

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **AYCLIFFE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Dover

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118449

Headteacher: Mr I Sheppard

Reporting inspector: Eileen Chadwick  
19115

Dates of inspection: 2 - 5 July 2001

Inspection number: 191942

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St David's Avenue Dover Kent
Postcode:	CT17 9HJ
Telephone number:	01304 202651
Fax number:	01304 225507
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Waite
Date of previous inspection:	03/03/1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19115	Eileen Chadwick	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Foundation stage Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15175	Margaret Cooper	Team inspector	English Art Geography Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
8560	Margaret Lynch	Team inspector	Mathematics History Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?

The inspection contractor was:

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

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7 - 11</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12 - 16</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>16 - 19</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>19 - 22</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>22 - 23</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>24 - 26</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>26 - 27</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>28 - 31</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>32- 49</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is smaller than most primary schools and situated on the Aycliffe Estate, overlooking Dover. Most pupils live on the estate, which consists mainly of local authority rented accommodation. A minority lives in the town, sometimes in bed and breakfast accommodation. The school caters for a diverse community that includes substantial economic and social deprivation. There are 152 girls and boys, including 20 children in Reception. Two mixed aged classes contain Year 1 and 2 pupils and Year 2 and 3 pupils. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is 39 per cent, and includes six pupils who have statements of special educational need. These figures are both well above average. Most of the pupils with special educational needs are boys with literacy and behavioural difficulties, including a significant minority who entered the school late with challenging behaviour. The rate of mobility is high at 21 per cent. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is nearly four per cent. This is above average and higher than when the school was previously inspected, although lower than in 2000 when it was 11 per cent. Most of those with English as an additional language are asylum seekers from Eastern Europe with little English. The main language spoken, other than English, is Czech. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, at 39 per cent, is high. The pupil overall attainment on entry is well below average and is lower than when last inspected.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The good leadership of the headteacher, effectively supported by the deputy headteacher and governing body, has created a harmonious school where pupils behave well and develop good attitudes to learning whatever their background and starting point. The systematic monitoring of teaching and new staff appointments, have brought about good improvements in the quality of teaching in Reception and Key Stage 2 and in pupils' behaviour. This has helped to improve pupils' progress at these stages. Standards in this year's end of Key Stage 2 national tests in English and mathematics have improved. However, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in numeracy in Year 1 and standards of writing are unsatisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### What the school does well

- The quality of teaching in Reception is very good. This ensures children make a very good start and reach standards that match expectations, including in reading and numeracy.
- The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good and is particularly effective in ensuring pupils in Years 4 and 5 learn well. This is starting to raise standards.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and history in Key Stage 2 and throughout the school in physical education, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. This promotes a harmonious atmosphere for learning.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good and all staff work very well as a team for the benefit of the pupils, whatever their family background. The school plays a strong part in the community.

#### What could be improved

- The unsatisfactory standards in writing and the proportion of pupils attaining at least satisfactory standards in English, mathematics and science by seven and eleven.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve in Key Stage 1 and the way teachers manage the wide range of attainment in literacy and numeracy in the mixed aged classes so all pupils achieve their best.
- The school improvement plan so that it helps the school to more rigorously raise standards.
- Opportunities for more capable pupils to consistently achieve at higher levels.
- Attendance, which is well below average, because a minority of pupils attend irregularly.

*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 satisfactory improvement since its last inspection in March 1997. The quality of teaching has improved significantly as there is less unsatisfactory teaching and more that is good or very good. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing its key issues. Curriculum planning systems are now good and the senior management team and governors' monitoring roles have developed well. The school has made satisfactory progress in implementing assessment procedures for measuring pupils' progress. There has been good improvement in the roles of the subject co-ordinators and they are particularly effective in mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education. This is raising standards.

Standards in National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds began to improve very well for the two years after the previous inspection but dropped significantly in 1999 and 2000, reflecting lower attainment on entry, including a substantial proportion of pupils who entered the school late with limited English or high level educational needs. Additionally, the school has had a high staffing turnover and experienced a degree of turbulence when teachers have left, often for promotion. As a result of a more stable staffing situation in Key Stage 2, and improved target setting, the school's 2001 test results for eleven-year-olds show signs of improvement. Pupils' overall progress is satisfactory and similar to the previous inspection except in art, which is unsatisfactory and has declined since the previous inspection. Pupils' attendance has fallen. There is still work to be done to ensure teaching in Key Stage 1 is of a high enough quality and teachers' expectations are high enough. The school has not improved provision for more able pupils.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	E	E*	E*
Mathematics	D	E	E	E
Science	D	E	E*	E

**Key**

well above average A  
 above average B  
 average C  
 below average D  
 well below average E  
 very low E\*

- In 2000 pupils' results were very low and in the bottom five per cent compared with all schools in English and science and well below average in mathematics. These results included the standards of pupils with little English. When their results are not included, compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in English and average in mathematics and science. However, several other pupils taking these tests had entered the school late with poor literacy further reducing the school's performance. National Curriculum results for 2001 have improved substantially in English and mathematics.
- The school's targets for 2001 for 61 per cent to achieve at least the expected Level 4 in English and for 66 per cent to do so in mathematics were not challenging and the school has achieved these targets.
- National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds have been well below national averages for the past three years in reading, writing and mathematics and, in 2000, were well below similar schools in all three subjects

### The standards observed during the inspection compared with all schools are:

- In Reception, children attain average standards in communication, language and literacy and mathematics and all areas of learning except personal, social and emotional development which is above average. The children achieve very well after entering school with attainment that was below average.

- By the ages of seven and eleven standards are well below average in reading, mathematics and science and below average in design and technology, history and geography. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in religious education, ICT and physical education throughout the school. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in music.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. However, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in numeracy in Key Stage 1 and in writing and art throughout the school.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress whilst those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. However, higher attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are good. Pupils like school and are attentive in most lessons. This is one reason why pupils' progress is improving in Key Stage 2.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in lessons and at play. Their courtesy to each other and adults, including visitors, is a strength of the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good and their relationships are very good. Pupils work well together in small teams and readily accept responsibility.
Attendance	Well below average and unsatisfactory because a few do not come to school regularly. This stops them making the most of their education.

Pupils' behaviour has improved since the previous inspection when it was unsatisfactory in a minority of lessons. The procedures for improving attendance need to be more rigorous.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Satisfactory	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.*

Ninety-five per cent of the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better, including 56 per cent that was good or better. Nearly a quarter was very good. Teachers often apply the behaviour policy well and lessons take place in a calm atmosphere, which helps pupils learn. Good quality teaching in ICT is helping pupils to learn other subjects. The very good teaching was seen in Reception and Years 2, 4 and 5. In these lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge and their high expectations of what pupils can achieve led to very good learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good in Reception because pupils' work is very well matched to their previous skills and the teacher uses time very effectively throughout her lessons. This is not continued throughout Key Stage 1 where teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in numeracy because expectations are not high enough in Year 1 and pupils do not do enough thinking or work. Numeracy is taught well in Key Stage 2 and the ability grouping arrangements are improving pupils' learning. Teaching and learning in literacy is satisfactory overall, although not enough time is spent on teaching writing and, sometimes, reading and writing tasks are too hard. Teaching and learning in science in Year 4 and mathematics in Year 5 are very good because teachers teach the subjects rigorously and make sure that pupils learn through listening to instructions as well as problem solving.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned and broad. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies is satisfactory overall. However, pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from too many lessons, causing them to miss out. There is no large climbing apparatus for Reception.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils are often supported well during class lessons but their work is not always well matched when they are taught in groups outside the class.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are provided with specialist help and well provided for in lessons. Teachers plan carefully for their needs and provide good opportunities for speaking and listening in small groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and good provision for cultural development. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong very well. However, there are not enough opportunities for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Adults know the pupils well and their very good relationships with pupils enable them to provide high quality support. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring behaviour and bullying are firmly in place.

National Curriculum requirements are met. Parents think well of this school and the school has developed a satisfactory partnership with them, though there is scope for a closer relationship with some parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very strong pastoral leadership and works very well in a team with his deputy, staff and governors to enable pupils to benefit from their education. The thorough target setting and monitoring of teaching and standards has brought about improvements in Key Stage 2 this year. Co-ordinators' roles are well developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body, ably led by the chair of governors is very supportive. The chair is closely involved in school life and has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors satisfactorily fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The governing body is increasingly helping to steer the direction the school takes. Financial planning is good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has developed satisfactory systems for measuring pupils' progress. The school carefully analyses its results in national tests and seeks to improve itself. However, the school improvement plan does not help the school to easily evaluate its actions on raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Staff are deployed well and valued as the school's best resource. The co-ordinators use their subject expertise in physical education, mathematics and ICT, for instance to help other teachers to teach well.

There are enough teachers to teach the curriculum. Class sizes in Reception are low and this helps give the children a very good start. The mixed aged classes for Key Stage 1 and Year 3 sometimes present problems for teachers in matching pupils' work because of the wider ability range. The

learning support assistants provide valuable academic and personal support of pupils. The number of computers is satisfactory and ICT resources are very well used. The school seeks to get 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"> <li>• Their children like school and behave well.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to do their best.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• They feel welcome in the school and the school is approachable.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• The amount and quality of homework.</li> <li>• The stability of the staffing for Key Stage 1.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments. The number of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory given the size of the school. Homework is satisfactory. There have been a number of staff changes in Key Stage 1 over the past five terms. For instance, the previous deputy left for promotion. Two new permanent teachers, including a new deputy, have been appointed for Key Stage 1 for September.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. The attainment on entry to this school is a complex picture. The attainment on entry of children into Reception class at four years of age is usually well below average and, in 1998 and 1999, was in the bottom 12 per cent in Kent. This is confirmed by the local education authority's testing procedures. This year, the current Reception pupils entered with below average attainment overall. Yet, the high level of mobility in this school also needs to be taken into account. The current Year 2 pupils' attainment on entry was very low. This is because 13 of the original entrants in this cohort have left, whilst four new pupils have ~~been~~ entered late. The baseline of the pupils now in Year 2, including the late entrants, is very low overall. The school attributes the high mobility to families moving from the Aycliffe Estate to rent or buy larger properties, family upheaval or asylum seekers moving elsewhere.
2. There is a similar high mobility picture in the current Year 6 as less than a half of the pupils were original entrants to the infants at Aycliffe. Many entered late in Years 5 or 6, a significant minority of whom had high level special educational needs for behaviour and learning difficulties. The impact of those entering with learning difficulties on the 2001 results was to reduce the proportion attaining Level 4 and above by at least five per cent. In the 2000 Year 6, in addition to the high rate of mobility found in this school, five pupils were asylum seekers, who entered late with very little English. In 2000, eight other pupils entered in Key Stage 2, several with behaviour and literacy needs. When all the late entrants' scores, including asylum seekers, are not included in 2000 results, standards compared with similar schools were below average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science, suggesting satisfactory achievement overall.
3. The inspection team, taking these factors into account, judges the overall effectiveness of the school to be satisfactory. By the time pupils leave the school at eleven years of age, their overall achievement is satisfactory although they attain well below average standards in reading, mathematics and science. However, standards of writing are very low after unsatisfactory progress through the school.
4. By the end of the Foundation Stage, (Reception) children attain standards that are above average for this age in personal, social and emotional development and average standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and all other areas of learning. Children make very good progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development and good progress in all other areas of learning. Children's attainments are average in speaking, listening and reading but their writing is not yet at this level and is below average despite their very good progress. Children's progress in controlling larger physical movements is not as good as in other aspects of physical development. This is because outside play facilities do not have the facilities for clambering and balancing. The very few pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress in learning to speak English, in learning to adjust to school and, overall, in their areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs are also very well catered for and they too make very good progress, especially in their personal and social development and in literacy and numeracy.
5. Analysis of the national tests for Year 2 pupils for the past four years shows standards improved from the very low standards achieved in 1997 in reading and writing to the well below average standards achieved in 2000. Standards in mathematics have fluctuated but have been mainly well below average. Compared with similar schools the 2000 results were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The results show that boys consistently performed better than girls. However, the cohorts are small, and the results must be interpreted with caution as the results of one pupil can make a very large difference to percentages.
6. Early analysis of the 2001 tests indicates very low attainment for the current Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Even allowing for the very low attainment on entry of several new entrants, including one with limited English, and small cohorts, the results show the school is not successfully raising pupils' attainment from the very low levels attained on entry to the school. Few attained the Level 2B grade and the proportion attaining Level 3 is very low

compared with all and similar schools. Analysis of the assessments made by teachers in 2000 shows low standards for literacy and numeracy. These assessments show that speaking and listening were well below average whilst standards in science were very low. Assessments for science in 2001 indicate some improvement although there is little attainment at level 3.

7. The findings of the inspection are that, by the end of Year 2, standards are below average in speaking and listening, well below average in reading and mathematics, including numeracy, and science. They are very low in writing. Standards are average in ICT and physical education. They are below average in design and technology, geography, and history. They are well below average in art and design and unsatisfactory. Standards are in line with the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in music. Standards observed in reading and mathematics reflect 2000 test results although standards in writing are lower and in line with the 2001 test results.
8. By the time they are seven, pupils are keen to answer questions and to convey simple meanings to others but their vocabulary is narrow which restricts their explanations. Most read simple scheme books accurately although few are fluent readers. They sometimes need help when working out new words. Pupils write for different purposes, including stories and poems. Their writing lacks detail although most communicate meaning beyond a simple statement. Their use of capital letters and full stops, as well as the spelling of common words, is very limited.
9. In mathematics, pupils add and subtract to ten and a few attain higher and have satisfactory mental skills. However, most still need fingers when adding and subtracting and cannot yet work out sums in their heads. A small minority can double small numbers but this is not usual in this year. Pupils have sound understanding of data handling. Pupils do not spend enough time learning numeracy in mathematics lessons in Year 1, although this improves in Year 2.
10. In science, pupils make tests and measure and record results using mathematics. However, they do not work well enough on independent enquiry or suggest enough ideas. Most have satisfactory knowledge of all aspects of science but a minority has a very limited scientific vocabulary. In ICT, pupils generate ideas in pictures and words satisfactorily and know how to show information on bar charts. They are beginning to understand how to use email and they apply ICT well to literacy and numeracy.
11. Analysis of the 2000 national tests for Year 6 pupils shows that, compared with all schools, pupils attained very low standards in English and science and well below average standards in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was very low in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Standards improved very well in 1997 and 1998, at a rate greater than the national trend but dropped severely in 1999 and 2000, particularly in English due mainly to the impact of pupils with English as an additional language, who had little English, taking the tests. In 2000, discounting all very late entrants, standards compared with similar schools were below average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. In English standards were particularly weak in writing.
12. The combined test data for the years 1998 to 2000 show no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in English, although boys outperformed girls in mathematics and science. In 2000 this was due to girls' very weak attainment at Level 5 in mathematics and science compared with girls' attainment in English. No significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls were observed during the inspection, except that in Year 1 and Year 6 there are many boys on the special educational needs register with limited literacy skills, a significant proportion of whom entered the school late. The school's formal targets for 2001 for 61 per cent of pupils to achieve the expectation, Level 4, in English, and 66 per cent in mathematics were too modest. These targets have been exceeded in English and met in mathematics. Early analysis of pupils' 2001 results shows improvements as two thirds achieved Level 4 or above in English and mathematics and nearly two thirds did so in science. The school improved its performance at Level 5 in science although this is still below national expectations. There was little attainment at Level 5 for English and mathematics in 2001 tests.

