

# INSPECTION REPORT

**TICEHURST CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Ticehurst, Wadhurst, East Sussex

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114524

Headteacher: Mrs M Sharpe

Reporting inspector: Cherry R Jackson  
005358

Dates of inspection: 12 - 15 March 2001

Inspection number: 191212

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Street  
Ticehurst  
Wadhurst  
East Sussex

Postcode: TN5 7DL

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Francesca Nowne

Date of previous inspection: 13 January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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David Holroyd	Lay inspector		Partnership with parents Care for Pupils
Brian Wilkinson	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communications technology	Leadership and management
Susan Hails	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Lea Dehaney	Team inspector	History Geography Music Equal opportunities English as an additional language	Curricular and other opportunities

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Ticehurst Church of England Primary is a relatively small, voluntary controlled, school for pupils aged 4 to 11. The roll has dropped recently and there are now 146 pupils, with 19 more boys than girls so that most classes have more boys in them. Over the last year, about 1 in 10 pupils left or joined the school, changing the composition of the classes. All the pupils are white, and all are of UK heritage, except for three who are learning English as another language. There are three Traveller pupils who are permanently resident in the village. The school usually has an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs; the current proportion is almost 3 in every 10 pupils. Their needs are mostly specific learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are two pupils with statements of special educational need. About a tenth of the children are eligible for free school meals, which is about average. The village is in a Rural Development Area as defined by the South East England Development Agency, so that there is some economic deprivation there. The capability of the children on entry varies greatly, with a small group of able pupils and a larger group whose attainment is below average.

The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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

Ticehurst is an effective school where governors, senior managers and all the staff are raising standards, from below average, through commitment and hard work. The teaching is sound with several strengths; learning opportunities and care for the children are good. The pupils are achieving well. Their attitudes and personal development are good. The school is providing satisfactory value for money.

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

- Standards for the juniors are improving steadily in English, mathematics and science.
- Handwriting is consistently good.
- The infants' standards in science are good.
- Generally the children achieve well, and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- The children are very positive about their school and take responsibility well.
- The teaching and learning are good for the under sixes and infants, for science, in the reading circles and in Year 6.
- The quality and range of the learning opportunities are good, with interesting work and events.
- The school cares well for the pupils' well being, behaviour and attendance.
- The governors, head teacher and senior management team are effectively leading the school to improvement.

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

- Standards in speaking, writing and, for older pupils, spelling, are too low.
- Whilst mathematics standards are sound, data handling and problem solving are the weakest aspects.
- The able pupils in the juniors work hard but could reach higher standards.
- The quality of the teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school so that the pupils' progress slows in the early juniors and speeds up in Year 6.
- Pupils have targets set for them but these are not referred to enough to involve pupils or their parents fully.
- Some lesson time is lost through necessary movement around the site, and some through slow changes of activities.
- The role of the curriculum leaders is undeveloped and they do not take enough responsibility for standards and progress in their subjects.
- The school makes an effort to involve parents but response is limited to a small group.

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

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



Since its last inspection in 1997 this small school has, through very hard work, made sound improvement in its curriculum and teaching. The children are now following the National Curriculum in information and communications technology and the teaching is better here. Numeracy and literacy skills are being better taught although the children still have ground to cover. Good procedures for child protection are in place and known to all staff.

Standards for the oldest pupils have been steadily rising over the last five years, although there is still some way to go.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	E	E	E
Mathematics	C	D	D	D
Science	D	E	C	D

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The grades show that, for the past three years the standards for the 11 year olds have usually been below average compared with all schools. English standards have been the weakest, often well below average but science standards rose in 2000 to be average. In 2000, Ticehurst's achievements were below those of similar schools and well below them in English. Since 1997, standards have been improving steadily. The starting point was low and the school has not caught up with national averages. The girls have been doing better than the boys, particularly in English. The school sets challenging targets but did not meet them last year. In the lessons during the inspection, the standards were sound in mathematics and science but still too low in English. Reading and listening are better than writing and speaking. The children, including those learning English and the Traveller pupils, are beginning to achieve well and those with special educational needs make good progress. The progress, generally, is quicker in Year 6 than in the other junior years. The under sixes and oldest infants are attaining satisfactorily and achieve well. The under sixes have particularly good personal and social development and the infants are particularly good at science. The more able children throughout could do better. The children's skills in using computers, their standards in religious education and in the other subjects, except for art in the juniors, are sound.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The children enjoy school and they are very interested in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils are considerate and disciplined in class and, usually, on the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There is a very good partnership between adults and children. Pupils take responsibility readily and can collaborate very well. Even young pupils can take turns and listen patiently.
Attendance	Although below the national average, attendance is satisfactory. The number of unauthorised absences has improved.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Over 9 out of 10 lessons seen were satisfactory and just over half the lessons were good. The teaching is sound with some particular strengths. The teachers manage the children effectively and the pupils respond by concentrating and trying hard. The teaching and learning in science are good. The teachers are well trained to teach the literacy and numeracy hours so that the teaching in English and mathematics is demanding and the learning is sound. There are particular strengths in the reading circles and in the youngest and oldest classes where there is a very good focus on the learning needs of the children. The teaching for the pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress due to careful planning and watchful attention. Progress is good across the reception and Year 1, slows in the juniors, where lesson plans are not matched accurately enough to what children need to learn, and speeds up in Year 6. The teaching, particularly in the lower junior classes, is not sufficiently demanding of the able children who therefore do not extend their thinking enough.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The large proportion of time allocated to English is sensibly used. The school provides enriching activities and a good range of experiences for all subjects. Some time is wasted moving about the site and on slow changeovers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The systems for identifying and supporting these children are good. They have sound individual education plans with clear targets, and additional oversight in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound. The few children are fluent and receive appropriate provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Sound. The school has clear aims to develop the children in these areas. Opportunity for moral understanding and the many strategies to help children develop socially are all good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school. It has developed very good practices for dealing with attendance and ensuring good behaviour and has begun to monitor pupils' progress rigorously.

The school works hard to communicate with the parents and has tried a number of initiatives. The parental involvement which is secured has a positive impact on the children's learning but is confined to relatively small proportion of the parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The head and senior managers have introduced many strategies to raise academic standards, while retaining a focus on personal and social development. They work as part of a staff team that has a shared commitment to improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed and have a clear view of the necessary direction for the school. They are becoming increasingly well informed about attainment but receive no information about the quality of the teaching.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is beginning to make a powerful use of the analysis of test results to identify learning needs. A weakness remains in that the curriculum leaders' roles in evaluating standards and quality are undeveloped.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. Good use is made of funding for special educational needs and to provide extra adult support for literacy and numeracy lessons. The governors consider the principles of best value when making their decisions.

The accommodation is adequate and well used. The provision of learning resources is good. The teaching staff are appropriately qualified and have useful in-service training. They are supported by a good team of learning support assistants.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children like school</li> <li>• They make good progress</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• Parents are well informed about the children's progress</li> <li>• The school helps the children to develop mature attitudes and values</li> <li>• There is a good quantity of useful homework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of tables and spelling</li> <li>• Playground behaviour</li> <li>• Lunchtime supervision</li> <li>• Support from parents</li> <li>• Class teachers' time with their classes</li> <li>• Leadership and management</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with all the positives here. They think that the children do need to improve their spelling although they are covering the tables they should learn in each year. Inspectors saw little bad behaviour on the playground although what there was could have been more swiftly and clearly dealt with. Lunchtime staff are short handed due to recruitment problems; supervision during the inspection was often satisfactory although it could be better. Children also set out and stack dining furniture, sometimes without supervision, which is not appropriate. Inspectors think that the school does a good deal of work to make relations with parents but that only part of the community responds; more support would help some of the children to learn better. Class teachers do have to leave their classes, for training. Whilst they miss their teachers, the children benefit from the expertise the teachers are gaining in literacy and numeracy. The inspectors think the leadership and management are good and consider that the head teacher, recently running the school without two of the senior managers, has worked effectively under pressure to manage and teach.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The test results for the school over the last four years have often been below the national average, and recent results have also been below the average for similar schools, which suggests that the Ticehurst pupils are not achieving as well as they could. The results for the oldest pupils, however, have been rising steadily over recent years and the rate of improvement has been in line with the national trend. Since the school started from a low point, however, the results are still relatively low.
2. During the inspection, standards were better than test results suggest and the pupils were generally achieving well, for three reasons:
  - The larger than average proportion of special needs children and the rather larger than average group whose attainment is low on entry goes some way to explain the low test scores. Such pupils are achieving well although their test scores are not high.
  - The school has improved its teaching by using, and training the staff to teach, the literacy hour and daily numeracy lesson and by spending more on extra adults to make the teaching groups smaller.
  - Analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the Year 6 pupils' standards earlier in the year gave a very clear indication of where they needed to learn more. Their class teacher is raising standards rapidly for them by focussing on the specific things they need to learn. Progress is swift for Year 6. They are extending their thinking and vocabulary, laying out information in tables and charts that they devise themselves, because of their teacher's appropriate pressure and demand for accuracy.
3. However, progress can still be improved for the children as they pass through the school and the standards can be better than they were during the inspection.
4. The school set targets for the Year 6 pupils in 2000 of 71% of pupils to attain the expected standards in English and mathematics but did not meet them. The size of the group was small so that a low result for even one child made a difference of 4%. Some of the children for whom the targets had been set had left before the tests, which was a contributory factor. The target for 2001 is a challenging 75%. Whilst they may not quite meet it, the school expects to come within 5%.
5. Over the last four years the school's results in English for the infants and the juniors have been below and often well below the national averages. The more able pupils attained better in reading than in writing in the infants. Internal tests for the juniors show that they are better at reading than writing, also. During the inspection the infants were just reaching the expected standards but the juniors were not. The juniors' reading skills were better than their writing. In 2000 the pupils' test results were well below average for similar schools which suggests that neither infants nor juniors at Ticehurst were achieving as well as they could. However, the infants during the inspection were achieving well and the juniors' achievement was reasonable, for the reasons suggested above.
6. In their lessons during the inspection the infants' standards were just satisfactory. They can listen and respond suitably, write with well formed letters, punctuate and spell sensibly. They make good use of phonics when they read, and while they do not necessarily understand every

phrase they sensibly keep going, if they can, to gain a sense of the meaning of the whole passage.

