in English but fell short of the mathematics target. Targets set for 2001 are realistically challenging. In the last three years, each year group has made good progress compared with their standards when they joined the school. Results vary because each year group is so different. Inspectors expect Year 6 test results to be lower this year than last, because the year group this year has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Even so, the vast majority are doing as well as can be expected.

Overall standards reached by seven-year-olds in 2000 were average in reading and above average in both writing and mathematics. When results are compared with pupils from similar schools, they were well above average in all three subjects.

Standards of work seen during the inspection were satisfactory, overall. Pupils generally make steady progress through their first years in school, as they master the basic skills. This prepares them well and they make quicker progress in the older classes, so that they achieve well by the time they leave at eleven. Standards in literacy and numeracy are improving, largely because the school has identified where they are weakest - in writing and number- and responded effectively. Even so, more needs to be done and pupils' speaking skills need to be developed more methodically. Standards are satisfactory in all other subjects, except design and technology and music where they are above the level expected. Information and communication technology is particularly well used across the curriculum, and this is beneficial to pupils' achievements. Weaknesses in standards reported at the previous inspection have all been resolved.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, interested in all the school can offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The vast majority of pupils behave well in and out of class. They are courteous and friendly towards one another, staff and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show initiative and willingly take responsibility. They work and play together well. The school is a harmonious community.
Attendance	Good. Attendance has improved steadily. Pupils are generally punctual.

Pupils play a full part in making the school a happy community. They show respect for each other's feelings and values. They are keen to learn and persevere to complete tasks, particularly those that challenge them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is generally good, and particularly strong in Years 4, 5 and 6. Half the teaching seen was judged good, one quarter very good and one tenth excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection, an improvement since the previous inspection when three lessons in every ten were less than satisfactory. Parents, too, feel teaching is good. Poor accommodation and inadequate resources are detrimental to the teaching of children under five.

English is generally taught well. There is particularly good attention to teaching basic skills and methodically developing pupils' vocabulary and spelling skills in Key Stage 2. However, more could be done to develop pupils' speaking skills. Mathematics is well taught. Since the previous inspection, pupils aged six and seven are managed better. Assessment of one lesson is used more effectively to plan the next. Consequently, tasks are generally matched closely to pupils' needs and they learn at a good rate. Numeracy skills are well taught. Teachers have good understanding and consequently explain clearly so pupils learn better.

There are many strengths in teaching. Teachers use resources well, particularly to give visual illustration to their explanations. This is beneficial to pupils' learning, particularly those with limited vocabulary. Very good use is made of specialist teaching; for example, to teach music in the older classes. Teachers deploy the good number of learning support assistants and volunteers well to support the learning of particular individuals or groups effectively. Teachers know their pupils well and have a good rapport with them.

Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Tasks are at the right level, and interesting. Pupils are keen and absorbed in their work. They work well with the skilled learning support assistants who guide them. Teaching of the more able is satisfactory, overall. Most teachers plan questions, for example, in the numeracy mental starter, that challenge pupils. In some activities, a few teachers use the same worksheet for all pupils. Consequently, the work is not well-matched to the needs of many, particularly the more able pupils. Furthermore, the questions on these sheets rarely ask for much thought from these pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and generally balanced. Good links with the local community, visits and visitors, and a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities enrich learning in class. Good links exist between subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and effective support provided. Work is closely matched to pupils' needs. Support is of good quality.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is excellent, there is a strong sense of spirituality in much that the school does. Provision for moral and social development is very good. Older pupils help younger ones. Expectations of behaviour are clear. Provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. The mission statement is embodied in the life and work of the school. Pupils' year by year progress is tracked closely and the school has begun to set targets in English and mathematics.

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, and weaknesses found in the previous inspection have been rectified. Information and communication technology and numeracy are developed particularly well through other subjects. Currently, the school day is shorter than the recommended minimum, so pressures on time squeeze some subjects. The school has satisfactory links with parents, and is keen to develop them further. Parents are welcomed into school and there is a very active home-school association, which organises social and fund-raising events.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, overall. The headteacher gives a very clear educational direction, firmly based upon the school's aims and values in the mission statement. However, subject co-ordinators need a more influential role to be fully effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very involved in school life and strike a good balance between supporting and questioning the school. They are well-informed; each is linked to a subject and visits the school regularly.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based upon thorough evaluation. Governors are also actively involved.
The strategic use of resources	Resources available to the school are used carefully with the clear aim of improving the quality of education provided. Nothing is wasted, everything is done for a purpose.

There is an adequate number of suitably qualified teachers and a good number of well-trained learning support assistants. Staff and pupils benefit from good levels of volunteer support. Accommodation is barely adequate and facilities for children under five are particularly poor, which has an impact upon teaching and learning. Use of the library and small group work are also adversely affected. Learning resources are satisfactory, overall, and generally well used, except those for children under five, which are insufficient.

Parents agree that the school is well led and managed. There is strong and purposeful leadership from the headteacher and governors, but more could be made of the expertise of senior staff. The school is fully implementing the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Teaching is good.• The school is well led and managed.• The school helps their children mature and become responsible.• Their children make good progress at school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside of lessons.• The school working more closely with them.• The school keeping them more closely informed as to how their children are progressing.

Based upon responses to the questionnaire, and discussions with parents at the meeting prior to the inspection and during the inspection, the great majority of parents hold positive views about the school. Inspectors agree with these positive views. A minority of parents raised three main concerns. Inspectors judge provision for extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory. In addition, there is a good number of stimulating activities that enrich the curriculum, and staff are fully involved in the wider community. The school works closely with parents, and offers a good number of opportunities for parents to discuss how their children are progressing.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, pupils achieve well compared with how they did when they joined the school. Results show consistent improvement when each year group's achievements at age eleven are compared with their achievements at age seven, or when each year group's achievements at age seven are compared with their achievements when they first joined the school.
2. Over time, the school's results show a trend of steady improvement, similar to the national picture. Standards vary from year to year, because each year group is different. This makes a comparison of one year's results with the next less useful than a comparison of how each year group is doing now compared with when it joined the school. Even so, in four of the last five years, English results have been on or above the national average in Year 6. This is also true of science, although in mathematics it falls to only three of the last five years.
3. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, nine in every ten pupils reached the level expected in English, a proportion above the national average. Three in every ten reached a higher level, similar to the national average. In mathematics, three-quarters reached the expected level, a little above the national average. The proportion reaching a higher level, one in every ten, was well below the national average. In science, every pupil reached the expected level, an excellent achievement. However, only about one-fifth exceeded it, well below the national average. Generally, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level is good but the proportion exceeding it is lower. The school recognised this and has already begun to take steps to resolve it. When results are compared with pupils from similar schools, they are above average, overall; well above in English, above in science and average in mathematics. Girls do a little better than boys in mathematics and science. The school exceeded the target set for it in English in 2000, but fell below that for mathematics. Targets set for 2001 are challenging but achievable.
4. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, more than eight pupils in every ten reached the expected level in reading, similar to the national average. One-third reached a higher level, above the national average. In writing, nearly every pupil reached the expected level, well above the national average. However, less than one pupil in every ten reached a higher level, well below the national average. In mathematics, eight pupils in every ten reached the expected level, below the national average. The proportion which exceeded it, however, was one-third and this was well above the national average. When results are compared with pupils from similar schools, they are well above average.
5. Children under five enter the school with a wide range of attainment levels, but, overall, they are below average. They are particularly low in key skills such as speaking and number. Many also have little experience of being with other children. A well-planned curriculum and good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities leads to satisfactory and often good progress. Children with special educational needs are identified quickly and good support is given. By the time they are five, most have begun to catch up but are still below average. Their learning and progress are adversely affected by the poor accommodation, both for their classroom and for outdoor activities.
6. Inspection evidence suggests that current standards in Year 6 are generally below average, although a good proportion of these pupils are now reaching a higher level, a recent target set by the school. Standards are lower among this year group largely because of the very high proportion with special educational needs, about three pupils in every five. When these pupils' results are compared with their results at age seven, they have generally made good progress. Nearly all have made at least two levels' improvement, the expected rate of progress, and many more than this. The very small proportion who have not made the progress expected are all on the higher stages of the school's special educational needs register. Current standards in Year 2 are broadly average. Again, when these pupils' levels when they entered the school are compared with those they are now reaching, they have also made good progress.

