

INSPECTION REPORT

High Hurstwood C of E Primary School

Uckfield

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique Reference Number: 114507

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Newell

Reporting inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston

OFSTED Inspector Number 8402

Dates of inspection: 29th November – 2nd December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707275

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school	Infant and Junior
Type of control	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
School address	Chillies Lane High Hurstwood Uckfield East Sussex TN22 4AD
Telephone number	01825 733231
Fax number	01825 733231
Appropriate authority	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors	Mr Michael Cooper
Date of previous inspection	June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Vivien Johnston, Registered Inspector	English Information technology Art Design and technology Geography History Special educational needs	Attainment and progress Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Teaching The curriculum and assessment The efficiency of the school
Libby Dickson Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Ken Parry	Mathematics Science Music Physical education Religious education Under fives Equal opportunities	Leadership and management Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The inspection contractor was:

Qualitas Education Consultants Ltd
Wickham Court
Layhams Road
West Wickham
Kent BR4 9HH
Tel. 0181 777 1103

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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average.
- The children who are under five make very good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils behave very well, and respond very positively to the stimulating and challenging teaching they often receive.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support in class, and are taught very well when withdrawn for extra help with literacy, and so they make very good progress.
- The school has a very good ethos. It provides very well for pupils' personal development and welfare, and encourages high standards of academic achievement.
- Strong support from parents and the local community contributes much to pupils' education.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Pupils do not do as well as they should in writing, and in presenting their work carefully.
- Teachers generally do not mark pupils’ work with informative comments, to help them do better in future, and do not use the information from marking to ensure that pupils make steady progress from year to year.
- The accommodation is too small and inconvenient, and affects pupils’ learning.

The weaknesses are greatly outweighed by what the school does well, and the school is already working to improve them. The governors’ action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school’s improvement since the last inspection three years ago is good. Results in the national assessments of English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen, and standards are now generally above average. The monitoring of teaching has improved, the amount of classroom support has been increased and a safety issue concerning access to the classrooms has been dealt with. The accommodation remains unsatisfactory, affecting pupils’ progress, despite the school’s efforts to minimise this and to gain the permission and funding to improve it. Other improvements which have contributed to raising standards include the successful introduction of the literacy hour, the national numeracy strategy, and revised curriculum planning for science. Resources for learning are better, though still insufficient. The training and support provided for staff, to develop their professional expertise, is good. The quality of teaching is currently much better than at the time of the last inspection, although long-term weaknesses which have affected some pupils’ progress have yet to be resolved. The school is well placed to make further improvements because of the effective way in which it is led and managed.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
English	A	A
Mathematics	A	A
Science	A	A

<i>Key</i>	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

This table shows that results in the tests were well above average in all three subjects in 1999, compared both to schools nationally and to similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals).

The standard of pupils’ work in English, mathematics and science is above average. Pupils’ results in the national tests were higher. This was partly because the pupils were prepared well for the tests, and partly because the tests cover a narrower range of the curriculum than is assessed in relation to the overall standard of pupils’ work. The standards achieved in religious education are above what is expected at the end of Key Stage 2, whereas in information technology standards are in line with what is expected.

By the age of five, children’s attainment is well above what is expected for their age. They make very good progress overall, particularly in language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social development and creative development.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Very good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Very good	Good	Good
Science	N/A	Good	Good
Information technology	N/A	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Religious education	N/A	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Other subjects	Very good	Good	Good

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

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96% of the lessons observed, and in 46% it was very good or, occasionally, excellent. These are high proportions. It was less than satisfactory in 4% of the lessons. The most consistently effective teaching was of the children who are aged under five and the younger Key Stage 1 pupils.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. Pupils generally behave very well in class and at other times of the day. No exclusions in the last few years.
Attendance	Attendance is higher than the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is average.
Ethos*	Very good. A positive and caring atmosphere, very good relationships, and a shared commitment to raise standards even higher.
Leadership and management	Good. Highly effective leadership and management by the headteacher, with a clear vision for the future educational direction of the school. An effective governing body, and most subjects being managed well.
Curriculum	Very good for the under fives. Satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2, with good subject policies to guide teachers. The progress pupils should make from year to year is not planned for well enough.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good progress because of the highly effective support they are given.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development, and good for their cultural development. It makes a highly significant contribution to the school ethos.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good staffing. Improved, but still insufficient, resources for learning. Unsatisfactory accommodation holds back pupils' learning, for example in physical education.
Value for money	Sound. Above average standards on entry to the school and at the end of Key Stage 2, and satisfactory progress overall. Very good personal development and behaviour, and teaching which is now good.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has always been good, and is getting better and better. • Their children achieve high standards, and they are well informed about their children's progress. • The school is approachable, handles complaints well, and encourages parents to play an active part in its life. • Their children are encouraged to get involved in a wide range of activities. • Good homework is provided. • The school has a very good effect on their children's personal development, and standards of behaviour are very good. • Their children enjoy school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some wish that their children did not have so much to pursue after school. • The standard of teaching has varied too much in the middle years of the school. • Their children do not do well enough in

Inspectors' judgements support parents' views of the school. The school has many strengths, as parents observed. Teachers set appropriate homework and follow the school's policy, which reflects national guidelines. Standards are lower than they should be in writing. The quality of teaching has varied too much between the three classes, affecting some pupils' learning. However, the teaching of these pupils was consistently satisfactory at the time of the inspection, and they were making much better progress.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve pupils' achievement and their learning, the governing body and headteacher should:

- improve the teaching of writing in English, and raise teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' written work, including its presentation, in all subjects of the curriculum [13-14, 34, 92-94];
- improve the marking of pupils' work by providing informative comments which guide pupils' future learning. Improve the system of recording these assessments, and ensure it is implemented consistently, and use the information to monitor pupils' progress from year to year [37, 54];
- continue to use their best efforts to improve the accommodation, particularly the hall and classroom space, and the provision for outdoor play for the children who are under five [75,89] .

[Numbers in brackets refer to the paragraphs in which these weaknesses are discussed.]

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- pupils should be given more opportunities for using the recently improved computer facilities, so that they achieve higher standards in information technology [117, 119, 120-121];
- resources for learning should be further improved [76, 89];

- reports to parents on pupils' progress should be more informative about what pupils have learned and where they need to improve in future [61]
- governors should report annually to parents on the implementation of the action plan which will be drawn up following the inspection [65].

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. High Hurstwood Church of England Primary School has 74 pupils on roll. It is small compared to primary schools nationally, but is over-subscribed. Numbers in each year group vary, from the smallest (Year 6) which has 7 pupils to the largest (Year 4) which has 14 pupils. The proportion of boys to girls in each year group also varies, although there are an equal number of boys and girls in the school as a whole. 14 pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, a proportion of the total on roll similar to that for schools nationally. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is average. Some of the pupils live in High Hurstwood village, with many others travelling from the neighbouring areas. A higher proportion of pupils than in most schools come from above average socio-economic backgrounds. 7% of the pupils have free school meals, which is below average. All the pupils are white, and all speak English as their first language.
2. Children start school in the September before their fifth birthday, initially on a part-time basis. At the time of the inspection, in the infant class for reception children and Year 1 pupils, twelve children were under five, nine of them attending part-time. Almost all have experience of pre-school education. In most years, including the present year, the overall level of attainment on entry to the school is above average. However, the range of prior attainment is wide, and the overall picture varies considerably from year to year because relatively few children are admitted each year.
3. The school's aims are to:
 - develop to the full the intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic and physical potential of the children, and encourage their individuality;
 - teach the children in a happy school environment, so that love of learning continues throughout the individual's life;
 - ensure that all children acquire the essential basic skills of numeracy and literacy, the ability to learn independently and the confidence to cope with a fast changing technological world;
 - provide as many opportunities and facilities as possible for learning and creative activities through experience, experiment and discovery;
 - create an atmosphere of trust and understanding in which the child can enjoy a sense of security, self-discipline and self-esteem;
 - develop the children's ability to live and work harmoniously together in the realisation that all have an equally important contribution to make to the school community and society in general.
4. The school's current priorities are to improve on current standards of achievement through:
 - higher expectations of all pupils;
 - raising standards in mathematics;
 - improving pupils' writing skills;
 - the early identification of pupils experiencing difficulties with literacy and numeracy;
 - giving teachers and learning support assistants additional training in aspects of the literacy and numeracy strategies, including how to support pupils with special educational needs.
5. The targets the school has set for pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 are that 100% of the pupils will attain level 4 or higher in English and mathematics in 2000. In 2001, the targets are that 91% will attain level 4 or higher in English and 82% in mathematics. These targets were set appropriately as they have taken account of the varying levels of prior attainment of the year groups, which fluctuate more widely than in larger schools.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Tables giving details of the results of the 1999 assessments in English and mathematics are not included in this report as there were under 10 pupils in Year 2.