7. The junior's standards are not secure. They too listen attentively but have lower standards in speaking and do not investigate and develop ideas as well as they should. Even those who can do that need to be pushed to use their skills. This affects their writing, whose content is not sufficiently complex nor well developed, either. Their reading benefits from good phonic skills and many are fluent. In Year 6, standards of reading are sound although individuals still have the odd difficulty with understanding. The children in Year 6 are making swift progress in English due to some very focused teaching but may not have sufficient independent skills embedded to do well in their tests.
8. The pupils use their speaking and listening skills thoughtfully in other subjects, particularly history, geography and religious education (RE), but even here need to speak at a more complex level. Their writing, in history particularly, is interesting and well presented.
9. In mathematics, the results over the last four years for the infants have been close to the national average and the juniors have been mostly below average. During the inspection the oldest infants and the oldest juniors were attaining the standards expected for their ages. Year 6 is again, making swift progress. The 2000 results were average for the infants and below average for the juniors when compared with similar schools so that infants were making a satisfactory achievement but juniors were not. During the inspection achievement was sound except for the more able pupils in the juniors, who were underachieving.
10. In their lessons in mathematics, the Year 2 pupils understand place value to 100 and can count in 2s, 5s, and 10s. They know some appropriate mathematical vocabulary like, "odd", "even" and "total". The oldest junior pupils understand fractions and decimals and can make a range of calculations mentally. The juniors are not skilled at data handling and do not apply all their skill at calculation when they are problem solving. The pupils use their mathematics sensibly in other subjects. They count and measure in their design and technology (DT) and sort data in their science.
11. In science, the teachers assessed that many 7 year olds were reaching satisfactory standards but few were attaining highly. 11 year olds' standards in science tests have varied from average to well below average over the last few years. During the inspection the infants demonstrated good standards and the juniors' work was satisfactory.
12. The oldest infants can carry out their own investigations skilfully and have knowledge about forces, parts of the body, electrical circuits, the texture and strength of materials. The oldest juniors understand what happens when solids dissolve and liquids evaporate and understand the properties of gases and light beams. They can conduct tests and record the results and can use the symbols used in electrical circuits.
13. In 2000 the juniors' science results were average for all schools nationally and below average for similar schools, which suggests that they were not achieving as well as they could. During the inspection the infants were achieving well and most of the juniors' achievement was satisfactory, although the more able pupils could still be doing better.
14. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are sound. The infants can use screen menus and control software; they use the word processor to draft writing and graphics

software in their mathematics. The older juniors can enhance their writing with graphics, use spreadsheets and research with CD-ROMS and the internet.

15. In religious education (RE), the pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions satisfies the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. Year 6 can discuss, with understanding, some beliefs in Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam.
16. DT standards and achievements are sound, with regular planning of designs before products are made. The infants can make model vehicles with moving axles and juniors can make working models quickly and accurately, using technological learning from one task to apply to another.
17. Geography and history standards and achievement are sound throughout. The infants can find Britain on the globe and locate Ticehurst. They understand that homes in the past were not like theirs, and why. The older juniors can use atlases, discuss weather conditions in different places and make sensible comparisons between where they live and other parts of the world and between past and present ways of life in England.
18. Standards in art are sound for the infants and they achieve well. Their observation is careful and they can do well finished and proportioned drawings. The juniors' standards of finish and study are not high enough to be satisfactory and they are underachieving here.
19. In their music and Physical education (PE) standards and achievement are sound. The pupils can sing tunefully and can play their classroom instruments meaningfully. In PE the infants move creatively and the oldest juniors can collaborate and plan sequences of movement where they transfer weight from one partner to the other.
20. Test data over the last four years suggests that girls attain better than boys in mathematics and, to a greater extent, in English. There are more boys in the school and more boys than girls on the register of pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The head teacher's monitoring suggests that there are boys who do not have special needs who do not attain as well as they could in the junior years. The school is taking useful action here and is part of a local project to address the issue.
21. Test results suggest that the gifted and talented pupils in the infants did not achieve as well in writing and science last year as they did in reading and mathematics. For the juniors in 2000, the proportion of high attainment at Level 5 was below average compared with similar schools in all three subjects of English, mathematics and science. Whilst this is not conclusive, as there may have been few able pupils in that year, it is true that in their lessons, not enough is asked of the able pupils; they are not speaking or writing at high enough levels and work in mathematics and science is not challenging enough for them.
22. The small group of under sixes in the reception year are all set to achieve their Early Learning Goals. They listen well and speak sensibly, count and begin to read numbers, can observe, build, control simple computer programmes, travel and balance in different ways, and sing. They draw and paint well. Their personal and social development is good because they mix and share, concentrate and join in discussion in class uninhibited by the presence of older children.
23. The pupils identified with special educational needs make good progress in meeting the goals on their individual education plans because of the well focussed support they receive from their class teachers, support teachers and learning support assistants. The pupils who have statements of SEN have very good support and make commendable progress.

24. One example of this good progress is shown in the work done in English by a pupil with a statement of SEN. Over the first six months of the year there was a marked improvement in story writing, showing improved sequencing in the story.
25. The school has a few Traveller pupils whose progress is usually sound and who have additional support if they need it. The tiny number of pupils who are learning English as another language are fluent and making progress commensurate with their peers.

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

26. Pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good. During the previous inspection, pupils' attitudes were judged to have a positive effect on the tone of the school. The very good standards have been maintained. The children's attitudes and mature behaviour support their learning well. Pupils in the school show their interest and enthusiasm clearly in lessons when they ask sensible questions and are keen to answer teachers' questions.
27. The majority of parents who responded agreed that their child likes going to school and any pupils who were asked confirmed this. They named several aspects of the school they enjoyed. These included the many extra curricular activities, which pupils enthusiastically join.
28. Behaviour during lessons and at playtimes is good. This contributes well to the calm purposeful lessons. The pupils are orderly and well mannered. They have a sense of community and loyalty to their school and want to win approval. Most parents are pleased with the standards of behaviour at the school. There is an anti-bullying policy and while the school acknowledges that there have been incidents of minor bullying, these have been effectively dealt with and no bullying was seen during the inspection. The pupils confirm this. Pupils who were asked could think of only one example of bullying. They explained that this was taken to the school council who effectively sorted the issue. There is no evidence of prejudicial attitudes among the pupils. There has only been one exclusion in the past year.
29. There are very good working partnerships between pupils and staff and pupils are very considerate of each other. In lessons pupils sit quietly and listen attentively to each other and their teachers. For example, in circle time in Year 1 children listened sympathetically to each other and considered the importance of rules and ways to help each other remember to keep the rules. In another class, circle time helped pupils to identify the issues that are only relevant to the class and the issues to take to the whole school council so that they were using consideration.
30. Pupils respond well to adults and visitors in the school and are polite and courteous. They hold doors open for visitors and are happy to talk about their school and their work. When they are given the opportunity to work together they do so sensibly. They collaborate and work effectively together, sensibly sharing resources and equipment. Those pupils who find good behaviour difficult respond well to help from the learning support assistants who sit next to them and help them to concentrate and to listen.
31. The pupils take responsibility for their many jobs about the school and are very active in helping. Older pupils take responsibility for younger pupils and are interested in helping them. For example, an older pupil took responsibility for taking a young pupil, who needed first aid, into school to find adult help. In another example, pupils in the juniors wrote stories for younger



children, considering what their needs would be. Pupils in Year 6 thoughtfully devised a questionnaire for other pupils in the school asking their views on playtimes to use as a starting point for considering changes.

32. There is a school council representing every class, except Year R, in the school. A suggestion box for issues to discuss is centrally placed so that any pupils may bring an issue to the council. Pupils clearly understand the responsibilities of representing others. A pupil in Year 6 efficiently chairs the meetings while another pupil takes the minutes. It is run by the pupils and benefits them all. For example, an issue brought to the meeting concerned pupils in Year 3 being allowed to play football at playtimes with the older pupils. The appropriate decision made was that representative councillors would speak to the teacher in Year 6 and ask that younger pupils' rights be safeguarded.
33. The children's attendance rate has improved since the last inspection with a small steady increase over the three most recent years, and it is just satisfactory. The rate is however, still below the national average due to the proportion of unauthorised absences which is three times the national average.

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

34. During this inspection over 9 out of 10 lessons seen were satisfactory and just over half the lessons were good. This is a sound improvement from the 1997 inspection when there were closer to 8 out of 10 satisfactory and none good. The school has retained the strengths identified when it was inspected before and made some improvements in the subject knowledge of the teachers, the use of marking, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The head teacher has worked with the teachers to share understanding of what good teaching is. The resulting policy provides useful guidance and support for the current practice.
35. The teaching over the school currently is sound with some particular strengths. It is at its best in science, reading circles, junior ICT and DT and in the youngest and oldest classes.
36. The teaching at the top and bottom of the school ensures good progress there, because the teachers are very conscious of the demands of the curriculum and the levels their pupils have reached. The challenge is often good in these year groups and there is more opportunity for the pupils to be independent learners. Pupils' progress is slower through the younger junior classes where lessons are not always accurately matched to exactly what the children need to learn.
37. Strengths of the teaching generally are the teachers' management of the pupils, the relevance of the lessons to the children, the clear lesson planning, the good use of qualitative resources, the use of homework, the teaching for pupils with special educational needs.
38. The teachers manage the children effectively. They keep them focussed on the work of the lesson and have a high expectation for quiet attentiveness from their classes. They catch any potential distraction very quickly. They maintain good oversight of the whole class even when focussing on a group so that the pupils know the expectation of good behaviour is still there. The pupils respond to this slight pressure by concentrating and trying hard. All this is done with evident concern for the children and their learning, which brings out the best in the pupils.
39. The teaching makes lessons fun and their enthusiasm makes the pupils quick to settle and co-operative, as they are in PE lessons, even when working in a cramped space. The teachers use language clearly to make sure the pupils understand, particularly in science and mathematics.

They give useful demonstrations, for example of shooting a ball in PE, and provide interesting stimuli like the picture made of fruit and vegetables that started off a Year 2 science lesson. Motivating, practical tasks in science and DT engage the children's interest; they work and clear up responsibly. Discussion of a Bible story in RE made it relevant to the pupils' lives when they considered how they would feel if a stranger asked to eat at their house. Useful, open questioning in science, DT, ICT, geography and mathematics helps the pupils to think deeply, but is insufficiently used in English lessons. The teachers make links between one subject and another where they can, for example relating learning about India in geography to previous information gained in history.

40. Clear lesson plans with specific objectives focus lessons well so that teachers are quite clear before they begin about what they want to cover. Junior DT lessons are a good example of this. The plans are rooted in the national scheme of work and are then developed by the class teachers to ensure that the pupils are practising skills, like measuring and cutting, while at the same time making working models which teach them how different mechanisms work. This all engenders an enthusiastic response from the pupils.
41. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects has improved, and this is particularly true in ICT. The junior teachers are especially confident in using computers themselves for administrative work and planning and confident in knowing how much to expect of their pupils. The children work in pairs and groups and their learning is good. The use of ICT in other subjects, particularly science, could be improved now.
42. ICT programmes usually relate well to the infant lessons, which is an example of the good use of resources for lessons generally. Where materials for making models or doing experiments are needed they are of good quality and to hand so that time is not wasted and work, for the children, is purposeful. The use of an old wooden rocking horse for history and art work is an example of the school's interesting and thoughtful provision. The school's garden is well used, especially for science, and during the inspection groups of pupils were out with support assistants looking at growth on plants and trees as spring advanced. The teachers have many interesting books to use with their classes although in one lesson the choice was rather difficult for the children who could enjoy the pictures but not understand the text.
43. A feature of the school's own policy is that every pupil in every year group has the same set of exercise books for the same purpose. This provides good continuity for the pupils, who gradually learn, for example, the difference between art sketchbooks and DT planning books and learn to value both. The strategy also makes oversight of their work easier for managers. The teachers, particularly those in the infants, also help the pupils understand the value of their work by mounting and displaying it very carefully. There is well and stimulatingly presented history work throughout the school.
44. The learning support assistants understand what their groups are meant to be learning and support them sensitively in lessons. They sit near their groups and watch them carefully. They help when needed but also give the pupils independence and do not dominate them. Occasionally an assistant works usefully in a whole class session to model to the children what the teacher wants them to do. This is very helpful as assistants do have a long time to wait in whole class sessions, while the focus is on the teacher.
45. Homework is taken seriously at Ticehurst. The class teachers set interesting tasks, well related to the class work, and they give useful feedback to the children afterwards. The Year 2 teacher suggested to her class that they go home and ask their parents about what they were like when

they were learning to ask questions, and the next day allowed them to share in their English lesson what their parents had said. This made the poem they were reading, about someone asking questions, more relevant for them and allowed their families to be involved in their work.