7. Standards in literacy are satisfactory, overall. Teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of texts, which they find interesting and often go on to read themselves. Their reading skills are generally satisfactory, although many older pupils still have difficulty in tackling unknown words. Reading generally, and use of information books, are adversely affected by the poor library facilities. In writing, pupils write for a suitable range of purposes in literacy, but opportunities to write in other subjects are restricted. Sentences are generally simple in construction and vocabulary is limited. Very few pupils write using complex sentences and paragraphs.
8. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory, overall. Standards are improving, largely because of the improved curriculum and teaching since the national strategy was introduced. In particular, mental computation is quick and accurate. Pupils also know how to go about tackling problems - for example, which of the four rules they need to employ. Numeracy is particularly well used in other subjects. Pupils estimate and measure in a wide range of tasks in such subjects as science, geography and history.
9. Standards reached by pupils with special educational needs are much improved since the school was previously inspected. Targets are clear and tasks in lessons build towards them well. Consequently, pupils are given work at the right level. The good number and skill of support staff enables these pupils to often make good progress. The use of 'sets' in literacy and numeracy, so that pupils work with others of similar ability, is proving beneficial in raising standards.
10. Standards reached by the most able pupils are generally good, but variable. In some classes, such as Year 6, their needs are carefully catered for and they do as well as they should. Occasionally, in some subjects and classes, the tasks they are given are not as well matched to their capabilities. At these times, their rate of progress drops.
11. Standards in science are satisfactory. Practical work gives pupils many opportunities both to learn first-hand and to use and apply their existing scientific knowledge in new situations. The methodical introduction of thinking skills in Year 5 and 6 is also very beneficial to pupils' learning generally, but particularly in practical work such as science. In information and communication technology, standards are satisfactory. The tasks planned are very interesting and relevant. The software is generally useful and pupils benefit greatly. Lots of tasks enable pupils to practise their information and communication technology competence through learning in other subjects. However, the number of computers available currently restricts pupils' opportunities to use them and consequently the standards they reach. In art and design, standards have improved since the previous inspection. Resources, artefacts, music and the work of famous artists are all used to stimulate pupils' creativity. Techniques are well taught and pupils achieve a good quality and range of interesting work. In design and technology, too, standards are much improved since the school was inspected previously. Again, tasks are imaginative and stimulating for pupils, who persevere and take pride in achieving a good quality of finish. In geography, standards are satisfactory. Fieldwork is used well so that pupils learn first hand and remember better, but the time allocated to the subject limits pupils' learning. In history, visitors and visits are used to fire pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Consequently, they understand to a higher level than is often found in pupils of this age. In music, standards are high generally and exceptional in singing. Good diction and pitch control enables pupils to catch the feeling or mood of each piece, drawn from a wide range of cultures and historical times. In physical education, standards are satisfactory, overall, and good in swimming. Pupils work vigorously and participate eagerly. However, they do not look regularly at their performances with a view to considering how to improve.
12. Nine in every ten parents who replied to the questionnaire feel that their children make good progress in the school. At the meeting for parents held before the inspection, several said that they thought standards had risen generally over the last few years.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Relationships in the school community are good. Pupils' attitudes to school are positive and their behaviour good. Their personal development is also good.
14. Children under five have positive attitudes to the tasks they are given. They quickly develop good relationships with one another and the staff who help them.
15. Pupils' attitudes to the school are positive. They enjoy coming to school and show interest in their learning. They are enthusiastic learners and keen to take advantage of all the school offers, including activities outside lessons. In practical tasks, particularly, they persevere and take great pleasure in their successes. Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children like school.
16. The behaviour of pupils is good, a view shared by about nine parents in every ten who responded to the questionnaire. Pupils' behaviour, in assembly generally and Mass particularly, is very good. They know and understand the school rules, and accept the reasons for them. There is no evidence of bullying, threatening or aggressive behaviour and the one recent permanent exclusion was appropriate.
17. Pupils enjoy good relationships with one another and staff. They are tolerant and understanding of one another's differences, particularly their feelings and values. Pupils fully understand the effect of their behaviour on others. Poor or challenging behaviour is rare. They have respect for one another, their own belongings and school property, and have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others.
18. Pupils play very well together. Whether choosing to play organised games, or preferring to talk quietly, pupils do so without oppression or harm. All pupils mix very well at playtime. Older pupils relate well to younger pupils, help and care for them, and teach them games.
19. Pupils with special educational needs show good interest in the activities provided and usually concentrate on their tasks and take a pride in their achievements. They enjoy coming to school and get on well with other pupils in their classes. They mix well at playtime.
20. Pupils' personal development and relationships are good. They work well together in shared tasks. In physical education lessons, they worked very well together and behaved sensibly when divided into teams to compete with each other.
21. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility and do so readily. They display initiative and personal responsibility. They help with the daily organisation of the school - for example, to prepare for assembly. Older pupils help with the care of younger children at playtimes.
22. Pupils enjoy receiving visitors, are courteous to them and take a pleasure in showing them round the school or showing their work. The school ethos and mission statement to 'love and respect one another' is reflected in the pupils' attitudes.
23. Attendance is good, an improvement since the previous inspection when it was satisfactory. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching is generally good, and particularly so in Years 4, 5 and 6. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when three lessons in every ten were less than satisfactory. The school has been successful in meeting this key issue of the previous report through staff training and changes in personnel. Half of teaching seen during this inspection was good, one quarter very good and one tenth excellent. Collectively this is a high proportion of good teaching and an important reason for the achievements of pupils. Nearly every parent who replied to the questionnaire also feels that teaching is good.
25. Teaching of children under five is satisfactory, overall. Aspects such as the planning, use of assessment to track how children are doing and resources to make the teaching point clearer, are all good. A good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated tasks is provided. Additional staff and voluntary helpers are all used effectively and staff work well together.
26. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is good; consequently, their explanations are clear and, when pupils experience difficulties, they are able to resolve them. Some very good use is made of the staff's particular expertise, for example, in music and art and design. In the former, the co-ordinator teaches all classes in Years 3 to 6 and this is very beneficial to the rate and quality of pupils' learning. Achievement is high in these lessons. In a very good Year 6 lesson, and an excellent choir session, her energy and enthusiasm inspired the pupils whose efforts, even though the tasks were difficult, were very good.
27. The teaching of literacy is good. Teachers' knowledge of the literacy hour is satisfactory and all elements of the lesson are in place. Lessons are well planned and organised so that no time is wasted. Additional staff and volunteers are well prepared and deployed where they can do most good. They are a significant factor in the good learning that takes place. Most teachers understand the importance of teaching and reinforcing technical language. In a very good Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, vocabulary such as 'alliteration', 'simile' and 'metaphor' was well taught. The teacher had high expectations that pupils would respond by using it accurately.
28. The teaching of numeracy is good. Pupils are managed better than at the time of the previous inspection, and teachers use assessment better to plan pupils' work. Planning is generally good, although not all teachers plan sufficiently challenging questions for the most able in the mental starter. Time is used effectively, otherwise, and explanations are good.
29. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. In most lessons, tasks meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, especially the lower ability and special educational needs pupils. Good use is made of computer programs to support these pupils. Learning support assistants are knowledgeable, skilled and well trained. They receive good guidance from teachers and are, consequently, very effective. They have a good rapport with these pupils, who also bring positive attitudes to their tasks.
30. Teaching of more able pupils is generally satisfactory. Planning takes account of pupil groupings and activities are generally designed to match the needs of the main ability groups within the class, including the more able. In a very good Year 6 history lesson, for example, even the teacher's questions were modified to challenge all ability groups. In a very good Year 1 science lesson, a very good extension activity was organised for the more able. However, occasionally more able pupils in some classes could do better if the work planned was more challenging, and did not rely so much on worksheets containing closed activities that ask little of these pupils.
31. Teachers know their pupils well and enjoy a positive rapport with them. This is particularly beneficial when handling the rare occasions of inappropriate behaviour. This good knowledge enables the teacher generally to find the right approach to resolve the difficulty.
32. Good use is made of resources to illustrate teaching points. This is especially useful when pupils have limited grasp of English, or when tasks are particularly complicated. In a very good Year 1 art

and design lesson, a good range of resources was used to give pupils an understanding of sculpture, and how it is designed and constructed. In a very good Year 5 design and technology lesson, the teacher used a wide range of resources to instruct and guide the pupils. Following the initial whole-class introduction, some pupils used CD-ROM to complete a storyboard while others watched a short instructional video. In a very good Year 6 history lesson, artefacts from the 1950s and 1960s were used effectively to describe the differences between primary and secondary sources of evidence. This visual explanation of a difficult concept was very beneficial to pupils' progress.

33. Marking of pupils' work is satisfactory. Some teachers give helpful, clear and concise information about what pupils are doing well and what they need to concentrate upon next. When this happens, it is beneficial to the rate of pupils' learning, giving a clear focus to their work.
34. Teachers generally use assessment well to help them plan on a day-to-day basis. However, this varies between individual teachers. As a result, on occasions, there is a mismatch between the work assigned by the teacher and the pupils' developing abilities. This generally applies to the more able pupils. When it occurs, it slows the rate of learning.

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

35. The curriculum is broad and generally balanced and enriched through extra-curricular activities and contacts with the community. The curriculum reflects the school's aims and supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained its curricular strengths and made good improvements. The range of subjects in the curriculum offered by the school meets statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Requirements are also met in every subject, including information and communication technology and design and technology, where there were weaknesses reported in the previous inspection. There is marked improvement in these subjects. Each subject is taught separately, except information and communication technology, which is taught well through other subjects. Good links between subjects are made to provide coherence across the curriculum. The study of the local area is good, through teaching in history and geography. Numeracy is developed well through other subjects. However, literacy across the curriculum needs developing further. In English, writing and speaking are not sufficiently developed. There is some over-dependency on worksheets and work books. There are good links with parents at entry to school, but limited links are established with the local nurseries and play groups from which the children come. There are well-maintained links with secondary schools, which prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.
36. The school day is shorter than the recommended minimum for the older pupils. Given that teaching is good, this has an adverse effect on pupil's learning. The school is aware of this and changes are planned. The curriculum fits into a tightly-managed school week, especially for the older pupils in school. This affects the curricular balance and the availability of time for teaching and developing some subjects. For example, there is less time available for teaching geography and design and technology, as compared with history and art and design, for which twice as much time during the year is available. The subject most affected by this is geography, which is given lower emphasis, particularly in Year 2. While the subject meets the statutory requirements, standards are affected. There is good emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy in the school, which is reflected in the time allocated to these subjects. The National Literacy and National Numeracy strategies have been implemented successfully throughout the school and the whole school has benefited.
37. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is mainly taught through religious education, except in the reception class and in Year 1, where the younger pupils learn about PSHE through class discussion. In older classes, the emphasis is on social and moral themes, and citizenship is currently not part of the curriculum. Some good opportunities for health education are included in science and pupils are made aware of the dangers of drug misuse. There is a clear statement from the governors in the school prospectus on sex education, which is taught as part of health education, and the school meets the statutory requirements in this respect.
38. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory. A good range of activities to cover all of the areas of learning in the Early Learning Goals, the recognised curriculum for children of this age, are

carefully planned, although the limitations of the accommodation adversely affect teaching and learning.