13. The findings of the inspection are that by the time the pupils leave the school at the age of eleven they attain well below average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards are below average in ICT, design and technology, history and geography. Standards are average in physical education and in line with the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Standards are well below average in art and design and unsatisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in music.
14. Pupils' speaking and listening is below average. Pupils listen carefully to ~~loers'~~ views but their use of vocabulary is imprecise and often they do not use standard English vocabulary and grammar. Most read books, including children's novels, expressively and fluently and with sound understanding. Higher attainers read very accurately and infer and deduct well. However, the provision for reading is inconsistent between classes, which prevents pupils making the consistent, good progress that is needed to improve standards. Pupils make the best progress in classes where all pupils have frequent opportunities to read in small groups. By Year 6 pupils write for an appropriate range of purposes, and redraft their work, but basic sentence grammar and punctuation of sentences are often incorrect and many common words are wrongly spelt Pupils' handwriting is mainly satisfactory. Higher attainers are fluent writers and spell well.
15. In mathematics, many have sound understanding of the four rules of number and can add and subtract decimals to several places with reasonable speed and accuracy. They understand how decimals can be converted to percentages and are able to find different approaches for solving problems. Higher attaining pupils apply their numeracy to problems well, for example for exchanging foreign currency. Lower attainers, overall, attain at one level below their peers and do not have the same flexible and quick approaches when solving problems.
16. In science, pupils' knowledge is below average. Pupils' skills in designing and testing their own experiments are well below average. Pupils' ICT skills are below average although they make good progress in Key Stage 2. Many were late entrants and have, either, not covered all of the skills, or their word processing skills are hampered by their limited standards in literacy. Early entrants to school have satisfactory skills across the range of the National Curriculum requirements. Pupils use their ICT skills well in other subjects, especially for data handling in mathematics, the Internet for geography and graphics in art.
17. Pupils use literacy and numeracy satisfactorily in other subjects. Numeracy is applied well in science in Years 2, 3 and 4. However, numeracy is not applied frequently enough in science in Years 5 and 6. In literacy, worksheets for lower attainers are sometimes hard and there is too much copied work for older pupils in science and geography.
18. Pupils with special educational needs made sound progress towards the targets on their individual education plans and statements of special educational need. They ~~ten~~ make good progress in class lessons in literacy and numeracy because learning support assistants give them good support. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress in their knowledge and use of English, and similar progress to their peers in other learning. The teachers provide good opportunities for them to work in small teams and to learn through discussion. Some good ICT work was seen when pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs were helped to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through ICT.
19. Higher attaining pupils, including the very able, make unsatisfactory progress. Opportunities for them to learn at higher levels, especially in English, mathematics and science are very inconsistent and this results in very few attaining at higher levels by Year 2 and Year 6.
20. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory by the time they leave the school. However, there are inconsistencies between subjects and key stages. In Reception children achieve very well, and after making very good progress, they are now very well prepared for learning the National Curriculum and some have already made a start. It is not possible to say whether standards decline from the ones attained in Reception as there have been changes in cohorts since pupils were in Reception. Additionally, the current Reception teacher has not long taught in this school and last year's Reception children were taught in a mixed aged class and the class was larger.
21. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall and satisfactory with good features in Key Stage 2. However, pupils' progress in numeracy in Key Stage 1 is erratic and, therefore, unsatisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in Year 1 and good in Year 2. Pupils' progress in numeracy

is good in Key Stage 2 as a result of mainly good teaching and, in Years 4 and 5, standards are beginning to improve. Pupils' progress in reading is satisfactory although the lack of regular and consistent extra group reading is preventing robust improvements in standards. Pupils' progress in writing is unsatisfactory as pupils are not making enough progress in learning to spell, punctuate their work or write extended pieces of work. Pupils make good progress in ICT, history, physical education and religious education. Their progress is satisfactory in all other subjects except art and design, which is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not learn art skills systematically and teachers' expectations are not high enough. Pupils do not apply art well enough to design and technology. Although pupils' progress is satisfactory overall in science, there are weaknesses in the systematic development of their ability to make independent tests. Some late entrants' previous skills, including in literacy, are limiting their attainment in history and ICT, preventing pupils' achieving average standards.

22. Since the previous inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress overall in improving standards and progress, given the drop in attainment on entry and effect of late entrants. Judgements in the last report were not clear on standards in English, mathematics and science. However, the national tests, taken soon after the inspection, showed pupils attained below average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' overall progress was satisfactory in the foundation subjects, as it is now. Pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2, ICT, physical education and religious education has improved well, but pupils' progress in art has declined. The school has not improved the weaknesses found in numeracy in Key Stage 1 and in writing. Investigative science also needs further improvement.

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

23. The good attitudes displayed by pupils to school life have been maintained since the last inspection. Ninety-two per cent of the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children liked coming to school. This is reflected in the admirable enthusiasm and enjoyment that pupils of all ages show for their work. For example in the reception class singing lesson, all the children joined in happily and sang with great pleasure. Older pupils who were learning the triple jump in physical education also participated with enthusiasm and energy. Pupils show a good level of interest in the tasks set for them when they are at an appropriate level, such as in a Key Stage 2 history lesson where pupils showed a good level of interest in the study of Egyptian gods and their journey into the underworld.
24. Behaviour has also been maintained at the good levels seen during the last inspection. The school's well considered behaviour policy and the consistency of strategies used throughout the school are effective in producing good standards of behaviour. A small number of pupils have specific behaviour problems that can disrupt lessons occasionally, but overall, staff manage the pupils well. Behaviour in the playground and the way that pupils move around the corridors is also good. There was no evidence of intimidation or harassment during the inspection and pupils are confident that when any such incident does occur, the matter will be taken seriously and dealt with effectively.
25. There was one fixed term exclusion during the last reporting period and, since the start of this academic year, the school has temporarily excluded a pupil twice and has had to permanently exclude another, although this decision was overturned on appeal. In all cases the pupils were very late entrants to the school and the correct procedures were followed.
26. Very good relationships are seen throughout the school and this is an area that has improved even more from the good levels seen at the last inspection. Pupils generally work very productively together in pairs or small groups. All adults, including non class-based staff, treat pupils in a very caring yet mature way. As a result the school has a very happy, friendly atmosphere. Pupils of all ages are very polite to visitors and are eager to talk about their school and the work they do. They show a high level of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others regardless of background, race or special needs. The good role models set by adults, the use of circle time and speaking and listening sessions for all ages, foster such relationships.
27. The extent to which pupils have the opportunity show initiative and take responsibility has improved since the last inspection and pupils readily take up the roles on offer. Older pupils can apply for the role of Playground Buddies where they are responsible for organising games, helping younger children, looking after equipment. There are several other jobs for monitors to

do and pupils also get involved in the running of the bookshop. The early morning session of 'Coaches and Athletes' where pupils help each other is a very good example of responsible roles given to pupils.

28. The personal development of pupils is further enhanced through a variety of visitors coming in to school such as theatre groups, making use of local attractions and facilities and particularly through the residential visits for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
29. Attendance rates have declined considerably since the previous inspection and the unauthorised absence rate in particular is now poor. This is accounted for by a very small number of pupils who have particularly poor attendance and also by the difficulty caused when pupils, expected to attend in September, are placed on the school's roll and then do not attend. Until the school is notified of their whereabouts, they have to be marked as an unauthorised absence. The cases causing most concern have been referred to the educational welfare officer. Overall punctuality to school is good and there is a prompt start to the morning session.

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

30. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Ninety-five per cent of lessons observed were satisfactory or better including 56 per cent that were good or better. Just under a quarter of all teaching was very good. This is good improvement compared with the previous inspection when teaching was only satisfactory in 88 per cent of lessons, fewer than half of all lessons were good and no very good teaching was reported. The very good teaching was found in Reception and Years 2, 4 and 5.
31. Yet there is variation in the quality of teaching and learning in different parts of the school and in different subjects. This prevents pupils making consistently good progress and standards being raised. The quality of teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and good overall in Key Stage 2. In the Foundation Stage, all lessons were at least good and nearly three-quarters were very good. The consistency of high quality teaching in Reception is impressive and, as a result, these young children are learning very well. In Key Stage 2, the overall quality of teaching is good but not yet consistently so in each year and this prevents pupils consistently learning well. In Key Stage 1 teaching quality is very variable and ranges from very good to unsatisfactory.
32. There are two mixed aged classes in Key Stage 1 and both classes, Year 1 and 2 and Year 2 and 3, have had a high degree of turbulence this year through staff changes that are no fault of the school. During the week of the inspection, the school's regular supply teacher took the Year 2 and 3 class as the deputy headteacher, who normally teaches this class, had had an accident. The supply teacher coped well and maintained the good standards of teaching that were apparent in this class from the evidence of pupils' previous work. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 have been taught through a job share arrangement until recently, although one of the teachers taught the class full time during the inspection.
33. The strengths of the teaching throughout the school, are the very good relationships teachers have with pupils and the way they create happy and calm learning environments. Teachers make sure pupils know their lesson purposes and their planning is sound. Lessons are often interesting and encourage pupils to want to learn. The school has made satisfactory progress in the key issue that was related to improving these aspects of teaching. However, there is still work to be done in ensuring the quality of teaching in all classes is consistently good enough. A strong feature found in many lessons was teachers' use of ICT as a natural tool for pupils to learn in different subjects. Teachers choose computer programmes very carefully for enhancing pupils' learning in the focus subject. Another strength, is the way the teachers often teach well not only by instruction, explaining, demonstrating and questioning the whole class but through group work so that the pupils can learn from each other and share ideas. The use of setting in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and Year 3 is effective for Years 2 and 3. Setting in Years 5 and 6 is having a strong impact on enabling teachers to match work well enough to pupils' needs. Teachers set clear targets for pupils and, in the most effective lessons, they make sure pupils are working well towards achieving their targets.
34. The very good teaching and learning in the Reception is a strength of the school and has improved well since the previous inspection when teaching was mainly good. During this

inspection, seven observations were made, the teaching was very good in nearly all lessons and never less than good. The Reception teacher manages the class very well and makes learning fun. Her knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage are very good. The teacher and support assistants are very skilled in promoting both the personal and academic needs of these young children.

35. The reception teacher's expectations are high and she has translated these into practice through very good and sensible routines, which the children all know. She is an excellent role model for children by her own enthusiasm, love of teaching and the high quality learning environment she provides. Her teaching methods are very effective for developing speech, reading, writing, mathematics, and personal, social and emotional development. She matches the children's work very well to their previous learning through very good detailed planning based on the nationally recommended curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Support assistants are well briefed and deployed and work very effectively as a team with the class teacher to provide a high quality learning environment. Assessment is very good and used well to inform planning. Transfer of records at the end of the reception year is comprehensive although more continuity is needed between the reception year and Key Stage 1 to ensure pupils continue to progress at the same rate.
36. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching is similar to the previous inspection and the school has not made enough progress in improving the quality of teaching in this key stage. During this inspection, 12 observations were made, the teaching was very good in one, good in two, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in two. The teaching of speaking and listening, reading, science, design and technology, geography, history, and music is satisfactory. The teaching of ICT, religious education and physical education is good. The teaching of writing, numeracy and art are unsatisfactory.
37. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This is a good improvement compared with the previous inspection when nearly two in every ten lessons were unsatisfactory and no very good teaching was observed. During this inspection 22 observations were made, the quality of teaching and learning was very good in three, good in 10 and satisfactory in nine. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The quality of teaching in speaking and listening, mathematics, including numeracy, ICT, religious education, history and physical education is good. The quality of teaching in reading, design and technology, music, and geography is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in writing and art is unsatisfactory. The very good teaching was observed in numeracy in Year 5, in science in Year 4 and in a class discussion on a local environmental issue in Year 4.
38. The teaching of the National Literacy Strategy is satisfactory overall and has good features in Key Stage 2. It is satisfactory with some weaknesses in Key Stage 1. In a good Year 4 lesson pupils were taught well how to order points in an argument and how to use connectives. The context and shared text were relevant to the pupils and interested them. Time was used effectively and both reading and writing skills were carefully taught. The teacher provided thorough instruction in phonics and the pupils' writing tasks during group work were carefully matched to the needs of the different abilities, enabling good learning to take place.
39. In a satisfactory lesson in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class the teacher had a challenging task of managing the very wide range of pupils' attainment because of the need to cater for two age groups. Her dramatic presentation of the Big Book "A Sudden Glow of Gold" and good class management ensured all concentrated fully during the whole class shared session and made good progress in reading. However, the group work did not promote the same good learning in writing, as the pace of learning was slower. This was largely because the work provided did not always match pupils' very wide range of ability, especially that of lower and higher attaining pupils. In an unsatisfactory literacy lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class, there were similar problems with matching work during the group activities. However, little learning took place as the reading and writing tasks were too hard for many. In weaker lessons, therefore, tasks do not take sufficient account of the steps required for pupils to progress in reading and writing and teachers do not always successfully manage the wide range of attainment.
40. The National Numeracy Strategy is successfully implemented in Key Stage 2 but not always in Key Stage 1. This raises standards in Key Stage 2. Lesson observations and evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work shows there are weaknesses in Year 1. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the teacher's high expectations and very good class management ensured that maximum

was spent on learning. The teacher gave a very good demonstration of how to change analogue to digital times and how to try different approaches for calculating local journey times. Pupils learned to think because the teacher's questions encouraged the pupils to solve problems and to explain their own approaches. Group tasks were very well matched to pupils' prior attainment. A very strong feature was the way ICT was used to promote the learning of lower attaining pupils, many of whom had recently joined the school. They were particularly well supported when they worked in small groups. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher's high expectations were turned into practice through well matched work during whole class and group activities. In an unsatisfactory lesson for Year 1, not enough time was spent on numeracy and developing mental skills during the whole class session. Examination of pupils' work shows time for numeracy is low in this class and does not receive enough emphasis. In the unsatisfactory data handling lesson observed, expectations were low, particularly for higher attaining pupils, and pupils spent most of the lesson colouring.