Attainment at Key Stage 2¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	5	6	11

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	4	4	6
	Total	9	9	11
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	82 (90)	82 (80)	100 (90)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	6	5	5
	Total	11	10	10
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	100 (90)	91 (90)	91 (90)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	3.9
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.5
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which was

	%
Very good or better	46
Satisfactory or better	96
Less than satisfactory	4

¹

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

6. On entry to the school, the attainment of the children who are under five is usually above average. It has varied from year to year, partly because the number admitted each year is small. The children make very good progress because of the very good teaching. By the time they are of statutory school age, the standards they achieve are well above average overall. Their achievements are well above average in their personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, and creative development. The children's achievements are above average in their knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.
7. Results in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above average in reading, above average in writing, and very high in mathematics. Compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results were well above average in reading, but below average in writing. The results in mathematics were well above the average for similar schools. In the teacher assessments in science, an above-average proportion gained the nationally expected Level 2, but the proportion achieving Level 3 was well below average.
8. At the end of Key Stage 2, results in English, mathematics and science were well above average, compared both with all schools nationally and with similar schools. The test results were higher than the standard of pupils' work at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 because pupils were well prepared for taking the tests, which measure a narrower range of the National Curriculum requirements than informs the judgement of pupils' overall standard of work.
9. The school met its 1999 targets for pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 1 except in writing. This was because writing was taught less well than reading. The targets for the end of Key Stage 2 were set at a very challenging level, but were not met. The small number of pupils in each year group means that the results can fluctuate considerably from year to year, and whether the school can meet its targets is sometimes affected by pupils joining or leaving the school. Key Stage 1 results have varied considerably each year, and the numbers involved are too low to identify reliable trends. The overall trend is of improvement at Key Stage 2.
10. The number of pupils taking the national tests is too small to identify trends in boys' and girls' results. The school's careful analysis of test data reveals no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls: they are achieving broadly similar standards, and making similar progress during both key stages.
11. Parents feel strongly that the school enables their children to achieve high standards. However, in their responses to the questionnaire, a few parents commented that their children have done less well because of weaknesses in teaching. Inspectors agree with parents' views. Pupils do well, particularly in English, mathematics and science, but differences in the quality of teaching have affected some pupils' progress during Key Stages 1 and 2.
12. Pupils of high, average and low prior attainment make broadly similar progress. The evidence of their previously-completed work and the lessons observed during the inspection showed that, overall, progress is good during Key Stage 1 and satisfactory during Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Their progress in English, mathematics and science enables them to attain standards which are close to the national average, as a result of the effective teaching and support they are given. This, and the similar progress made by boys and girls, reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunities, and indicates that it implements its policy successfully in these areas.
13. In English, standards are above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The standard of pupils' speaking and listening and reading is considerably higher than the standard of their writing. In their responses to the questionnaire, a few parents commented on the relative weakness in their children's writing. Pupils have not been expected to write independently at sufficient length, and so their progress in developing their writing skills is too slow. For example, higher-attaining pupils did not learn to paragraph their stories by the end of Key Stage 1. However, almost all learn to read fluently, and go on to become confident independent readers during Key Stage 2. Pupils of all ages listen with good understanding. They express their ideas clearly and articulately in discussion. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress during both key stages.
14. Pupils' learning in other subjects is considerably helped by their good skills in reading, and by their

confidence in oral activities. They learn well from discussion. Their vocabularies are wide, and they quickly learn to recognise and subsequently use subject-specialist language. Teachers provide good role models in this, and have high expectations of pupils' oral fluency and competence in reading. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their skills in reading for information, for example in research activities in history and geography. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are generally lower, both for the quality and quantity of what they produce in lessons and for its presentation. This affects the standards pupils achieve.

15. Standards in mathematics are above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils make good progress overall during Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress during Key Stage 2. However, the best progress has been made by the younger pupils at Key Stage 1 and the older pupils at Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, almost all pupils have a good knowledge of the place value of hundreds, tens and units. They use standard and non-standard units for measuring, and present and interpret information in block graphs well. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use a range of methods to calculate confidently and accurately. Average- and higher-attaining pupils deal confidently with percentages, and know how to calculate to two decimal places.

16. Standards of numeracy are above average, in mathematics and other subjects. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on teaching a variety of mental strategies for carrying out calculations. The youngest pupils have a variety of counting and sorting experiences, and are introduced effectively to the vocabulary they need to discuss number. Older pupils extend their number skills well in other subjects.

17. In science, standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above national expectations. The younger Key Stage 1 pupils build well on the very good start they have had as reception children. Despite slower progress later in Key Stage 1, overall pupils have made good progress. By the end of the key stage, they have a good understanding of the conditions necessary to support life. Most have a secure grasp of the basic principles of a fair test. Pupils' progress during Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. The best progress has been made by the older pupils. By the end of the key stage, pupils of all levels of prior attainment demonstrate good knowledge of living things, physical processes and the properties of different materials. They have recorded their learning accurately and methodically, and applied their knowledge well to practical investigations.

18. In information technology, standards are generally in line with the national expectation at the end of both key stages, with a strength in pupils' work in data handling, particularly through their work in science. Pupils make generally satisfactory progress during both key stages, although some have not had sufficient opportunities to use computers regularly. Older pupils have printed information from CD-ROMs, and occasionally word process their writing. They have made satisfactory progress in control work.

19. Standards are above the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils make good progress during both key stages, particularly in their ability to relate teachings and ideas to their own experiences. The oldest pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the significance of religious ceremonies for believers, and recognised how people's lives are affected by their faith. Pupils' written work shows not only great interest but also respect and wonder, for instance in their written reflections on the duties and responsibilities of being a godparent.

20. At Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in art, history and physical education, and satisfactory progress in design and technology, geography and music. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in history and physical education, and satisfactory progress in the other subjects. The subjects in which they make better progress are generally taught more regularly, or pupils' learning is helped by the extra-curricular activities provided after school. In all these subjects, pupils have made the most progress in the early years of Key Stage 1 and the latter years of Key Stage 2. The available evidence indicates that pupils achieve the standards expected for their age in art, design and technology, geography and music, whereas in history and physical education standards are above the expectations for their age.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

21. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good, as are relationships within the school community. Parents attending the meeting prior to the inspection commented that pupils behave very well, and that they have pride in the school. All the parents responding to the questionnaire agreed that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children, that the school achieves high standards of good behaviour and that their children like school. The findings of the inspection support their views.

22. Pupils' response in the lessons observed was considerably more positive than during the last inspection. Their response was satisfactory or better in about nine-tenths of the lessons observed. It was good in over four-fifths of the lessons, and very good in half of them. These are high proportions. There was, however, some variation between the classes, reflecting differences in the quality of teaching. The response of the children under five and the younger Key Stage 1 pupils was always good or better, and often it was very good. The older Key Stage 1 pupils and those in the lower years of Key Stage 2 were less consistently mature in their attitudes. They responded well when the class activities were managed firmly, for instance when the teacher enforced the rule that they should wait their turn quietly no matter how keen they were to answer the question. The older Key Stage 2 pupils' response was good or excellent in a high proportion of the lessons, about half of those observed. Occasionally, however, they were inattentive and did too little work in the time available. Similar weaknesses were found by the previous inspection, and, as now, were linked to weaknesses in teaching.

23. The children who are under five are very helpful and responsible. They take turns willingly. They listen and respond well to instructions, and are developing confidence in contributing to whole class activities such as by sharing their ideas.

24. Throughout the school, pupils have good learning skills. When teaching is very good, they are highly motivated, confident learners who tackle difficult work with enthusiasm. For example, some Year 6 pupils reading 'The Diary of Anne Frank' had read on further than they had been asked to for homework, and were intrigued by the challenging questions they were asked about the characters and their feelings. Pupils of all ages use resources independently and well to find answers for themselves during lessons, such as looking up vocabulary in dictionaries. Their contributions to discussions are thoughtful. They co-operate well in group and pair activities, sharing ideas and helping each other.

25. Most pupils are much less keen on writing than on reading and taking part in oral work. Orally, pupils explore their good ideas willingly and at length, but are reluctant to put the same effort into expressing themselves articulately in writing. This affects the standards they achieve. They also take too little care to present their written work neatly.

26. The pupils with special educational needs appreciate the support they are given in class, and try very hard to succeed. They very much enjoy the short sessions in which they are withdrawn from class work for individual or small group activities to develop their literacy. They generally do their homework conscientiously, and are proud of the improvement in their spelling and reading. They take a full part in lesson activities and are confident of success.

27. Pupils are considerate towards each other and adults. They are very polite, to other pupils as well as to adults. In the playground, the older pupils take good care of the younger. Pupils generally behave very well in class and at other times of the school day. They know and usually respect the school's high expectations of their behaviour. They are confident that any problems such as bullying, which is infrequent, will be dealt with fairly. No pupils have been excluded from school during the last few years. Pupils accept responsibilities willingly, and take their duties seriously. They are reliable and trustworthy, and show their initiative in sorting out any difficulties they encounter. Their mature attitudes and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings contribute much to the school's positive ethos.

Attendance

28. The rate of pupils' attendance at the school for the academic year 1998/99, at 95.6%, was higher than the national average. It is higher than the attendance rate reported by the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is in line with the national average. Pupils usually arrive at school on time. Registers are filled in appropriately and efficiently at the beginning of each session. Pupils' regular attendance and punctuality have a positive effect on their attainment and progress.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

29. The quality of teaching observed was much higher than reported by the last inspection. Teaching was satisfactory or better in almost all the lessons, and good or better in about three-quarters. It was very good, or

occasionally excellent, in almost half the lessons. These are high proportions of effective teaching.

30. However, in their responses to the questionnaire, some parents commented that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching for the different classes had affected their children's progress. The inspection found that parents are correct, but that the situation had improved recently. Pupils have a very good start in their first years at school, but subsequently were not challenged sufficiently and so made slower progress. More was expected of the older pupils in Key Stage 2, with the result that their effort and quality of work have been higher, and standards overall are above average by the end of the key stage. The teaching prepared pupils very effectively for the national tests of English, mathematics and science at the end of the key stage, and so results were well above average. At the time of the inspection, staffing changes had occurred, and teaching was almost always satisfactory or better. Pupils of all ages were making steady progress. The most consistently effective teaching was of the children who are aged under five and the younger Key Stage 1 pupils. Here, it was always good or better, and often very good. Overall, teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 was good. At Key Stage 1, it varied from excellent to satisfactory, and at Key Stage 2 from excellent to unsatisfactory.

31. The teaching of the under fives is very good. It is characterised by excellent subject knowledge and understanding of how young children learn, high expectations of their progress, and very good lesson planning. The planning provides well for the children to achieve the desirable learning outcomes and move on to work based on the National Curriculum. Classroom and special educational needs assistants are experienced and well-qualified, and provide very good teaching and learning support. Together with volunteer helpers, who are also committed and well-briefed, they make a significant contribution to the quality of the provision and to the children's very good progress. The learning environment is calm and orderly. Lesson activities are challenging and well organised. In an example of very good teaching of art, questioning was used very effectively to develop children's understanding of how an artist works. The children were reminded of their earlier work in colour mixing, enabling them to build on it well, and the discussion also made good links to their work on textures in a science-based activity. Explanations and demonstrations were very clear, emphasising the need to observe closely and teaching the techniques the children would need for their own portraits. As a result, the children made very good progress in their creative development.