39. The curriculum is satisfactory. All curriculum policies are in place and being reviewed to bring them in line with the new requirements. The school is in the process of adopting the nationally recognised schemes of work for most subjects. This is helping to ensure continuity and progression. However, there are currently inconsistencies across year groups because medium-term planning is largely left to individual teachers. Through inspectors' analysis of work, the differences in planning and teaching between classes were particularly apparent.
40. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The needs of these pupils are quickly and accurately identified. Individual Education Plans are clear and parents are informed about learning targets. As a result, pupils with special educational needs consistently make good progress throughout the school in relation to their prior attainment. The school complies with all statutory requirements. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs is a major improvement in the school's work since the previous inspection. The school generally meets the needs of more able pupils.
41. The school ensures equality of access and opportunities for all pupils. Withdrawal of pupils from classes, to work with learning support assistants, for example, is generally well organised so that pupils rarely miss very important teaching points, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school does not yet have a documented policy for identifying pupils who might be gifted or talented.
42. About one half of parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that the range of activities outside lessons is inadequate. The inspection findings are that there is a satisfactory and increasing range of extra-curricular activities, such as choir, football, netball, rugby and cricket. A very successful choir, which has won local and national recognition, gives pupils excellent opportunities to participate in major venues such as the National Festival Hall and Rochester Cathedral. The French and art clubs, available during the time of the previous inspection, are no longer available owing to the restricted accommodation. There is a good range of educational visits that successfully enrich the curriculum. A visit to a centre for out door adventurous activities extends the curriculum further. Visitors play an important part in making learning more interesting. For example, 'Roman Day' successfully stimulates pupils' interests and develops a deeper understanding of the Roman life style.
43. The school has a strong Catholic ethos and strong links with the Catholic community, which benefits the pupils' learning. Good links are maintained with the parish. The pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of the wider community and they make collections for many worthwhile causes. There are good links with the community at large. Good links with the local business community led to pupils visiting a local laboratory.
44. The overall provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Much is done to develop attitudes and values consistent with the school's vision and Catholic ethos.
45. Provision for spiritual development is excellent. Pupils respect one another's beliefs and value them. The strong connection that the school has with the local Catholic Church is emphasised by the school mission statement and the high profile that the school places on pupils' spiritual development. Prayers are said at the beginning and end of each school day and the local priest regularly holds a special Mass for the school. During the inspection, a Mass was observed where the school choir sang superbly, all pupils experienced awe and wonder and ample time was given to pupils for reflection. Behaviour throughout this Mass was excellent.
46. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Teachers offer enormous encouragement to pupils. All pupils are given a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and the impact of their actions on others. To do this, a variety of strategies is employed by teachers, who ensure that pupils' moral behaviour is of a high standard. Pupils are rewarded by the gaining of a certificate for good behaviour and even pupils who have misbehaved receive acknowledgement when they improve.
47. The provision that the school makes for pupils' social development is very good. The good relationships promoted throughout the school encourages pupils to work and live harmoniously

together. Where pupils are given opportunities to work together in lessons, they co-operate well and share their ideas. For example, in a literacy lesson, pupils worked together to complete the outline and plot of a story and read their combined efforts to the whole class. Pupils are encouraged to befriend children who are lonely or new to the school and in the playground older pupils help younger pupils.

48. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are helped to appreciate a wide range of cultures through visits and visitors, such as the Roman Day. Pupils are actively involved in their own learning, and consequently achieved much. In discussion, their clear, vivid and accurate memories clearly demonstrate the good learning that has taken place.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. The teaching and support assistants know their children very well and give them good support and help during their time at St. Ethelbert's. The care and concern which the staff has for pupils is self-evident. All adhere closely to the aims and objectives in the mission statement in their day-to-day life in school. Both are important factors in the good progress pupils make during their school lives. They thrive in this positive climate for learning.
50. Procedures for monitoring and promoting child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and the school has a comprehensive policy. Full and effective liaison is carried out between staff and the appropriate agencies. Records are complete and accurate. Health and safety procedures, and first aid arrangements, are good. The recording of accidents has been improved since the previous inspection.
51. The school has very good procedures for the monitoring and recording of attendance. Registers are accurate and marked regularly. They fully comply with legislation.
52. The school has simple but effective procedures for the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour. Pupils are aware of the few school rules and fully comply with the reward and sanctions system. No incidents of bullying or challenging behaviour were observed during the inspection.
53. Procedures for assessing the progress of children under five are good. Assessment is very thorough and the information used effectively to match tasks to children's capabilities and check how well they do over time. Good arrangements ensure that these children enjoy a smooth transfer from home to school.
54. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and improving. Good systems track pupils' progress year by year from when they first join the school, especially in the core subjects of English and mathematics. The information is used well, particularly to set targets for how pupils are expected to achieve, and to deploy additional support where necessary. The school is able to check that it is adding value in each key stage. Good computer usage is helping senior staff become more aware of comparative information in relation to pupils' prior attainment nationally, and in relation to similar schools in the locality.
55. Target-setting is relatively new in school and, increasingly, teachers and pupils are becoming more aware of its value in raising attainment. The school generally sets itself challenging whole-school targets and, increasingly, the targets are becoming more realistic, taking account of the current groups of pupils and their special educational needs. The school has recognised that parents are not yet fully informed about their children's targets; this is part of its future action plan. Teachers keep class records of pupils' progress in all subjects of the curriculum and this practice is consistent across the school. All this is an improvement since the previous inspection.
56. Teachers' assessment is generally accurate and reliable; however, there are instances where there is a lack of understanding of National Curriculum levels and this can lead to pupils being allocated the wrong level.

57. Procedures for identifying needs and monitoring progress of pupils with special educational needs are equally good. Teachers use assessment information well to set clear targets for improvement in Individual Education Plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The school's stated aim is to support parents in their role and involve them fully in their children's education. The great majority of the relatively small proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed positive views of the school. A small minority expressed a view that the school does not keep them well-informed about their children's progress, does not work closely with them and does not provide a good range of activities outside of lessons. The inspection findings did not confirm these views.
59. The school has satisfactory links with parents. The school welcomes parents and volunteers. Their work is much appreciated and they make a valuable contribution to lessons. Most parents give their children good support with learning out of school. They encourage and guide their children well.
60. Parents of pupils with special education needs have satisfactory links with the school. They are invited by the school to be involved in discussions regarding their children's progress, are fully consulted regarding target-setting, and are invited to annual reviews.
61. Information provided by the school about pupils' progress is satisfactory. Parents of Reception children receive good quality information three times during their children's first year. Throughout the school, annual reports give clear and concise information about pupils' progress but do not give targets for the following year, which would be useful to pupils and parents. Additional reports containing national test information do not clarify what the gradings mean and leave some parents confused.
62. Parents have good opportunities to come into school each term to see class teachers and discuss their children's progress. In addition, staff are available to see parents whenever they have any concerns that they wish to discuss.
63. Other information provided for parents is satisfactory. An illustrated brochure, which is well presented, gives new parents full information about the school, its ethos and mission statement. In addition, information about activities is sent to parents on a regular basis.
64. There is a small but active school-parents association that organises social and fund-raising events. Last year, a relatively large sum of money was raised. Their work is much appreciated by the school.
65. The school has effective arrangements for the admission of pupils and the transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education. Parents are invited to come into school to meet staff prior to their child's admission at Reception level and are encouraged to stay with their child until the child settles into school routine. At Year 6, the school has arranged for visits from the staff of the receiving secondary schools and gives parents full information on the opportunities for their children.
66. The omissions from the prospectus mentioned in the previous inspection report have been rectified.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The quality of the leadership and management of the school is good overall. Although this is a similar judgement to the previous inspection there have been some important improvements, which owe much to the dedication of the headteacher. His commitment to overseeing all aspects of the school's work has been a significant factor in forging a sense of community and common purpose, founded on the teachings of the Catholic Church. The school's drive to improve standards emphasises the importance of the unique nature of every pupil and of the need to ensure that pupils develop spiritually and morally, as well as academically. These aims and values are reflected in all its work. There is, however, insufficient delegation of leadership and management responsibilities to other senior members of staff.
68. The governing body, ably led by the chair of governors, is very involved in school life and gives good support to the school. It meets regularly to keep abreast of the school's work and guide its development. Monitoring arrangements are satisfactory. The headteacher keeps the governors informed of test results, the results of his analysis and the areas which he and the staff have identified for improvement. Governors are linked to subjects of the curriculum. They visit the school regularly and meet the headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators to discuss and agree policies. Some have observed lessons and others help in the classroom. This results in governors having a good insight into the work of the school with which to inform their decisions. The willingness of governors to attend training courses benefits the school because it results in their having an up-to-date knowledge and understanding about current requirements and their statutory responsibilities. For example, the governors for literacy and numeracy have attended appropriate training and taken a keen interest in the school's response to these national initiatives.
69. The headteacher has a clear view of the schools strengths and weaknesses. He carefully analysis and collates test results and monitors pupils' progress towards them. He uses this information to inform whole-school target-setting. He is well aware of what goes on in every classroom and undertakes regular, formal monitoring of teaching. Procedures allow opportunities for strengths and weaknesses to be shared with individual teachers and there are systems to ensure follow-up support and training. He has also undertaken, along with the deputy headteacher, a whole-school self-evaluation of pupils' writing.
70. Where responsibility for subjects and aspects of the school have been delegated, co-ordinators are beginning to make an effective contribution to school improvement and are working hard to promote and develop their subjects. Schemes of work and policies have been updated and there has been some good work on developing assessment systems. Co-ordinators monitor standards by looking at pupils' work and give appropriate support to staff. They do not, as yet, monitor and evaluate by observing lessons and this reduces their capacity to gain an overview of the schools' strengths and weaknesses and to use their expertise to effect improvements and develop consistency of practice. The headteacher has taken responsibility for five subjects in order to ensure consistency during a period of staff changes. This arrangement now requires review in order to reduce the headteacher's workload and ensure a more equitable distribution of responsibilities.
71. Satisfactory procedures for formulating the school development plan involve the headteacher working in close partnership with the governing body and staff. The format of the plan now includes monitoring arrangements and success criteria, against which teaching and learning can be judged, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The numeracy and literacy action elements have been informed by the analysis of test results and have precise criteria which focus on raising academic standards. There are too many priorities in the current plan, however, and it now needs to be reviewed and rationalised, and positioned within a longer-term strategic intent for the school to make it more manageable and ensure that it is aligned to the school's mission. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Current focus is appropriately on raising the level of basic skills in literacy and numeracy for all its pupils in order that they reach their full potential. There are appropriate plans for assessing individual achievement and for targeting improvement. The plans indicate arrangements for staff development opportunities.
72. The school has a strong commitment to equal opportunities. The school's data analysis is helpful in identifying under-achieving groups of pupils and targeting additional support for them, to raise levels of achievement.

73. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. Pupils' progress towards targets in their Individual Educational Plans is monitored on a regular basis. There is good level of support in all classes for pupils identified as having special educational needs.
74. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory and supports agreed educational priorities appropriately. The school is addressing satisfactorily the 'best value' principles in the management of resources. All governors consider financial matters jointly. This unusual arrangement places a heavier responsibility on the headteacher for budget planning than is found in most schools. He is well supported by the school's administration officer, who ensures the smooth running of day-to-day financial administration and provides clear reports for the governors. Specific grants and additional funding are used appropriately. A significant amount of money has been appropriately set aside to support the much needed planned improvements to the accommodation.
75. Staffing is good, overall, with appropriately qualified teachers. Performance management procedures are in place, but, once again, there is a heavy reliance on the headteacher alone to manage the performance of all teachers. There are appropriate induction procedures for staff new to the school and for newly qualified teachers. Learning support assistants are skilled and well-trained. This is very beneficial to their work with pupils.
76. The school makes good use of its barely adequate accommodation. All classrooms are attractive, well-organised environments for learning. The cleaning staff keep the school in immaculate order. The junior library is stocked satisfactorily and reasonably well used, but is inappropriately housed in a corridor, which is a not a conducive environment for quiet independent study. There are particular problems for the reception class, which is housed in the basement. Noise from the classrooms above sometimes makes it difficult for pupils to hear one another or their teacher. Although there is access to the outdoors, the outdoor area is no more than a pathway and is too restricted for all but the most controlled of activities. In the main, the school makes appropriate use of its grounds for sport and playtime activities. There is scope for the further development of the grounds to support other areas of the curriculum.
77. Learning resources are satisfactory, overall, and they are generally well used. There are barely enough computers. The quality of resources for reception-aged pupils is unsatisfactory. There is a paucity of provision for physical development through outdoor play, and too much of the equipment to support pupils' imaginative play, small world and role-play, is of inferior quality.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78. The school should continue to build upon the good progress made in the recent past to:
1. Raise standards in English by:
 - providing more regular opportunities for pupils to speak;
 - expecting pupils to give full answers to questions;
 - continuing to build upon the good provision made recently for pupils to write at length. (*Paragraphs 7, 35, 86, 101, 102, 103, 104, 110, 112, 121, 123, 132*)
 2. Give subject co-ordinators a more influential role in the management of their subjects. (*Paragraphs 67, 70, 113, 124, 136, 152, 159*)
 3. Continue to seek ways to improve accommodation, particularly for children under five and the school library. (*Paragraphs 5, 7, 38, 76, 77, 82, 90, 94, 107*)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL:

- Implement current plans to extend the school day in Key Stage 2 at least to the minimum recommended time. (*Paragraphs 11, 36*)
- Ensure that tasks for the most able pupils offer sufficient challenge. (*Paragraphs 3, 10, 28, 30, 122, 134, 158*)
- Develop greater consistency in medium-term planning, to ensure more cohesion within the curriculum. (*Paragraph 39*)
- Consider widening provision for personal, social and health education; for example, to include the more methodical development of 'citizenship'. (*Paragraph 37*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	27	50	14	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	216
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	95

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.4	School data	0.0
National comparative data	4.3	National comparative data	0.3

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	16	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	13
	Girls	15	17	14
	Total	28	32	27
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	85 (72)	97 (75)	82 (72)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	15
	Girls	15	15	16
	Total	28	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	85 (72)	88 (72)	94 (75)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	15	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	15
	Girls	17	13	18
	Total	30	25	33
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	91 (63)	76 (63)	100 (66)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	11	16
	Girls	11	10	9
	Total	24	21	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	(84)	(72)	(81)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	185
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	30.9

Education support staff: YR – Y 6

Total number of education support staff	14.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	263

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	470, 345
Total expenditure	448, 612
Expenditure per pupil	1, 638
Balance brought forward from previous year	34, 560
Balance carried forward to next year	56, 293

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	165
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	35	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	42	6	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	40	13	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	61	13	0	3
The teaching is good.	49	45	3	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	45	13	13	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	27	3	10	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	35	6	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	39	32	19	10	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	49	7	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	37	7	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	14	21	17	24

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

79. Children join the Reception class in the September of the school year in which they become five. Good induction arrangements include opportunities for parents and children to visit the school in the term prior to starting and part-time attendance during the first half term. Most children have attended some form of pre-school provision, including playgroups and nurseries. The school has few links with these groups at present.
80. On entry to the Reception class, attainment is generally below the average expected for this age. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Many children have poorly developed speaking skills and find it difficult to articulate their feelings, needs and ideas because of a limited vocabulary. They have little awareness of mathematical concepts, such as shape and size, and little knowledge of number. A significant minority of children have poor self-help skills and are not sure how to work and play with other children. Children make good progress in their personal and social development and because of this are well prepared for their work on the National Curriculum in Year 1. Although they reach standards below those expected for their age by the end of the Reception year in the other areas of experience, this represents satisfactory progress in relation to where these children begin.
81. The curriculum is well-planned and soundly based on the national guidance for the Foundation Stage leading towards the Early Learning Goals. There are good arrangements to ensure an appropriate balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated tasks and teaching is satisfactory, overall, and often good, particularly in language and children's personal and physical development.
82. Provision for the youngest children was judged to be satisfactory in the previous inspection. Accommodation is currently unsatisfactory, and this adversely affects children's learning. Although the teacher makes the best possible use of the space available, the accommodation provided is not suitable for the youngest children in their first year of schooling. The classroom is housed in a basement and does not provide sufficient space for the wide range of practical activities that young children need. There are constant disruptions through noise made by movement in the classrooms above, which make it difficult for children to hear their teacher or one another. The outdoor area is no more than a pathway and is, as such, too small for all but the most controlled of activities. Furthermore, many of the resources provided are of poor quality, particularly those for creative and imaginative activities and for outdoor play.

Personal, social and emotional development

83. Pupils make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
84. Right from the start, the supportive and caring ethos helps children settle quickly into well-established procedures and routines, that promote independence and result in their being eager to learn. Staff set very good role models in the way that they work together, and show respect, patience and courtesy to all the children with whom they work. They spend time with children, helping them to understand how they should behave towards each other; for example, they help children to know how to become friends again when they fall out or have an argument. As a result, children gradually learn to make good relationships with others in the class and they have positive relationships with staff. Children often play and work alongside each other. Many begin to share materials, tools and equipment, negotiate roles and responsibilities, and help each other. Their awareness of the needs of others is good and they are quick to recognise when their classmates are in need of help or when they are unhappy. Because of the wide range of interesting, practical activities provided and the good support they receive, children gain confidence in themselves and come to believe that learning is enjoyable. They are able to make informed decisions and choices about the activities that they will take part in during the course of the day and to talk about what they have done. Behaviour and self-control are generally very good. They understand something of the difference between right and wrong, and are developing an understanding of the consequences of their actions on others. Their

self-care skills develop well. Children dress themselves independently and tidy and put away equipment with great efficiency.

Communication, language and literacy

85. Children make generally satisfactory and sometimes good progress in communication, language and literacy. Even so, attainment remains below average by the time they move into Year 1.
86. Children in the Reception class learn to listen attentively, to take their turn when answering questions, and to support one another. Most children follow discussions well and show good concentration. Higher-attaining and more confident children are keen to answer questions and also ask questions of their own, or pass comments, for example, when discussing stories with their teacher. Many are articulate, and they express their ideas clearly and well. However, a significant number of children are reticent and not readily drawn into discussions. When they do, they often experience problems as they search for suitably precise words to communicate their thoughts, and they find it difficult to express their ideas clearly and logically. Teachers and classroom assistants give good encouragement, help them to say things more precisely and to develop their ideas in greater detail and at greater length. In the course of their 'small world' play. Children commentate on their actions and use their imaginations as they make up stories about them.
87. All children enjoy sharing stories, poems and rhymes with their teacher. They happily sing the 'alphabet song' they have been taught, and they follow the events in stories closely as the plot unfolds. They love to hear stories being read aloud. They are accustomed to discussing the feelings of characters in the stories they hear and some children can link cause and effect by relating it to their own experiences. For example, they think that the owl babies might feel frightened because it is dark. The more able children already read simple texts aloud, accurately and independently, while a good proportion of other children recognise some key words on sight. They are developing a satisfactory awareness of phonics but do not yet use it to help them read new words. Many less able children, including those with special educational needs, have not yet learned to make links between the illustrations and the text.
88. Most children are beginning to break the flow of speech into words as they begin to write. For example, they enjoy writing lists, often using emergent writing, in role-play in the 'Beach Café'. Adults give good encouragement to the children by acting as scribes and writing down words as they say them. Some children can form their letters accurately and write their own name. The more able children are able to write down short simple statements that sequence their ideas. The less able children understand the need for spaces between words. Most know that writing moves from left to right across the page. They are beginning to produce some recognisable words, and they can usually 'read' their own writing to tell someone else what it is they have wanted to say. Most importantly, all children, whatever their ability or stage of development, are developing very positive attitudes to writing particularly and language work generally.