46. The teaching for the Traveller children and those learning English as another language is appropriate. The teaching for the pupils with SEN is good. Their good progress is due to careful planning and records, communicated in writing between staff, and watchful attention from teachers and support assistants. An example of the tact and care these pupils are offered happened in a PE lesson, where a child had difficulty handling a ball and was effectively and quietly supported until he had mastered the technique.
47. The teachers are well trained to teach the literacy and numeracy hours competently so that teaching and learning in English and mathematics are sound. There is good clear structure and detail in the lesson planning, which usually shows different work for different ability groups. Planning can be weaker where the demand is too easy or too hard for the pupils, particularly where the teacher's expectation is too low, in the juniors. Clear and frequent phonics and handwriting teaching are helping the learning in reading and writing. The provision for developed speaking and listening is too limited, although good mathematics vocabulary is in use. The plenary sessions at the ends of the lessons are too short and not giving the pupils enough opportunity to be evaluative about their learning. The pupils use computers to write but could use them more, particularly in mathematics. The reading circles usefully provide some time for discussion about books, which is well guided by adults. In Year 6 lesson pace is brisk with a high expectation, clear direction and respect for individuals.
48. Careful marking by the teachers is always encouraging and often makes a good response to the meaning of the pupils' writing. It does not often enough tell pupils how they could improve their work.
49. The best assessments are made during the lessons using white boards. Every pupil has one and can hold it up with their answer to a question on it, which enables the teacher to see all at once. The teachers are working hard to set helpful targets for every group of pupils in their classes but are not assessing and talking about these enough in the lessons to make them as useful as they could be.
50. Aware of possible underachievement for boys, the teachers helpfully try to ensure that both genders have the attention in the lessons that they need. In the reading circles for older pupils the boys are taught separately, which gives them more opportunity and encouragement.
51. There are two major weaknesses in the teaching and both are about asking more of the pupils:
  - Particularly in the lower junior classes the demand is not sufficiently challenging for the able children who therefore do not extend their thinking enough. This is true across the subjects, even in science, where the teaching otherwise is good. Here, the work the most able do is often close to that done by the more average group.
  - There is insufficient rigour in the expectation within the subjects so that the pupils, whilst they work hard, do not always make the full effort that they could. In PE they do not prepare themselves well enough in their dressing, and are not asked for precision in movement. In English they are not developing their thinking and planning for writing as well as their presentation skills and not making enough real personal investment in writing. Older pupils do not reflect enough in RE nor do sufficiently sustained work in art.

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

52. As in the 1997 inspection, the school's curriculum is appropriate for legal requirements with a good range of interesting activities and opportunities. The school offers the full range of subjects expected including health education, sex education and drugs education. RE appropriately follows the arrangements that have been made locally. The allocation of time to subjects currently favours English heavily which appropriately reflects the needs of the pupils as written into the school's plans for development. Time for other subjects is limited by this and by time spent moving around the building. The national programmes in literacy and numeracy are helpfully implemented and the national guidelines for all other subjects have been used to write the plans for these subjects. In PE and geography these plans are supplemented by other schemes and resource packs. The school has recently met the need to review the curriculum in order to cover the revised national requirements. Programmes for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) are in place. As there was in 1997, there is a very good range of extra-curricular clubs; the pupils have opportunities to take part in at least one of them.
53. In 1997, the curriculum for ICT was unsatisfactory and this has been addressed. Extra resources, training for the teachers, use of the national scheme of work, dedicated lessons in the new computer suite and the part time employment of technical support all combine to produce a sound curriculum. One of the technicians provides useful support for gifted and able pupils in ICT.
54. The curriculum for the youngest pupils was good at the time of the last inspection. Now, the number of pupils of reception class age is very small and they are working within the Year R/1 class. The curriculum provided is broadly satisfactory although the pupils would benefit from more opportunities for creative speaking. It is difficult, however, to provide enough freedom for the children to determine their own activities when they are working alongside pupils using a more formal curriculum.
55. There are appropriate, separate programmes for numeracy, literacy and science. There is a rolling programme of topics for history and geography which are covered once every two years in the infant classes, in Years 3 and 4 and in Years 5 and 6. This is sensible and ensures that pupils do not repeat topics and remain motivated. The topics and activities are interesting and relevant for the children. The provision for investigative work has improved through science and DT since 1997.
56. The new, national, literacy and numeracy lessons have been implemented. Consistently detailed planning ensures that the different sections of the lessons are taught and that the school's own homework provision is integrated. Nationally planned, additional sessions for children who need a special boost are all provided appropriately. Useful support in establishing all this has been provided by the East Sussex literacy and numeracy consultants.
57. As well as the literacy hour, the pupils have extra handwriting, spelling and reading practice, which means that they spend well over a third of their time on English. Whilst it is understandable that the school should respond in this way to the need to raise standards in reading and writing, the breadth and balance of the curriculum need regular review. Time is shorter than usual for mathematics and science; these standards are sound for the older pupils although test results do not compare very well with other schools. Time is short for other foundation subjects and RE, and standards have deteriorated in art since the last inspection. PE

has more time than in many schools and standards have been maintained since the 1997 inspection.

58. A very good range of fourteen extra curricular clubs is popular with parents and supplements the curriculum. These include gardening, football, touch rugby, netball, 'drop-in games', 'robot adventure', 'science adventure' and 'books are fun'. Extra-curricular provision particularly supports the technology curriculum. The clubs take place at lunchtime and after school and membership of each club is reviewed on a termly basis to respond to need. The school identified science as an area for improvement and thus a club was formed for Year 2 pupils. Criteria for participation and hence the number catered for, vary. Some of the clubs have a limitation on age as the younger pupils are considered too tired to benefit from some of the activities provided at the end of the day. Others, such as the gardening club have limits according to size as the number of adults available for supervision around the various parts of the school is limited.
59. The amount of teaching time within the school day only just meets the national guideline and is shortened by the length of time needed for pupils to move about the school, particularly crossing from the temporary classrooms to the main building for assembly, PE or to use the computer suite. A significant amount of time is taken up this way. It is used in training the children to move considerately about their school and contributes to the PSE curriculum, but standards of personal development are good and time is not needed for that. The constraints of the accommodation affect the way time is used.
60. The school makes extra time available for learning through the extra-curricular clubs. These are productive sessions although the numbers of pupils who can or do attend are variable. The willingness of all staff and members of the community to take part voluntarily in these clubs is a reflection of their commitment to the pupils.
61. The school is not reviewing the quantity and quality of teaching time regularly in the light of the national guidance and governors do not have enough information about standards in all the subjects to make a useful judgement. Whilst extra curricular clubs are happy times for relatively small numbers of pupils, lesson time is short for some subjects. Timekeeping is not as sharp as is needed in this situation. Registration can be late, changes of activity, like ends of playtime, can be slow. The school day could usefully be longer to give more lesson time to the subjects where it is shortest, and more time for movement. Changeovers should be crisper.
62. The school participates in various inter-school competitions including cricket and netball. They also enter local competitions run by a garden centre and a mathematics competition organised by East Sussex Local Education Authority. Educational visits and visitors appropriately help to support the curriculum. The enrichment of the English curriculum through the use of regular reading partners who visit during lunchtimes to hear boys read and the visits of authors should all help to raise standards.
63. Pupils who have special educational needs have good access to the school curriculum and this is one of the strengths of the school. They are well supported in the classrooms. The teachers consider ways in which the assistants can help and ensure that this is written into their lesson plans and discussed with the assistants themselves. At times a pupil is appropriately withdrawn to work with the SENCo or a learning support assistant. For example, a pupil with statement of special educational needs is withdrawn from class to work where it is quiet and distraction free on a special speech therapy programme with a learning support assistant. Care is taken to ensure that pupils are appropriately withdrawn and do not miss parts of the curriculum. For example, they may come out of a reading circle to work individually on improving their reading

or spelling. More usually the SENCo or a learning support assistant works in class supporting a pupil with special educational needs.

64. Pupils with special needs are fully included in out of school activities and have access to all the extra curricular activities such as school clubs.
65. There are three pupils for whom English is not their first language. Their spoken English is competent, the curriculum is suitable for them and they are making satisfactory progress.
66. For the gifted and talented pupils the curriculum provides interesting knowledge and experience. It does not challenge them to carry out sufficiently demanding tasks.
67. The school has made very good links with the local playgroups and nurseries and school staff visit to meet children before they transfer to school. Younger children of families taking part in the family numeracy programme are welcomed, which helps to prepare them for when they start school.
68. The links with the local secondary schools are very good. Ticehurst is a partner school in a bid being made by Upland School for technology status. As part of that link Ticehurst has access to technology which is currently well used with the Year 6 pupils. Older pupils go by bus to the secondary school to take part in clubs run at Upland school.
69. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, as it was in 1997, and is made mainly through assemblies and RE. Opportunities to discuss feelings and opinions are planned through the circle time and the PHSE programme. Teachers take advantage of other unplanned opportunities as they arise.
70. The provision for pupils' moral education continues to be good. The Golden Rules are understood and weekly thoughts are discussed during assembly and in class. Self-discipline is encouraged. Care and responsibility are reinforced through the pupils' participation in the school council. The staff provide opportunities for pupils to reflect upon and discuss their behaviour. Midday meal supervisors have more children to deal with and do not always provide the same opportunities for pupils at lunchtime.
71. The provision for pupils' social development also continues to be good. Social behaviour is strongly encouraged in the day to day working of the school. It is often reinforced by social rewards as in the case where the best-behaved table at lunchtime is invited to have tea with the head teacher. The idea of having family groupings at the dinner tables to break down barriers between older and younger children and to encourage a caring approach works well. On the playground the equipment provided encourages social interaction. The school council makes a very strong contribution to the positive social life of the school. However, further opportunities for collaborative work could be provided within the curriculum, particularly in English where paired discussion is under-used.
72. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory as it was in 1997. Lessons and clubs give good contact with the cultures in the local community. Pupils have opportunities through geography and RE to consider some of the features of different cultures, although these are not as well developed in art. There is a wide range of visits to National Trust sites, to the local church, and one to a Hindu temple. Some of the displays, the range of musical instruments and books show that the school is providing contact with different cultures.