41. Behaviour management is at least satisfactory. This is a good improvement on the last inspection, when behaviour management was unsatisfactory in several lessons. Teachers manage difficult pupils well. Behaviour management is particularly good in Years 4 and 5, and, overall, teaching is strongest in these classes. Learning support assistants throughout the school provide valuable support for pupils during group work.
42. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. It is satisfactory overall in English, however it is unsatisfactory for writing. It is good in ICT through the school. It is satisfactory overall in science, however teachers do not all understand how to successfully teach investigative work. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory in all other subjects except and there are some weaknesses in design and technology.
43. Teachers take good account of the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Specialist teaching and guidance is provided for pupils at an early stage of learning English. Teachers also pay careful attention to ensuring they participate fully in all lessons and, as a result, they make good gains in their knowledge and use of English.
44. Teachers make satisfactory provision overall for pupils with special educational needs, and promote their satisfactory progress towards learning and other targets in their individual education plans. This is a similar judgement to the one made at the previous inspection. In many lessons teachers adapt tasks so that pupils with special educational needs language and learning can achieve them. However, occasionally teachers do not take sufficient account of targets on individual education plans to ensure work is matched closely enough to individual needs. This prevents pupils making systematic gains in skills and knowledge. Targets on individual education plans are not always sufficiently specific or measurable to guide teachers' planning, or to enable teachers to monitor progress. Where learning support assistants are used to support learning within class lessons, they are used well, and their skills and sensitivity in working with pupils with special educational needs have a positive impact on the progress they make. Where pupils are withdrawn from lessons for individual or small group teaching, the appropriateness of learning programmes is variable. In some cases, pupils are withdrawn inappropriately, from lessons or parts of lessons that meet their needs well, to work on less relevant tasks.
45. Day-to-day assessment is satisfactory overall. Teachers use praise and encouragement and often provide good feedback during lessons. In the most effective sessions they fine tune their lessons to meet the needs of different learners. However, this is not always good enough in Key

Stage 1 in literacy and numeracy sessions. The quality of marking is satisfactory and there are some good examples of effective marking in mathematics and history in Key Stage 2. This marking gives pupils a clear idea of how they need to improve.

46. A few parents at the parents' evening were concerned about homework as they were not sure whether it supported class work. The inspection team found provision for homework to be satisfactory with some good work for older pupils. A minority of parents expressed concern about the number of teachers that the Year 2 and 3 class had had in the last four terms. The inspection team agrees. However, this is through no fault of the school and two new well qualified and permanent teachers have been appointed to teach Years 3 for September.

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

47. The quality of the curriculum provided in the Foundation Stage is very good and fully meets the Early Learning Goals. The combination of very good teaching and assessment procedures, with the wide range of rich experiences offered, ensures that children attain standards that exceed expectations in their personal, social and emotional development and match expectations in all other areas of learning. Through talk, enquiry and purposeful play these pupils are developing positive attitudes to learning. However, provision for pupils' physical development is limited through the lack of large climbing apparatus.
48. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the school provides a broad curriculum and encourages satisfactory progress and good personal development. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught and meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Time devoted to most subjects, including literacy and numeracy, is appropriate but below average time is spent on music.
49. The findings of the last inspection required implementation of whole school curriculum planning systems and schemes of work for ensuring continuity and it required these to be monitored by the governing body. These key issues have been well addressed. The monitoring policy for the governing body is good and devised with the business manager for Dover. Policies and curriculum plans are in place for all subjects. These are good and follow the Qualifications and Curriculum (QCA) Authority guidelines with occasional adaptations to meet the school's needs.
50. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is satisfactory overall. However, there are weaknesses in the way the school balances time. This affects the school's ability to rigorously raise standards. The National Numeracy Strategy is effectively raising standards in Key Stage 2 but not in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 1, not enough time is devoted to developing pupils' numeracy skills in the early part of the key stage as mental daily sessions are too brief. The school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is improving most pupils' reading in Key Stage 2. However, in Key Stage 1, it is maintaining rather than raising standards. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, it is better in classes where extra group reading sessions are regularly held. In order to raise standards in this school it is apparent that very regular extra group reading is needed in every class. A major cause of pupils' unsatisfactory progress in writing is the limited time spent on writing for sustained periods of time, both in English and in other subjects of the curriculum. The school has recognised this and has planned to allocate more time to extended writing.
51. Since the previous inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in improving opportunities for investigative mathematics and good progress in improving outdoor and adventurous activities in Key Stage 2 in physical education. It has made some progress in improving pupils' science investigative skills although not enough time is devoted to systematically developing pupils' ability to design, plan and make their own tests, especially in Years 5 and 6. In geography, there is now a policy for fieldwork but limited practical opportunities. There are some sound environmental experiences for younger pupils, when pupils take part in a sponsored treasure hunt that involves plant and bird spotting.
52. The school's policy for the equality of opportunity is not comprehensive. There is no policy for more able pupils. The school, however, provides well for pupils with English as an additional language and ensures pupils are supported fully in learning English and included in the life of the school. The school provides very well for these pupils' personal development and ensures they have good and, where at all possible, equal access to the curriculum. Opportunities for higher attaining, including more able pupils, to achieve at higher levels are unsatisfactory. There are also unsatisfactory aspects in provision for pupils with special educational needs.
53. The school takes steps to provide an appropriate curriculum for pupils with special educational needs, and meets their curricular and other requirements as set out in statements of special educational need. However, in its endeavours to meet the needs of all pupils on the Code of Practice special educational needs register, curricular arrangements do not promote an inclusive education for all pupils. There is undue emphasis on meeting language and learning

needs through withdrawing individuals or groups from lessons to work on learning programmes that are unrelated to pupils' learning experiences in class. Insufficient attention is given to ensuring that learning needs are met wherever possible through the school's planned curriculum. In some cases, tasks provided in withdrawal sessions are less well matched to individual needs than class activities planned by the teacher. The extent of withdrawal results in an interrupted and less balanced curriculum for many pupils. For example, pupils withdrawn at the beginning of sessions for work on language and literacy often miss the beginnings of lessons in other subjects, including mathematics and history. This has an adverse effect on the quality of their learning in other subjects. There is also a degree of interrupted learning for the rest of the class when sessions are regularly interrupted for pupils with special educational needs to be withdrawn or returned to their classes.

54. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good overall. However, there are strengths and weaknesses within provision. Although the school is teaching religious education well and satisfactorily providing for collective worship, provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. This is because assemblies do not provide enough opportunities for a sense of deep reflection, for contributing to pupils' spiritual growth and self knowledge. The act of collective worship fulfils statutory requirements but does not make a significant or powerful contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
55. Some good examples of spirituality were seen during the inspection. In the reception class, all pupils had a spiritual experience of real joy and excitement when working in their indoor physical education lesson with the parachute. During an impromptu playground discussion in Scott's Garden, a small number of junior pupils spoke with genuine reflection and sensitivity on the significance of the garden as a memorial garden created to remember Scott, a pupil who had died. These pupils were able to voice their reflections on the lovely shrubs and the purpose of the place as a quiet area for children to sit and talk. In a Year 4 history lesson, pupils experienced the impact of Third World deprivation through the projection of stark black and white media images on an overhead screen. The sensitive music, the silence and atmosphere of the room provided a powerful occasion for all to share a spiritual experience. However, there are too few opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum.
56. Opportunities for pupils' moral development are very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school's prospectus clearly informs parents of procedures taken to ensure that pupils "conduct themselves in a proper manner as part of the community of Aycliffe." Expectations for pupils' behaviour are made clear to parents, together with a system of sanctions that will be applied by the school when pupils' behaviour is inappropriate. Parents said they are impressed with the standards of good behaviour achieved. The school works hard to give children an understanding of the difference between right and wrong and leads pupils to actions that are governed by an internalised set of principles and values. A good book assembly on a Friday provides opportunity for every class to nominate two pupils to be praised and recognised by the school. The headteacher and staff ensure that, during a school year, all pupils in all classes will receive such recognition for improved or good behaviour.
57. There is a strong drive on the part of the headteacher and staff to develop the self-esteem of pupils and help them to relate very well together. They are taught to develop a strong understanding of right from wrong and to see things from another person's perspective. During the inspection, most teachers managed pupils' behaviour well and implemented the school's policy for managing the behaviour of the significant minority who have behavioural difficulties. The school provides very clear messages on the kind of behaviour that is expected and has appropriate rewards and sanctions systems. It is to the school's credit that pupils behave well when moving around the school and at play, often without the need for direct supervision. The school has an appropriate behaviour management report that details incidents, those involved, witnesses and consequences. The very good role models, and teamwork, of all staff and the community and the supportive climate of the school encourages the pupils to see the school's moral values put into action on a daily basis. The school welcomes all pupils, regardless of their previous history in other schools or family backgrounds, and is dedicated towards providing pupils with a strong moral and supportive base to help them combat disadvantage. The headteacher knows all pupils and provides very strong pastoral leadership. This climate of support has a very good impact on pupils' moral development.
58. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school's aims seek to promote the school as a most important centre of the Aycliffe village community and it does this successfully. For example, the school practises its aims by renting one of its rooms so the

pupils from the estate can attend a playgroup which otherwise would not exist. Many of the school support staff live in Aycliffe and strongly support the school's values. The school creates very good opportunities for pupils to develop very good relationships and to enjoy each other's company. The sense of harmony is very strong and pupils from ethnic minorities or late entrants to the school are fully included in school life. Playground, corridor and dining room observations during the inspection were delightful. Pupils are able to spend time together that is enjoyable. They listen to each other and talk quietly when indoors. Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of pride in their own achievements and their school. Pupils talk with pride about their recreational areas, for example football on the field, the football pitch, and sports day fun.

59. The school helps pupils to develop responsibility well. For example, 'Blue Hats' are break time 'buddies' for younger pupils. This is a system where older pupils apply for jobs for supporting other pupils in the playground. Pupils apply for jobs and, through interview, are appointed to roles of responsibility. Blue hats, for example, organise play equipment for younger pupils and were observed playing games beautifully with the younger pupils and treating them with respect. The school offers a variety of apparatus out of doors for break times; for example, stilts are available for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 and are very popular. Adult lunchtime assistants provide good attention for the pupils and are very good role models for how the pupils should treat each other.
60. A very strong programme for supporting pupils' emotional and social development is 'Coaches and Athletes'. A learning support assistant, before school, runs this occupational therapy programme on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. In this short programme, younger pupils (Athletes) are taken through some simple exercises using benches, bats, balls, hoops and bean bags by an older pupil (Coach). The exercises are designed to 'wake up' the brain in order to help the pupils be ready for the day's learning. Both the 'coaches' and 'athletes' involved have special educational needs and the programme benefits the older pupils in taking responsibility for themselves and in their support of the younger pupils. The younger pupils benefit greatly from the social aspects as well as gaining confidence and success in one morning's exercises. When this was observed, there was a wonderful atmosphere of care generated by the older pupils and, in such a short time, a real sensitive, enabling atmosphere of success was created.
61. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school satisfactorily promotes the cultural heritage of British culture and of the Dover area. For example, the school participates in the yearly remembrance of the 'little ships' of Dunkirk and pupils visit the docks and study the ships. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have been involved in the White Cliffs Countryside project at Samphire Hoe. Pupils have helped in beach and hill clearing and in pavement art. The school celebrates, welcomes and seeks to understand cultural diversity. The full inclusion of asylum seekers in all aspects of school life is helping to prepare pupils well for living in a multicultural society.
62. In 1998, as a result of its inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees the school benefited from participation in a special project designed to promote multicultural awareness. The strong impact of this project is still felt today. The project was established to foster cultural links, give pupils a voice and consider moral issues concerned with equality of opportunity. The project aimed to celebrate the asylum seeker children's lives through creative work with their peer group, to help others understand asylum and refugee cultures and to raise awareness of the distinct nature of the different groups in Dover. This project successfully encouraged the building of understanding between asylum seeker children and their Dover peer group. The project has had a very important impact on all adults concerned with the school and pupil understanding of different cultures. It prepared pupils well for living in multicultural Britain.
63. Religious education also provides strong opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures. The school has access to a Muslim storyteller who comes in from the local education authority's traveller service. However, cultural experiences through art, music and literature are less developed. The result of the school's very good provision for moral and social development and racial harmony is that pupils are very considerate of each other and were very courteous to inspectors. They instigated conversations or greetings and offered help to inspectors and their teachers. Relationships observed between pupils and adults were very good during work and play.

64. The school has satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities and sports clubs run at lunchtime or after school. There are varying activities, depending on the time of the year, which include cricket, team quick cricket, cycling proficiency and football. A high number of parents were dissatisfied with extra-curricular provision. The team agrees the number of opportunities are small, although they include a good range of sports, and there are no musical after school activities as the coordinator has recently left.
65. The school has good links with the local community that contribute to pupils' learning. The quality of links with Christchurch initial teacher training college in Canterbury is very good and beneficial to the curriculum. During the inspection pupils greatly benefited from the skills of two students from Christchurch College. There are good, well-established and constructive links with partner institutions and particularly effective links with the main receiving secondary school. This ensures the transition to secondary school is very smooth due to the wealth of information passed on and the amount of time they will already have spent there. Pupils meet staff and have "taster" sessions of the subjects they will learn. The school also has close ties with a local school for pupils with special educational needs. There are strong links with the local small schools' federation. These provide opportunities for pupils to enter sports competitions together and other curriculum opportunities.
66. Pupils learn to care for others in their community well. They provide Harvest Festival donations to residents in a nearby sheltered housing development and pupils sing for them at Christmas. The school's football kit was sponsored by a local business and other companies donate prizes for raffles. The school was also recently involved in an exhibition aimed at bringing together local children with those from families seeking asylum.