Mathematical development

89. Children make satisfactory progress in their mathematical development.
90. The teacher provides a wide range of activities to encourage the children to count and develop their mathematical awareness. For example, they count the number of children who are present when the register is taken. They sing a range of counting songs accurately and learn how to add one more by singing 'One Man Went to Mow'. Most children can recognise numerals from 1 to 5 with confidence, and count to 10 and sometimes beyond. With support, they can use simple number games involving number recognition and counting on. Children solve practical problems when, for example, counting coins to buy items in the role-play area. Although many children of five still find it difficult to explain their mathematical ideas, they begin to use words such as 'more' and 'less' to compare numbers of objects. They also use the language of position-for example, who is third and who is first, when drawing a bus queue. Many children can identify simple two-dimensional shapes such as a square, circle and triangle and recognise the language of position such as 'behind', 'in front' and 'inside'. When making models out of cartons and boxes they begin to develop their understanding of three-dimensional shapes, how they fit together and the language by which to describe them. The lack of

an outdoor play area and appropriate wheeled vehicles limits their opportunities to develop their understanding of time, distance and speed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

91. Children make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
92. Evidence from teachers' planning and from discussions with staff shows that children in the Reception class develop an awareness appropriate for their age about the past and present. For example, they look at photographs of old Ramsgate and think about what it looks like today. They listen to stories and letters from 'Grandpa Bill' about what it was like to be a sailor a long time ago. Children also develop a satisfactory understanding of the wider world in which they live. They are taken on a local 'journey', on foot, to the beach, where staff lead them through interesting discussions about significant geographical features, both natural and man-made, before they decide how they might have been formed. Children make good progress when examining a range of shells and seaweed, using all their senses and noticing the form and texture. They ask questions and speculate about what might have inhabited the shells and discuss what seaweed is and where it grows.

Physical development

93. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development, and gain an appropriate degree of dexterity for their age.
94. Children benefit from suitable opportunities to develop their manipulative skills when using construction toys, and when painting, drawing and cutting. Small groups of children have access to an outdoor play area, which is appropriately supervised by an adult. However, it comprises little more than a pathway and there is not enough space for opportunities to develop their co-ordination in using large equipment.
95. Good use is made of the hall and field for physical development. Children listen carefully and respond to instructions to move into spaces or lines. They use small games equipment such as hoops and small balls appropriately. They show a good awareness of their own space in relation to others, and are able to control the speed of their movements.

Creative development

96. Children make satisfactory progress in their creative development.
97. Children have learned a good range of songs by heart. They sing songs enthusiastically and can dance or clap hands to them. Their singing skills are satisfactory. Children take care of materials and use them imaginatively to paint fish and scrape them into wax. They make up imaginary stories using small world models and characters, and take on the imaginary characters of grown-ups when role-playing.

ENGLISH

98. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard for their age in English was well above both the national average and the results of pupils from similar schools. The proportion of pupils who reached a higher level than expected was broadly average. These results represent good achievement by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, given their generally below average levels of attainment when they started school. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is much improved since the previous inspection.
99. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading was average compared with schools nationally and was above the results of pupils from similar schools. In writing, the proportion who reached the expected standard was well above both the national average and the results of pupils from similar schools. The proportion of pupils who reached a higher level than was expected was broadly average in writing and above average in reading.
100. Over time, results vary but each year group makes good progress. Results of eleven-year-olds in English declined between 1996 and 1999, but there was a marked improvement in 2000. This is largely due to the differences between each group of pupils, particularly the proportion with special educational needs. In the current Year 6, for example, about three in every five pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is a very high proportion. When the results of each year group at eleven are compared with their performance at age seven, they make consistently good progress. The school carefully tracks pupils' progress in reading and writing, and there is evidence to suggest that pupils make better than expected progress and exceed predictions. Progress is far more consistent throughout the school than when it was previously inspected.
101. Throughout the school, achievement in reading is higher than in writing, and many pupils' skills as listeners are better developed than their skills as speakers. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
102. By the time pupils are seven, standards in speaking and listening are in line with those expected for pupils of this age. Pupils listen politely and usually with genuine interest to their teachers, to other adults who work with them, and to one another. They are able to follow and respond to instructions without having to be told things more than once, and, because they are willing to learn, always try to do their best. Most speak clearly, although many tend to answer with a single word or in simple sentences.
103. By the time they are eleven, standards in listening are in line with expectations, although those in speaking are a little below. The more able pupils are confident and articulate, speak Standard English correctly, and can adapt their speech to suit various audiences and purposes. Less able pupils have a good understanding of the main points in discussion, but they rarely answer in more than a simple sentence, unless asked to do so by their teachers.
104. Progress in speaking and listening is satisfactory, overall. Pupils aged six and seven receive a high level of adult support and this is very beneficial to their learning. For example, when they struggle they are able to receive individual help. When they work independently or in small groups, they are under more direct supervision than many older pupils. Consequently, their needs are recognised and acted upon much quicker. However, as pupils move through the school, too many do not acquire the specialist vocabulary they need to think about and discuss their work, and their general vocabulary is rather limited. This results in difficulties in expressing their thoughts and ideas clearly.
105. By the time pupils are seven, standards in reading are in line with those expected for pupils of this age. They generally read accurately and most demonstrate understanding of the text they read. They can recall the main events and identify the characters in stories.
106. By the time they are eleven, standards in reading are a little below those expected for pupils of this age. Nearly all pupils read accurately and fluently, and can work out the meaning of a word or

sentence for themselves. They display particularly good understanding of characters' feelings, and they can usually predict what is going to happen next. Many, but by no means all, use inference or deduction.

107. Progress in reading is good throughout the school. Teachers introduce their pupils to a good range and variety of fiction and non-fiction texts in literacy lessons and in other subjects, and this is beneficial to pupils' progress and achievement. Appropriate opportunities for older pupils to use the library independently and to find things out using the computer are having a positive effect on their skills of reading for information. Younger pupils have made their own small versions of information books and know how to use the contents page of books to find information. The lack of a suitable library, however, means that their skills in selecting and using information books independently are not well-developed. This situation has not improved since the previous inspection. Other weaknesses occur when pupils' do not have sufficient grasp of phonics and of how to use contextual clues to help them work out unknown words for themselves. Many pupils of all abilities in the school are puzzled by the meanings of uncommon words, by idioms and by figurative language, and some less able pupils find it difficult to use inference to work out hidden meanings.
108. By the time pupils are seven, standards in writing are in line with those expected for pupils of this age. They develop particular strengths in the technical aspects of writing, such as spelling and punctuation. They form their letters accurately and they learn to produce neat, legible writing, which is consistent in size. Most pupils have already developed, or are developing, a controlled, cursive style of handwriting, and they take great care to present their work neatly. Many pupils at this stage use full stops and capital letters accurately to demarcate sentences.
109. By the time they are eleven, standards in writing are below those expected for pupils of this age. Most writing is structured and clear, and pupils extend their ideas logically through a sequence of sentences. Words are chosen for variety and interest, although many pupils have a limited range of vocabulary to draw upon. Nearly all pupils use speech marks, question marks, exclamation marks and commas, for the most part accurately.
110. Progress in writing is satisfactory, overall. Pupils write for a suitable range of purposes in literacy, but not in other subjects. This affects their progress adversely as they are not practising their skills sufficiently. Most pupils write interesting, simple, stories with a clearly defined structure, while the work of some more able pupils readily engages the reader and is made richer by the use of dialogue and descriptive detail. The written work of less able pupils generally lacks fluency and coherence and is sometimes rather stilted because they find it difficult to apply, simultaneously, the many skills needed to produce well-written pieces of work, including the ability to combine a number of ideas into more complex sentences. Although pupils practise how to spell a range of words, they do not have a sufficient grasp of the meanings of words and of the spelling rules to apply their knowledge accurately in the course of their own written accounts.
111. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching is satisfactory in the younger classes and good or sometimes very good in the older ones. All teachers and learning support assistants have a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. They work very hard to help pupils to do their best, and are committed to raising standards. Compared with their attainment when they were younger, the vast majority of pupils learn well, largely because of the good teaching they receive and their eagerness to learn. Lessons are generally organised effectively, and pupils, tasks and resources are managed to good effect. Learning support staff are well-informed and well-deployed, and they play a very constructive role, giving focused attention to those pupils who need it.
112. The best teaching results in pupils making good progress because they are constantly challenged to work at the edge of their capabilities. In lessons where that happens, objectives are very precisely targeted on what pupils are to know, understand or be able to do. As the lesson begins, these objectives are shared with the pupils so that they clearly understand the purpose of what they are doing. As the lesson unfolds, they are rigorously pursued. Skilled questioning, often specifically targeted at pupils of different abilities, builds on what pupils already know and encourages them to think for themselves and to develop their own ideas. The good use of oral and written feedback in the older classes is both encouraging and helpful because it lets pupils know what they have to do to improve their work. There is some very good teaching in these classes, where the teachers show

pupils how to combine ideas in a logical sequence, how to achieve overall coherence in extended pieces of writing, and how to improve the organisation and structure of their work. The texts chosen for shared and guided reading lend themselves admirably to the main purpose of helping pupils to learn, and to apply, a range of reading strategies. Teachers also use them to good effect to develop pupils' understanding of plot, character, feelings and social and moral issues. Where teaching is less effective, it is because pupils are not sufficiently challenged to talk at greater length, to rephrase what they have to say in a more logical and articulate way, or to use more specific vocabulary. Opportunities are also missed to develop stronger links between reading and writing. For example, the use of literary models could demonstrate the effective use of language by real writers. This might influence what pupils themselves then write. In some lessons, there is an over-emphasis on worksheets and workbooks, particularly in group work and guided reading sessions, when they are not always linked to the main learning objective of the lesson, are too easy, and restrict opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and imaginative ideas.

113. Management of the subject is generally satisfactory. When the national initiative was introduced, the co-ordinator monitored lessons and sought to ensure the successful implementation of the initiative. She no longer monitors regularly, as she did when the school was previously inspected, and her ability to share her expertise and directly influence teaching and learning is very much reduced as a consequence. Her overview of the schools' strengths and weaknesses is also less clear. Resources for English are satisfactory, overall, and generally well-organised within the limited space that the school has available. Parents show interest in their children's work and clearly value the teachers' efforts on their children's behalf. However, they are not always as directly involved in supporting their children's efforts as they could be - for example, through hearing children read at home. The school makes every effort to compensate for this.