32. Other strengths in the teaching of the under fives are that a very good range of teaching strategies is used, instilling confidence and encouraging the children to become independent learners. Resources are well managed. For example, in a guided play activity outside, children sorted varied objects into sets according to their weight and size. This successful lesson was cut short because of a shower of rain, and so it also exemplified the school's inadequate facilities for active play.

33. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is now good overall, as a result of recent improvement. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. The specialist teaching of music and of French to the older pupils is particularly effective because of the teachers' subject expertise. The re-grouping of pupils for some literacy and numeracy lessons enables teachers to meet pupils' needs more effectively than is sometimes possible in the mixed age classes. Throughout the school, teachers plan carefully for what they intend pupils to learn each lesson. Sometimes, they also plan well for the varying needs of pupils of different ages and levels of attainment, which helps all the class to learn well. For example, in a mathematics lesson an open-ended activity on addition and subtraction set Year 2 pupils to work on numbers to twenty, Year 3 pupils to work on numbers to ninety-nine and Year 4 pupils to work with two or three digit numbers. Higher-attaining pupils were extended by being moved on to tackle the work of the older pupils, and those with special educational needs were given good support. The carefully structured approach and clear explanations enabled all to make good progress, despite the interruptions caused by a few pupils talking and calling out answers.

34. In other lessons, the younger pupils sometimes found the tasks set for the whole class rather difficult, and too little was expected of the older pupils. The evidence of pupils' previously-completed work indicated that this has often been the case in writing activities. During the inspection, in English and history lessons Key Stage 2 pupils were told *what* to write but were given insufficient guidance on *how* to write it, and this limited the progress of most in the class. Generally, teachers' expectations of the quantity and quality of the written work pupils are capable of doing have been too low, in contrast to their expectations of their oral and practical work, which is why standards in writing and presentation are lower than they should be.

35. Teachers' clear explanations and effective use of question and answer sessions contribute much to pupils' high standards in speaking and listening. The teaching of subject-specific vocabulary is a particular strength of

teaching throughout the school. In an example of very effective teaching, Key Stage 2 pupils learning French were kept active through a series of very well structured oral activities, building on their previous learning of vocabulary and practising dialogues with the teacher and with each other. Their mistakes were corrected sensitively and clearly, with plenty of praise for the effort they made. Resources such as flash cards were used very well to prompt pupils' recall. They made very good progress because of these strengths in the teaching, the pace of the lesson and the high level of challenge provided.

36. Generally, teachers' management of pupils' behaviour and of the learning activities is now a strength. The classroom atmosphere is purposeful, and pupils are encouraged to do well. This supports the learning of the lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Their progress is considerably enhanced by the help they are given by classroom assistants. Teachers work hard to minimise the difficulties caused by the limited accommodation, and make the best use of resources. They have tended to miss opportunities to use computers, however, which has contributed to standards in information technology being lower than in most other subjects.

37. Teachers assess pupils' learning best in informal ways, by observation. They generally do this successfully during lessons, and adapt their teaching accordingly. Their marking of pupils' written work is less thorough. Some work has been marked regularly, with informative comments to guide pupils' future learning. Generally, marking gives pupils too little information on the quality of what they have done, and teachers have not maintained sufficiently clear and useful records of their day-to-day assessment to help their lesson planning and monitoring of pupils' progress over time.

38. Parents expressed varying views on homework, both at the meeting prior to the inspection and in their responses to the questionnaire. Most feel that teachers set appropriate homework, although a few expressed the view that the homework set for the younger pupils in Key Stage 2 has been too patchy, and that it has not been marked or built on effectively in subsequent lessons. The inspection found that teachers are now setting appropriate homework for pupils of all ages, in line with the school policy.

The curriculum and assessment

39. The curriculum for children under five is very good. It is broad and balanced, firmly rooted in the desirable learning outcomes for the education of the under fives, and leads smoothly and rapidly into work based on the National Curriculum programmes of study. Information from the baseline assessments made on entry to the school is used well to ensure that the needs of individual children are met, and the procedures for the day-to-day assessment of children as they carry out their tasks are effective. However, a manageable system for maintaining an overview record of the children's attainment and progress has not been developed.

40. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 covers the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Health and sex education are provided for appropriately, including attention to drug misuse, with occasional circle time to promote pupils' personal development. Much time is spent on literacy and numeracy, which is appropriate as raising standards in these subjects has been a priority. A sufficient amount of time is spent on science, religious education, and physical education. In these subjects, standards are above average. Other subjects have generally been given relatively little time and so standards are not as high. Sometimes, the balance of subjects taught each day is inappropriate. For example, in the week of the inspection the older Key Stage 2 pupils spent most of two days on English and history work. The school intends that information technology should have an appropriate amount of curricular time, but the evidence of the inspection indicated that this is not happening in practice. Pupils used computers infrequently during the inspection, and their previously-completed work showed that most have had insufficient opportunities for work in this subject. This was largely caused by the school's previous difficulties with its computer resources. As a result, pupils have not made as much progress in information technology as in the subjects in which standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 2. To overcome these weaknesses, the school recently agreed and began to implement a curricular policy which gives appropriate time to each subject.

41. Curriculum planning is satisfactory overall. It sets out clearly the content to be covered and provides for a two- or three-year cycle of coverage of topics, for example in science and history, which is necessary because of the mixed age classes. A weakness identified by the last inspection was that the planning did not provide clearly for the progress pupils were expected to make from year to year in their skills and understanding. The school has worked to improve this, with some success. Planning in English, mathematics, science and history now gives an indication of the expected progression in pupils' skills within each key stage, though it is still insufficiently clear

about the progress pupils should make each year. This weakens the schools' otherwise good provision for pupils to have equal opportunities to succeed academically. In particular, pupils in Year 4 have not had equivalent opportunities. They are taught in two classes, and although the school made joint planning of the Year 4 curriculum a priority, until recently weaknesses in teaching meant that the intended curriculum was not taught effectively to some of these pupils.

42. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are occasionally re-grouped for literacy and numeracy activities. This enhances the curriculum as it enables the teacher to focus on the needs of pupils in a particular year group without having to manage two other year groups at the same time. For example, the Year 6 pupils were stretched by challenging work in English during a literacy hour observed during the inspection. A similar arrangement for Year 4 pupils in mathematics is also successful, and has the added benefit of allowing pupils in Years 5 and 6 to learn French once a week. Some specialist teaching, for example of music, also improves the quality of the curriculum.

43. Pupils with special educational needs are provided for well. The school takes particular care to ensure that their needs are met and that the Code of Practice for these pupils is implemented effectively. For example, the additional sessions on literacy follow a well-designed programme of activities which is very successful in improving the pupils' reading and spelling skills. Lesson activities are adapted well for pupils with individual education plans or a statement of special educational need, enabling them to take a full part in lessons and to make good progress.

44. Parents value the school's encouragement of their children to take part in extra-curricular activities. Mostly, these are organised once a week, after school on Wednesdays. As at the time of the last inspection, they are very well attended by pupils of all ages. The opportunities to take part in team games such as football and netball considerably extend the physical education curriculum. Instrumental tuition is provided for those who would like it. Overall, the school makes very good provision for extra-curricular activities, as was found by the last inspection.

45. The class teachers know their pupils very well, partly because they teach them for two or more years. They generally use informal assessment well to adapt the work to meet pupils' needs. Despite this, weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' learning contribute to the variable progress they have made in both key stages. Although the school has a clear policy for assessment and marking, it is implemented inconsistently. Class teachers' records of their assessments, gained from marking and observations, are too brief. For example, records of pupils' attainment have not been maintained for information technology, nor of the older pupils' independent reading in English. The school is therefore not able to track individual pupils' progress from year to year, particularly when they change class or teacher, and informative records are not available to pass on to the next teacher. This was identified by the previous inspection as an area of weakness, although assessment was then judged to be generally good. It has contributed to inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of pupils, and the difference in progress made by pupils in different classes.

46. Portfolio collections of pupils' work show good coverage of the essential elements of the curriculum in almost all subjects. They were developed recently, in a process which involved discussion of the quality of work included. Although this has been helpful in developing teachers' expertise in assessing pupils' work, the samples are not annotated with pupils' ages and dates of completion, nor with evaluative comments assessing the quality of the work. As a result, the portfolios do not provide teachers with a sufficient record of the standards expected for each year group, to help their planning for pupils' progress from year to year and to illustrate the school's expectations for pupils of different levels of attainment.

47. However, the school has recently improved its use of test data. Various literacy and numeracy tests are used to track pupils' performance and to help teachers match work to the pupils' needs. For example, test and other assessment information has been used well to identify pupils with writing difficulties, particularly spelling, and to provide them with a programme of support sessions. The attainment and progress of the pupils with special educational needs is assessed carefully each term, against the targets in their individual education plans. These are good features of the school's arrangements for assessing pupils learning and using the information to provide the teaching they need.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

48. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and its provision for

their cultural development is good. This makes a highly significant contribution to the supportive and caring ethos of the school. The very good arrangements for spiritual development reported in the last inspection have been maintained, while moral, social and cultural provision have been improved.

49. Religious education and assemblies have a very positive impact on pupils' spiritual development. For example, pupils' growing sense of personal worth and a powerful sense of belonging were evident in when school colours were presented to younger pupils in Key Stage 2 for representing the school in sports. The successful implementation of the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education, a comprehensive policy for religious education, the framework of themes for assembly and the school's very close links with the church are significant strengths. Teachers discuss sensitive issues with pupils in relation to their own and others' beliefs and values. Pupils' spiritual awareness is further developed in subjects such as art. For example, they were encouraged to appreciate creativity and the world of the imagination when they produced artwork inspired by the work of famous artists including Degas and Picasso. Caring for the school garden has promoted a sense of fascination with the natural world.