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

67. The school is very welcoming and is very caring. The school's arrangements for the care and safety of its pupils are effective. There are good levels of supervision and care with several staff trained in first aid procedures and appropriate systems in place to record accidents and illnesses. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and clear and governors, of whom the caretaker is one, are actively involved in regular checks of the grounds and premises.
68. Governors have adopted the local education authority guidelines for child protection and the deputy headteacher is the child protection coordinator. However, she is currently the only member of staff to be formally trained in child protection issues. There is no synopsis of the guidelines for child protection in the staff handbook, or written guidance for midday supervisors so that staff new to the school, or those employed on a temporary basis, are made aware of the school's procedures for child protection.
69. The school has satisfactory systems in place for monitoring attendance. There are close links with the education welfare officer to whom pupils are referred when their attendance gives cause for concern. A senior member of staff regularly checks the registers and follow-up letters are sent to parents if they do not provide a reason for the pupil's absence. However the school has not instituted a system of telephoning parents on the first day of absence. There are a few long-term absences of several pupils that need to be resolved in order to improve the school's unauthorised absence rate. Good attendance is promoted through the awarding of certificates and the need for parents to put in a written request for holidays during term time.
70. There are good and effective systems in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. As a result, the school has been successful in reducing oppressive behaviour to a minimum. Pupils are confident that any intimidation resulting from racism or other reasons will be swiftly and fairly dealt with. The behaviour policy is clear and pupils know the rewards and sanctions that will be issued. A system of giving slips to pupils who are courteous and well-behaved works well as does the assessment of behaviour that takes place regularly. Behaviour is monitored through the use of incident reports that are kept on each individual pupil's file. Parents are informed where necessary and home/school liaison books are also used to monitor behaviour and enlist parental support. The school keeps a separate record of racist incidents.
71. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are also good although the system is largely informal. It is successful because the headteacher and all staff are very caring, know the pupils well and communicate effectively amongst themselves. A programme for personal, social and health education with circle time and speaking and listening sessions

allows further opportunity for staff to monitor and assess personal development and the latest pupil progress report has been amended to include a section assessing the progress made by pupils in this respect.

72. There are good systems for assessing and recording pupils' standards and progress. Baseline assessment is carried out during the pupils' first term in the Reception class, and this information is used very well to plan their future learning. At Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils sit statutory national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, and non-statutory national tests at the end of every other year. Other standardised tests are used, including for reading, and the school has introduced assessment systems for the foundation subjects in line with QCA recommendations. There are good arrangements for assessing and monitoring the progress of groups of pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons, and there have been recent improvements in recording individual progress in reading and writing. Assessment procedures in ICT and physical education are very good. The school also tracks the progress of six pupils across the ability range in each class to monitor overall progress.
73. Assessment information is used appropriately to place pupils in ability groups in literacy and numeracy lessons, and to plan work for the differing needs of most pupils in many subjects. However, it is not used well enough to match work closely to pupils' differing needs in English, including for pupils with special educational needs. As a result, pupils do not build systematically on their existing skills and knowledge in literacy and this results in unsatisfactory progress in writing. Additionally, higher attaining pupils' progress is unsatisfactory because of the inconsistent use of assessment for planning for their needs.
74. The school has appropriate arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs, and ensuring that the provision outlined in statements of special educational needs is implemented. The school makes good use of advice from external specialist agencies, including an educational psychologist, to help them meet needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs maintains appropriate records for all pupils on the Code of Practice register, and there are good examples of learning support assistants helping to monitor attainment and progress. Individual education plans are provided where appropriate and reviewed each term, and learning targets are shared with pupils. Pupils themselves do not usually contribute to planning their targets, although there is a good example of one pupil writing his own learning plan. Targets on individual education plans are not sufficiently specific, and do not give enough guidance to help class teachers plan work or monitor progress. Good attention is paid to meeting emotional and behavioural needs including, for example, the recently introduced playground 'buddy' system. Plans are underway for 'Privileged Circle' times to further promote positive attitudes and behaviour of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The 'Coaches and Athletes' arrangements, through which older and younger pupils work in twos on physical activities first thing in the morning, also promote progress for pupils with a range of needs that affect learning.

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

75. The evidence from the preinspection questionnaires and the parents' meeting shows that parents have maintained positive views of the school since the last inspection. Although only a small number of parents returned the questionnaire, of those who did, all said that they felt the school expected their child to work hard and achieve their best and that they would feel comfortable approaching the school with any concerns. The only two areas that concerned a minority of parents were the amount of homework given and in the opportunity for extra curricular activities. The school does have a satisfactory homework policy and inspection findings are that it is generally applied in a satisfactory manner. There are currently only a limited number of extracurricular activities that include dance and sports as a result of staff moving. For example, there is no longer a choir or a recorder club. The school hopes to expand the range in the new academic year.
76. The governors, headteacher and staff have worked hard to develop links with parents through the use of questionnaires, making themselves easily accessible to parents and keeping them informed of school events through regular newsletters. The use of a home/school agreement, that has recently been amended to include a sentence on parental support with homework, has helped to reinforce the partnership with parents. As a result, parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning at home and school by listening to them read and by supporting project work and homework tasks. Some parents come in on a regular basis to help in class with ICT or listen to readers and others help on educational visits. The Parents

Teachers and Friends Association is active in raising funds for the school through organising events. A recent need to relne the swimming pool has been taken up immediately by parents. Offers of practical help have been received and money is being raised.

77. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress, and many provide support at home to help them attain the targets on their individual learning plans. The school takes steps to involve parents from ethnic minorities in the work of the school, and keep them informed of their children's progress, by arranging for school letters to be translated into their first languages.
78. The quality of information that is provided by the school is satisfactory overall. The governors' annual report to parents and the prospectus both meet statutory requirements and the former is particularly "user friendly". There is no regular written curriculum information for parents although some information is given at the consultation evenings. The annual pupil progress report for parents is satisfactory although some comments are too descriptive of what the pupils have studied rather than what they have achieved. National Curriculum levels are not used with any consistency, and targets are often not specific. Parents receive regular newsletters, have three formal opportunities to talk to teachers during the year and all staff including the headteacher, are readily accessible at all other times. An additional parents' evening is held for pupils with special educational needs for consultations with the coordinator.

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

79. The school's leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides very strong pastoral leadership and, since the previous inspection, he has led the school well through significant periods of change caused by changes in the nature of pupils' prior attainment on entry. The very strong emphasis on relationships, teamwork and very effective moral teaching has a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the way they relate to each other. Pupils often begin school at a social and emotional disadvantage and the school works well to combat this. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the chair of governors are an effective team and provide a clear direction for improving standards. Although the standards of the school have been low for the past two years, this has been caused mainly by the effect of late entrants. Prior to the change in the school's intake on entry three years ago, the school substantially improved the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in National Curriculum tests from the low standards reached in 1996, although standards were still below national averages.

80. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has dealt with difficult and necessary changes to staffing well with the support of governors. Staff changes have been well managed and recent appointments are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. The good improvements in teaching are due to the purposeful efforts of the school to address its weaknesses. However, this has been more effective in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. The school has had a high staff turnover since the previous inspection, through no fault of its own. Most teachers have left for promotion. For example, since the previous inspection the school has had two deputy headteachers who have both left because of their promotion to headteacher. The current deputy headteacher has also been promoted and is taking up her headteacher appointment next term, after only four terms in post. A permanent deputy will replace her and take responsibility also for managing the infant department. Overall, subject co-ordination is now managed well in this challenging small school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher systematically monitor teaching and this has brought about good improvements in Key Stage 2. Co-ordinators also monitor teaching, although this has yet to have an impact on raising standards in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1.
81. Since the previous inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing its key issues from the previous report. There are now effective whole school planning systems. The co-ordinators are now effective in their roles, with particularly good co-ordination of mathematics in Key Stage 2 and ICT and physical education throughout the school. The headteacher's and governors' monitoring roles have improved. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issue related to assessment, as, although procedures are often good, there is some mismatch of work for higher and lower attainers, especially in Key Stage 1. The school has not addressed the need to identify and provide challenging work for more able pupils. All teachers now share lesson purposes with pupils. However, there is still work to be done to ensure lessons are of a consistently high quality. Pupils' overall progress is similar to the last inspection. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory in the context of a very difficult period for the school.
82. The committed governing body provides good support for the headteacher. There is very effective leadership and commitment by the chair of governors who is a regular visitor to the school. She has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and plays a strong part in helping to steer the direction the school takes. Under her leadership the committees are now firmly established and have clear purposes. These have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Overall, governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Several governors have difficulty visiting the school because of their other roles, although all provide valuable support.
83. There have been several new appointments to the governing body and it now has a good range of expertise to enable governors help shape the direction of the school. For example, the chair of finance has considerable expertise in financial management in the business community. However, the governing body needs to work more closely with the school to help it to develop more thorough self-evaluation procedures. Although governors have critically analysed assessment data and set appropriate targets for improvement, for example in writing, the governing body's evaluation procedures need strengthening. This is linked to the process of improvement planning. The school improvement plan focuses on the school's priorities and although the current plan is easy to follow and is costed, it does not give enough emphasis to areas that are of central importance for raising standards, for example in literacy, numeracy and science. The plan identifies success criteria, gives timescales and names of personnel who are to action the improvements. However, the plan does not give precise numerical targets focused on raising standards. This prevents accurate evaluation of whether targets have been reached. Monitoring and evaluating procedures are not shown clearly. The plan does not show timescales for monitoring or who will monitor to see whether enough improvements have been made.
84. The school fulfils the requirements of the Code of Practice in having a special needs register, consulting with parents, and holding reviews. There is an appropriate policy, and provision is managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator for special educational needs, who works closely with well-trained learning support assistants. The management of provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good and is provided by the peripatetic teacher for these pupils.
85. The school's finances are well monitored and systems for financial control are very good. The contingency fund, of eight per cent of the budget, is slightly above average and satisfactory. This is a small school that has planned well for staffing emergencies and the wide fluctuation in

pupil numbers that happens from time to time. As the school admits pupils at short notice, including pupils with special educational needs who have not gained a place elsewhere or asylum seekers, the school needs extra reserves. The school's annual budget depends on numbers of pupils predicted one year ahead. This is an impossible situation for this school, as pupils sometimes enter and leave through the year. For example, asylum seekers sometimes leave at very little notice. This means there is sometimes a shortfall if new pupils enter late or, if pupils leave early, and the school has to pay back amounts of money. The governors strive to maintain single age classes in Key Stage 2. The school prudently manages its budget and seeks and obtains best value for its purchases. Resources are well used to help pupils make progress, especially in ICT. Budgeting procedures are good and expenditure is clearly linked to the school development plan. The spending per pupil is high as in most small schools. The school consults parents about its curriculum and obtains best value for its purchases.

86. The school has a sound equal opportunities written policy. However, some pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from literacy and other lessons which affects their progress in some lessons. More capable pupils are not achieving their full potential although this is beginning to improve in mathematics in Key Stage 2 through the setting arrangements.
87. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school has a good balance between longer serving and more newly qualified teachers. The school has a good balance of expertise and the school has particularly strong expertise for the Foundation Stage. The training programme, which is linked to the school improvement plan, has appropriately concentrated on improving ICT and writing has rightly been identified as a priority area. Training needs are appropriately addressed although some practical training is needed in science, art and design and technology. New members of staff, including newly qualified teachers, are welcomed and given very good support. Classroom assistants are experienced and trained appropriately for their roles and provide valuable support. The school has recently received an Investors in People Award for its staff development. The fact that many staff vacancies have arisen through the school's staff receiving promotion in other schools suggests the award was wisely given.
88. Pupils benefit from good accommodation at the school. The relatively new building and the grounds are well maintained. Although some classrooms are somewhat cramped, the additional work areas are used well to relieve some of the pressure on space. There is a separate library and music room, a spacious hall and an indoor swimming pool. The grounds are particularly attractive with a large playing field as well as a hard surfaced playground that is marked out with various games and includes a giant draughts set.
89. Resources are satisfactory in all subjects with improvements having been made in the library stock. The school has a satisfactory number of up-to-date computers and uses these very well. New computers had just arrived by the end of the inspection and are due to be used by next term. The youngest pupils benefit from interesting shared texts but there is not enough large climbing apparatus for this age group.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

### (1) Raise standards in English, mathematics and science through the school by:

- Developing teachers' subject knowledge for teaching writing, and investigative science;
- Increasing opportunities for sustained writing in English and other subjects and ensuring there is a systematic approach to teaching spelling and punctuation;
- Providing more regular opportunities for pupils to read in small groups in all classes;
- Ensuring pupils with special educational needs are given equal opportunities for a broad and balanced English curriculum and their targets on their individual educational plans are in precise small steps in reading, phonics, spelling and writing to help teachers to carefully plan pupils' work;
- Ensuring enough time and attention are given to developing pupils' numeracy skills in mathematics lessons and that pupils have regular daily practice;
- Ensuring pupils develop their ability to design and test their own experiments in science.

(Paragraphs 1-22, 30-46, 50-53, 73, 81, 86, 107-140)

**(2) Raise standards in Key Stage 1, especially in literacy and numeracy by:**

- Ensuring teachers have high expectations of what each pupil can achieve;
- Ensuring pupils' work builds well in Year 1 on the very good practice that exists in Reception by using end of Reception assessment information to set rigorous targets;
- Rigorously monitoring literacy and numeracy sessions in Key Stage 1 to ensure pupils are learning well and reaching their targets;
- Finding ways to manage the very wide range of attainment in mixed aged classes so reading, writing, and numeracy tasks are always well matched to pupils' needs;
- Sharing the very good practice which exists at Aycliffe and to enable teachers to see exemplary teaching in literacy and numeracy from other teachers;
- Using assessment information to match work more closely to the differing needs of pupils.

(Paragraphs 5-9, 20-22, 31, 32, 36, 39, 40, 44, 45, 73, 81, 107, 109, 112, 120, 128, 129)

**(3) Improve the school improvement plan by:**

- Making sure it emphasises raising standards;
- Making sure it contains clear and measurable targets so the school can easily evaluate its success in raising standards;
- Providing timescales and named personnel for monitoring and evaluating whether targets have been reached and actions have led to improvements.