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

73. The school provides a good level of care for its children. Strengths have been maintained from the last inspection and there are improvements in child protection, attendance and assessment. The school gives strong support to good behaviour; there are useful assessment and recording routines, which are being used increasingly well, and a demonstrable concern for pupil well being.
74. There are good child protection procedures. In order to address the concerns of the previous inspection report, there has been a sound programme of training for all staff. There are regular updates and these help all involved to implement the new school policy. Relationships with other agencies are satisfactory although the head teacher reports problems around accessing suitable help for children from the school.
75. There are very good relationships between staff and children which allow children to approach staff readily and confidently with personal concerns. First aid procedures are good and are carried out effectively.
76. The building is safe. Periodic risk assessments of the school site enable the governors to review security and safety of the buildings regularly. The caretaker undertakes and records a full fire drill every half term.
77. The school has improved its management of pupils' attendance. Extra money has been spent to provide a member of staff to follow up non-attenders, which has reduced unauthorised absences.
78. As in 1997, the school has very good systems for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The Golden Rules were adopted following good and wide consultation with children, in Circle Time, and discussions with parents. They are displayed and valued in the classrooms. The head teacher and governors helpfully monitor the effectiveness of the behaviour policy. The head teacher reviews trends from the logs kept by staff. Governors inspect the school incident book. As a small school staff know the children well and are thus able to discuss any areas of concern at staff meetings or informally.
79. The effectiveness of the policy is also, appropriately, discussed by the school council and their views affect the school's management. During the inspection, children recalled a school council playground survey which led to a number of lunchtime changes. In particular, the school changed its organisation to separate sandwich and hot lunch sessions
80. Lunchtime supervision was a concern raised by parents. The mid day support assistants are due to receive appropriate training in behaviour management and the avoidance of bullying and racially insensitive behaviour. Staff are supported by the head teacher who supervises much of the lunch hour and checks entries in the incident books to assess where further help or support may be needed.
81. The head teacher reports a difficulty in recruiting meals' supervisors and during the inspection they were short handed. In the dining rooms the children are asked to be quieter than is common. Individual pupils told inspectors that they are hurried sometimes although this did not happen during the inspection. Very little difficult behaviour was observed. A pupil on the playground complaining that others were being cruel to him was comforted and told not to return

to them, but they were not reprimanded. This level of supervision is adequate but could be better and contrasts for the children with what happens at other times in the day.

82. Older pupils were setting out and stacking meals' furniture, sometimes without supervision, which is not acceptable.
83. The designation of areas on the playground for specific activities, such as football, means that games are well managed. The school has provided useful extra resources, including an additional assistant to oversee a lunch time football game. The newly provided playground furniture and play equipment provides further choice for lunchtime activities. A very good infant gardening group works with a member of staff to maintain the attractive, playground flower beds.
84. Useful assessments are made of the children's progress and there is particularly good work in English and mathematics in Year 6. A very comprehensive assessment policy covers the purposes of assessment and recording, how it is used to monitor progress and identifies clear roles for all concerned. Teachers and learning support staff regularly record progress of children in their groups. They record the pupils' spelling skills regularly. A system of testing in mathematics will soon be used to define future learning needs. The teachers regularly ask pupils to write a sustained passage of writing and then ascribe a National Curriculum level to the work. This is a particular strength of the assessment, which enables teachers to see strengths and weaknesses.
85. The use of all the information gained for future planning is sound in literacy and numeracy but not proactive enough. The teaching in Year 6 is the exception where there is a good focus on strengths and weaknesses across the class. Generally, there is insufficient planning for pupils at different levels in science, writing and speaking; and more rigorous planning is needed for gifted and talented pupils.
86. Traveller children and children learning English as a second language have appropriate support from the school and the Local Authority where necessary.
87. Good support is given to children with special educational needs. The systems for assessing the needs are good. These pupils are appropriately identified by teachers or by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) who uses information from tests. The teacher and SENCo then work together to ensure these pupils have support and help. Sound individual educational plans (IEPs) are written for each child who needs one, by the teacher and SENCo, working together. These plans helpfully detail the targets for these pupils to attain and the support they will be given to achieve them. The few targets are brief and clear. Teachers and other adults promote the self-esteem of the pupils so that they play a full part in all aspects of school life.
88. Any pupil who has a statement of special educational need has the support stipulated on the statement. Their statements are reviewed annually with a contribution from their parents and any involved staff.

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

89. The 1997 report found that the school was committed to ensuring a strong partnership with parents. This remains the case and the school has a sound partnership with parents. On their questionnaires and at their meeting the parents overall were comfortable with approaching the



school. The parents, and particularly a very hardworking group of them, provide valuable support to the school and to the curriculum and help to reinforce positive attitudes, add resources and enrich the education provided. Unfortunately that still leaves a large group of parents whose communication with the school is not particularly supportive for children, parents or school.

90. The vast majority of the 58 parents replying to the questionnaire and 25 at the meeting stated their children enjoyed school. They believe that it is an approachable school. There were concerns about lunchtime supervision, behaviour in the playground, knowledge of tables and spelling, class teachers' time with their pupils. Questionnaires also showed 16 of the 58 parents replying (28%) did not consider the school to be well managed and led. This last issue is dealt with below in this section. The other issues are addressed in the appropriate sections of the report.
91. Parents are definitely encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school, as governors, helpers and members of the Friends of Ticehurst School (FOTS). The Friends raise valuable amounts of money for the school, with a variety of social and community events. For example, during the inspection FOTS was promoting an Easter egg hunt which would be non-profit making, to provide a social gathering.
92. The school is consultative and holds a good range of parents' meetings including two for each class per year. These are well received and provide an informal opportunity to discuss school issues. The development of the anti-bullying policies arose here. The school also used a questionnaire to parents in 1999 which resulted in the considerate strategy of holding class parents' meetings.
93. The school provides to parents well presented and overall, good, information, although there are some gaps. The reports on children's progress cover every subject of the curriculum. They reflect what individuals have learned and the progress they have made. They do not allow for child and parent comment to the school and as with the 1997 report, do not set targets for improvement or indicate how parents can assist in securing such targets.
94. The school prospectus and other printed material is considered and presented in a clear, manageable format. The very helpful range of smaller leaflets cover specific issues, including "Feeling Safe", for children, and "Behaviour" and "Bullying" for parents. The leaflets provide a good summary of the important points in any of the topics. As an example the Behaviour leaflet describes the use of Circle Time and the background to Golden Rules. The Prospectus is good and conveys the information the school needs to provide. The governors' annual report to parents is very readable, although there are some specific points it has omitted, like the school's performance against its targets last year.
95. Parents are given good information about the school's special needs policy and practice. They are informed of their children's progress and are invited to annual reviews. The Special Needs Co-ordinator works sensibly with parents and ensures that their potential to support and promote individual education plan targets is part of the plan. She attends parents' evenings to talk to parents and she and class teachers are always available to any parents wanting to talk to her about their son or daughter. Individual education plans are shared with parents at the termly Parents Evenings so that they understand what the school is doing to support their child.
96. The impact on the children's learning of the parental support is good, particularly as the size of the parent group which is giving support is relatively small. Assistance in ICT and reading improve skills for individuals. The very high attendance at a class assembly taking place during

the inspection showed the children how valuable their work and personal development are to the community. The curriculum is enriched by parents who lend relevant artefacts as stimuli. Some parents are able to support teachers by helping in classes and other areas of the school while others assist by accompanying staff on educational trips. The parents in the family numeracy project are supporting the children's learning well and many, though not all, parents hear their children read at home and support homework.

97. The school still has the problem of a larger group of parents who are not responding to the offer of involvement with the school. Overall, the pupils still have too many unauthorised absences. A minority of parents consider that leadership and management at school is not good although the inspection finds that it is. This suggests that the school and some of the parents are not communicating clearly with each other about their aims and ways of supporting the children. The responsibility for this belongs to everyone involved. The school can play its part by looking for ways of involving a wider range of parents and helping them enjoy their children's school years. The parents can play their part by talking with staff about problems before they grow very serious and making sure their children attend well.

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

98. Both the headteacher and chair of governors were relatively new to their roles at the time of the last inspection. In the four years since then, they have provided good leadership and management, sharing a commitment with the whole staff team to make the school as good as they can. This has resulted in the school's taking effective action to move forward.
99. The governing body is effectively fulfilling its statutory duties. The inadequacies of the information technology curriculum in the previous inspection have been addressed, partly through the school's funding from the National Grid for Learning, and its partnership with a neighbouring beacon primary and the local secondary school.
100. The governing body, through the headteacher, has a clear view about the educational direction the school must take. Raising standards is a priority, especially in English. Governors also seek to maintain the qualities of care, community and personal and social education which have been longstanding features of the school. The school's established aims and values permeate its work, both in policy setting and planning and in the regular day-to-day routines.
101. The pupils' achievements are analysed in order to track individuals' progress and set targets. The school has been swift to set challenging internal and statutory external targets for literacy and numeracy.
102. The governors are well informed about the day-to-day running of the school and have adopted a key role in shaping the direction of the school. There is an extensive committee structure which addresses the business of the governing body. The school improvement plan charts a sound range of actions with appropriate and often quantifiable success criteria to enable the governors to evaluate progress. Governors are assigned to a curricular area or subject and most have made regular visits to see the school improvement plan in action. It is, nevertheless, important to ensure that any future monitoring of standards and teaching are carried out by subject co-ordinators and the leadership team. This would provide governors with the agreed monitoring information, thus conserving the energies of governors and reserving a strategic and evaluative role for the governing body itself.

103. Recently introduced national procedures for performance management have been introduced appropriately. Also, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have implemented a monitoring strategy for evaluating the quality of pupils' work, teachers' weekly lesson planning and their development of teaching. In the absence of the deputy headteacher, it is providing the headteacher with good, but infrequent information on teaching, being limited by her availability for this work. Internal monitoring, however, has been supplemented by use of local education authority advisers and consultants who have provided informative, objective reports and guidance for the introduction of the national literacy, numeracy and other associated school improvement strategies.
104. Governors are informed by data, and through their own visits. They and the head teacher need further information, from the oversight of the curriculum co-ordinators. This was raised in the 1997 inspection and still needs attention. The subject co-ordinators have worked hard in the intervening years on schemes of work and resources for their subjects. They do not have systematic ways of monitoring the quality, standards and progress in their subjects or of reporting that to the head teacher. This reduces the ability of the head teacher and governors to maintain an effective strategic oversight of standards and quality across the school. An example, where further evaluation is needed, is in the curriculum section of this report, where regular evaluation of the use of time is identified as a need.
105. The school has made sound, strategic use of its finance, funding from local trusts and donations and grants to ensure there is a good range of learning resources available to pupils in all subjects. Considerable energy has gone into planning for a new purpose-built school which the governing body hopes will soon replace the existing Victorian school with its 1960s low cost free-standing classrooms. Accommodation is just adequate in terms of the space available. Space in the two halls is restricted for PE, as was signalled in the last inspection. The school makes good use of outside playspace in compensation.
106. The number, qualification, and experience of teaching staff is adequate and show a profile ranging from one newly qualified teacher to three very experienced teachers, including the headteacher, with more than 20 years experience. Three teachers have been appointed since the last inspection and, during this inspection, the deputy headteacher was on maternity leave, and the teacher for reception and Year 1 was on a phased return to work following long-term sick leave, both being replaced by supply teachers of varying experience.
107. The parents who sent views for the inspection have concerns about the fact that class teachers do not teach their classes all the week. However, the balancing factor is that withdrawing staff for in-service training is improving the quality of the teaching. Some continuity is offered to the classes as they are ably supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator, 10 teaching assistants and a further nine volunteer helpers.
108. The provision of learning resources is good, with a good range of books and equipment. All teachers have recently been provided with laptop computers which has allowed them to develop their computing skills more quickly. The school is also making good use of equipment loaned for pupil use by the local secondary school.
109. The school building is well maintained and has benefited from recent minor refurbishment in the library to create a five station computer suite and a quiet study area in the corridor nearby and the centralisation of literacy resources in the spare classroom. The four temporary classrooms across the playground cause a loss of teaching time as pupils walk to and from the hall in the main building.