MATHEMATICS

114. In the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were below the national average. In these tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected by their age matched the national average, although the proportion of pupils reaching a higher level was well below average. Results were average when compared with similar schools. Taking the last five years' test results into account, results are generally in line with or above the national averages, except in 1999, when there was a dip. Girls have tended to do better than boys.
115. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds, standards were above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching a higher level than expected was also above average. Results were well above average in comparison with similar schools. Results over the last five years show good improvement year by year. There is some difference between the teacher assessment and test results, especially in relation to the higher level. Girls have tended to do better than boys in the national tests.
116. The inspection finding is that standards in Year 6 are below the national expectation, overall. This is mainly due to the high proportion of pupils in the year group having special educational needs. Even so, all are making good progress and the majority are working at the expected level for their age. There is also a marked improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching a higher than expected level. Girls and boys do equally well. The high number of pupils with special educational needs in this class is making good progress. Standards in Year 2 are broadly in line with those expected by this age.
117. By the age of seven, most pupils have a secure grasp of place value to 100. They have a good feel of the size and order of numbers on the number line. Pupils round up two-digit numbers to the nearest ten. They count numbers in 2s, 5s and 10s, and are beginning to have some understanding of 'multiples'. They know addition and subtraction facts and apply their knowledge to solve simple problems. Some use three-digit numbers quickly and accurately. They use money in a shopping context, and the majority knows the value of coins up to one pound, giving the right amount of change. They know many properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and sort them correctly. Pupils have a good understanding of how to use tables and graphs to handle data, such as a survey of their favourite toys and foods. The computer is used well by the pupils to support their work.

Pupils in Year 1 develop a sound understanding of addition and subtraction facts, using numbers to 20, and they become aware of the size and position of numbers to 100.

118. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a well-developed understanding of place value in large numbers and show a good awareness of patterns in numbers, through using their knowledge of tables. They apply their knowledge of the four rules in simple problems accurately. They learn about the relationships between percentages, decimals and fractions and learn to order them correctly. They multiply decimal numbers by 10, 100 and 1000, developing an understanding of the place value of numbers before and after a decimal point. They plot coordinates in all four quadrants, and measure accurately the angles of a triangle. They calculate the area and perimeter of a shape and make a table to show their results. Pupils in Year 5 learn the vocabulary of probability; for example, 'likely', 'certain' and 'fifty-fifty', developing a sound understanding of the likelihood of an event through games and real-life situations. Pupils in Year 4 learn to draw and measure angles of regular polygons, and recognise angles that are more than or less than 90 degrees. They have a good understanding of angles.
119. Progress is good throughout the school. When pupils enter Year 1 standards are generally below average. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a good impact, particularly in mental calculation and the development of a good range of methods to tackle problems. Pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress. This is mainly due to the good level of support they get, particularly from learning support assistants. Tasks are suitably modified for them to meet their needs and are well-matched to their individual targets.
120. Mathematics is used well in other subjects, for example, history, geography and science. The use of a time-line is well-developed in history, and pupils carry out a range of measuring activities linked to their work in science and geography. For example, pupils in Year 5 made a database on the local weather, using pie charts and bar charts to show the variation in temperature, rainfall and wind. Pupils in Year 2 estimated and measured to control the directions and distances travelled by a programmable robot.
121. The use of literacy in mathematics, however, is much less throughout the school. There are limited opportunities for pupils to communicate information through writing, or through written or oral interpretation of the data they use in their tables and graphs. Pupils lack confidence in explaining strategies they use in their problem-solving. In a lesson observed in Year 6, there were good opportunities for pupils to represent, extract and interpret data in frequency tables, tallies and charts, while carrying out their investigations. The majority managed this well; however, pupils had some difficulty in communicating this information using the mathematical language they had been taught.
122. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and this is an important factor in the good progress pupils make. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, particularly in Key Stage 1, where teaching was reported to be unsatisfactory, although teaching in the older classes continues to be more effective. The management of pupils' behaviour has improved, as has the quality of assessment and its use in teaching. Teachers generally plan well and use their time effectively within the three-part lesson structure, and give good explanations and demonstrations during their lessons. Consequently, pupils show positive attitudes towards their work and most try their best to complete the given tasks within the set time. During lessons they maintain their interest and show good behaviour throughout. Teachers prepare well for their introductory mental and oral activities, although tasks often tend to be too easy for the most able pupils. For example, most of the pupils in Year 3 showed a good awareness of the position of numbers beyond 100, on a number line; however, the work assigned was too easy for them to show this. Even so, pupils enjoy these sessions and work hard.
123. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced, providing good opportunities for problem-solving. Problems from real-life situations are particularly inspiring and pupils work particularly well given these opportunities for their own investigations. In most, but not all, classes there is a good range and quality of work in pupils' books. Elsewhere, over-reliance on poorly-designed worksheets, and workbooks that do not closely meet the lesson's objectives, leads to a lack of variety in the work seen and little opportunity for pupils' writing. Homework is set on a regular basis, following the policy.

However, homework is rarely used as a means of consolidating or extending pupils' knowledge and skills through applying the newly learned ideas beyond the classroom.

124. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses. He provides a satisfactory level of support for teachers and the learning support assistants. At present, the co-ordinator does not directly monitor either teaching or learning, although he has done this in the past. Currently, his role is restricted to monitoring teachers' planning and looking at pupils' work. The analysis of test results, review and evaluation of mathematics is done jointly with the headteacher. The co-ordinator is well-informed about standards in the school and has an important role in setting targets for improvement. This has contributed to raising standards. There has been good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection. The weaknesses noted then, especially the unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1 and the inadequate support for pupils with special educational needs, have been rectified.
125. Resources are satisfactory, easily accessible and well used by staff and pupils alike. Resources are particularly well-used during the introductory part of lessons. The computer is used well throughout the school to support different aspects of mathematics and contributes well to the attractive classroom displays on data-handling.

SCIENCE

126. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for eleven-year-olds in the 2000 national tests was well above average, although the proportion reaching a higher level was well below average. When results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, attainment is above average.
127. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for seven-year-olds in the 2000 assessments by their teachers was slightly above the national average, and the proportion exceeding it well above the national average.
128. Evidence from the inspection suggests that current standards in Year 6 are below those expected, although the proportion of pupils working at a higher level seems better than last year. This is below the standard at the previous inspection. Inspection evidence suggests that standards in Year 2 are broadly in line with those expected, with a good proportion of pupils working at a higher level. This is better than at the time of the previous inspection. The drop in overall standards in Year 6 is largely due to the differences between year groups. The present year group contains a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, roughly three in every five pupils, and this clearly has an impact upon achievement. All pupils are working at appropriate levels, with sufficiently demanding tasks to meet their different abilities. Particularly beneficial to pupils' learning is the emphasis in a few year groups, most particularly Years 5 and 6, on the methodical development of pupils' thinking skills during practical activities, so that they are learning to think scientifically, using a wide range of thought processes.
129. In Year 2, pupils understand the importance of making a test 'fair'. They respond well to suggestions on how to find things out. They use simple equipment carefully and make task-related observations. They draw circuits, using pictures to represent the battery and bulb. Through investigation, they concluded that plants need water, light, warmth and soil to thrive. The more able offer sensible reasons for their predictions. For example, they suggested that when a ball is dropped from a height between two others, its resultant bounce should also be between these.
130. In Year 6, pupils observe carefully. They recognise that their soil profiles have layers, and that the heaviest constituents are at the bottom. They notice that some objects float on the surface. They know sounds are produced when objects vibrate, and that these vibrations are not always visible. The more able recognise that the shorter the vibrating object, the higher pitched is the note. They know that the skeleton protects and supports your body, and lets it move. They describe the apparent motion of the sun and the producers and consumers in the food chain.

131. Throughout the school, there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and these pupils learn at a good rate. Learning support assistants are well-trained and well-prepared for their work. They enjoy a good rapport with pupils and learning is clearly focused. Often, the teacher's planning makes equally effective provision for all pupils. In Year 6, for example, the teacher plans particularly searching questions for the more able pupils, and asks more of them in the summing-up session at the end of the lesson.
132. Literacy skills are often used well. In Year 6, pupils take notes and use bullet points appropriately. Teachers make sure that pupils understand the vocabulary of the subject. For example, words such as 'profile' are carefully explained, often using a different context. Subsequently, the teacher expects the pupils to use these words. However, there is little writing of, for example, conclusions, where pupils collect their thoughts and present a reasoned piece of text.
133. Number skills are well used in a good variety of practical activities. In Year 2, pupils measure the length travelled in their experiment with appropriate accuracy. In Year 4, pupils measure and plot plant growth over time. In Year 5, they measure accurately the temperature of water as ice melts, logging their data on to a computer and producing a line graph. In Year 6, pupils produce similar data from measurement of light.
134. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Pupils generally learn at a good rate, although learning is particularly good in Years 1, 5 and 6 because their teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of science. In Year 1, for example, clear teaching ensures that pupils fully understand difficult concepts. They know that the stars are there all the time, that the moon reflects rather than produces light, and that leaves 'collect' sunlight. Pupils undertaking experiments are carefully led through how to make the test fair. Questions are probing, challenging pupils to use what they already know and to think through problems. Resources are well used, particularly to give pupils with limited vocabulary lots of visual explanation. In Year 5, very good planning ensures that pupils work through very relevant activities. Pupils are given many opportunities to be scientists, to recognise why a test is fair, to set up an experiment, to observe closely and think about how things work. Their teacher carefully supports their learning, knowing when to give pupils thinking time, and when to intervene and offer further guidance. Pupils achieve well, overall. Where the rate of learning dips it is because pupils are given worksheets that do not enable the more able pupils to work at the right level. For example, the more able pupils in Year 2 are asked to predict, like the rest of the class, by merely ticking a box when some have the capacity to go beyond this and say why they make this prediction.
135. The curriculum is good. The nationally recognised scheme of work is used increasingly, incorporating the school's previous science topics where possible. The school recently received an award for its work in science. Assessment is good. Pupils' progress in all units of work are assessed to monitor the rate of their learning and the effectiveness of the activities given. In addition, pupils are given two science investigations each year to check how well they use and apply their scientific knowledge.
136. Co-ordination is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable, but limited use is made of his skills. Although he looks regularly at teachers' plans and pupils' work, he is given too few opportunities to have a direct impact upon how the subject is taught and learned. He is also unaware of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the subject in the national test results, and consequently cannot use this information to improve science. Current plans, to raise standards amongst the more able pupils, to fully implement the nationally recognised scheme, and to give the co-ordinator opportunities to work alongside other teachers, are good.
137. Resources are good. Those for scientific enquiry were improved following the previous inspection, and this has been of benefit to the teaching and learning of scientific investigation particularly.