50. Pupils' moral development is underpinned by the school's caring ethos. The well-written behaviour policy, based on firmness, fairness and friendliness, gives clear and helpful guidance to staff. It is implemented consistently from the time children start school, and so successfully promotes a secure understanding of right and wrong. Teachers and other adults, including the many parents who work in the school on a voluntary basis, set clear expectations of behaviour. Reward systems are used well to acknowledge and celebrate pupils' achievements in all aspects of school life. Good emphasis is placed on respect for truth, people and property, and the pupils' charter is designed effectively to promote both rights and responsibilities. Circle time enables pupils to face up to difficult issues. Parents are very supportive of the school's approach and believe it promotes high standards of behaviour.

51. Provision for pupils' social development is a major factor in the very good relationships found among and between adults and pupils. Pupils are given very good opportunities to work successfully as individuals, in pairs and as members of a group. The presence of adult helpers in lessons gives additional opportunities for the children who are under five and the older pupils to learn how to interact well in small groups and in one-to-one situations. The very good range of extra-curricular activities enables them to work together and to pursue their interests in an informal setting, while the pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 also have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. Teachers allocate duties to assist with the smooth running of classrooms. For example, the children who were under five were each given a small task to help tidy up after a very active literacy hour lesson in which a wide range of resources had been used. Older pupils can become house captains, librarians and playground buddies for younger pupils. All these opportunities play an important part in encouraging pupils' sense of responsibility within the school. Many links with the church and the village successfully develop and extend this community awareness. Regular fund-raising activities for local and national charities encourage pupils to develop a good understanding of citizenship and consideration for those less fortunate than themselves.

52. The school provides a wide range of opportunities which promote and extend pupils' cultural development. Pupils have occasional opportunities to work with professional artists, poets and musicians in workshop activities, in addition to enjoying performances by music ensembles and studying the work of famous artists. They take part in their own performances such as 'Puss in Boots', and in traditional village activities such as maypole dancing. The school organises a wide variety of educational visits to places of historical interest such as Preston Manor, and activities such as a Victorian week extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own traditions. In religious education, pupils are introduced to the diversity of faiths and cultures, but they are not provided with first hand experiences of our multicultural society. For example, teachers do not organise visits to places of worship or invite speakers from other faith communities to talk directly to pupils, although representatives of the Christian community have visited the school.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

53. Parents commented that the support and guidance their children are given is of high quality, and that their children are cared for well. Inspectors agree that the school provides very good support and guidance for all its pupils. This makes a significant contribution to their wellbeing and the standards they achieve. Teachers and other staff know pupils well, treat them with respect and encourage them to be motivated and self-confident. Relationships throughout the school are good, and pupils feel confident about approaching members of staff if

they have any concerns. The previous inspection identified these aspects of the school's work as strengths, and they have been consolidated and further improved.

54. Pupils' personal development is monitored informally by class teachers and the headteacher. As staff know the pupils very well, this arrangement works well. Pupils' academic progress is monitored closely by means of regular testing in English and mathematics, and by some sampling of individual pupils' written work. The information is used well to identify particular strengths and weaknesses and for individual target setting, which has been introduced since the last inspection. The system for tracking pupils' progress has not been extended to cover the other subjects, and does not provide readily accessible information on their progress as they move through the school. This makes it harder for teachers to build on pupils' achievements when they change class or teacher, and contributes to the variation in the quality of teaching for the different classes.

55. Pupils with special educational needs have well-written individual education plans that set appropriate targets. Mostly, these targets focus on literacy. The plans are reviewed regularly, with appropriate consultation with parents. Appropriate links with outside agencies are maintained. These pupils' progress is supported and monitored well, and the school is very successful in helping them to improve their progress and achievement.

56. The school has effective discipline and anti-bullying policies. Its expectations for pupils' conduct are clearly established. Staff ensure that pupils understand the procedures for maintaining discipline, and the need to apply sanctions in cases of unacceptable behaviour. Good behaviour, attitudes and effort are rewarded through the appropriate use of praise, and the system of rewards which includes the award of stickers and housepoints. The arrangement of older pupils acting as 'playground buddies' once a week helps to develop positive relationships across the school.

57. The school's measures for promoting pupils' regular and punctual attendance are very good. Attendance records are well kept; absence is investigated promptly and parents are regularly reminded of the importance of their children's regular attendance and punctuality.

58. Arrangements for child protection and the promotion of pupils' health and well-being are now very good. The child protection policy gives clear and specific guidance. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer and has had up-to-date training. The school pays very close attention to health and safety issues. Comprehensive risk assessments and health and safety checks are carried out on a termly basis, and results are reported to the governors of the school. Fire drills are also held termly, and all equipment and alarms are tested regularly. First aid and medical procedures are good, staff are appropriately trained and careful records are kept of any incidents. The school site is kept clean, tidy and litter free.

Partnership with parents and the community

59. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting prior to the inspection, all parents expressed strongly positive views about the links between them and the school. They feel very welcome in the school and that they are encouraged to play an active part in its life. They value highly the school's ethos and its openness to them. They are confident that any concerns will be dealt with positively and promptly, and are very appreciative of the care and support shown by the staff to their children. They feel well informed about their children's progress and that they are given a clear understanding of what is taught. Inspectors agree that these are all strengths. The school has developed an excellent partnership with parents, and the curriculum is considerably enhanced through the very good links that have been developed with the local community. The strengths in these aspects of the school's work identified by the last inspection have been maintained, and the quality of information parents are given about the curriculum has improved.

60. A number of parents and other adults from the local community help in the school on a regular basis. They make a valuable and valued contribution to teachers' work in lessons. Parents also give very good help with after school activities, such as coaching the football and netball teams. Many others provide practical support, for example by helping with redecorating and maintaining the school buildings, and improving the outside environment. The parents association is very active. It organises a wide range of social and fundraising events throughout the year, providing considerable financial support for the school. This has enabled the school to improve its resources for learning, and so to improve the quality of education provided.

61. The information provided by the school for parents is good overall. The prospectus is well presented and sets out detailed information. Regular newsletters keep parents well-informed about day to day matters at the school.

The provision of information about the curriculum and what is being taught to pupils has improved since the last inspection. It is now very good, as parents commented prior to the inspection. Meetings to give parents information about curriculum matters are held regularly and parents are supplied with a range of written material to support their children's learning at home. They are consulted regularly about relevant school issues such as the recently drawn up Home-School Agreement. Although most parents feel well informed about their children's progress, the annual reports to parents are too brief. They are insufficiently detailed about the strengths in pupils' work in each subject, and give too little information about targets for future learning.

62. The school is an integral part of the village. It has close links with the local church. The local curate-in-charge leads a school assembly each week, and the church is used for school services and as a valuable learning resource. The Parochial Church Council recently provided some bibles, to help the school teach religious education more effectively. At the 125th anniversary celebration of the school, the pupils were closely involved with the local community. For example, they interviewed residents of the village as part of their research into the recent and ancient past of High Hurstwood, as part of their work in history. Pupils participate in local events such as the village fete and a music festival in Uckfield, and at Christmas sing to residents in a nearby retirement home. There are regular visits to the school by members of the local community including the police. A number of school events, including the Christmas Bazaar, are seen as whole village events.

63. Curricular links with other primary schools have developed well through membership of the Village Schools Association. The school makes good use of the local area for a wide range of educational visits. Pupils move on to a number of secondary schools in the area, and the school has established helpful communication with most of these. Teachers from these schools visit to meet the pupils in Year 6, and the school passes on information on pupils' academic and personal development. The school also maintains good links with the many local playgroups.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

64. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has been in post for two years. She is very committed and professional, and commands the respect of parents, governors, staff and pupils. She provides strong leadership, reflecting her clear vision for the future educational direction of the school, and has managed the school very well. Parents feel that the school is getting better and better. They attribute this to the dedication of the staff and the headteacher's highly effective leadership and management. Inspectors agree with them. The strengths in leadership and management identified by the previous inspection have been developed further.

65. The governing body provides good support and its relationships with the school are very good, as was noted by the last inspection. Governors visit the school regularly. Helpful strategies have been developed for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education provided, for example to consider whether the deployment and use of classroom assistants is effective. Some governors also provide practical help, such as by working with small groups of pupils in the classroom. As a result, governors are well informed about the school. The governing body has an appropriate committee structure, with clear terms of reference. The whole governing body is involved in monitoring the curriculum. Minutes of meetings show that decisions are taken with careful consideration of their impact on pupils' learning. Statutory requirements are met, including for collective worship, appraisal and special educational needs, with the exception that the governors' annual report to parents has not included information on progress in implementing the action plan following the last inspection.

66. As is usual in small schools, class teachers are responsible for managing several subjects or aspects of the curriculum. They have responded conscientiously to this challenge. They are beginning to monitor standards in the subjects for which they are responsible and to introduce curricular improvements. For example, science is now taught more effectively, using the scheme of work which was introduced recently. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy hours has been managed effectively. In some areas, however, subject co-ordinators have been less successful, notably information technology, resulting in insufficient progress being made since the last inspection. Weaknesses in the management of subjects have contributed to the difficulty the school has had in ensuring that pupils have equal opportunities for learning, reflected in the uneven progress made by pupils in the different classes.

67. The school's aims and values, stated in the prospectus, are concerned with promoting traditional values, high standards, a Christian atmosphere and the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The aims and values are reflected in clearly-written policies covering all aspects of the school's work. They demonstrate the school's commitment to the all-round development of all its pupils, and to helping them achieve high academic standards. This approach is formalised within the school's comprehensive equal opportunities policy. Most of the aims are met very well. All the parents who returned questionnaires agreed that the school's values have a positive effect on their children. Parents value the positive, caring ethos of the school. They commented that the staff lead by example, and treat everyone as special. Inspectors agree with them. The aims are reflected in the daily life of the school and result in a very good ethos in which there is a shared commitment to raise standards even higher. However, the aim to achieve high standards is met only in part: results in the national assessments are well above average at the end of Key Stage 2, whereas overall standards are above average. In particular, pupils do less well in writing than they should, which affects the quality of their work across the curriculum.