110. The school grounds provide relatively spacious hard playground and garden areas, with maximum use made of every available space to provide social areas, some with tables and chairs, for pupils and parents waiting to collect pupils. The school has a working greenhouse provided by a local charitable organisation and an organic garden. However, the school has no playing field, but has an arrangement to use the local recreation ground for sports day in the summer. In the recent wet weather, parts of the playground were waterlogged due to difficulties with surface water drainage.
111. Financial control and day-to-day administration are carried out to a high standard. The school was last audited in December 1997 and no significant findings were reported. The governors are prudent with their spending and have effective budget monitoring systems. They are aware of the principles of best value and are keen to apply them in the accommodation improvements for which they are planning.
112. The previous inspection noted insufficient time for the special educational needs co-ordinator to oversee classroom practice. This is improved and the SENCo has a clear understanding of needs and manages pupil support well. She works with the head teacher and termly with each class teacher on reviewing individual education plans and setting targets. Although she only works in the school for two days a week she makes herself available by telephone and often teaches in the school on other days as cover for absent teachers. This ensures she is available to give helpful advice to teachers, if needed. There is a good SEN policy that meets the statutory requirements and explains the stages of support. There is good liaison with professionals from outside the school, who come in to give advice or help these pupils. Learning support assistants work under the direction of the SENCo when they support pupils with special needs. There is an identified governor who takes responsibility for special educational needs issues on the governing body. The SENCo and the governor meet to discuss issues and work together every year to review the policy and report to parents on any special educational needs issues. The funds given to the school to support pupils with special educational needs are appropriately spent on these pupils.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

113. The governors, senior managers and staff should continue to work at raising standards, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
- (1) raising the standards of speaking writing and spelling in English by:
- planning lessons which will extend pupils' speaking skills to the higher National Curriculum levels; (paragraphs 124, 125, 126 & 141)
  - using plenary sessions at the ends of lessons for the pupils to talk about and evaluate their own learning; (paragraph 138)
  - using the termly assessments in writing to identify what the children need to learn next, and ensuring that it is taught and practised; (paragraphs 130, 132 and 144) and
  - teaching the pupils consistently to plan and draft their writing and to check spellings after the first draft, and using information technology for these purposes; (paragraphs 129, 141 and 142)
- and in mathematics by:
- ensuring that junior pupils work more systematically on data handling; (paragraph 151)
  - improving problem solving skills by discussion and practice; (paragraph 151)

- ensuring good use of information technology in mathematics lessons; (paragraph 151) and
  - using the plenary sessions for pupils to talk about learning. (paragraph 154)
- (2) raising the attainment for the more able pupils by
- ensuring that they are not practising things which they can already do; (paragraph 154)
  - giving them the opportunity to think about difficult questions; (paragraphs 169, 126 and 51)
  - in science, providing them with more demanding tasks; (paragraphs 166 and 172) and
  - allowing them to do more sustained work in art. (paragraphs 179, 178 and 176)
- (3) improving the consistency of teaching and learning across the junior years by
- continuing to provide in-service training and support for the teachers and allowing them to watch colleagues working' (paragraphs 107 and 152)
  - continuing to monitor the quality of the teaching and provide rigorous written feedback; (paragraphs 102, 103 and 104)
  - making sure that the children understand their targets and discuss them in their lessons; (paragraphs 156, 49 and 122) and
  - monitoring the progress of the pupils across the National Curriculum levels and ensuring that they are taught what they need to learn next. (paragraphs 84, 85 and 144)
- (4) ensuring that registration is over by 9am and lessons start promptly, and that changeovers are crisp. (paragraph 61)
- (5) ensuring that curriculum leaders take responsibility for quality and standards in their subjects by:
- checking the standards and progress of the pupils in their subjects across the school; (paragraphs 172, 182, 223, 208, 198 and 190)
  - checking that lesson plans and pupil targets cover what pupils need to learn next; (paragraphs 47, 51, 144 and 84)
  - evaluating the allocation of curriculum time to their subjects against the standards achieved; (paragraphs 57, 59 and 61) and
  - reporting regularly to the head teacher on these issues. (paragraph 104)
- (6) continues to be proactive in involving parents in the work of the school by:
- building on the good work of the Family Numeracy group; (paragraph 157)
  - seeking alternative strategies to help parents enjoy and understand the school; (paragraph 97 and 90) and
  - sharing the children's targets with their parents. (paragraph 156 and 49)
2. In addition to the key issues above, the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:
- rigorous expectations; (paragraph 51)
  - lunchtime supervision; (paragraphs 81 and 82)
  - attendance; (paragraphs 33 and 97)
  - information to parents; (paragraphs 93 and 94)
  - under sixes curriculum; (paragraph 116) and
  - PE. (paragraphs 220 and 222)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	7	43	46	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	146
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y1 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		4.8

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	14	9

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	12	14
	Girls	6	6	8
	Total	19	18	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (71)	78 (71)	96 (86)
	National	84 (82)	85 (86)	88 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	6	7	9
	Total	19	20	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (76)	87 (81)	100 (86)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	13	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	12
	Girls	6	8	9
	Total	13	16	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (55)	67 (48)	88 (65)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	10	10
	Girls	6	7	7
	Total	13	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (55)	71 (52)	71 (61)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	141
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	24

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	312,727
Total expenditure	312,824
Expenditure per pupil	1,852
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,509
Balance carried forward to next year	4,412

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	146
Number of questionnaires returned	58

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	43	2	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	29	60	10	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	16	60	22	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	62	14	3	0
The teaching is good.	34	62	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	53	17	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	29	14	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	53	9	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	45	16	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	21	50	16	12	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	55	14	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	35	9	4	5

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents at the meeting felt that the school had a happy atmosphere and did its best for every child. They were concerned that the school tries hard to communicate with all the parents but that relatively few respond. They were also worried about the quality of behaviour and supervision at lunchtime.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

114. Currently the school has only five under sixes who work in a mixed age class with the 15 year 1 pupils. The under sixes start school with a widely differing range of attainment. By the end of the Foundation Stage most are likely to have achieved satisfactorily all their Early Learning Goals. They are also likely to show good personal, social and emotional development, be good at letter sounds and early writing and drawing. This is good achievement for them, as it was at the time of the last inspection.
115. In their personal, social and emotional development the children are already meeting most of their goals. They have formed good relationships with the adults who work with them and mix well with each other. In one computer lesson they shared machines in pairs and although the person who was not controlling the mouse would have liked it, these children waited patiently till they could change places and did not complain. The children concentrate well in whole class and group work. They are interested and well motivated. They are confident enough to speak up in group-discussion and one was happy to read her work to her whole class, including all the older children. They were able to understand the moral of a story about how people are all different. The group does not have very frequent opportunity to experience other cultures. The teaching for them is good; the care modelled by the adults and their patient explanations helps the children develop sensitivity to others' needs. The class were led by one teacher to welcome a visitor and worked hard at remembering the stranger's name, because their teacher was indicating that it was important.
116. In their communication, language and literacy work the children are likely to meet their goals. They listen well and speak sensibly. They begin to take roles in play. For example, they could lay the table in their play café and talk about what they had done. They are competent, but not outstanding, speakers. Further opportunities to be creative in speaking would support them later in the school, when they will need more developed skills. They can recognise letters from their names and can suggest rhyming sounds. They are working on the difficult task of identifying the final sounds in words. Several can write recognisable letters and one child can already write a sentence unaided. They enjoy books and understand how to find meaning in the pictures and letters. The teaching they have is particularly good in helping them develop a meaningful idea to draw or write, and to hear letter sounds. During the inspection one group worked with an adult to sort toys by the final letter of their names. The toys made the hard work relevant. In the children's books it is clear that they have had a lot of individual help to think what they want to say about their drawings.
117. The children's mathematical development is sound and the teaching meets their different levels well. They are learning to read numerals to 5 and having help to count those numbers accurately. Working together they can position numbers on a blank line in the right order. The range of attainment is very wide and everyone is achieving well in relation to their starting point. One child is still confusing 3 and 5, while another can position numbers on a blank 100 square.
118. The children have sound knowledge and understanding of the world. They have made useful observation of cross sections of fruit sensibly using a magnifier for the purpose. The cutting and slicing to prepare for the drawing gave multi-sensory experience, which helped these young children to learn. They have shared some quite advanced work with the older children, making diaries of how hyacinth bulbs are growing; this helps them learn what living things need. The

good provision of equipment for the class means the children can start learning about design and technology by working with a useful range of construction kits and they have purposeful experience at using computers to draw with and to count, read and spell. They can click and drag with a mouse and are learning to control their programmes sensibly. The learning would be better if they were to change over control sometimes as they work in their pairs at the computers. The teaching gives them a high level of attention so that they remain work focussed.

119. The children are likely to meet the goals for their physical development. Their teachers stress safety to them and they can handle tools sensibly. They can, in their movement lessons, travel and balance in different ways. They warmed up at the start and felt their hearts beating at the end of one lesson and so begin to have a sense of the effect of exercise on their bodies. The teaching is sound for the under sixes but is really asking them to do things that older pupils are meant to do. Additional adult help was readily provided for a less well co-ordinated child who needed it and there was no distress to the child. In this lesson the younger children were working within the National Curriculum, like the older ones. They do have opportunity to play with large mobile toys, as they should, but the lack of freely available outdoor play facilities, however, does mean that the under sixes cannot decide for themselves when to extend their play into physical activity; they have only limited space and time for it. Whilst they are mature enough to manage and their teachers are clear with them about what they are learning, they are missing an earlier stage of work which would develop confidence and creativity.
120. In their creative development the children will meet their goals. Their achievement is good and very good in graphic art. They have plentiful experience of different colours and textures in their collage work. Their teacher has provided them with some structured learning and talked with them about thick and thin brushes, and colour mixing. They can discriminate between two kinds of pencil. They have done some paintings from observation of an old rocking horse with unusually accurate colour detail and some sustained self-portraits in paint which represent an effort of concentration for them. In music they can sing well and use their hands to mark rhythm with the older children. The teaching they have is good, with carefully organised experience, discussion and careful marking and display of their work, which shows them how much it is valued.
121. Standards of teaching are good for the under sixes. Continuity of care is ensured when the two current, part time, teachers change over during the week. As they change over, lesson planning is usually well communicated from one to the other, although, for a minority of lessons the teacher who did not write the plans needs to be clearer about them. The co-ordinating teacher plans the work for the under sixes very carefully. She has a difficult task of providing for the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum in one classroom. She does this by setting topics and activities which will interest both age groups and then defining different objectives for the two. Broadly, this works well, although there are times, particularly in PE, role play and creative work, when the under sixes do not have enough freedom and creativity in their curriculum.
122. The children have a good start in the reception class: school staff hold induction meetings for them and provide a new parents' information pack; and their parents and the families can fill in a record to show what the child has been doing at home. The co-ordinating teacher keeps careful records of individual progress so that she can meet everyone's needs and sets useful targets for them. There is no formal mechanism to communicate the targets to the parents, which would help them to help their children. The teacher ensures that the learning support assistant is clear about objectives for children she is supporting and the assistant makes helpful notes at the end of each session about their progress. The co-ordinating teacher also has a management role to develop the Early Learning provision and is thinking ahead sensibly about what needs to be done.