(Paragraphs 1-22, 83)

**(4) Improve the progress of the more capable pupils by:**

- Having high expectations of pupils, setting targets and assessing their progress towards these targets;
- Providing consistent opportunities for all higher attainers to achieve at their best levels;
- Ensuring that teachers have the subject knowledge for teaching subjects rigorously enough to higher attaining pupils;
- Identifying and providing for the very able pupils, especially in English, mathematics, science and ICT;
- Monitoring the progress of all higher attaining pupils more carefully and the school's strategies for teaching them.

(Paragraphs 6, 12, 19, 39, 52, 73, 81, 86, 109, 127, 133-135, 139, 150, 166)

**(5) Improve attendance by:**

- Raising expectations of parents to ensure they understand the importance of making sure their children attend regularly;
- Querying reasons for absence more promptly;
- Continuing to identify pupils with unsatisfactory attendance (below 95%) and ensuring parents are aware of the impact on learning.

(Paragraphs 29, 69)

**The governors should also include the following issues in their action plan:**

- Improve provision for pupils' spiritual development;
- Improve standards and the quality of teaching in art and design throughout the school and pupils' ability to apply art to design and technology. Provide whole school training in art and, where needed, in design and technology;
- Provide large apparatus for clambering for Reception pupils.

(Paragraphs 4, 7, 13, 22, 54, 55, 104, 141, 145, 146-151)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	22	34	39	5	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for parttime pupils)	0	152
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	59

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	60

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	7	11	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (77)	67 (68)	89 (82)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (77)	83 (82)	56 (82)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

- Omitted as fewer than 10 boys were involved in the tests.

### 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	11	13	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	4	6
	Girls	4	7	9
	Total	7	11	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	29 (50)	46 (41)	63 (64)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	8	6	8
	Total	13	11	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (55)	48 (45)	58 (64)
	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	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	129
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.0
Average class size	25.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	156

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	301,575
Total expenditure	301,258
Expenditure per pupil	2,078
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,432
Balance carried forward to next year	22,749

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	152
Number of questionnaires returned	26

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	38	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	31	4	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	54	8	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	50	19	0	0
The teaching is good.	65	27	4	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	19	0	8	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	31	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	27	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	27	4	0	19
The school is well led and managed.	54	42	0	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	46	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	35	19	15	15

## 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

90. Children enter Reception full time in the September of the year in which they become five. Most have attended the playgroup for three afternoons each week. The playgroup is situated on the school site and this is a good initiative since the previous inspection. As there is no other pre-school provision in Aycliffe this is a very important development in helping the children to adjust to school. Assessment made on entry to school shows that the overall attainment for the current Reception children was below average. This was higher than the well below average attainment found in recent years. Within this judgement, there is a very wide range of attainment as, on entry, a few children have low language and skills as well as personal, social and emotional development, whilst a very small minority is well above average. One pupil has English as an additional language whilst seven children are on the special educational needs register, including two at higher forms of needs, for speech difficulties. The class teacher is well qualified and very effective. Her assistant is well experienced with this age and all work well as a team to form a secure, caring and challenging learning environment for the children. The children are taught as a single age range and the class size is small. In previous years the class has also contained Year 1 pupils. The teacher has been teaching in the school for only two years and is making a very good impact on provision for the Foundation Stage.
91. The children make very good progress through work and play activities that are very well matched to their previous attainment. This is the result of very good teaching, observation, assessment and recording of children's progress. The Reception teacher has high expectations for every child, whatever the starting point, and excellent systems for matching children's work to their needs, especially in literacy and numeracy. Baseline assessment is given during the children's first half-term and used very well to provide well matched work. Both the children with English as an additional language, and the ones with special educational needs, make very good progress through receiving very good support. Higher attaining children are identified early and make good progress through being given well matched work.
92. By the time children leave the Foundation Stage, their attainment in personal, social and emotional development is above average. Their attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development are average overall. Children are making very good progress in these three areas of learning. Children attain average standards in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development after making good progress. Although children's progress is very good in all aspects speaking and listening, reading and in the beginnings of writing, children's attainment in writing is below average reflecting lower attainment on entry in all the skills needed for this aspect of communication, language and literacy.
93. Overall teaching and learning are very good. A true comparison with the previous inspection cannot be made since attainment and progress and teaching were judged then by five and not, as they are now, by the end of Reception. However, children's progress was judged to be good and teaching was good. These are now very good. All lessons observed were at least good and over two thirds were very good. The school has made good progress in improving provision for this age. The curriculum provided for the children is based very well on the national framework, leading to the Early Learning Goals and assessment is very good. The teacher is very skilled when providing for the diverse needs of her class and manages the children very well.

### Personal, social and emotional development

94. By the end of Reception, very nearly all children attain at least the Early Learning Goals and have learned to work and play alongside others and are quite independent. Children have formed very good relationships with their teachers and each other. They can adapt equally well to learning through a whole class or group activity. They respond well to learning through focused tasks when the teacher is instructing or they can work with great interest on tasks they have chosen. When required to do so, many can work independently during group time in the literacy hour. Children listen carefully to each other and take turns well. This was seen on several occasions during structured play or during more formal lessons. Children have a

natural joy and enthusiasm for learning. They are very eager to explore new situations. During a formal physical education lesson in the hall, when the teacher used a parachute for stimulating children's physical movements, children were fascinated with the movement of the parachute. The children expressed their great joy and pleasure yet were able to respond immediately to the teacher's every instruction. Staff do much to promote this area of learning by carefully assessing children's individual needs and to ensure they adjust happily to school routines through sensitive intervention. Children are able to dress, take on simple classroom responsibilities, know where things are in their classroom and help to tidy up. Children's behaviour is good. The teacher and her staff work hard at this and they achieve a good result given the below average starting point of some children.

95. Teaching and learning are very good. This includes provision for purposeful play and for collaborative tasks promoted by adults, as well as direct teaching strategies. The teacher has created a bright and sparkling environment where children are kept safe, feel secure and valued as individuals. Her management of children is very good, and very good relationships between all create a pleasant atmosphere. The children have the confidence to explore because they feel secure and happy. Classroom procedures are very well established, and children gradually respond to the routines of the day. An important factor in helping the children to adjust to school routines has been the gradual lengthening of formal teaching time during the year yet ensuring there is a high quality play environment for children to choose their own activities for part of the day. Children learn to adopt positive attitudes towards one another because they are all treated equally and with respect.

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

96. Children's attainment at the end of the reception year is average overall. However, in writing about one third do not yet achieve the expectations for this age despite the very good progress being made. Children are able to listen with much enjoyment to stories and rhymes. They listen with rapt attention to literacy hour introductions and seek to understand the meaning of books by interpreting pictures and answering the teacher's questions. For example, they love listening to the teacher read "Supersonic Engine Juice", sustaining concentration for long periods and eagerly looking for clues when answering her question "Does poor Alex look happy about it". They attend very well and take in new information through instruction and demonstration. The teacher uses the right amount of repetition to ensure that, whatever their starting point, children develop the necessary attention skills. Most talk confidently, although a few still have limited speaking skills and special attention is given to these pupils. Children's range of vocabulary and their grammatical structure is satisfactory although few are above average in this respect whilst several are still quite limited. They like to speak to the adults around them, and to comment to other children playing and working alongside them. Children enjoy simple rhymes, poems and stories and greatly enjoy saying rhymes and finding word patterns in their class stories. The teacher is very skilled in promoting the use of language, and in particular the use of language for thinking and reasoning. She questions children and often repeats their answers with clearer diction adding enrichment to the vocabulary to extending children's speech.
97. Children enjoy sharing a Big Book with the teacher and they are doing well in learning sounds and letters and many can spell simple words. Children understand that print carries meaning and many have a good knowledge of letters of the alphabet. Children can often recognise initial and final sounds in simple words and are beginning to work out simple word patterns. Children enjoy handling books, looking at them and discussing ideas gleaned from the illustrations. Many can recognise familiar words and older and more able children can already read simple texts with success. Writing is below average. About a half are able to write simple sentences, and about a quarter of all pupils do this with considerable success. These children can write two or three sentences. The remaining half can write their names and most of these children are able to copy simple three letter words correctly. However, several still do this in an unformed and uncontrolled way.
98. Teaching and learning are very good. Children's understanding and interest in books and reading skills are very well supported. The teacher extends speaking and listening very well through a rich early years environment where children learn through practical work and talk. There is very thorough attention to phonics and the teacher has devised some high quality games for group work to promote children's interest. The teacher and her assistant both use questioning skilfully to encourage children's responses, to raise language levels and promote thinking in large and small groups. The teacher is particularly effective in using a range of

techniques including open-ended questions, descriptions and explanations. Assistants are well briefed and used effectively for developing language through roleplay and focused group activities. All extend the speech for children with English as an additional language particularly well. The programme for communication, language and literacy is extremely well planned and well linked to the National Literacy Strategy as recommended for the Foundation Stage. There is very good organisation and learning in literacy is fun and relevant in this class.

### **Mathematical development**

99. By the end of their reception year, children's attainment is average after making very good progress. Most can add two numbers together within practical situations and are already reaching or exceeding the expectations by the end of the year. Children are able to count in tens together and several higher attaining children can jump two numbers on the number line. Only a small minority is still learning to count to 10, for example the number of apples on a model tree. These children recognise numerals to 10. Children are developing their mathematical thinking very well and solve simple problems. A few very able pupils recognise numbers beyond 25 and can accurately add and subtract any number to ten, sometimes with remarkable mental skills. Children love working with numbers and stay on task. Very good attention is paid to developing mathematical language. Children enjoy the games introduced by the teacher with the number line and are helped by the visual displays.
100. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher's expectations are high and she provides very well matched work to children's previous attainment. She skilfully ensures lessons are challenging and has the systems in place to ensure children have the right level of challenge so each child has plenty of success. Priority is given to practical activities to help children understand through talking and real life experiences. She ensures class mathematics lessons are exciting. Her own visual aids are excellent, she presents herself very well at all times and models mathematical thinking very well for children. During class sessions her pace is brisk yet she patiently repeats explanations when the children do not understand. Children are learning numeracy in a very happy and relaxed atmosphere. The teacher is skilfully implementing the National Numeracy Strategy alongside the Foundation Stage curriculum. The time for whole class and group sessions has been gradually balanced through the year so that children concentrate for longer periods during whole class sessions. Mathematics lessons are a delight.

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

101. Children's overall attainment is average by the time they leave Reception. Children have a satisfactory understanding of the properties of materials and know they often respond differently to squashing and pulling forces. They recognise a range of moving parts, including cog-wheels, and notice how turning one part can make other parts move. They have planted beans and, over a period of time, they have carefully observed their growth. They know that plants need light and water to make them grow and that growing beans have roots. Children have developed good knowledge of the metamorphosis of a frog from a tadpole and a strong sense of wonder in the magic of nature. Through their roleplay, as well as class teaching, children are developing an awareness of the roles of people who help the community. They have learned about the jobs of the postman and the fireman when they visited their class. Children are also learning about the purpose of local businesses. The roleplay area has been a post office and a vet's surgery and is currently a garden centre. Children carefully observe similarities and differences in the daily weather. They are learning to use vocabulary such as 'yesterday', 'tomorrow', or 'once', 'long ago', to represent time. They are developing their computer skills well. They can design and make pictures for their garden centre using "Colour Magic" and make recognisable pictures of watering cans, plant pots or other useful items. Children develop a sound understanding of the keyboard.
102. Teaching and learning are good. Provision for all kinds of play for promoting this area of learning is good whilst provision for children to use the computer and to develop ICT skills is very good. However, provision for design and technology aspects are not as systematically developed. For example, there is no evidence children investigate simple products, their own likes and dislikes and think about whether some everyday inventions are suitable for the jobs they have to do, for example their own lunchboxes.

### **Physical development**

103. Attainment in this area of learning and development is average after good progress overall. Children use their hands quite well to make and fit things together, as in doing jigsaw puzzles and in their play with construction toys. Their manual dexterity and control in drawing and colouring also reflect the range of skills expected for this age. At playtime and in physical education lessons, they are able to enjoy moving freely, and can run, jump and turn, and control movement on small tricycles. Children are able to space out and not bump into each other. However, their progress in clambering and in balancing is limited because of the lack of suitable large equipment in the reception outside play area. Most use simple tools such as scissors and paint brushes satisfactorily. Children develop sound manipulative skills through designing and making with "dough like" materials. In painting, they control large brushes satisfactorily. However, several do not yet form their letters properly.
104. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching in formal physical education is very good. The teacher's choice of activities, her high expectations and management of the children ensure children learn very well in these lessons. The teacher also does her utmost to provide a very stimulating outside play area with a suitable range of small equipment. However, suitable outdoor clambering and balancing activities cannot occur because of the lack of suitable apparatus. Activities are planned well for the development of manual dexterity, such as the use of simple tools, scissors, brushes, pencils and construction kits. However, children are only provided with satisfactory opportunities for cutting and joining a range of materials.

### **Creative development**

105. Children attain average standards. Pupils use larger tools, such as brushes and modelling materials such as mouldable materials for expressing their ideas using satisfactory skills. In free painting, children make pictures using a variety of colours. Children make careful observational drawings, for example of the beans they are growing and select colours for their best effect. Their computer designs of pictures of objects which can be sold in the roleplay garden centre are very imaginative. Children are very excited by "magic plasticine", a modelling material which, when moulded, rapidly changes colour. Children design and make some very creative products when using this material, for example imaginary flowers. A good range of free choice activities is introduced to encourage and develop the children's creative and expressive skills. Roleplay is well supported by dressing up clothes, the garden and writing centres. In music, children enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes, for example "Tadpole" and learning new ones, and they like to clap or to keep time when beating the rhythm with simple instruments. They are very enthusiastic about making music.
106. Teaching and learning are good. Good provision is made for the arts, and children are able to enjoy expressing themselves in movement, sound and art. The teaching of music is very good and the teacher sets a very good example by her tuneful singing and clear diction. In a very good lesson observed, she made music fun by her humorous approach when she sang "pom, pom, pom" instead of the word. Children greatly enjoyed singing 'Bananas in Pyjamas' and kept time very well. However, within this very favourable picture the range of materials for the children to use when expressing their ideas for designing and making is only satisfactory.

### **ENGLISH**

107. The inspection findings are that standards in this subject are well below average. National test results for 2000 showed standards at the age of seven to be well below average in both reading and writing compared with the national average and also for similar schools. Improvements in test results in recent years have been broadly in line with the national trend and not enough to raise standards in the subject. Teachers' assessment of pupils' speaking and listening skills at this age also show standards to be well below average.