68. The school development plan is good. It includes a detailed overview covering a three-year period, and identifies appropriate priorities and targets. It has a good focus on improving educational standards. It is an effective working document as the tasks, costings, success criteria and the staff responsible are clearly set out. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is effective. Individual and whole school needs have been identified and prioritised appropriately. The action taken so far has been successful. This clear-sighted and purposeful approach has contributed significantly to the school's good progress since the last inspection. The school has good potential for further development, and is strongly committed to it.

69. Considerable improvements have been made in the three years since the last inspection. Key issues identified then were to improve the monitoring of teaching, increase the amount of classroom support and deal with a safety issue concerning access to the classrooms. All of these were dealt with successfully. The fourth issue was to improve the accommodation. As a result of the governors' and headteacher's continuing efforts, the local education authority is carrying out a feasibility study on this matter. In the meantime, the difficult situation has been managed as well as possible. The classes have been reorganised so that the oldest pupils are no longer taught in the smallest classroom. The accommodation remains unsatisfactory, however, as it continues to impede pupils' progress and attainment, and so improving the accommodation is still a key issue.

70. Results in the national assessments of English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen since the last inspection, and standards are now generally above average. Other improvements which have contributed to raising standards include the successful introduction of the literacy hour, the national numeracy strategy, and revised curriculum planning for science. Resources for learning are better, though still insufficient. The training and support provided for staff, to develop their professional expertise, is good. The quality of teaching is currently much better than at the time of the last inspection, although long-term weaknesses which have affected some pupils' progress have yet to be resolved. The school is well placed to make further improvements because of the effective way in which it is led and managed.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

71. The school is well staffed in terms of the number, qualifications and experience of teachers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, and the needs of the children under five and the pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2. As far as possible, teachers' subject management responsibilities have been linked to their qualifications and interests. At present, the long-term absence through illness of a teacher is being covered on a temporary basis by a supply teacher. The headteacher has ensured that very good support is provided, to ensure that pupils' learning and progress do not suffer. The strategies used have been successful. However, the headteacher has had to take on additional curricular responsibilities, creating an unduly heavy workload.

72. The level of classroom support has been increased since the last inspection, to deal more effectively with the challenge of teaching mixed-age classes. The classroom assistants are well qualified and experienced. They provide both teachers and pupils with very good support, considerably enhancing the good quality of education provided. This is a view which is shared by governors and parents, who commented on the dedication of the staff and on the high level of contribution made by classroom assistants to their children's learning, welfare and personal development.

73. The introduction of a comprehensive programme of professional development has been a recent priority. The programme has had a significant impact on the work of the school, for example in improving the quality of

teaching, which is demonstrated by the successful management of the current staffing difficulties. All staff have job descriptions, and understand their own and others' roles and responsibilities. The priorities for training are clearly identified in the school development plan. In addition, both teachers and support staff are encouraged to take part in training to meet their own professional needs. Many of these needs are identified as part of the appraisal process, which staff see as a positive and worthwhile experience. The impact of training on the work of the school is clearly evident in the successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. There are no formalised procedures to support new staff, but the staff handbook provides very clear guidance on routines and procedures and the good working relationships mean that very effective support has been given.

74. The school site is attractive but inconvenient, as was noted by the last inspection. Good features of the outside facilities include a solar-heated swimming pool, a wildlife area with a pond which has been very well designed for teaching and learning, an award-winning garden and a good-sized but sloping playing field. The playground is rather small, and no separate play area is provided for the reception children.

75. Considerable improvements have been made in recent years to the quality of the school's accommodation, but it remains inadequate in many ways and affects pupils' progress and attainment. Aspects of physical education such as gymnastics are restricted by the small size of the hall. The small classroom in the original Victorian building leads to difficulties when forming classes. As a result, Year 4 is split between the transition class and the junior class. A few parents expressed their concern at this arrangement as they feel that it adversely affects the quality of education provided for these pupils. The inspection found that the problem has been caused by weaknesses in teaching rather than the limitations of the accommodation, although splitting the year group adds to the difficulties teachers have in meeting the wide range of needs which results from having three year groups in one class. The indoor accommodation for the children who are under five is barely adequate. The classroom is rather small, which prevents the setting up of areas for different kinds of activities. The space available is used very well and so the children's learning is not significantly affected. However, the lack of an outside area for the under fives' use limits opportunities for directed play activities and the use of large wheeled equipment. The reception children have to use the school playground, which is not immediately accessible from the classroom and is not covered. This imposes significant restrictions on its use. The staff and governors have worked hard to minimise the impact of the inadequacies of the accommodation on pupils' learning. They have well-advanced plans to extend and improve the building and develop an outside play area for the children who are under five, when funding becomes available.

76. Overall, the provision of learning resources is insufficient, despite recent improvements. The school has rightly prioritised improving resources for information technology, literacy and numeracy, including renewing the stock of books in the school library. This has helped the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours, and enabled pupils to do more work in information technology than previously. Subjects such as English, geography, history and religious education still have too few books and materials for the needs of the curriculum. More instruments for classroom use are needed for music. The resources for the children who are under five are insufficient. Resources for indoor activities, although much improved, are only just adequate, but those for outdoor use are unsatisfactory. For example there is no large climbing apparatus, nor a storage place for smaller equipment. These constraints inhibit children's physical development. Materials for the programme of additional support for pupils with special educational needs are sufficient. The school makes good use of the school grounds and facilities in the local area to enrich pupils' learning through first hand experience.

The efficiency of the school

77. The previous inspection found that the school was efficient, with very good procedures based on well-written policies, effective financial control and good administration. This is still the case, and in some respects the school is more efficient than previously. Financial planning is now linked to the school development plan, and budget forecasts are made. The budget has been managed very carefully to stay balanced, despite the many needs for expenditure. Decisions such as to invest in insurance against staff absence through sickness have proved prudent. The expenditure on school administration is relatively high, but provides value for money as it ensures that the school runs smoothly and allows the headteacher to concentrate on the curriculum and on raising standards of achievement. Relatively high expenditure on learning resources was necessary to buy books for teaching reading and numeracy, and to improve computer facilities. The priority given to staff training is also reflected in relatively high expenditure, which has been worthwhile as the expertise of teachers and classroom assistants in

literacy and numeracy, and in teaching pupils with special educational needs, has been considerably improved, contributing to the better quality of teaching. No audit has taken place since the last inspection; the latest audit at that time found all procedures to be correct.

78. The budget allocation for pupils with special educational needs is spent appropriately, mainly on providing additional classroom support for them. The school has also used the funding to buy additional resources, such as for the programme of extra literacy work. Other pupils with particular difficulties in spelling have also benefited from this provision.

79. Teaching staff and classroom assistants are deployed appropriately, and work very hard to provide a good quality of education. Parents commented on this. The arrangement for re-grouping pupils for some literacy and numeracy work is very successful. Staff make very good use of the accommodation, minimising its disadvantages as far as possible. The resources for learning are used well, except that pupils generally do not use the classroom computers sufficiently regularly.

80. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average, as are standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. Their attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. The school's income per pupil is above average. The school provides a good quality of education: teaching is now good, although until recently some weaknesses affected pupils' progress. Overall, therefore, the school provides sound value for money, as at the time of the last inspection.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

81. The provision for children under five is a major strength of the school. Children start school in the September before their fifth birthday when they are admitted to the infant class for reception children and Year 1 pupils. At the time of the inspection, twelve children were aged under five, nine of them attending part-time. Almost all have experience of pre-school education. Families are well prepared through meetings and documents and a very good partnership for learning is formed. In most years, including the current year, the standard of children's attainment on entry to the school is above average. However, their attainment covers a wide range and the overall picture varies considerably because relatively few children are admitted each year. The evidence suggests that the overall attainment on entry of pupils currently in Year 1 was well above average. Children settle quickly and well to school routines and clearly enjoy their activities. They make very good progress overall, and by the time they reach statutory school age they attain levels which are well above those expected for children of their age. While still in the reception year, they attain the desirable learning outcomes and make a smooth transition to work based on the National Curriculum.

82. By the time they are five, the **personal and social development** of most children is well above national expectations. Relationships with adults and with each other are very good. The children share equipment, take turns willingly and concentrate on their work for sustained periods. They settle to tasks quickly and are happy to seek help when they need it. Their behaviour is very good, and they develop a clear understanding of right and wrong. They use well-planned opportunities to develop imaginative and co-operative play, for example in the 'Happy Hairdressers'. They are set targets for their learning, which helps them to develop greater levels of independence. The high expectations for behaviour, the caring, secure environment and the sensitive handling of pupils with special educational needs have a positive impact on the very good progress made by children in this area of learning.

83. The children attain standards in **language and literacy** which are well above national expectations by the time they are five. Whatever their attainment on entry to the school, they make very good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. They listen carefully to adults and follow instructions well. They develop the confidence to talk clearly about their experiences using appropriate vocabulary, as demonstrated when they described the different textures of a variety of materials. The majority read simple texts accurately using their increasing knowledge of letters and sounds, and talk confidently about their likes and dislikes in books. They respond well to the wide range of opportunities provided for writing. By the time they are five, almost all write coherent sentences in regular, joined-up script, such as when writing about their work in the school garden or about the Big Bad Wolf.

84. Children's attainment in **mathematics** is well above the level expected nationally. They make very good progress. The well-structured experiences across all aspects of mathematics build rapidly and constructively on their earlier experiences. They successfully carry out simple addition and subtraction sums using numbers to ten, order objects by size and weight and identify common two and three dimensional shapes. Teaching is well planned, and carefully matched to the children's needs. Very good opportunities are provided across the curriculum for children to develop mathematical language and concepts, for example when they sang 'Five Green Bottles' and when the attendance register was checked.

85. The children make good progress in their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, and attain standards which are above national expectations. They have developed much of their knowledge and understanding through taking part in practical activities which are interesting and motivating. For example, they designed and made models from a variety of materials, and decorated them to a high standard. They have visited the local farm and the church, and they observed and recorded changes in the school garden during the year. Information technology successfully supports the children's learning. Adult helpers are deployed effectively to teach and monitor the regular use of computers and a programmable toy.