ART AND DESIGN

138. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. Standards have improved in Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection.
139. By the age of seven, pupils are confident when mixing colour and use their skills well to paint. They are given good opportunities to observe the work of local artists, and they apply their ideas to their own work with imagination. Some of the good quality 'Frottage work', made out of rubbings of textured objects found around the school, was inspired by looking at the work of Max Ernst. Pupils in

Year 1 learn to identify materials and processes that can be used in making a sculpture, and develop a good understanding of sculptures. Pupils in Year 2 work in two and three dimensions, using their sketch-books to explore their ideas. The three-dimensional work seen in Years 1 and 2 was of good quality.

140. By the age of eleven, pupils represent their chosen themes and ideas with increasing attention to accuracy and detail. Their drawings take account of the visual elements of line, colour, shape and form, and pupils use their knowledge of the tactile qualities of materials they work with. Pupils' sketch-books in Year 5 show that they have studied the effect of music on art and design. For example, they have used music by Mozart and Beethoven to inspire and create their picture scenes. Pupils in Year 6 experiment with different painting and printing techniques, and work with clay to develop their ideas, feelings and thoughts. They use their sketch-books to design and experiment; for example, to create a shop-front later made in clay.
141. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, make good progress within lessons, and over time, in developing their skills and their knowledge and understanding. This is an improvement from the previous inspection.
142. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and has improved since the previous inspection, when it was reported to be just satisfactory. In Year 1, where teaching was very good, a good range of resources was used to enthuse pupils to make their own sculptures, using a variety of materials, including clay. Good opportunities were given for pupils to examine their own work and to compare it with others. Pupils were encouraged to talk about their self-portraits and discuss other pupils' portraits. The use of the sketch-book is well-developed throughout the school, and is proving useful in developing and refining pupils' ideas. This is a strength of the teaching. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, pupils made a clay gargoyle using designs previously drawn in their sketch-books. Throughout the lesson they were taught to look closely to see how they could improve their models. Pupils in Year 3 were taught to draw detailed, well-proportioned figures using different perspectives. Teachers make particularly good use of step-by-step demonstration; for example, to teach roller-printing techniques in Year 6. The pupils were observant, and they tried this approach later by themselves, changing colours and designs at each attempt. They compared and commented on each other's designs. Pupils enjoy their work in art and select their own tools and materials carefully to make their models and pictures. They talked enthusiastically about their ideas and techniques and were able to evaluate their work and improve upon it. Teachers assess carefully how their pupils have done and use this information well to plan further work.
143. Strengths in art and design have been well maintained since the previous inspection, and there are also some improvements. Particular staff's talents are used well to inspire and enthuse pupils. The art and design policy has been reviewed recently and provides useful information for staff. The school is in the process of adapting the existing scheme of work to take account of current requirements and guidance.
144. Management is good. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and pupils' achievements through evaluating their finished work. She has a good understanding of the subject's strengths and of areas that need developing. She has set herself appropriate targets for the development of the subject. However, the time scale of activities is not clear. One of her priorities is to re-establish the after-school art club, which has been successful in the past.
145. Art on display reflects appropriately the Christian ethos of the school and generally provides an attractive visual environment. The quality of displays is adversely affected by the lack of suitable wall space and boards. Some of the displays are too high for pupils to see the work and to appreciate it fully. This was particularly evident in some older classes. Overall, art makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

146. Standards in design and technology are above those expected by pupils of eleven, and pupils make steady progress through the school, and particularly good progress in the older classes. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection.
147. In Year 2, pupils have designed playground equipment they would like, and used drawings and models to convey their ideas. They used a good variety of materials and techniques to make their models. They have used various stitchings to make imaginative glove puppets.
148. In Year 6, pupils use labelled diagrams to demonstrate how their ideas could work. They take note of users' views when they design various television snacks such as 'chocolate desert chip'.
149. Throughout the school, there is good evidence of pupils using a wide variety of techniques, tools and materials.
150. Too little teaching was seen for an overall judgement to be made. In the lesson seen, teaching was very good. Skills were taught very well. Many pupils were beginning to be imaginative and creative in their work, clearly demonstrating a very good knowledge of skills, materials and methods they may use. The good rapport between teacher and pupils enabled the lesson to move smoothly. Pupils were fully involved in their learning and supporting others, for example, when those judged to be particularly skilful stitchers became 'consultants'. Very good use was made of a range of resources, including information and communication technology and video, to enhance pupils' understanding. The very good plenary session enabled the pupils to evaluate one another's models and provide good ideas for development. Within the school, some good use is made of teachers' expertise: when teachers exchange classes so that more pupils may benefit from each teacher's particular expertise.
151. The curriculum is good and the school has made good use of the nationally-recognised scheme of work to improve the curriculum offered and to improve assessment.
152. Co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has used his knowledge to support teachers well; for example, with guidance and information sheets to support the curriculum. The subject would benefit further were the co-ordinator to have more opportunities to monitor, evaluate and support the curriculum. For example, the co-ordinator's current plans to introduce a 'thinking skills' initiative would be beneficial, particularly to the planning and evaluating processes.
153. Resources are generally satisfactory and the current plans, to obtain more equipment to link with information and communication technology, are appropriate.

GEOGRAPHY

154. Very little teaching of geography was observed during the inspection. Evidence from other sources, including the analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils and staff, show standards to be broadly in line with what is expected for eleven-year-olds, but below expectations for pupils aged seven. This is mainly because of the lower emphasis and time that is being given to teaching geography in Year 2.
155. By the age of seven, pupils are able to use simple plans. They locate the school and the school grounds by looking at the aerial photographs of the locality. They find the position of the school on a map of the local area and show the road on which the school is and where they live. Pupils are not yet aware of places beyond their locality, where they live on the map of Britain, about the local environment or how it compares with a contrasting locality away from Ramsgate. During discussions, pupils from Year 2 showed good attitudes towards learning geography, and were keen to talk about their work. They gave convincing explanations of why the size and the view of the school building and the grounds appeared different in the two aerial photographs that were seen.
156. By the age of eleven, pupils know some well-known rivers from different countries around the world, and have found out how the course of the rivers has changed over the last 50 years. They learn to interpret graphs and charts and use the vocabulary related to rivers, such as 'source', 'stream', 'flow'

and 'erosion'. They have carried out some fieldwork to broaden their knowledge, and have been surveying the coastline between Ramsgate Sands and Pegwell Bay, as part of a national survey of the British coastline. They have satisfactory awareness of the current major environmental issues and form some views of their own about what changes, if any, they would like to make to the stretch of the coast; and what the coast-line may be like in twenty years time. They are gaining a good understanding of maps and diagrams. In Year 3, pupils are able to identify prominent roads and buildings on both the map and the aerial photographs of the local vicinity. They are able to describe the main features of the locality. Pupils in Year 5 have made a weather profile about Ramsgate. They investigate the question, 'What is the difference between weather and climate?' Their work and classroom displays show that they have had opportunities to collect, record and analyse evidence gained through their fieldwork. The resulting data is represented in pie charts and graphs. They have studied changes in the local buildings and the environment, and are aware of how the local area has changed over time. Their map-work and enquiry skills are developing well for their age.

157. The lesson that was seen in Year 6 reflected some features of very good teaching. The lesson focused on teaching key enquiry skills. Good planning and careful preparation of resources ensured that the wide ability range within the class was well-catered for. Pupils were taught systematically the use of four-grid reference points, and then six-figure points. Teaching activities were pitched appropriately at their level of need, and the pupils found them interesting, as they were able to recognise the local Ramsgate buildings and features. Pupils used the computer to support their map work. Assessment was planned and used well for future reference. Pupils were interested in the relevant activities they were given and worked diligently throughout the lesson, putting their best effort to their work and working well with their peers. The behaviour and relationships throughout were very good.
158. The school makes satisfactory provision, overall, for geography, although on the whole there is patchy coverage of the curriculum. There is a satisfactory policy, and long-term curriculum plans show adequate coverage through integrating skills, places and themes for all age groups. However, in some classes there is a dependence upon poor quality work-sheets that limit the use of pupils' extended writing and do not give more able pupils the correct level of challenge in their work.
159. Management is not effective in ensuring consistency, continuity and progression through the school. Although the co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning, there is variation in the quality of medium-term planning within different year groups. For example, the planning of geography in Year 1 is more detailed, making a reference to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, and there is a better range of learning opportunities for the pupils than in Year 2. This adversely affects pupils' achievements. The monitoring of teaching and learning, to evaluate its effectiveness or to ensure breadth and balance in the taught curriculum, is infrequent. There are gaps in curricular continuity.
160. The level of books and resources is satisfactory. There is an improved use of the computer by pupils for finding out their own information, and for practising their enquiry skills. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. For example, pupils' investigations in Year 5 were well represented in tables, charts and graphs, and displayed on classroom walls, showing a good range of work on the theme of local weather.