108. National test results for 2000 show that pupils attained very low standards in English at the age of eleven compared to the national averages as well as the average attained by similar schools. The percentage of pupils who attained the level expected for their age was very low, and the percentage who exceeded this level was well below average. Standards improved very well in 1997 and 1998 compared with the ones attained in 1996. However, they dropped in 1999 and fell to very low by 2000. This was mainly the result of the impact of pupils with English as an additional language and other pupils who were late entrants taking the tests. When all late entrants to Key Stage 2 and pupils with limited English are not counted ~~the~~ tests, standards, compared with similar schools were below average. The school's targets for English were not achieved in 2000. The current year's target has been successfully achieved although it was not sufficiently challenging. Boys have been performing better than girls at both key stages.
109. The inspection findings show the current groups of seven and eleven-year-old pupils are attaining standards that are well below average. This shows some improvement for Year 6 pupils, and this is reflected in the considerably higher proportion, about two thirds, who have attained the level expected for their age at eleven in the year 2001 tests. This figure would have been higher had it not included the results of a significant minority who entered very late in Key Stage 2 with statements of educational needs for literacy and behavioural difficulties. The improvements are the result of greater consistency in teaching following a period of high staff turnover. Most year groups display well below average standards of language and literacy when they enter the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall in the infant and junior classes, although this progress varies between different aspects of the subject. There is little attainment at higher levels in English, and this is lower than science for 2001. There was no significant evidence from lessons and scrutiny of work to indicate that girls are not performing as well as boys. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding.
110. Although standards in speaking and listening are below average, pupils make good progress at both key stages, particularly in their confidence and courtesy in speaking in large groups and with unfamiliar adults. Pupils whose special educational needs are related to speech and language difficulties are enabled to make good gains through the help provided by learning support assistants with speech and language programmes.
111. By the age of seven, pupils listen carefully to teachers' explanations and instructions and usually respond appropriately to others. Most are keen to answer questions in lessons, and they convey simple meanings to adults and one another, but show limited capacity to explain their ideas using a growing vocabulary. By the age of eleven pupils show considerable confidence in sharing their ideas with others. In discussion, they listen carefully, making contributions and asking questions that are responsive to others' views. However, their use of vocabulary is not precise, and their capacity to use standard English vocabulary and grammar is underdeveloped. Several good examples were seen during the inspection of teachers using good strategies to promote speaking skills. These included opportunities to present performance poetry, collaborative working in small groups, brief discussions with a partner to help generate and clarify ideas, and use of the 'hosting' drama technique to explore the use of language in the roles of other characters.
112. Standards in reading are well below average although pupils make satisfactory progress from entry to the school. Year 2 pupils' reading of simple scheme books is generally accurate although not yet fluent. They enjoy reading and are beginning to use appropriate strategies to read unfamiliar words but sometimes need adult support. In a literacy lesson seen, their answers to questions showed sound levels of understanding, and they were able to identify clues in the text that indicated time sequence, such as 'and then', 'at first' and 'next'. Year 6 pupils' reading of texts, including children's novels by authors such as Jacqueline Wilson, is expressive and shows developing accuracy and fluency. Hesitations and errors are generally related to gaps in pupils' own knowledge of vocabulary. However, they show levels of understanding that are broadly appropriate for their age, and are beginning to use inference and deduction to explore meaning. This is seen, for example, when they compare and contrast the works of two authors. Higher attainers read fluently and accurately and make reference to relevant information in the text to support their views about key themes and characters. There

are inconsistencies in provision for reading between classes. Pupils make the best progress in classes where all pupils have frequent opportunities to read in small groups.

113. Pupils do not make sufficient progress in their writing skills, and standards are very low. By the age of seven, pupils write in a range of forms including stories and poems. Most pupils communicate meaning beyond a simple statement although ideas are often confused and only a small minority gives sufficient detail to engage the reader. The use of capital letters and full stops, as well as the spelling of common words, is underdeveloped. Year 6 pupils write for an appropriate range of purposes, and redraft their work. However, basic sentence grammar and punctuation of sentences is often incorrect. They are beginning to choose words for variety and interest, although many common words are spelt inaccurately. They write a summary, for example, of the events from a story extract from a character's viewpoint. Pupils throughout the school are developing a joined style of handwriting that is often clear and legible. However, the presentation of some pupils' work is poor. Higher attainers develop their ideas in writing, organising their work appropriately for the purpose and the reader. They use complex sentences to extend meaning and most words are spelt accurately, including those of more than one syllable that conform to regular patterns.
114. Reasons for the limited progress made in writing include insufficient opportunities for pupils to write for a sustained period of time, both in English and in other subjects of the curriculum. Some of the writing in pupils' books is copied whilst, on too many other occasions, they are asked to write only individual words or simple phrases. As a result, pupils do not have enough opportunities to organise their own thoughts and ideas into continuous prose. Additionally, there are shortcomings in the expertise of teachers in helping pupils develop their writing skills.
115. There has been significant development since the last inspection, including the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, although the below average standards found at the last inspection have not been maintained. There have also been improvements in resources, in teachers' accuracy in assessing standards and in providing learning targets for individual pupils. Recently introduced systems for monitoring pupils' progress in reading and writing are of high quality. There has been insufficient improvement in provision for writing, although this has now been identified as a priority.
116. The quality of both teaching and learning in this subject is satisfactory overall at both key stages. In the lessons seen, teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory, but it was mainly satisfactory and it was satisfactory in all but one lesson. Teachers establish a good rapport with their pupils and manage them well, so that they are interested and attentive, and work productively during the lesson, particularly during the whole class elements of literacy lessons, which are taught well. In a very good Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils first discussed and then wrote their ideas for improving safety at a nearby road junction, following a recent accident. The choice of topic was well chosen and engaged the pupils' interest and the discussion was managed skilfully so that all groups were involved, including those with special educational needs and a pupil at an early stage of learning English. Both the teacher and learning support assistant displayed good expertise in extending language skills. As a result, pupils made very good gains in their vocabulary and skills in communicating their ideas clearly.
117. In a satisfactory Year 6 lesson, the shared text was well chosen for developing reading skills, including inference and deduction. However, during the whole class sentence level work, the teacher spent too long questioning pupils causing some loss of interest and attentiveness. In an unsatisfactory lesson observed for younger Key Stage 1 pupils, reading tasks were too hard for many pupils and the writing tasks were poorly matched to pupils' prior attainment and little was learned.
118. Teachers use assessment information appropriately to group pupils by ability and to identify learning difficulties, but do not use it effectively to match work closely to the needs of pupils within each class. Teachers plan work with varying levels of challenge for pupils of differing abilities. However, tasks do not always take sufficient account of the steps required for pupils to progress from their current attainment in reading and writing, nor of targets on the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, pupils do not make the systematic gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable them to make good progress over time.
119. Good use is made of ICT to promote progress in literacy skills, and teachers take careful account of the needs of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English who make good

progress in their capacity to understand and use the language. Where learning support assistants are used to provide inclass support for individuals or groups of pupils with special educational needs, their support has a positive impact on the progress made within lessons. Where pupils are withdrawn to work on separate learning programmes, the quality of learning is variable in quality. In some cases, pupils with language and learning difficulties are withdrawn from elements of lessons that meet their needs well, such as whole classwork on a shared text, to work on less meaningful tasks. This interrupts learning both for the individual pupil and for the rest of the class, and is inappropriate.

120. The subject is managed satisfactorily. There are good procedures for the coordinator to monitor standards and progress throughout the school, and to plan future development. Schemes of work are based on the National Literacy Strategy and meet statutory requirements for the subject. However, there are shortcomings in the balance and relevance of the curriculum, particularly in provision for writing, and in planning work to meet the literacy needs of all pupils.

## MATHEMATICS

121. The findings of the inspection are that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards are well below average and similar to the standards attained in the national tests in 2000. Standards in 2000 tests were also well below those for similar schools. Pupils' progress is erratic and unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1. This is because of weak teaching in Year 1. Higher attaining pupils' progress is unsatisfactory through few opportunities to learn at higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make unsatisfactory progress. Standards in Year 2 are similar to those attained at the time of the previous inspection in national tests.
122. The standards reached by eleven-year-olds improved well for the two years following the previous inspection. By 1998 they were below national averages, but dropped significantly in 1999 and 2000 reflecting the fact that these cohorts included a significant proportion of pupils with English as an additional language taking the tests, despite having very little English. It also coincided with a higher proportion of pupils entering late with high level special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. Higher attaining pupils make inconsistent, therefore, unsatisfactory progress.
123. The findings of the inspection are that standards are well below average in Year 6, which is a drop from the standards observed during the previous inspection. However, pupils' progress is now good in Key Stage 2 whereas it was satisfactory then. Early analysis for 2001 results shows an improvement by 20 per cent on the standards reached in 2000. The 2000 results included the standards reached by several pupils with English as an additional language, who entered late in Key Stage 2, with little English. When 2000 results do not include the late entrants with limited English, the overall attainment of 2000 Year 6 pupils, although well below national averages, was average compared with similar schools. When the high proportion of all late entrants to 2000 Year 6 are not included, the pupils who entered the school in the infants achieved above average standards compared with similar schools. Current Year 6 standards are also adversely affected by a significant minority who entered very late in Year 6 and had statements of educational need for learning and behaviour difficulties. When their results are not included, standards are below national averages yet above average for similar schools. The inspection shows that pupils make good progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 through good teaching.
124. By the age of seven pupils add and subtract to ten and a few attain higher than this and have satisfactory mental skills. However, most still need fingers when adding and subtracting and cannot yet work out sums in their heads. A small minority can double two digit numbers but this is not usual in this year. Pupils have sound understanding of data handling. Pupils do not spend enough time learning numeracy skills in mathematics lessons in Year 1 and this is lowering standards. In Year 1 not enough time is allowed at the beginning of numeracy sessions for pupils to develop their mental skills. This improves in Year 2 and the arrangements where most of Year 2 pupils are taught together improves pupils' progress from that in Year 1.

125. By the age of eleven in mathematics, about two thirds have sound understanding of the four rules of number and can add and subtract decimals to several places with reasonable speed and accuracy. They understand how decimals can be converted to percentages and are able to find different approaches for solving problems. Higher attaining pupils apply their numeracy to problems well, for example for exchanging foreign currency. However, few reach higher levels. Lower attainers, overall, are slower and do not have the same flexible and quick approaches when solving problems.
126. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. However, it is too variable in Key Stage 1 and, as a result, unsatisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in Year 1 and good in Key Stage 2. This is confirmed by examination of pupils' previous work. In a good Year 2 lesson pupils learned well through effective whole class teaching that enthused them. The teacher's approach to mental work, where pupils worked in teams on the "Block Busters' game", captured the interests of pupils. There was enough time for pupils to develop their mental skills and learn from each other. The teacher's class management was good and maximum time was spent on learning. Where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory there was not enough time for mental work, expectations were too low and pupils spent much of the lesson on colouring activities that did not develop their mathematical thinking.
127. In Key Stage 2 the teaching was mainly good and it was very good in Year 5. Examination of pupils' previous work also showed teachers' expectations are often high in Key Stage 2 and pupils learn well. Behaviour management is often good and teachers' subject knowledge is good. The setting arrangements for Year 5 and 6 are raising attainment. In the very good Year 5 lesson observed, behaviour management was very skilful and the teacher engaged the pupils' interest by ensuring numeracy was relevant to pupils' lives. When pupils were taught to change analogue to digital times, this was made relevant through the need for pupils to understand how to work out local bus timetables. The lesson was well paced and time was used effectively. There was enough time for instruction, questioning, time for pupils to explain their answers and very good opportunities for pupils to work in small teams and learn from each other. Work was well matched to pupils' prior attainment throughout. The very good learning in this class is raising attainment. In satisfactory lessons, whole class sessions are often brisk and effective strategies include timed oral work when pupils try to beat the clock. However, the pace in learning mathematics sometimes slackens during group work. In satisfactory lessons there is sometimes not enough challenge for higher attainers. Classroom assistants support pupils' learning well, especially for those with special educational needs.
128. The quality of teaching is similar to the previous inspection, when it had shortcomings in Key Stage 1 although was it was judged good in Key Stage 2. However, 25 per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2 at the time of the previous inspection and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection. The school has made good progress in improving curriculum planning. Opportunities for investigative mathematics have improved and are now satisfactory.
129. The co-ordinator's role has improved and the coordination of mathematics is good overall, although it is stronger at Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and planning and sets a strong example to other staff by his own mathematics teaching. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is successful overall and at Key Stage 2 is raising standards well from pupils' original low starting point. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and has attended a long 20 day course. Assessment is good and the results are often used satisfactorily to plan work. The co-ordinator has initiated a system for analysing assessments and the results are used to redress any teaching or pupils' knowledge weaknesses. The school uses the QCA optional assessment tasks for this. However, the close monitoring of standards and teaching is not as good in Key Stage 1 and needs more rigour.
130. The co-ordinator has a comprehensive action plan and an allocated budget. He has a vision for the future. The next initiative is to have parents involved. The co-ordinator believes this may be problematic but hopes to start with a Foundation Maths day workshop this term for parents.

## SCIENCE

131. The findings of the inspection are that standards are well below average in Year 2. This finding is an improvement on the assessments made by teachers in science at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, which were very low compared with national averages and well below the results for similar schools. Early analysis of the 2001 assessments made by teachers for the

current Year 2 show improvements although standards are still well below expectations. The findings of this inspection show standards are lower than the ones attained by pupils at the time of the previous inspection, which judged standards to be "just below average". However, pupils were making satisfactory progress then as they are now. This is because pupils' attainment on entry has declined since the previous inspection and, for the current Year 2 pupils, was very low. No differences were observed between the standards reached by boys and girls in the lessons observed. However, 2000 assessments made by teachers showed that nearly all boys attained Level 2 but less than a half of all girls did so.