86. The **physical development** of most children is above national expectations. Their progress is good, although it is hindered by the inadequate facilities for outdoor play. Children walk, jump, skip and step with good control, and showed a very good sense of balance and the ability to hold a position. They have a very good awareness of space. They demonstrated very good control when using stepping stones and a variety of apparatus to travel around the hall, exploring and describing a variety of textures they encountered. In this activity, imaginative planning had made very effective links between physical education and the children's learning about the senses.

The children's use of vocabulary associated with the sense of touch was assessed well by the adults supporting the activity. Children hold tools such as pencils, felt pens and glue brushes with care and confidence. They showed good hand-eye co-ordination when they followed an outline and designed hats made of paper.

87. Attainment in **creative development** is well above the standards expected nationally, as was shown by the attractive and well-mounted displays of children's work. Children express their feelings and ideas well through a very good variety of structured experiences. They make very good progress in art, technology, music and imaginative play. They work confidently in a variety of media, and show a well-developed sense of colour, shape and pattern in their string prints, textured pictures of Big Ted and their autumn leaf collage. Their art work shows accuracy in observation and boldness in use of brush strokes and colour. They develop a good repertoire of songs and thoroughly enjoy singing and making music with untuned percussion instruments.

88. The teaching of the under fives is very good. High-quality interaction between adults and children extends their learning. The calm, well-structured learning environment, in which all adults participate as a team, is an important element in this. The classroom assistants and those who help children with special educational needs are experienced and well-qualified, and provide very good support for teaching and learning. They, and the committed and well-briefed volunteer helpers, make a significant contribution to the quality of educational provision for the under fives, and to the children's progress. Lesson activities are challenging. Questioning is used very effectively to develop children's thinking and to promote discussion. Varied teaching strategies are used successfully, instilling confidence and encouraging children's involvement. Instructions for tasks are very clear. The resources are well managed. For example, in a lesson which took place outdoors for reasons of space, children sorted objects into sets according to weight and size. This activity was successful, but was cut short as a result of a shower of rain, illustrating the inadequacy of the school accommodation for practical activities.

89. The curriculum for the children under five is broad and balanced. It is firmly rooted in the desirable learning outcomes, and leads smoothly and rapidly into the National Curriculum programmes of study. Information from the baseline assessments made on entry to the school is used well to ensure that the needs of individual children are met, and there are effective procedures for the day to day assessment of children as they carry out their tasks. However, there is no manageable system for maintaining an overview of children's attainment and progress which is passed on to the next teacher. The indoor accommodation is just adequate and is used very well by staff, but the outside area is not immediately accessible and is not covered. This imposes significant restrictions on its use. Resources for indoor activities, although much improved, are also only just adequate. Resources for outdoor use are unsatisfactory. For example there is no large climbing apparatus, nor storage for smaller equipment. These constraints limit the opportunities for physical development.

90. The last inspection report contains no information on the attainment and progress of children under five, nor on the quality of education provided for them. Although no comparison with the previous findings can be made, other evidence provided by the school indicates that good improvements have been made to the provision for the under fives. In particular, additional resources have been bought and the quality of teaching is higher than previously. The school is well placed to continue to provide high quality education to the under fives, and is doing its best to resolve the accommodation difficulties.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

91. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, results in reading in the national assessments were well above average compared both to all schools nationally and to similar schools. In writing, the results were above average compared to all schools but below average compared to similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 2, results in English were well above average compared to all schools and to similar schools. Although the small number of pupils means that results can vary considerably from year to year, the general trend is of an improvement at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, results have fluctuated more widely, particularly in reading. In writing, they have generally been close to the national average. The number of pupils is too small to identify trends in boys' and girls' results.

92. The overall standard achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. Standards in speaking and listening and in reading are well above average, whereas standards in writing are average. Pupils are currently making satisfactory progress overall. The younger pupils are making very good progress, building well

on their very good start in literacy when they were aged under five. For example, shared reading of texts in the literacy hour has helped them to develop good knowledge about how stories are structured, and most already read confidently on their own. Pupils with special educational needs have benefited from the stimulating way in which stories are shared with the rest of the class, and so retell a familiar story from the pictures and by recognising the initial letters of some words. The older Key Stage 1 pupils also enjoy reading, and do so confidently and well. Most make the transition from easy texts to free reading successfully, helped by good support at home. However, until recently these pupils made unsatisfactory progress in writing. Because they have had too few opportunities to develop their skills in writing independently and at length, as parents commented, they have not learned to write as confidently and well as they read. Much of their previously-completed work is brief, untidily presented, and sometimes unfinished. Higher-attaining pupils have not learned to paragraph their stories by the end of the key stage. However, most pupils spell and use sentence punctuation accurately, and because they have wide vocabularies they express their ideas clearly both orally and in writing.

93. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average, again with strengths in speaking and listening and reading. Pupils' overall progress is satisfactory, though the older pupils have made considerably better progress than the younger ones during the key stage. The standard of pupils' work is not as high as the results in the national assessments, which do not test aspects of the curriculum such as extended independent writing. The older pupils write confidently in a good variety of styles, in English and in other subjects such as history, but much of this work is too brief. They use their wide vocabularies well to express their ideas articulately, both orally and in writing, for example to create atmosphere in poems based on the witches' scene from 'Macbeth'. The higher-attaining and older pupils structure their stories well, and use paragraphs to organise information coherently. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading, and comment perceptively on characters in the fiction read in class. The older pupils read popular children's fiction, but have needed more guidance to ensure that they move on to more challenging titles and authors.

94. Pupils' learning in other subjects is considerably helped by their good skills in reading, and by their confidence in oral activities. They learn well from discussion, and express themselves articulately. Their vocabularies are wide, and they quickly learn to recognise and subsequently use subject-specialist language. Teachers provide good role models in this, in English and the other subjects, and have high expectations of pupils' oral fluency and competence in reading. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their skills in reading for information, for example in research activities in history and geography. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are generally lower, both for the quality and quantity of what they produce in lessons and for its presentation. This affects the standards pupils achieve.

95. Pupils with special educational needs, and some with particular difficulties with spelling, are taught very well when withdrawn from lessons for extra help with literacy, and so have made very good progress. They are also given good support in lessons, and so overall their progress is very good, enabling almost all to achieve the expected standard in the tests at the end of both key stages.

96. At both key stages, the variation in pupils' progress in English has been because of differences in the quality of teaching. Pupils' previously-completed work showed that there had been weaknesses in the teaching of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and early in Key Stage 2. However, the evidence of pupils' current work and of the lessons observed during the inspection showed that the teaching of these pupils is now satisfactory.

97. During the inspection, the teaching observed in both key stages was good overall. In both, some teaching was very good or excellent, but the teaching of writing observed at Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. For example, the task of writing a poem was set without being adapted to meet the varying needs and ages of the pupils in the class, and pupils had too little guidance on how to develop their ideas. Strengths in the teaching were that the initial discussion of a poem's syllables had engaged pupils' interest and helped them to recognise its rhythm, and the pupils were given a useful model of the style in which they were to write. However, the writing activity extended over two lessons, and lacked urgency. The feedback when pupils read their poems aloud was not evaluative, which meant that they gained little insight into what they had done well or advice on techniques for improving.

98. In contrast, in an example of excellent teaching during a literacy hour lesson at Key Stage 1, the teacher had high expectations of all pupils' effort and attainment and used very effective strategies to enable the class to cope with reading a very demanding text. Some pupils role-played the characters in the story as it was read. This enabled all to understand the events of the story, and led to high levels of enjoyment and participation in class

discussion as the story was read. The group activities, to write or retell and act out their own versions, involved pupils of all levels of attainment most successfully. A wide variety of resources was used skilfully, and the lesson moved at a quick pace. Other excellent features of this lesson were the explicit teaching of unfamiliar vocabulary, the way pupils' enthusiasm was directed firmly and clearly so that they stayed focused throughout the lesson, and the expectation that pupils would behave responsibly and maturely. Similar strengths were observed in the teaching of other lessons, notably when reorganisation enabled the Year 6 pupils to be taught as a group.

99. Pupils' response in English lessons is good overall. At both key stages, it was very good or excellent when the teaching was stimulating because the pupils were keen to learn and have well-developed independent learning skills. Pupils of all ages took turns fairly in discussion, listening to others attentively, and co-operating very well in group activities. When the teaching was less effective, they tended to become restless and were slow to settle to writing activities.

100. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well, and the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. A good policy for English informs the most effective teaching. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but keep too few records of their assessments, for example of the standard of their writing. It is unsatisfactory that the older Key Stage 2 pupils' independent reading is not monitored and guided carefully, to ensure that the higher-attaining pupils move on to more challenging books. A portfolio of examples of written work illustrates the range of work to be covered, but it is not annotated to guide teachers in the level of work appropriate for each year group. The resources for teaching English have been greatly improved recently. Some of the weaknesses identified by the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. Results in the national assessments have been maintained at a high level, and the standard of pupils' reading has improved but the quality of their writing and its presentation remain weaknesses. The subject is managed well, with good monitoring of the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The weaknesses identified by the inspection and from monitoring of test data are being acted upon. For example, pupils now have regular handwriting sessions, which are improving the presentation of work of the younger pupils, and the quality of teaching has recently improved. The school is well placed to maintain its strengths and continue its improvements in English.

Mathematics

101. Results in the 1999 assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 were very high compared to schools nationally, and well above the results for similar schools. The introduction of a new scheme of work contributed to an improvement in the results of the high-attaining pupils. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above the average for schools nationally, and for similar schools.

102. Standards at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above average in all aspects of mathematics. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The variation between the test results and the standards achieved in pupils' work can be partly explained by the thoroughness with which pupils are prepared for the tests. In addition, high levels of parental support and well-motivated pupils have been important factors in ensuring success in the tests, which do not cover all aspects of the mathematics curriculum.

103. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress overall, although the best progress has been made by the younger pupils. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress overall although scrutiny of their previous work shows that progress has been better towards the end of the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, often attaining the nationally-expected level at the end of each key stage, as a result of the effective support provided by teachers and classroom assistants.