## ENGLISH

123. The standards for the oldest infants in English are satisfactory and their achievement is good. Their speaking and listening, writing and reading are all sound. For the oldest juniors, achievement is sound but their standards are not high enough for their ages. Their speaking and writing are not good enough although their listening and reading are satisfactory.
124. The pupils' speaking and listening is sound in the infants but not fully satisfactory in the juniors. They could do better, particularly the more able pupils who need a more rigorous demand. At the last inspection the pupils' ability to listen was a strength throughout the school and this attentiveness is well maintained. That is partly due to the school's determined and long-standing stress on consideration for others which ensures that the pupils respect another person who is speaking and can be empathetic.
125. The infant pupils listen and respond suitably and are aware that formality is sometimes needed. They wait for a turn, do not interrupt, and are confident enough to speak out in front of their classes. Many older pupils, in Year 2, can explain themselves fairly clearly. For example, some individuals were able to remember what to ask their parents at home and come back the next day with a clear answer. To reach a higher level they needed to show more assurance and flexibility, exploring their "answers" and the possible humour there.
126. The younger juniors pay good attention but demonstrate rather low standards of speaking in their lessons. They incorporate detail into what they say but not to investigate and communicate ideas. The older juniors still listen carefully and respond appropriately. Year 5, for example, showed a grasp of the main points of a discussion in their geography lesson about Chembokoli although they did not offer sustained and thoughtfully developed ideas. Year 6, however, in a RE lesson, responded well to their teacher's questions and thought hard. Some are not very articulate, as for example a boy, in a reading session, talking about a book: "it's, like, we had that before". Others are capable of far more, can communicate ideas as they did in RE but need to be pushed to develop ideas, describe events and opinions in a sustained way, varying vocabulary and taking account of other's views.
127. The pupils' writing was not satisfactory during the last inspection for the infants and was just sound for the juniors. Now it is just satisfactory for the infants but not quite meeting the standard expected for the juniors. The previous strength in handwriting has been maintained. National test results show that standards are improving although they are still below the national average and the average for schools whose pupils have broadly the same levels of deprivation as at Ticehurst.
128. For the infants, the average score for the Ticehurst pupils in writing has been rising over the last five years although it is still below the national average and the average for similar schools. In their lessons currently the pupils are showing standards which are just sound. Their achievement is good and they make good progress, particularly over their early infant years. Their handwriting is good, with accurately formed letters and clear spacing. The best shows reasonably even size and skilled letter joins. The punctuation is sound, with even the least capable using some full stops and the best being consistently laid out in sentences. Many pupils can use question marks. The well provided phonics work is helping the pupils make good attempts at spelling. Most can write a simple word like "why" from memory. While the most competent pupils can spell such words as "someone", "porridge", those who are not as sure can make sensible attempts, like "I ettit all up".

129. For the juniors, handwriting continues to be good. Year 3 form letters very well, Year 5 show good co-ordination and cursive style, Year 6 writing is neat and well formed. Punctuation is improving but the pupils are not yet using it as well as they should. Year 3 are learning connectives and sentence demarcation but have not yet mastered it all. Year 6 are often correct with sentences and full stops but need to know paragraphing now and be more accurate generally. Their spelling is improving also. The most capable Year 6 pupil can spell “investigative situation” but still among the juniors there is too much infant –style phonic invention rather than accuracy.
130. It is in the content of their writing that many pupils now need to improve. If they could improve their speaking skills they would find written composition easier because they would be able to think of interesting things to say.
131. In the infants, Year 1 have improved well over the current school year in both the quality and quantity of their composition, with one individual moving from writing unrecognisable words to a complete sentence. One has written a vivid book about being hungry and eating various different things. This is based on a model but the pupil has made it personal and real. Year 2 have many competencies. They are writing purposefully but their presentation is better than their content. Their work is meaningful in narrative, with some ideas developed and some sense of the reader’s needs. Until now the test results have not included very high proportions of high writing scores. If they are to gain these, the pupils need to improve the variety and interest of their vocabulary and the logic of their passages. A diary written as part of a history lesson has some high level work in it, explaining why people had to blow up houses during the fire of London and if they can produce more of this quality they can improve.
132. In the early junior years the pupils’ progress in writing content is slow and needs to be rigorously monitored. Data also shows that last year the amount of improvement for the oldest juniors from where they were at the end of the infants was below average compared with similar schools. Currently Year 6 pupils are being pushed by their teacher into swift progress but there is a lot of ground to cover. In Years 3,4,and 5 there is a good deal of narrative writing. For example, Year 3 have produced interesting stories about a bunny coming to school, which are often neat and clear but with not enough adjectives. Year 5 pupils are imaginative in their narrative but only the most capable show feeling and that is fairly clumsy. Generally in these year groups there is not enough expression of feeling, or well-chosen vocabulary and the pupils write simple rather than complex sentences. In Year 6 the writing is becoming more adventurous. For example, a pupil was encouraged by the teacher to write” “Hard” as a single sentence when describing a football movement to give impact to the word. The most able pupils in this group are meeting the national expectation due to the quality of the teaching but others take longer to learn and have a long way to go.
133. Both infants and juniors are just meeting the national expectation for reading and progress is better through the junior years. There is a strength throughout in using phonics to work out unknown words but there is weakness in understanding of their text for some pupils. Data shows that average scores in reading for the infants have risen slightly but are still below the national average. Last year the infants gained as many high scores at Level 3 as similar schools did and suggests that the school is serving its more able pupils appropriately. Internal data, from the school’s own tests, shows that the juniors are better at reading, with more high attainment, than they are at writing.
134. Year 2 pupils read quite long texts for their age and use their phonics well. For example, a capable pupil could decode “ignores”. This same pupil did not always understand what she had

read but did not stop to worry about that. She moved on and generally followed the sense of her text. A less competent pupil in the same year showed weak understanding although he knew what all the words in his book said. In the lower juniors classes the best reading is done with fluent expression and good use of phonics and grammar to work out unknown words, although sometimes pupils need a good deal of adult support and are not independent. Year 6 pupils' reading is sound although there are still moments here where individuals do not understand the text.

135. Data has suggested that boys attain less well than girls in English, particularly for the juniors. Over recent years, while both genders' average scores have been below the national averages, the boys have been further below the national average for boys than the girls have been, for girls. Data analysis from the local education authority shows a similar picture. The head teacher has found that some boys do not attain as well as girls. Boys are in the majority in the school generally and on the register of pupils with special educational needs. Whilst the teachers ensure that in their lessons both genders have similar opportunities, the school is taking the difference in attainment seriously and has initiated action to improve the provision for boys who need help. Volunteers from the community are coming to give the boys extra reading practice at lunch times, with male volunteers particularly sought so that they can provide appropriate role models. Reading circles are regular feature of the curriculum where pupils work in groups to discuss their reading. As the girls tend to be more articulate and swifter to answer, the Year 6 circles are divided so that boys have the chance to work without them. This is a useful initiative which will need more time to impact. Although levels of articulacy are still low in the boys' reading circle they are consistently practising talking about the meaning there and their achievement is sound.
136. The pupils with special educational needs are usually well supported in English and make good progress, with learning support assistants or part time teachers usually nearby to help while they are working. The very few pupils who are learning English as another language make similar progress to their peers. They are fluent and capable, not needing support. Those children who are gifted and talented make good progress in the Foundation Stage and the early infants, where they can work with older children sometimes to do harder work than their age group. In the older infants and juniors the gifted and talented do not make enough progress. Although the levels gained in 2000 for the infants and juniors were below average in English, the proportions of high attainment at Level 3 and Level 5 in reading for the infants and in English for the juniors matched those found in schools with similar catchments. In reading and writing, the able pupils need more demand placed on them for inference and thoughtful content, respectively.
137. The teaching in English is sound and the pupils make sound learning gains. All the teachers and learning support assistants have had useful training in the use of the literacy hour and work very hard to provide it. The teachers plan competently, using the support of the local authority's literacy consultant well. They make sure they know exactly what they will teach in each part of the literacy hour and they usually plan different activities for groups at different levels of capability. The teachers also ensure that the learning assistants know exactly what they are to teach with their groups so that these staff are well used. The pupils respond well to these routines, are co-operative and comfortable in their lessons.
138. The teachers manage the pupils well, moving them swiftly from one activity to the next without fuss. They have well chosen books and materials well prepared so that no lesson time is wasted. They keep up the pace of the lessons well, often asking closed questions which elicit swift answers. They do not, however, push pupils to produce developed language. There is often a loss of pace at the end of the lessons where the plenary session is meant to conclude and

point the way forward. The teachers do not always leave enough time for this and are rushed. Then the quality of their discussion with the pupils is not high enough and the pupils do not have the opportunity to reflect on their learning and evaluate it. They do not practise their speaking enough at this point.

139. The teaching of the basic skills is good and the pupils are competent in these areas due to systematic introduction of phonics and practice in handwriting. The pupils' attitudes in one junior handwriting practice session were very good indeed and they clearly understood and valued the purpose of their practice. Pupils work in the same format and the same exercise books in every year group, which emphasises to them the continuity of their learning and their teacher's expectations. As a result, they learn to work carefully and try hard to be correct.
140. The teachers expect the children to be diligent and they are. Practice exercises and worksheets are well chosen so that pupils are working at appropriate levels in skills' practice.
141. The expectations for independence, high level speaking and for crafting a piece of writing are not high enough for the juniors. In a minority of junior lessons, the work was rather hard for some groups when they had to comprehend or interpret literature. They could not be independent; they had to rely on their learning support staff to help them, which can cause them not to expect to be able to work alone. Quite often the teachers, who are pressed for time, accept the first spoken answer they hear and do not push the pupils for more clarity or depth. The children are comfortable then but not stretched in their learning. The teachers do not use opportunities for paired or group discussion in English lessons. This would increase the amount of speaking each pupil could do
142. The teachers are providing some useful planning and redrafting of writing in some junior lessons and for homework, but this is not regular and systematic enough so that the pupils have not learned these habits. Many pupils would be able to do this as a matter of course by Year 6 if they had been asked to do it consistently through the lower years. The range of contexts the teachers are providing for speaking and writing is good because they use history, science and RE lessons for practising.
143. The teachers' use of individual white boards for on-going assessment is very good. It enables the teacher to see each child's answer at the same time when the boards are held up. Every individual knows that their effort is important. The teachers also give great care to marking all the work and writing positive comments on it. This marking is plentiful and helpful. It is another way the teachers have of showing the pupils they are valued. The marking is at its best when it refers to the content of writing or explains how work could be improved. At the moment the pupils know more clearly how to improve their phonics and reading than they do their writing content.
144. Tests are used at the end of each junior year to make a formal assessment of where the pupils are and each child writes a sample piece of composition each term which is judged by the teacher against the National Curriculum expectation. This rigorous assessment is very helpful and is being put to good use in Year 6, where the teacher has done an in depth assessment of strengths and weaknesses and is applying the findings well. The teaching here is good, carefully focussed on improving vocabulary and writing style and is having a positive effect on the children's work. If the work of the younger junior classes were equally well focussed on needs, progress could be improved there too.