132. The findings of the inspection are that standards are well below average in Year 6, which is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection. In the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 in science, standards were very low and well below average compared with similar schools. However, these results include the standards reached by pupils with English as an additional language, who entered late in Key Stage 2, with little English. When these results, are discounted, the overall attainment of 2000 Year 6 pupils, although well below national averages, was average compared with similar schools. The provisional results for 2001 Year 6 tests show that standards remain low however, the impact of a significant minority who entered late in Years 5 and 6 with high level special educational needs or limited English has depressed pupils' results at Level 4. There has been a slight rise in the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Over the past four years standards have varied. Immediately after the last inspection, standards improved from the well below average standards achieved in 1996 until by 1998 they were below average. However, by 2000 they had declined to very low because of the effect of the results of pupils with English as an additional language who took the tests in 1999 and 2000. This inspection finds no significant difference between the standards and progress of boys and girls.
133. Pupils' overall achievement by the time they leave at eleven is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress overall with very good progress in Year 4 where there are many opportunities for learning scientific language through practical and small group work. The more capable pupils make unsatisfactory progress through irregular opportunities to learn at higher levels. Pupils apply information and communication technology well especially in Year 6, when pupils write simple procedures for switching circuits on and off, and in Year 4 when pupils record the results of experiments using a very good range of data handling software.
134. The findings of the inspection show that at both key stages standards in scientific knowledge are better than in investigative science. The previous inspection found weaknesses in investigative science. The school has only partly addressed this weakness. In Key Stage 1 there is still more to be done to ensure pupils can take responsibility for their own actions when making their own tests. In Key Stage 2, pupils' ability to plan and test experiments they themselves have designed does not develop evenly. These skills develop very well in Year 4 but, in Years 5 and 6, not enough time is devoted to developing pupils' independent enquiry skills.
135. By Year 2, pupils respond to suggestions of how to find things out and are developing an awareness of how to make careful experiments. They are able to measure satisfactorily and record results using mathematics when closely supervised. However, many cannot work independently without direct supervision and do not suggest ideas for their own tests. Although most have satisfactory knowledge of all aspects of science, a minority has a very limited scientific vocabulary and these pupils cannot readily explain their scientific understanding.
136. By Year 6, most pupils can suggest sensible ideas for tests and they have satisfactory understanding of the fair test. Pupils are able to plan an experiment. Although many can conduct experiments without the need for direct supervision, about one third have difficulty with this. Pupils use mathematics adequately for collecting results and searching for patterns. About two thirds make satisfactory predictions and explain these in terms of scientific knowledge. The remainder does not do this well enough or readily seek patterns or explain results with enough fluency. Pupils' ability to evaluate their work and suggest improvements is also a weaker aspect by Year 6.
137. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. It is stronger in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. This is a similar judgement to that

made by the school's previous inspection. This judgement is made through observing lessons as well as the examination of pupils' previous work. In both key stages, teachers' planning is good. In Key Stage 1, teachers regularly develop pupils' knowledge through practical work and provide opportunities for pupils to learn through listening and watching as well as experimenting. However, teachers do not plan for pupils to systematically acquire the skills which are needed for them to work independently. In a satisfactory lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3, the teacher demonstrated well how rubber bands in catapults can store energy for making small objects move. She had high expectations of the need for pupils to use mathematics accurately. However, during practical work the groups were very large and classroom assistants sometimes over directed the pupils. Pupils do not learn to gradually think for themselves in Key Stage 1.

138. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning during the inspection was very good in one lesson, good in another and satisfactory in the rest. However, examination of pupils' work indicates that teaching is very good in Year 4 and mainly satisfactory in Years 3, 5 and 6. In Year 4, pupils are given challenging investigative work and, over a series of lessons, they gradually build their enquiry skills. The teacher also plans carefully for teaching scientific knowledge rigorously in a way that is relevant to pupils. The teacher's own subject knowledge is very good. In a very good Year 4 lesson, the teacher demonstrated how lubricants can prevent the mechanical parts of a bicycle rubbing together. Strong features of this lesson were the teacher's high expectations of what pupils can achieve, his ability to teach well through instruction, questioning or problem solving. The teacher ensured pupils planned their own practical work carefully before working in small teams on solving the problem of which lubricant was the best. The teacher successfully encouraged pupils to think creatively and to develop systematic experimental procedures when they measured forces with Newton meters. His class management was very good.
139. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils planned an experiment to test whether the brightness of bulbs was affected by different electrical components, for example the type of wire used. The teacher introduced scientific vocabulary very well and had high expectations for group planning tasks. However, there was a considerable amount of writing during the planning activity. This reduced the time for practical work thus slowing down the development of pupils' scientific skills. Examination of pupils' books in Years 5 and 6 also shows that too much writing is copied, all pupils sometimes work at the same level and the needs of higher attaining pupils are not met. In both these classes, there is not enough emphasis on pupils developing rigorous practical skills and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply mathematics to science.
140. The co-ordinator has held the post for one year. His own teaching sets a very good standard for other teachers and he has excellent knowledge and skills. His monitoring role is developing well as he supports and monitors teachers in their planning and teaching. However, he has not yet examined pupils' books in depth or taught alongside other teachers. The school has planned carefully how to use the guidelines produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. However, the progression in experimental skills needs to be made clearer and teachers need more support in this. Assessment is satisfactory overall although lesson planning does not always take account of the needs of higher attaining pupils. There has not been any recent practical training for improving teachers' subject knowledge, although several, more recently trained teachers have up-to-date subject knowledge.

## ART AND DESIGN

141. Only one lesson was seen and there was a limited quantity and range of pupils' work available. However, the evidence from scrutiny of work in books and displays, and from discussion with pupils about their knowledge and experience, indicates that standards are well below average at both key stages. This represents a decline since the previous inspection when standards were found to be in line with the national expectation. Pupils' limited rate of progress shows that their achievement is unsatisfactory at both key stages, and the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.
142. In the one lesson seen, the quality of both teaching and learning was satisfactory. Year 2 pupils designed and cut out contrasting building shapes and assembled them to form a simple collage. This practical activity engaged the pupils' interest. In consequence, they worked productively and with enjoyment on the task, taking pride in their work, although their design and cutting skills were immature. The class teacher and learning support assistants helped and encouraged pupils so that they improved their skills, including those who used a computer program to design houses.
143. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that Year 1 pupils create simple symmetrical butterfly shapes, and Year 3 pupils produce pictures in three dimensions to illustrate animals' use of camouflage. In Year 4, pupils paint woodland, desert and seashore habitats and use collage techniques to represent journeys. They also use a computer program to create scenes in the style of Seurat's work, and these are of good quality. Year 5 pupils use textiles in their collage designs, and in Year 6 they create simple silhouette portraits. No evidence was seen of modelling work in three dimensions, although Year 5 pupils are given the opportunity to attend sessions at a nearby secondary school, where they work with techniques including tapestry, and making mugs from clay. Pupils have also benefited from working with a group of visual and performance artists through the multicultural 'Map' project. They used a variety of techniques, including printing, to produce a well designed and executed wall hanging that has been displayed in the Dover museum.
144. From the work seen, including observational drawing in sketchbooks, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in their skills. They also demonstrate limited knowledge of the work of artists, and have been given little opportunity to work with a range of media and techniques. This is related to shortcomings in teachers' expertise in art and design and in their limited expectations of pupils' attainment and progress. An attractive work by a local artist is given a prominent position in the school. However, representations of other works by famous artists that are displayed around the school are not labelled and pupils do not know their titles or the names of the artists.
145. The co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for the subject, and is planning future development. There has been some recent improvement in implementing a recommended scheme of work, but this is not yet making a satisfactory impact on standards. Work in art and design is often meaningfully linked to learning in other subjects. However, the knowledge and skills for art itself are not rigorously developed.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

146. During the inspection the teaching of design and technology was observed only in Years 2 and 3. Judgements are based on these observations, on the analysis of pupils' work throughout the school, discussions with pupils and teachers and on the school's planning and records. The evidence shows that standards are below average by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress, which is similar to that made at the time of the school's last inspection. Pupils design and make with a satisfactory range of materials, including textiles, food, construction materials and electrical components. They apply science and mathematics satisfactorily but do not apply art well enough.
147. By the end of Year 2, pupils' ability to generate and represent ideas as well as their practical skills are average. However, their ability to evaluate and improve their work as it develops is below average. The quality of finish is neat but not always visually attractive. When designing and making moving models using wheels and axles or simple pneumatic devices, pupils generate ideas and show their ideas satisfactorily. They measure, cut and join materials with

satisfactory precision and apply scientific knowledge of forces satisfactorily. Pupils are developing their knowledge of different products, for example photo frames and beginning to know that people have different preferences.

148. By the end of Year 6, pupils' designing and making skills are below average. Pupils successfully apply their knowledge of different products when designing and making. However, they have limited understanding of different users' needs or preferences and do not develop clear enough criteria for their products before designing and making. This limits their ability to create products that are suitable for their intended purposes. For example, when designing and making slippers for toddlers, from textiles, pupils investigated slipper designs well but did not find out the needs of the person the slippers were meant for. Pupils communicate ideas and plan ahead carefully. They cut, shape and join materials satisfactorily and produce neat and satisfactory end products. Pupils evaluate their work during the designing and making process, but the lack of clear initial design criteria limits their ability to do this. Pupils apply science well. In the Year 6 slipper project a strong feature was how pupils applied their knowledge of friction well and made non-slip soles. Pupils' limited art skills prevent pupils making products that have a strong visual appeal.
149. The quality of teaching and learning observed, and from analysis of pupils' previous work, is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall and teachers ensure pupils learn through focused practical tasks before designing and making. This ensures pupils develop the necessary knowledge and practical skills. However, there is not enough attention to developing pupils' understanding of users' needs at Key Stage 2. There is a sound balance of projects for developing pupils' skills with a range of materials and pupils develop their understanding of structures, moving parts and electrical components satisfactorily. In Year 4, some particularly good work was seen when pupils designed and made pop up books. Plans for burglar alarms and mechanical moving models for Years 4 and 6 are appropriate. Year 3 pupils develop their understanding of structures satisfactorily when designing and making photo frames. However, in Year 5, pupils' end products are not always of high enough quality, especially when pupils make musical instruments and textile hangings. Not all teachers have had adequate subject training and this limits their expectations of what pupils can achieve.
150. There are sound opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening, subject vocabulary and writing. Opportunities are missed in ICT, for example, for using data handling to record people's preferences although there are satisfactory computer control links. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress whilst those with English as an additional language make good progress through good opportunities to develop their speaking and vocabulary through small group work. More capable pupils make unsatisfactory progress, through few opportunities for higher level learning.
151. The subject co-ordinator, who has recently taken over the role has appropriate subject knowledge. He monitors teachers' lesson plans and work, although has not yet monitored teaching. Assessment is satisfactory although higher attaining pupils' needs are not met. Overall, the subject meets National Curriculum requirements and resources are satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

152. No lessons were seen in this subject during the period of the inspection. Judgement about standards, teaching and learning have been based on scrutiny of teachers' planning, pupils' work and discussion with pupils. Standards in geography are below average throughout the school and pupils at both key stages make sound progress. Progress is similar to the previous inspection although standards were then average. By the age of seven, pupils show developing knowledge about their own locality, including physical and human features. They understand some of the reasons why their area attracts tourists and record on a graph the different forms of transport to France. Year 2 pupils have studied weather and climate, identify appropriate clothing for different seasons, and record their own observations of daily weather as well as newspaper and radio forecasts. Year 6 pupils demonstrate knowledge of mountain areas in different parts of the world, the earth's composition, and the immediate and long term effects of earthquakes on people's lives. Pupils' mapwork skills are underdeveloped, and there is little evidence of pupils developing their skills and knowledge through practical fieldwork.

153. Evidence of the progress made by pupils shows that the quality of both teaching and learning is satisfactory in geography. Teachers' planning takes good account of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study to ensure that pupils make satisfactory gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding. There are good examples of teachers using ICT well to support learning including, for example, Year 2 pupils' recording on a graph how pupils within the class travel to school. Work in geography is not used well enough to promote literacy skills. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write their own ideas and observations in continuous prose, as opposed to copying notes or completing simple words or phrases on worksheets.
154. There has been sound development since the last inspection in implementing an improved scheme of work, and in assessing pupils' standards and progress. There has also been significant improvement in procedures for the coordinator to monitor the school's provision. This subject is managed satisfactorily by the coordinator, who has correctly identified strengths and weaknesses within the school's provision and planned appropriate ~~are~~ for development to improve performance. The school's geography resources are adequate, and the co-ordinator is giving a priority to ensuring there are appropriate resources for all elements of the revised curriculum.

## HISTORY

155. During the inspection lessons were observed in Years 4, 5 and 6. Judgements are also based on the analysis of pupils' work throughout the school, discussions with pupils and teachers and on the school's planning and records. On the basis of this evidence, pupils attain standards that are below average in both key stages. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Standards in Year 6 are below average, despite pupils' good progress, because there are several pupils in Year 6 who entered very late Key Stage 2 who have high level special educational needs in literacy. These pupils do not yet select their own information and structure it well enough. Their limited literacy skills often prevent this. This reduces the proportion of pupils attaining average standards despite all, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, making good progress.
156. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils often place events in order but a significant minority cannot explain how their lives are different to those in the past. Their historical vocabulary is satisfactory overall and they ask and answer questions about the past. Most are beginning to identify differences between ways of life at different times. Pupils often understand changes in their own lives and that of their families, including grandparents. Pupils are beginning to understand some main events from British history and the wider world, for example the story of the gunpowder plot and the Olympic Games. However, there is little attainment at higher levels and limited literacy restricts recording.
157. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils' chronological understanding has greatly developed. In the Year 6 lesson observed pupils listened to a narrative of Drake's life and, during the reading, successfully charted significant dates on a time line. In a Year 5 lesson pupils were involved in a world study of a past society. Pupils showed good knowledge of ancient Egyptian gods. Pupils were very observant and interested in the pictorial evidence and were quick to spot items and show initiative in pointing things out. The pupils talked knowledgeably about the gods and the similarities between them. They knew the meaning of 'mummified'. In group work, less able pupils had an appropriate writing frame to support their writing of a chronological report of the journey to the underworld. Less able pupils know and understand the concept of BC (before Christ), but do not know AD (anno domini) by Year 6.
158. Pupils use computers well for history and in Key Stage 2 use the Internet for researching for information. This also develops their literacy skills. Reading and writing skills are developed well through history and lower attaining pupils' work is well matched to their previous attainment in literacy. Numeracy is applied satisfactorily to help pupils understand large numbers.
159. Evidence from pupils' work in Key Stage 1 shows teaching is mainly satisfactory. Pupils often learn through handling practical historical objects or from stories of historical characters. Writing tasks are usually satisfactorily matched to pupils' needs. Teaching and learning are good in Key Stage 2. Teachers plan their lessons and manage pupils well and make good use of drama in order to make history relevant. Teachers ensure pupils know the purposes of lessons and examination of pupils' work shows teachers provide good feedback on how pupils

can improve their work. Written marking is often good. For example, for an above average pupil in Year 6, the teacher wrote: "Be careful you write information correctly. In the years after 1958 the march was from Aldermaston to London."