104. By the end of Key Stage 1, almost all pupils have a good knowledge of the place value of hundreds, tens and units. They order numbers to one hundred, use halves, thirds and quarters confidently, and know the particular features of common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. They use standard and non-standard units for measuring, and present and interpret information in block graphs well. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use a range of methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide confidently and accurately, and they have a good understanding of the relationship between these operations. They calculate area, perimeter and volume, construct and interpret a wide range of graphs and charts, and measure length, weight and capacity accurately. Average- and higher-attaining pupils deal confidently with percentages and know how to calculate to two decimal places.

105. Standards of numeracy are above average, in mathematics and other subjects. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on teaching a variety of mental strategies for carrying out calculations. They give pupils good

opportunities to talk about and explain their methods, in order to improve their problem solving skills. In both key stages, pupils carry out number work with increasing confidence, and they have regular opportunities to practise and develop their skills in all mathematics lessons. The youngest pupils have a variety of counting and sorting experiences, and are introduced effectively to the vocabulary they need to discuss number. Older pupils extend their number skills well in other subjects. For example, in science they have carried out an investigation into the effects of exercise on the body, counting pulse rates before and after exercise, and then using a computer spreadsheet to record the data and present it as a graph.

106. Pupils' response in mathematics lessons was good overall. They generally behaved very well and were highly motivated. Pupils of all ages listened attentively to their teachers and to each other, helping to create a positive working atmosphere. These were significant factors in enabling pupils to attain high standards. A small minority of younger pupils in Key Stage 2 behaved inappropriately, by persistently calling answers out and interrupting the teaching. This slowed the pace of the lesson, and lowered other pupils' concentration and rate of work.

107. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now good in both key stages. Thorough planning for the youngest pupils ensures that their learning develops systematically, and that tasks are closely matched to their needs and prior attainment. Teachers identified clearly what they expected pupils to learn, and shared these learning objectives with the class. This helped to create a purposeful learning ethos. In a particularly successful lesson, these objectives were returned to during a final discussion, involving pupils in assessing their own progress. Planning for the older pupils did not provide as successfully for the needs of pupils from all three year groups, and to extend the higher-attaining pupils. Lessons are well organised, based on the planning provided by the National Numeracy Strategy. Lesson activities are generally interesting and simulating. Teachers are encouraging and supportive, for example when Key Stage 2 pupils were praised for the homework they had completed, reinforcing and extending their learning. Standards of presentation are lower than they should be. Teachers generally do not pay sufficient attention to ensuring that pupils write their work neatly and date it.

108. Mathematics is led and managed well, leading to good overall improvement since the last inspection. Results in the assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved, and have been maintained at a high level at the end of Key Stage 2. The requirements of the National Curriculum are covered well, and the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented successfully. Test results have been analysed carefully, and appropriate targets have been set. Other assessment procedures, such as that significant strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work should be recorded on the reverse of planning sheets, are implemented inconsistently. The school is in a strong position to raise standards even further, for example by sharing examples of good practice identified through the very effective monitoring process.

Science

109. In the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, an above-average proportion gained the nationally expected Level 2, but the proportion achieving Level 3 was well below average. This is because the teaching had not provided sufficiently challenging work for the higher- and average-attaining pupils. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above average compared both to schools nationally and to similar schools.

110. Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above national expectations. As for English and mathematics, and for similar reasons, the test results differ from the standard of pupils' work. However, results have risen steadily since the last inspection, due to improvements in the quality of teaching and curriculum planning.

111. The younger Key Stage 1 pupils build well on the very good start they had as reception children. Despite slower progress later in Key Stage 1, pupils have made good progress overall. By the end of the key stage, they have a good understanding of the conditions necessary to support life. They have learned about the life cycles and habitats of animals and plants, by making careful observations and recording the results systematically in diagrams and tables. Most pupils have a secure grasp of the basic principles of a fair test, as shown in their investigations of simple circuits and testing of their predictions about how many bulbs would light.

112. Pupils' progress during Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. The best progress has been made by the older pupils. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a good knowledge of the major organs of the human body and flowering plants, enabling them to describe their functions accurately. They use simple keys to identify living

things, and have a good understanding of the relationships between plants and animals in a habitat. They have successfully explored the link between forces and movement, and the main features of light and sound. Most plan and carry out controlled experiments successfully, taking account of the need for fair testing. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment demonstrate good knowledge of living things, physical processes and the properties of different materials. They have recorded their learning accurately and methodically, and applied their knowledge well to practical investigations, as for example when the older pupils conducted an investigation into the effects of exercise on pulse rate. This activity supported pupils' development of skills in numeracy well.

113. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress during both key stages, often as a result of the emphasis upon a practical, investigative approach to learning science. They generally achieve the nationally-expected standard by the end of each key stage.

114. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They behaved well in the lessons observed, and were highly motivated in response to the well-planned and interesting teaching. They had a mature approach to practical and investigative work, co-operating well and using resources safely and sensibly. Pupils in Year 1, for instance, worked enthusiastically to discover that feathers and an old pair of trousers made the most comfortable fillings for a pillow, making careful observations and reporting confidently to the class on their findings.

115. The quality of teaching is currently good in both key stages. In the lessons observed, it was always at least satisfactory, and occasionally very good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Their planning ensures that pupils' learning builds successfully on their earlier experiences. For example, pupils move from describing events and phenomena to explaining them, and from using everyday language to more precise use of scientific vocabulary and symbols. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Lesson activities are interesting and stimulating. For example, in a very successful lesson on the human senses at Key Stage 1, good subject knowledge, combined with a very clear understanding of the needs of the younger children in the class, ensured that the activities were well matched to the pupils' varied needs. The pupils made very good progress in learning to think in a scientific way. The good relationships which exist in all classrooms have a positive effect on the ethos for learning and on individual pupils' progress. In all the lessons observed, teachers made very good use of support from classroom assistants and volunteer helpers to supervise practical tasks and to ensure that pupils' concentration was sustained.

116. Science is managed well. Recently-revised curriculum planning covers the requirements of the National Curriculum, making appropriate provision for pupils' progress from year to year. Too few records of pupil's attainment are kept. Very good use is made of the school site, which has been developed as a valuable resource for learning. The resources are only just adequate in quantity, but are managed efficiently to promote pupils' learning. Areas for improvement identified through monitoring have been acted upon well. For example, greater emphasis has been given to developing pupils' skills in scientific investigation, although they still have insufficient opportunities to carry out genuinely open-ended investigations. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection is good. Teaching is now consistently effective, the science policy and planning of the curriculum are better, and standards have risen. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

OTHER SUBJECTS

Information technology

117. No lessons in which a class was taught information technology were seen during the inspection, and so judgements are based on the occasional observations of pupils using the classroom computers, discussions with pupils and teachers, planning and previously-completed work. The evidence indicates that standards are generally in line with the national expectation at the end of both key stages, with a strength in pupils' work in data handling, particularly through their work in science. Pupils make generally satisfactory progress although some have not had sufficient opportunities to use computers regularly.

118. During Key Stage 1, pupils have used computers for a wide variety of activities. The younger pupils have successfully learned to use computer art programmes. Those observed drawing a self-portrait used the tool bar confidently to select colours and a paint brush, and on several occasions pupils experimented well with lines and colours to create interesting patterns. Some were introduced to finding information from a CD-ROM, with the support of a parent helper. Pupils have used a programmable toy for control activities, the younger ones making it move forwards and back a given distance, and the older pupils extending this knowledge well to follow a route

and draw shapes. They know how to enter and format text in a word processor, for example by changing fonts. The older pupils have made appropriate use of a database in science, such as to record the measured temperature of the school pond and then print out the findings.

119. During Key Stage 2, pupils learn to search a database, and to use spreadsheets such as to record information around the home. In word processing, they have learned to import graphics to illustrate their texts, such as to present newspaper front pages covering the story of the sinking of the Titanic. Older pupils have printed information from CD-ROMs, and occasionally word process their writing. The available evidence indicated that pupils with special educational needs have had more opportunities to extend their skills in communicating information more frequently than have those of average- and higher-attainment. Progress in control work is satisfactory, as, for example, the older pupils know how to make repeat procedures in Logo. As at Key Stage 1, the most regular use of information technology is made in science. During the inspection, some older pupils were introduced to Excel to record their findings and present them as a graph. They quickly grasped what to do as the teaching was well planned and the explanations were clear.

120. On the few occasions when pupils were observed using computers, they were enthusiastic and confident learners. They worked confidently, with good concentration. Insufficient teaching was observed to judge its quality. On the few occasions when teachers or classroom assistants led a small group activity, the teaching was satisfactory as pupils were given clear explanations of what to do. Appropriate activities have been planned for, and the school's scheme of work covers the main elements of the National Curriculum satisfactorily. However, although the school intends an appropriate amount of time to be spent on information technology, this was not observed to happen in practice during the inspection.

121. Some weaknesses in the management of the subject were found. Records of pupils' achievement in information technology have not been kept. Although a portfolio helpfully illustrates the range of work covered, its potential usefulness is limited as it has not been annotated with the pupils' year group nor with comments on the standard of the work. The resources for information technology have been improved recently, but previously problems with the equipment inhibited work in this subject. For example, problems with printers meant that sometimes it was not possible to print out pupils' work. Therefore, until recently, too little use was made of the classroom computers, slowing pupils' progress. Despite the recent improvements, insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection and, as a result, standards in information technology have not risen.

Religious education

122. Only one religious education lesson was taught and observed during the inspection, and so judgements are mainly based on other evidence. This included discussions with teachers and pupils, a scrutiny of previously-completed work and other documentation.

123. By the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils attain levels which are above those expected by the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education, on which teachers base their planning. The available evidence showed that pupils make good progress during both key stages, particularly in their ability to relate teachings and ideas to their own experiences. This has a very positive effect both on their religious education learning and on their spiritual development.