145. The school has taken sensible action to address the need to raise standards. Many new, interesting, books have been bought and children have good choice of reading matter. In addition to the support for boys mentioned above, the curriculum has been adapted to give more time to English. The pupils not only have their daily literacy hour but also additional handwriting and reading sessions. Standards are improving, which indicates the success of this strategy.
146. The school is trying many ways of raising the profile and the use of literacy among the pupils. There are writers' and readers' clubs, arrangements for older children to reading with younger ones, for example. The senior managers also try to find ways of informing the parents about the teaching strategies they are using. The children take their reading cards to and fro so that parents can see what they have read, hear them and make comments. The Spelling Workshop for parents and the speaker on literacy at the annual governors/parents meeting were both interesting but sadly, only small numbers of parents came to these events.
147. The co-ordinator for English through the school is the head teacher, whose leadership is good. She has worked successfully to ensure appropriate action planning and teacher training and has set good arrangements in place for standards to be regularly monitored. She is giving time to planning and implementing literacy support, particularly for boys, as a result of monitoring. The most intensive work, both in management and implementation, has been for Year 6. Such evaluation and planning could be usefully extended to the younger junior classes.

## **MATHEMATICS**

148. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain in their lessons the standards expected for their ages in mathematics. Overall the pupils are achieving well. The 2000 national test results show that standards were comparable with similar schools for pupils in Year 2 and below those of similar schools for pupils in Year 6. Standards are steadily improving in line with standards nationally. Compared with their own test results in mathematics at the end of Year 2 the Year 6 pupils have made an average amount of progress when compared with pupils in similar schools. During their final year in school pupils make swift progress. This is due to the teacher's high expectations and the appropriate pressure to succeed. But standards are still not as high as they should be through the lower junior year groups. The teachers do not expect enough of more able pupils, who underachieve.
149. Girls attain slightly better than boys at both key stages. The teachers are aware of this and try to give both genders appropriate opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, by both teachers and learning support assistants, and make good progress. Overall the pupils who have statement of special educational need make good progress due to the effective individual support they are given.
150. By the age of seven, pupils are achieving well. They have a sound knowledge of place value to 100. They can count in 2s, 5s and 10s from a given number. They use mathematical vocabulary appropriately. For example, they know the terms "odd, even" and "total" and the names of common two dimensional shapes. They are learning an efficient method to add nine to any number by adding ten and subtracting one. Using the same strategy the higher attaining pupils can add 11 and 21 to a number. Pupils in Year 1 understand place value up to 20 and independently put numbers correctly on a blank number line, while higher attaining pupils put numbers to 100 on a blank 100 square.
151. By the age of 11, pupils are achieving satisfactorily. They solve number problems using a variety of mental calculations. They understand factors, multiples, fractions and decimals as

proportions of a whole. They identify co-ordinates in all quadrants and the highest attaining pupils are secure in their understanding. Analysis of their work shows that handling data is a weaker area of knowledge. Pupils in Year 3 remember the names of two dimensional shapes and begin to understand symmetry and how to reflect basic shapes in a mirror line. Pupils in Year 4 consolidate their knowledge of multiplication tables and identify patterns in tables. In Year 5 pupils write problems to show understanding of problem solving using more than one mathematical operation. For example, they write a shopping problem where six apples and a kilo of carrots are bought. Then they ask how much change would be given from £20. Pupils are not all secure in their understanding of problem solving. Most pupils are learning the multiplication tables expected for their age groups.

152. While the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school are satisfactory overall, they could be better. In the lessons seen in Year 1 and Year 2, teaching is at least satisfactory and some is good. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching varies from unsatisfactory to good but is satisfactory overall and best in Year 6. The best teaching is characterised by a brisk pace, clear time allocations for tasks to be completed and challenging work. The pace of learning for pupils in Year 4 is slower than in other year groups and pupils make more limited progress. The demands made on pupils in Year 4 are too low because the teachers, who are new to this country, are unfamiliar with the requirements of the Numeracy Strategy although this is currently being addressed through appropriate training. All teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively and pupils respond by concentrating well on the tasks they are given.
153. In the few good lessons pupils are encouraged to solve problems and the tasks set make them think hard. For example, when younger pupils were learning about place value they were given number cards to 100 and had to place them correctly on a blank 100 square. In another successful lesson older pupils were challenged to identify points on a 4-quadrant grid. In the least successful lesson seen the tasks given to pupils were too easy for the majority and the pace of the lesson was too slow.
154. The majority of teachers are familiar and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively. The three-part lesson structure is soundly established and planning is good, although the use of clear questions at the end of sessions to assess what pupils have understood is not a strong feature of all lessons. The school has benefited from using the planning format from a local "Beacon School". Lesson plans show clearly what the pupils are to learn in each lesson, and the teachers tell the children this objective when each lesson begins. However, teachers do not return at the end of the lesson to check with pupils that they have learned what was planned. The teachers use a good range of mathematical vocabulary which pupils recall. The oral and mental sessions at the start of lessons are usually delivered effectively. The main teaching activities involve pupils practising their skills and in this part of the lesson teachers manage pupils and resources efficiently. Work is regularly marked and teachers write helpful comments explaining how pupils might improve their work. However, higher attaining pupils are usually set the same tasks as other pupils and, although they complete more work, the level of work they are set does not challenge them sufficiently.
155. The use of information technology to support work in numeracy is identified in some planning and pupils use software in ICT lessons to practise number work. No use of information technology in mathematics lessons was seen during the week of the inspection and the pupils are not using their ICT skills consistently to do their mathematics work. Mathematics supported learning well in some other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in a science lesson Year 6 pupils sorted data by producing charts showing reflective and non-reflective surfaces.

156. Teachers use regular testing to assess pupils' attainment. In Year 6 the results of tests are carefully analysed and the teacher's planning is adapted to reflect the information. The co-ordinator now plans to extend this helpful analysis to the other year groups in the school. Targets for groups of pupils to achieve are set in some classes although pupils are not familiar enough with them, so that the impact of the targets on their learning is not maximised. This is a new development and the school is working on it.
157. A Family Numeracy Group set up by the school successfully supports pupil and adult numeracy by working with parents and children together. A series of 20 weekly sessions from October to March helps parents develop their own numeracy skills as well as teaching them how to support their child's mathematical learning. They prepare resources to help the children and take them to the village to learn about spending money in real life situations. The parents and children in the group are enthusiastic about the work and some parents want to continue with their learning once the sessions are finished. The work of the group has a positive impact on the children's learning.
158. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, although standards in national tests remain below national standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented. This has improved the short term planning which, for the majority of pupils, is now closely matched to the range of need. Work set for pupils who will be working with learning support assistants is planned on a separate planning sheet and usefully includes space for comments about the learning of pupils in the group. This is very helpful for lower attaining pupils or those with special educational needs. There is now a co-ordinator for the subject who is also a leading maths teacher for the county, she works closely with the numeracy consultant to put improvement strategies in place. A spreadsheet has now been set up to analyse test results in detail so that improvement strategies can in future be precisely targeted. There are now good resources to support learning.

## **SCIENCE**

159. The standards for the oldest infants in their lessons are good compared with the national expectations and the infants achieve well. Standards for the oldest juniors are satisfactory and their achievement is sound.
160. In the National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2000 for 7 year olds, the pupils' results were very high compared with the national average at level 2 but were below average at the higher level 3. The standards achieved in the different aspects of the knowledge and skills of the science curriculum were broadly similar, though common to both level 2 and level 3, the attainment in the aspect focusing on materials and their properties was slightly lower.
161. In the National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds, the percentage of pupils reaching the average level 4 was close to the national average but well below the national average at level 5. When compared with the standards of similar schools, the results at level 4 were average. However, when compared with the standards these pupils were reaching when they were seven years old, the results in science in 2000 were above average, showing that good progress was made through their latter years at school. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was below average indicating that although most pupils' achievements improved, there was further scope for improvement for the higher achievers in the juniors.
162. When compared to the standards for seven year olds in schools with similar intakes of pupils, the test results for the infants in 2000 were very high compared with the national average at level 2

but were well below average at level 3. Standards of pupils' work seen in the inspection support the recent improvement in the National Curriculum teacher assessments and tests. By the time the infants are seven, standards are good and both boys and girls achieve well. They have well developed investigative skills and have an appropriate breadth of experience through studying a range of domestic and environmental contexts that are familiar and of interest to them. They have learned about forces, predicting how far a wheeled vehicle will travel down a slope. They have considered how sounds are made, investigated the parts of the body, and have studied the growth of hyacinth bulbs and frogs, the texture and strength of materials, freezing and melting, and electrical circuits.

163. In a Year 1 lesson, a small group of pupils, under the direction of their teacher studied root formation as they re-potted a plant and others used hand lenses to help them to observe the cross-sections of fruits and red peppers. Others went outside into the school grounds with a learning support assistant and observed plants and insects in their habitat. The pupils reacted well to these opportunities to observe for themselves, showing much interest resulting in sound language development and recording skills.
164. In a Year 2 lesson, the class was considering how foods provide nourishment. Higher and average attaining pupils coped well with research tasks using books to find answers to questions they had been assigned, or to select foods for inclusion in menus for breakfast, lunch, tea and supper. Others, working under supervision, selected pictures of foods to glue into their project books. By participating in these activities and by keeping a homework log of the food they will eat during a weekend, all pupils, including the boys and girls with special educational needs, are learning well in a practical, investigative and meaningful way. They are able to undertake and complete work which is very similar to work given to the average and higher attaining pupils and achieve with varying degrees of independence, due mainly to the often good support from learning support and special needs assistants.
165. Some of the infants' diagrams and charts are of good quality, particularly when observing first hand. They attempt to describe fair testing, write sound descriptions and make clear drawings and try to predict, on the basis of what they know already, what might happen in an experiment, or suggest what their results might mean.
166. At age 11, standards are average and pupils' achievements on the whole are satisfactory, but a minority of boys and girls are capable of higher achievement but are not reaching the standard they should. This is mainly because they do not have sufficient opportunities to tackle more demanding tasks.
167. By the age of 11, the juniors have a sound grasp of dissolving solids and recording their results on simple graphs; looking at the evaporation of liquids and the properties of gases; and of investigating the properties of light beams and mirrors. They are familiar with the conventional symbols used in series and parallel electrical circuits, and have tested materials for conductivity and magnetism.
168. In Year 5 pupils have measured and compared the forces acting upon an object in air and in water. They measure and record their findings accurately, remember new technical vocabulary such as 'Newtons' and 'upthrust' and use their knowledge and understanding of physical phenomena to link cause and effect in simple explanations. Progress of the pupils with special educational needs, including the statemented pupil, was good due to the well focused support provided by the learning support assistant. In Year 6, when looking at torch beams reflected from mirrors and shiny and non-shiny surfaces, groups and pairs of pupils made simple

predictions of what they might expect to see, and drew careful diagrams to show the angle of reflected light and the results of their reflective surface investigations. Progress was a little slow in the paired work due to pupils spending much time drawing up tables on which to record their findings, rather than finding a wide range of reflective and non-reflective surfaces, and afterward, there was some uncertainty about angles of reflection which needed to be followed up in a subsequent lesson.