HISTORY

161. Standards of attainment in history are in line with expectations generally and exceed them in some aspects of the subject, such as using sources to find out about the past, including the past history of the locality. Progress is good for all pupils throughout the school.
162. Strengths identified during the previous inspection in teaching and learning have been well maintained. There is an improved use of the computer as a source of information to support learning since then. Pupils in Year 6 made good use of the CD-ROM to access information for their topic.
163. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound sense of the past and can make a comparison with the present, comparing now with then. They know about important people and their effect upon history, such as Florence Nightingale and how hospitals have changed since her time. They compare homes of a hundred years ago with modern homes, and show a good level of understanding of the changes. They use evidence such as photographs and artefacts to compare transport used today and in the past. Their recent visit to the 'motor museum' was useful in extending their knowledge of the notion of change over time.
164. By the age of eleven, pupils know about changes that have taken place in each decade since the 1930s, and develop a good understanding of cause and effect of change in each decade. They know how life has changed and develop a good understanding of what it was like to live during the Second World War, and the effect it had on the daily lives of the people. They learn that evidence about the past comes from a range of sources, some more reliable than others. In Year 3, pupils study the Romans and find out about different aspects of their lives. Pupils develop a good sense of chronology as they move through the school. The use of the time-line in Year 3, 'from Stonehenge to us', is particularly helpful in developing this. Pupils in Year 4 study about the 'rich and poor' through 'inventories' as their source of evidence for what domestic life was like during Tudor times. In Year 5, pupils use 'time-line 2000 BC to the birth of Jesus Christ', while studying the ancient Greeks. All achieve well.
165. Pupils show good attitudes to learning about history. Their behaviour is good throughout, and they are enthusiastic, especially when there are exciting opportunities for them to take part in role-play, as for pupils in Year 3 on their 'Roman Day' during the inspection. Pupils enjoy their lessons and take an active part in their learning, leading to good progress within lessons and over time.
166. Teaching, overall, is good and has a number of strengths. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, and enjoy the work themselves. Although worksheets are used extensively for pupils to record their findings, there are opportunities for them to do extended writing. A good example of this was available in Year 2, where the more able pupils had written about their thoughts on how the modern home has changed from homes of 100 years ago. Teachers make good use of visitors to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of history. For example, pupils in Year 3 were helped to gain a better understanding of the Romans by going through some Roman experiences, such as a wedding, forms of entertainment, work and education. Pupils were enthusiastic. They showed some empathy and expressed thoughtful views on differences between life today and life during the Roman times. The 'Roman Day' helped them to appreciate their own lives, and understand why Romans acted as they did. Teachers use resources well. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson, well-prepared primary source materials, such as original copies of three newspapers from the 1950s of the same date, gave pupils the necessary challenge to find out the main facts of importance, and minor facts about everyday life. All pupils enjoyed tasks well-matched to their abilities, with the right level of challenge. All became engrossed in their work and persevered. The more able pupils were further challenged to give their interpretations of how the main events of the day had been presented by different newspapers as the truth. Pupils also used the CD-ROM to look for events in their newspaper. The less able pupils were suitably supported by learning support assistants and challenged through comparing a modern radio and television with those from the 1950s, and writing answers to questions drafted by the teacher.
167. The curriculum is good. A good policy statement usefully guides the teachers' practice. The school's scheme of work is being revised appropriately, in line with current requirements and advice.
168. History is well managed, and the co-ordinator provides effective support to staff with their planning. He has managed to monitor teaching and learning in some classes. The monitoring of planning has

been effective in ensuring that pupils have a wide range of experience and they develop their skills, knowledge and understanding progressively in history.

169. There is a good range of resources, which are used very effectively by teachers to support the units of work. Good use is also made of visitors and visits to museums and places of interest, to study the local area. Work in books, for example, in Year 5, shows good use of maps and old photographs to develop in pupils an awareness of the changes and developments that have taken place in the locality over time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

170. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected by this age, an improvement since the previous inspection. Particularly effective is the use made of ICT in other subjects throughout the curriculum. Pupils are taught the advantages of ICT, in particular circumstances, when compared with alternative methods. Consequently, they develop a clear understanding of when it is appropriate to use ICT.
171. Throughout the school, pupils undertake a good variety of tasks that enable them to learn and practise ICT skills through very worthwhile activities in other subjects. This is very beneficial to their learning. Pupils use the computers with ease. They are quick and accurate, showing good knowledge of the software and related tools.
172. In Year 2, pupils use a wide variety of forms to learn and practise skills. They draw accurately, demonstrating good mouse control and knowledge of the tools such as 'fill' in the shapes they produce. Some repeat their work using symmetry, shape or tile. They word process regularly, for example, to draft poems. They change font, size and colour successfully and add appropriate illustrations from 'clip art'. They enter data from their work in subjects such as geography, and produce a variety of forms of graphs. They interrogate these data to answer some simple questions, such as what is the most or least popular. They can use CD-ROM to answer prescribed questions, such as 'what is the world's biggest fish?'
173. In Year 6, pupils write creatively in work linked to their history topic. They use the world-wide web to find a map showing their home. They have designed their own web page, considering factors such as the effect of the image and the clarity of the writing. They have a sound understanding of the application of ICT; for example, the use of pressure pads or infra-red remote control, or how to make a traffic light follow the correct sequence. They use light- and heat-sensing equipment to support a scientific investigation.
174. ICT is used well to practise, and thereby reinforce, skills learnt in literacy and numeracy. For example, a Year 5 literacy lesson was supported by ICT as pupils placed conjunctions in highlighted sections. In a numeracy lesson, pupils ranked five numbers, with two decimal places, in order. When they made mistakes, the good software gave guidance. Their results were recorded for the teacher to review later. This continues throughout the school. For example, Year 4 plotted the height of their marigolds as they grew, Year 3 their birthdays, Year 2 their favourite foods.
175. Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject competence and can generally resolve any difficulties their pupils meet. During lessons, they regularly check pupils' progress so that no time is lost.
176. Teachers plan relevant activities that enthuse pupils. For example, data collected on a Year 6 town centre study are used to determine land use. Good use is made of individual expertise, for example, in how to design a website, to extend pupils' understanding. School visits generally include use of the digital camera, and photographs are subsequently loaded or scanned into pupils' accounts of the trip.
177. The curriculum is very good. Many worthwhile and appropriate tasks are planned that link very closely with work in other subjects. The school is quickly moving away from a curriculum emphasising word processing to one where all strands of ICT are included.

178. Co-ordination is very good. The many strengths and few weaknesses of the subject are fully understood and there is a very clear and appropriate development plan to develop the former and rectify the latter.

MUSIC

179. Pupils throughout the school make very good progress in music and achieve standards that are above national expectations. They enjoy their music-making activities, especially singing. The standards achieved in singing are exceptional and this is a strength of the school. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress. These high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
180. During the course of the inspection singing of very high quality was heard in lessons, assemblies, in Mass and during choir practice. Pupils have good diction and pitch control and this enables them to communicate the feelings and moods of the music to the listener. On many occasions, particularly when they harmonise, pupils' singing has a spiritual quality. Pupils' skills in working together to practise, rehearse and give a performance are excellent. Pupils in the choir take great pride in representing their school and act responsibly and sensibly when giving performances in a range of settings and to a wide variety of people. Pupils develop a good knowledge of the musical elements of pitch, tempo, dynamics and timbre and this helps them to create varying moods and effects when working together to create music. They investigate, select and combine their musical ideas to a good standard. All pupils in Year 4 learn to play the recorder and as a result they have a good grasp of musical notation. They demonstrate good control of their instruments when playing together such pieces as the theme from 'Titanic'.
181. The quality of teaching in music is good, and in lessons taken by the music co-ordinator it is excellent. Her very good subject knowledge and her understanding of how to teach pupils to sing has a significant impact on the standards that are achieved. Lessons are well-planned and structured so that pupils increase their understanding through a variety of musical activities that combine performing, composing and appraising. There are very good opportunities for pupils to work independently, in various-sized groups and in whole-class situations.
182. The choir has won numerous awards. Both younger and older pupils took part in these competitions. The choir has performed at a number of local events such as the 'Children in Need' concert in Ramsgate and has also taken part in national events. This is effective in raising the confidence and self-esteem of the pupils who take part and also of raising the profile of the school locally. It is currently practising to take part in a festival of singing in churches along the old Saxon shoreline of Thanet.
183. The music co-ordinator provides very good leadership for the subject. She teaches Key Stage 2 classes and this enables her to ensure consistently high standards throughout. She is well-supported in her work with the choir by the deputy headteacher. She has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has an appropriate plan for the further development of the subject. She gives good support to her colleagues through her input on planning, but her role in monitoring and evaluating the subject through lesson observation has not yet been developed. Resources for music are good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

184. Standards in physical education are generally in line with expectations for pupils' age. A strength is swimming, where nearly all pupils reach or exceed the expected level by age eleven. A relative weakness is the use of evaluation to improve performance.
185. In Year 2, nearly all pupils throw and catch, dribble and pass, to a satisfactory standard. They know exercise makes them warm, and can describe the effect of exercise upon their bodies. When repeating basic techniques, such as throwing and catching, they look to improve their performance.
186. In Year 6, pupils employ throwing, jumping and running skills to a satisfactory level. All pupils can jump a hurdle successfully. A few are beginning to take a uniform number of steps between the hurdles, and more use the same leading leg. Only a few have any sense of a continuous forward movement. In hockey, most demonstrate precision, control and fluency in dribbling and shooting. In small team games, they have good understanding of tactics. A few, however, swing the sticks with little control or thought for those around them. Year 6 pupils use their number skills well, for example to measure time taken or distance thrown. Many show some understanding of two decimal places.
187. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress in their learning. This is largely due to clear adult instruction, and the willingness to listen and eagerness to participate that the vast majority of pupils bring to their lessons. Pupils' positive attitudes help lessons to flow. Some older pupils will suggest and demonstrate warm-up activities. However, teachers rarely give their pupils systematic and regular feedback as the lesson proceeds, and this limits their progress. Occasionally, a pupil will attempt to evaluate an activity, but their answers are not thought-through or well-developed. Even then, there is little attempt by the teacher to put this into practice.
188. The quality of teaching is generally good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the skills and techniques they teach. Their explanations are consequently clear and pupils' understanding good. They give their pupils much encouragement during activities. Teachers generally make good use of other adults, both staff and volunteers. Staff support individual pupils with special educational needs well, so that these pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils invariably work as well with these adults as with their teachers.
189. The curriculum is good. There is a good range and depth to activities that are enriched by extra-curricular activities such as netball and events with other schools.
190. Co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and how it is taught. Plans for improvements are appropriate. There are sufficient resources, but the hall space is tight when older pupils use large apparatus.