160. In a good Year 4 class pupils were taught empathy for the poor people in Tudor England. The lesson was very well planned to provide an impact for all the class. Stark black and white images of Third World scenes were projected onto a screen to the accompaniment of interesting, haunting music. This impressive opening immediately captured pupils' attention. Pupils were then asked to make the connection from poverty and deprivation in our world to the more abstract idea of poverty in Tudor England. A further dramatic activity, 'hot seating', was used to enable some pupils to take the role of a Tudor character so that other pupils could pose questions to the chosen Tudor character in role. There was excellent use of pupils for role modelling and the pupils chosen were able to give full answers based on accurate knowledge. Pupils of all abilities learned very well in this part of the lesson. However, the plenary was short and limited pupils' ability to evaluate what they had learned.
161. The co-ordination is good and the co-ordinator has had training to develop her role. The scheme of work and assessment are good and are based on the QCA scheme of work. The co-ordinator advises colleagues and checks planning although has not monitored teaching. However, she scrutinises standards of work from three levels of ability in every class to check teaching and learning. The school has a small number of historical artefacts and makes good use of the local education authority's loan service for borrowing more. The school creates opportunities for some historical visits, for example, to Dover Castle. The Year 6 residential visit to the Isle of Wight has a good opportunity for historical studies in its programme.
162. Since the previous inspection, curriculum planning and assessment have improved well. Teaching has also improved as no unsatisfactory lessons were observed during this inspection whereas there were some shortcomings in Key Stage 2 previously.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

163. By the end of Year 2 standards are average but are below average by the end of Year 6. However, pupils are making good progress through the school through good teaching. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has been limited by the fact that nearly a half of the pupils in Year 6 were late arrivals to the school, including a significant minority who arrived in Years 5 or 6 with high level literacy special educational needs. Also 15 of the pupils who have ever formed part of the Year 6 cohort have since left. Since the previous inspection, the school has done well to maintain average standards in Key Stage 1 despite the current high mobility and lower attainment on entry. Since the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in improving ICT. There have been good improvements in the number of up-date computers, teachers' subject knowledge and satisfactory improvements in control technology. The school has introduced very good assessment procedures and is using the QCA scheme of work well. Both girls and boys make good progress and apply their information technology skills to English and mathematics well and satisfactorily to the rest of the curriculum.
164. By the age of seven, pupils generate ideas in the form of graphics, for example, when designing pictures for a house. Pupils have satisfactory word processing skills and type short captions for bike ride pictures when showing their feelings about a character who said "Nobody wanted to play with me". Pupils also type out stories about "Princess Smarty Pants" although few were observed to develop their thinking as they wrote. Some pupils' limited literacy skills slows the development of their keyboard skills. Pupils can change font sizes and colours and improve their presentation when writing simple sentences about "Why I like writing" or "Why I like dinner time". Pupils show mathematical data in the form of simple tables, for example for making block graphs to show the kinds of birds they have seen in Aycliffe. Pupils control the school's programmable toy "Roamer" by creating sets of instructions and are confident computer users. Pupils are learning to use email and, with the help of a classroom assistant, sent email getwell messages to their class teacher who was recovering from a broken ankle.
165. By the age of eleven whilst about two thirds of all pupils attain satisfactory standards across the full range of the National Curriculum, the rest, mainly late entrants, have weak word processing skills. Most are able to combine graphics with text for presenting their stories for the best impact. When pupils write book reviews, for example about a family torn by divorce, pupils are able to capture the mood of the writing well through their sensitive use of colour,

fonts and text size. Pupils have sound awareness of the importance of ICT in every day life especially in control technology. Pupils write simple control procedures for switching electric motors on and off, controlling traffic lights and operating temperature sensors. However, this is often a weaker area for late entrants who entered with low level skills. Pupils steadily build skills for using email and the Internet. Some good information retrieval was seen when Year 6 pupils researched for information about the River Thames on the Internet in geography. Pupils successfully represent and analyse mathematical information gained through science experiments. Pupils in Year 6 make good progress in using spreadsheets and also select different graphs, including line graphs, for best comparisons. Pupils in Year 4 achieved high standards when they used graphics to design and make pictures in the style of the famous artist, Georges Seurat, and created very beautiful pictures through their choice of colour and used spray effects to show very fine detail.

166. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school through well matched work and many opportunities to apply information and communication technology to their literacy and numeracy work. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress through frequent opportunities for them to use computers and to work in small teams. In Year 6 pupils have literacy partners for ICT which is improving lower attaining pupils' word processing skills. However, opportunities for very high level work are not yet consistent through the school and very able pupils are not yet systematically identified.
167. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Although only one full information and communication technology lesson was observed during the inspection this judgement is made through observing the teaching and learning in the context of other lessons, displays of pupils' work and examination of pupils' individual portfolios. A strong feature is how pupils learn to apply ICT skills to other subjects and make good progress in developing ICT skills. This is due to teachers' good subject knowledge, the rigorous monitoring of pupils' attainment and the good use of assessment to plan pupils' work. Good teaching and learning were observed in Year 5 in mathematics, when pupils with special educational needs worked out travel times using the twentyfour hour clock. In a good lesson in Year 4, the teacher used ICT time very effectively through clear class instruction. The teacher ensured there was an effective system for all pupils to develop their skills using the group of computers in the outside area. His high expectations, and very good class management, ensured pupils learned well how to select Clip Art for the task of creating a class fish tank. The quality of help provided by learning support assistants is good, assistants support pupils but do not do too much for them.
168. The scheme of work, and assessment procedures, are very good. The coordinator has very good subject knowledge and vision for improving the subject and provides very good support to other teachers. The monitoring of standards and teaching is good. The subject meets National Curriculum requirements well. Resources are satisfactory and are being updated.

## MUSIC

169. Only two lessons were seen during the period of the inspection, and there was no written or other recorded evidence of pupils' work in this subject. As a result, there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about standards and the quality of teaching or learning. Teaching was satisfactory in the two lessons seen and pupils made sound gains in their skills and knowledge. Year 2 pupils, for example, played a game to develop their listening skills. This involved passing a 'hat' around the class circle. When the singing rhyme finished, the pupil holding the 'hat' followed a written instruction to make a particular kind of sound with an instrument. The pupils enjoyed taking part in the game, especially singing the rhyme, and those who used an instrument to demonstrate a sound did so confidently and accurately. Learning support assistants helped pupils with special educational needs effectively to ensure they could participate fully. This was a carefully planned lesson that met the needs and interests of the pupils. As a result, they made sound progress and could correctly identify whether the sounds played were loud, soft, slow, etc.
170. Year 5 and 6 pupils took part in a singing lesson planned to focus on diction, singing in two parts, repetition, answering and pitch. The teacher had good levels of expertise in music and was able to provide strong support for the group by use of his own singing voice and guitar accompaniment. The pupils showed positive attitudes towards singing a challenging song, and their performance was of good quality in accuracy of pitch and timing, and singing in two parts. However, some appropriate points in the planning for improving performance were not

implemented in the lesson. The equality of opportunity for some pupils, and the ethos of the lesson in which pupils clearly enjoyed performing together, was adversely affected by inappropriate withdrawal of individuals for reading. Discussion with Year 6 pupils shows they have knowledge of some musical terms such as 'pitch' and 'tempo' and with the work of famous composers. They have also had opportunities to compose their own work, including one in 'Rap' form.

171. The subject has been satisfactorily managed although the coordinator has recently left. As a result, the extracurricular music activities have not been provided during the current term. There are appropriate procedures for monitoring standards and progress, and for planning future development to improve school performance. There has been improvement since the last inspection in implementing a recommended scheme of work, and the curriculum meets statutory requirements for the subject. This subject was the focus of a Small Schools' Support initiative last year in which advanced skills teachers worked closely with the school to develop teachers' expertise. The curriculum is enhanced through opportunities for pupils to participate in performances including, for example, at Christmas. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, and pupils benefit from having a dedicated music room for their lessons.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

172. During the inspection one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1 and three were observed in Key Stage 2. In these lessons standards were average in Year 2 and at Key Stage 2. No lessons were observed in Year 6 during the inspection. The school has an indoor swimming pool and discussions with teachers show requirements for swimming are met, although at the time of the inspection the swimming pool was out of action. Progress, including that made by pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. These judgements are similar to the previous inspection except progress is now judged to be good. There are no differences in the standards achieved between boys and girls.
173. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is good. In the Years 2 and 3 lesson observed the teaching was very good and achieved by the teacher providing very clear instructions for the pupils and managing their behaviour very well. The teacher challenged and inspired pupils to improve their technique of underarm throwing. Pupils of all abilities listened well, applied much physical effort to their work and tried very hard to improve their skills. The teacher also taught warm up, cool down and lesson evaluation very efficiently. Time and resources were well used. Pupils learned very well and the teacher assessed their work in order to use this information for planning their future work. Opportunities for pupils to learn how to evaluate and improve their work have improved well since the previous inspection.
174. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was good in all the three lessons observed in Years 4 and 5. In Year 4 pupils worked on hop, skip and jump sequences. The teacher's good subject knowledge was evident in the way he motivated pupils and made learning relevant to real life by explaining how hop, skip and jump is an Olympic event called triple jump. The short warm up session was taught well and expectations of pupils were high. The teacher's good demonstrations of arm swings and balancing on the balls of feet were effective. His own full involvement in the warm up also set the pupils' sights high. In Year 5 hop, skip and jump was also taught well in outdoor games. Good features of the teaching were how skills introduced in an indoor physical education were transferred to games. Again the references to national champions ensured pupils saw the relevance of their learning. Skills were taught and learned well. In both sessions self-evaluation skills were well taught and teachers encouraged the pupils to strive to improve their skills. Throughout, class management was strong and there was an appropriate balance between instruction and demonstration for group and individual work.
175. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the subject coordination, curriculum planning and assessment very well. The subject is very well coordinated by a teacher who specialised in physical education in her initial training. The policy and planning are very good and adapted from the guidelines produced by the QCA. Planning is fine-tuned to the school and takes good account of classes of split age groups. An appropriate and rigorous action plan highlights what has been done and what improvements are needed. The coordinator has since monitored each part of physical education lessons throughout the school. Resources have been audited, arranged well with accurate labelling, added to and their provision monitored. High standards are insisted upon. All staff change for physical education and there

are appropriate safety rules for pupils. The school currently plans to offer, in the next school year, a number of clubs, namely dance, football, and netball. The coordinator is, herself, a national netball player. The subject has improved well since the previous inspection, for example for adventurous activities including orienteering in Key Stage 2.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

176. During the inspection the teaching of religious education was observed in Years 1, 2 and 4. Judgements are based on these observations, on the analysis of pupils' work throughout the school, discussions with pupils and teachers and on the school's planning and records. Pupils attain standards that are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus and progress is good.
177. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know a range of religious stories, including some from the Old Testament, and many can relate these to their experience. Their awareness of personal relationships is well developed and they appreciate the importance of being kind and helping others. They are familiar with some features of religious festivals such as Christmas, Ramadan and Eid and they are aware that people have different beliefs. Pupils know that artefacts such as the Bible, cross, cup, candles and prayer book are special and name their special groups.
178. By the end of Key Stage 2 most have a satisfactory understanding of several religions as well as Christianity, including Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. Pupils are respectful of beliefs and traditions distinct from their own. They are strongly aware of the importance of care for others and for their environment. The pupils have a sound understanding of different places of worship and know some local places of worship, including the Kingdom Hall in Folkestone (Jehovah Witnesses) and St Paul's in Dover. Pupils' understanding of signs and symbols of occasions, of Passover, Diwali, commandments and rules, develops well in Key Stage 2. By Year 6 pupils can explain symbolism in religious practices and traditions.
179. Examination of pupils' previous work, discussions with pupils and the lessons observed show that teaching is good. Teachers make every effort to ensure lessons are meaningful to pupils. The two lessons observed contributed well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In the Year 1 and 2 lesson observed, teaching was good. Pupils learned about leaders in preparation for a lesson on King David as a religious leader. The chair of governors had been invited to speak to the children about her role as leader of the governors. Her clear explanations and ability to explain her role in ways the pupils could understand led to good learning. Here the young pupils were able to relate to a real leader and learn about her role as a friend, a supporter of the school, someone who can tell the truth about situations. The pupils were able to ask questions and relate a general understanding of leadership to their own responsibilities in the classroom and school. Apart from this lesson setting the scene for the next lesson on King David, it helped the pupils to see a good role model.
180. In the Year 4 lesson observed, pupils also posed questions. Here the purpose was to create questions on Hinduism to inform pupils' knowledge at the end of their topic. The teacher facilitated a discussion of similarities and differences with Christianity. There was good use of the word, 'faith' to explain the concept of belief in God. Pupils were able to clearly communicate their ideas and feelings and to use appropriate terminology to explain beliefs and practices. The teacher shared information about his own religious practice and spoke about the meaning of 'Amen' as 'I agree'. One pupil knew this information and most pupils were able to express thoughtful views, to communicate ideas and feelings clearly and to pose questions. The teacher brought the topic alive through his ability to make it meaningful to pupil. He used a good range of Hindu artefacts and gave clear and sensitive explanations and, as a result, pupils were able to talk of Hindu gods and of Hinduism. Pupils knew that when Hindus want to welcome gods they pray, prepare dishes and visit their shrine. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils in the two lessons observed was good.
181. Pupils' books show Year 1 and 2 pupils study appropriate topics on what it means to belong, for example to a family, school, on festivals of Christmas, Easter, Ramadan, Eid, and biblical figures. Work at the end of Key Stage 2 includes Jewish and Muslim cultures and the Christian festival of Easter. The combination of faith through art was less evident in the inspection. Pupils are receiving their entitlement, to religious education and work is usually differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. The curriculum closely follows the Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Christianity is, therefore, taught for the greater part of time

although pupils also acquire knowledge and understanding of Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. Overall there have been good improvements since the previous inspection as pupils' progress is now carefully monitored and pupils make good progress. The school has also improved assessment procedures and this has improved the match of pupils' work.