124. During Key Stage 1, the younger pupils develop a good understanding of their own feelings and those of others. They have explored the importance of keeping promises, trust and sharing, and through their harvest celebrations have related these ideas to food shortages around the world. By the end of the key stage, pupils use appropriate vocabulary to identify the main parts of the church, and have begun to understand the beliefs, customs and traditions of Christianity and Judaism. They have explored ways in which symbols occur in everyday life, discussing and writing about the use and meaning of poppies, candles and birthday cards. During Key Stage 2, pupils extend their knowledge of symbolic customs and the cultural and spiritual links associated with them. They have investigated religious ceremonies, such as Christian and Muslim birth rituals. They demonstrated a good understanding of the significance of these ceremonies for their believers, and recognised how people's lives are affected by their faith. Pupils' written work shows not only great interest but also respect and wonder, for instance in their written reflections on the duties and responsibilities of being a godparent.

125. Only one lesson was observed, at Key Stage 2. The teaching was very good. The lesson had been effectively planned to meet the needs not only of all three year groups in the class, but also of higher- and lower-

attaining pupils. Pupils' initial fussiness was dealt with firmly, and the pace of the activities was very purposeful. The symbolism in the Nativity story was explored through an imaginative activity in which pupils identified key elements of how the story had been illustrated on some Christmas cards, and moved on to considering variations in the gospel versions. The pupils were enthusiastic learners. Through probing questions and the well-structured activities, their knowledge and understanding of the significance of the events was developed well.

126. The available evidence indicates that religious education is taught well at both key stages, successfully promoting pupils' personal development and respect for the views and opinions of others. The scheme of work has been planned well to avoid repetition of work as pupils move through the school, and provides good guidance for teachers. It is linked well to the themes for assemblies and collective worship. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although improved by the donation of some bibles by the local church, resources are insufficient, with a particular shortage of good quality pictures and artefacts. The evidence indicates that the improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards are higher than reported then. Religious education now has a stronger focus, and pupils complete more written work.

Other subjects

127. In the subjects which follow, too few lessons were observed to make overall judgements of the quality of teaching and pupils' response. The judgements of the standards achieved and of pupils' progress have been made on the basis of the evidence of pupils' previously-completed work, discussions with pupils and teachers, planning and other documentation.

128. In these subjects, the available evidence indicates that the strengths identified by the last inspection have been maintained. Some improvements have recently been made, especially to resources, and clear, informative policies have been developed for most subjects. Overall, the improvement in these subjects since the last inspection is satisfactory. Subject co-ordinators have started to monitor the implementation of subject policies, and provide more guidance to other teachers, but some weaknesses remain. In particular, curriculum planning does not show clearly enough the progress pupils are expected to make from year to year, so that their good initial start is maintained throughout Key Stages 1 and 2.

129. In **art**, pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. Overall, they attain the standard expected for their age. The best work is currently being produced by the younger pupils at Key Stage 1. Their paintings and drawings on display, such as of Humpty Dumpty, are excellent. The work shows that these pupils are skilled in drawing, mixing colours, and composing detailed illustrations. Their portraits of each other show good progress in drawing. Other work which was also of a high standard included Key Stage 1 pupils' observational studies of the school garden last summer, and Key Stage 2 pupils' paintings of hands based on African artwork. Other art work is of an average standard, such as the posters Key Stage 2 pupils have created as part of their work in history.

130. In **design and technology**, the available evidence indicates that pupils achieve the standard expected for their age and that they make satisfactory progress during both key stages. Their work demonstrates a growing confidence in tackling increasingly complex tasks, from model making with reclaimed materials in Year 1 to the use of varied tools and techniques when making model buildings in Year 6. The youngest pupils develop their design ideas successfully through drawing, list the materials to be used and have followed recipes when cooking. The good quality finish of Key Stage 2 pupils' Victorian fairground games showed that pupils have sound skills in cutting and joining card and wood. Pupils have taken pride in the quality of their work. The evidence indicates that effective teaching takes place in both key stages. Teachers have planned interesting and challenging work, making good links with subjects such as science, mathematics, history and art. For example, older pupils studying World War II in history have compared wartime and modern recipes for cakes and cookies. The policy and scheme of work contain some helpful guidance on the skills of making, but give insufficient advice on how to develop and assess the skills of designing and evaluating systematically.

131. Pupils make satisfactory progress in **geography** during both key stages. Standards are in line with what is expected for their age. Much of their work in this subject is linked to history topics, and good use is made of visits to the local area for practical work. Some of this work has been recorded in writing, and shows that appropriate tasks have been set. For example, mapping has been introduced at Key Stage 1 linked to a visit to a local farm and in work on rivers. Older pupils carried out a survey of the local area, and their maps are clear and

fairly well detailed. The resources for geography are insufficient, as, for example, the school has too few maps and atlases, affecting the work that can be covered and slowing pupils' progress.

132. Pupils make good progress in **history** during both key stages, and standards are above the expectation for their age. Their work is particularly strong in looking at evidence in local studies, and recording the information gathered in a variety of ways. Pupils of all ages produced good work in their study of the Victorians, as part of the school's 125th anniversary. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils looked at evidence of Victorian times in the local church, and their notes on architectural features showed they had a good understanding of what they observed. Key Stage 2 pupils successfully carried out research into various aspects of Victorian life such as transport and education. The older pupils wrote informative comparisons of Victorian and present-day school life. Pupils are given good opportunities to extend their skills in writing in different styles, drawing on the historical information. For example, younger pupils have written letters of application to be maid or footmen in a Victorian household, choosing their style and vocabulary well to suit the purpose and times.

133. History and geography share similar strengths in the variety of interesting work covered, and the practical approach adopted. However, there are some weaknesses in the way the subjects are managed. The planning does not show clearly enough how pupils' skills will be developed systematically in each subject. For example, links between the topics covered each year have not been made clear, and the planning does not provide adequate guidance on what is expected of the pupils of different ages in each class. Pupils complete their work on paper, compiled into attractive topic books. These make it difficult to monitor their standards of work and progress over time, particularly in geography.

134. The school attaches high status to **music**. Pupils make satisfactory progress during both key stages. Standards are in line with what is expected for their age, although the school has identified that composition is less strong than performance. Pupils sing confidently, with increasing control of pitch, rhythm and quality. Their singing in most assemblies was good, especially when following a leader and to a pre-recorded accompaniment. Strengths in the teaching observed were that teachers were knowledgeable and well prepared, and provided a variety of activities to develop pupils' skills. They gave effective demonstrations of what was required. The younger Key Stage 1 pupils learned new songs, and used untuned percussion instruments enthusiastically to keep a steady beat. Pupils' attitudes to music were good. They listened to music with enthusiasm and enjoyment, in lessons and at assemblies, and followed instructions well. Most try hard to give of their best, but the immature response of a few held a lesson up despite the teachers' firm management of the class.

135. A strength in the music curriculum is that all pupils in Year 3 learn a pitched instrument and to use standard notation. Higher-attaining pupils are well provided for by a peripatetic keyboard teacher. The curriculum is enriched by regular performances given by visiting musicians, and frequent opportunities for performance, for example in assemblies, school productions and in recorder and music festivals. Many pupils take advantage of the good extra-curricular opportunities, for example the joint venture between school and church to form a choir. These extra activities have a considerable impact on the quality of singing.

136. Standards in **physical education** are above average for pupils' age, and higher than was reported by the last inspection. Pupils make good progress during both key stages because the teaching is good and pupils try hard. In general, pupils behaved very well in the lessons observed, but occasionally silliness and over-excitement held up their progress despite firm classroom management. Key Stage 2 pupils showed a good knowledge of balances and symmetry in a gymnastics lesson, and commented well on the sequences of movement they developed. Excellent advice when individuals showed their work to the class helped pupils of all ages to refine their sequences. The comments supported everyone's efforts, including those of the pupils with special educational needs. As a result, the class made excellent progress during the lesson.

137. However, pupils' overall progress is affected by difficulties caused by the accommodation. The hall is too small, which limits what can be covered in gymnastics lessons. A whole class cannot work safely on activities involving large apparatus and extended sequences of movement. In an indoors games lesson observed, the youngest pupils worked on the skill of aiming accurately when throwing a ball or bean bag. They made very good progress because the activities were sequenced well to become progressively harder, and very effective use was made of demonstrations, with the assistance of an expert parent helper. However, the small size of the hall made it difficult for the pupils to practise the skills as over-ambitious throwing or inaccurate aiming frequently interfered with other groups' work.

138. The extra-curricular sports activities, organised once a week after school, make a good contribution to

pupils' progress as most take part. These activities are supported well by parents, for example to coach football and netball. Specialist cricket coaching is provided in the summer, together with swimming. Pupils have good opportunities for competitive team games, and are successful in local matches. They cope well with the sloping nature of the school's football pitch and grounds, and are very fit and athletic. The range of games provided is much wider than at the time of the last inspection.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

139. The inspection was carried out over a period of four days by a team of three inspectors, who spent a total of seven days in the school. Nineteen parents attended the parents' meeting prior to the inspection, and a questionnaire was returned by the parents of thirty-three pupils. This information from parents was used by the inspectors to guide their work. For most of their time in the school, the inspectors visited classes and talked with individuals and groups of pupils. Twenty-six lessons or part-lessons were observed, taking twenty-one hours altogether. The work of a sample of pupils from each year group was evaluated. Pupils from each year group discussed their work and experience in the school with the inspectors, who also held many informal discussions with pupils in lessons and at other times. Planned discussions were held with teachers, the headteacher and other staff and four governors. Many documents were scrutinised, including school policies, planning, and records.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	69	1	14	5

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	3.74
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week	60.2

Financial data

Financial year:	1998-99
	£
Total Income	178,358
Total Expenditure	174,841
Expenditure per pupil	2,301
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	3,517

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

53
33

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	91	9	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	73	27	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	64	30	6	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	52	42	3	3	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	58	33	6	0	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	64	33	3	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	58	39	0	3	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	25	45	15	6	9
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	73	27	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	67	33	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	67	33	0	0	0

Other issues raised by a few parents

The headteacher is very committed and professional, and commands the respect of parents, staff and pupils. Inconsistencies in teaching have affected some children's progress, for example in writing.