169. Teaching and learning in science are good, though there are areas of strength and weakness. In the infant classes, the very good management of pupils and use of time, support staff and resources; and the good subject knowledge and high expectations for classwork, homework, attitudes and behaviour lead to good learning. The pupils apply the scientific processes well for their age, participating fully in structured investigative activities. In the junior classes, teachers' very good management of the pupils, their good questioning skills and interesting and motivating tasks set for classwork and homework engage the interest of the pupils quickly and set a sound basis for subsequent learning in the lesson. Effective demonstrations, involving both the class teacher and the learning support assistant, enable older juniors to make good progress as they learn to observe carefully and think logically in describing what they see. Occasionally, older pupils are not given enough opportunity to put forward their own ideas in discussion and to consider how they will 'measure' any differences in what they will see.
170. The pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour contribute significantly to the quality of learning and success in science. They can work independently in small groups, often in pairs, and maintain good relationships with each other and their teachers. They are very keen to participate and older pupils act maturely when asked to get out and put away science equipment in lessons.
171. Science has satisfactory leadership and there has been satisfactory improvement in the coverage of the curriculum since the last inspection. The infants and juniors now have better opportunities in experimental science to instigate, predict and evaluate, and to use these skills in other subjects such as design and technology. There are good links with the local secondary school in Year 6 for bridging the primary and secondary science curriculum. Several events are planned during the year linked to environmental science, and electrical safety in the home, which serve to enrich the science curriculum. There is better teacher support in lessons through the new schemes of work based on national guidance and the deployment of learning support assistants. The progress of the infants has improved, stimulated by a full range of activities from the under fives upwards, supported by a number of extra-curricular activities including a science club for pupils in Key Stage 1 and a very well organised and resourced gardening club led by the school caretaker. Furthermore, each class has responsibility for an area of the school grounds which include a pond, bird observation and butterfly areas and a sensory garden. The school competed with success in a recent environmental competition.
172. There is still more management work to be done, as monitoring is a weakness. To assist in the further raising of standards, there is a need to:
  - develop closer monitoring of science teaching to make all the lessons as good as the best practice in the school;
  - to use assessments of pupils' attainment effectively to plan work to move them forward; this is a particular need for the more able pupils; and
  - develop the use of computers in science.

## **ART**

173. The infant pupils are meeting the expected standards in art and making a good achievement. The juniors, who are working particularly hard at improving their SATS results, are doing a minimum of art and not really demonstrating high enough standards; they would be capable of more. This, whilst understandable in the short term, is not as good as at the time of the last inspection when work was satisfactory in both phases.
174. The infant children have carried out and understood experiments with different brushes and pencils. The younger ones have painted carefully observed self-portraits where they have mixed colours to match their own features. The older pupils have looked carefully at objects from their history lessons, like model houses and ships and have produced some well proportioned and detailed pencil studies of them. Generally, observation is careful and effort is sustained so that the children finish what they start. Older infants have made good use of the digital camera to frame pictures of what they see, which they can use for later reference.
175. The infants also have experience of different textures and colours of materials with which they make collages. They are accurate but their work would be more meaningful and qualitative if they worked to their own drawing rather than filling in provided outlines.
176. Observational work was the best feature of the art when it was last inspected. This is still true for the infants but the juniors are not demonstrating enough improvement across the year groups in their drawing at the moment, nor enough depth or detail in colour and form. In fact in some classes the children are putting into their work the kinds of cartoon drawings they see in the media. This suggests that they do not really understand how to work at drawing and do not value their own skills and perceptions enough. The oldest pupils have done some seasonal paintings that are rather stereotyped and do not show enough sustained study or observation before the final picture was produced.
177. The juniors are learning to put in detail and to finish their work: Years 3 and 4 have made some mosaic pictures with sticky paper which are a useful discipline for them but not at a very high level of imaging. Year 5 has made some informative drawing of Divali lamps which are a useful appreciation of an object from another culture. They have added rather crude colour to these, rather than mixing colours that are there in the original.
178. The older juniors have worked hard on some three dimensional models in clay and cloth, making containers and hats respectively. This has given them useful experience with these media and shows that their work is individually inspired and their skills with materials are developing, although they could achieve a higher standard of finish.
179. The teaching of art was sound at the time of the last inspection. No lessons were actually seen during this inspection but some features of the teachers' work are evident. There is good, consistent use of sketchbooks in almost all the classes so that the pupils have record of their work, reflect on it and have several tries at an image. This is a fairly new development so the books do not have much work in them yet but this is an initiative with great promise. Another good feature of the teaching in many of the classes is that the teachers value the art work enough to write comments on it or to ensure that it is neatly mounted and carefully displayed around the school. The use of information and communications technology for art in the infants is also helpful: digital camera images and drawings using the "Dazzle" software give the pupils opportunities to produce work at a higher standard than more conventional media allow. Appropriate improvements in the teaching would be: for the infants to try to reduce the pupils' dependency on adults and for the juniors to insist on rigorous effort from the pupils.

180. The teachers plan carefully for art lessons. Although keeping to the scheme of work seems to be more difficult in the junior classes they mostly manage to do it. More rigour here would raise standards. Apart from the very helpful marking in the infant classes, the pupils' progress in art is rarely assessed so that they do not know how they could improve.
181. The art club for the lower juniors classes gives good extra curricular support with recent work of a high standard in appreciating Van Gogh's work and older pupils are given the opportunity to attend an art masterclass organised by the county. The school is well provided with media to use and plenty to look at. The flower garden at the front and the children's own vegetable garden provide plentiful opportunity for studies of plants and trees. Whilst one class has a good collection of objects from India, loaned to a teacher through a personal connection, the school is not rich in such stimuli.
182. The teacher who co-ordinates art across the school has a heavy load. She is also responsible for mathematics and is a full time class teacher. She has helpful plans for the staff to have in service training later in the year and for a school art week that will enrich the learning. She has no formal means of taking an oversight of how well the scheme of work is taught nor of the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils' work, and this limits her ability to lead.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

183. Based on the scrutiny of pupils' work and of activities seen in junior lessons and extra-curricular activities, standards by the ages of 7 and 11 are in line with the expectation for these ages and their achievement is sound. Boys and girls regularly undertake design and technology activities covering a suitably broad range of materials and skills including food, textiles, structures, mechanisms, control technology and drawing skills.
184. Pupils use planning books from Year 1 onwards in which they plan and record their design intentions in simple graphical and annotated form. Although generally satisfactory, the younger pupils' designs are sometimes limited by their conceptual and drawing skills which are mostly at an early stage. The quality of infant and junior pupils' planning would benefit from more practical and investigative approaches to design situations. After practical work the pupils could record on paper or three-dimensionally where appropriate, their design ideas as they learn about the properties of the materials. Also, being able to investigate design needs as they become clearer to them will enable them to make practical modifications to their emerging designs.
185. In years 1 and 2, the infants design well proportioned Stuart houses made from paper and recycled packaging, as part of their work in history lessons. Others cut and stitch glove puppets made from felt. They make model vehicles with moving axles and wheels using a mixture of recycled packaging, card axle supports, art straws and ready made wheels. The designs and accompanying booklets compiled by pupils show that appropriate research and an analysis of moving parts has taken place.
186. The juniors have looked at stable structures and the planning books of pupils in Year 3 show carefully drawn examples of structures such as music stands and candle holders requiring firm, stable bases. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils made cardboard photo frames based on a choice of ideas suggested by their teacher. They adapted the dimensions to their own and pupils of all abilities enjoyed some success. Progress was particularly good in this lesson. In Year 4, pupils are making pop-up cards with simple push-pull mechanisms leading to good standards of achievement. In Year 5, pupils were investigating how a cam and follower mechanism made from card and a lollipop stick can transform rotary motion into reciprocating motion. They

worked quickly and accurately and knew how they would adapt the principle to a future design assignment to make a moving model.

187. The youngest pupils have been preparing fruit and the upper juniors have been making biscuits and analysing their appearance, taste, and texture, recording their work in well presented illustrated booklets. This work links well with the science curriculum.
188. The quality of teaching was only seen in the junior classes and is good. Teachers plan their lessons well with appropriate detail, employ effective teaching methods, and manage pupils, time, use of support staff and resources well. A suitable range of themed topics based on the national schemes of work are used for practical work each term. Resources overall are satisfactory, and include a good range of construction kits of differing size and complexity. A small kitchen, off the staff room, is helpfully available as a children's kitchen for cooking activities.
189. Pupils learn well and respond to the variety of their assignments with enthusiasm. They are productive in lessons and though the work set for all pupils, irrespective of their attainment or background is very similar, pupils are very well supported by their teachers and the learning support assistants.
190. There were no issues arising in design and technology from the last inspection. There has been a slight improvement in the teaching overall in the junior classes. The subject is ably co-ordinated by an experienced teacher who supports colleagues but does not have an oversight of standards and lessons.

## **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

191. The attainment in geography meets national expectations and the pupils achievement is sound. During the week of the inspection it was not possible to see any history lessons because the topic framework meant that none were being taught. From the samples of work seen, the pupils' attainment is at least satisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection standards in history were found to be good and those in geography satisfactory.
192. The examples of history work undertaken in the earlier part of the year were well presented. For example, the younger children had been studying the Great Fire of London and recorded their understanding of the events in a diary which was then treated to make it appear as if it had been burnt in the fire ensuring that the presentation was stimulating for the pupils. Children had also made models of the buildings in the style of the period, linking their history with design technology. The teaching makes the period studied interesting and relevant to children's experience by the use of artefacts such as Hemsley, a real rocking horse, to explore the Victorian period.
193. The older pupils have studied a wide range of historical periods including the Romans, and the Greeks. Visits to Lullingstone Roman Villa have helped them to understand how the Romans lived. Pupils are able to draw comparisons between the periods they are studying and the present day. Younger junior pupils understand why the Romans covered their floors with mosaics and how progress enables modern day houses to have carpets. They also make good use of timelines.
194. In geography younger children are taught about St Lucia. Lessons are made interesting by the use of materials from the internet, photographs and Caribbean fruit. Through discussion and appropriate questioning the children are encouraged to be curious. They are able to identify



places on the globe and this is promoted through the travels of 'Barnaby Bear', a toy bear, who has been taken by teachers and children to South Africa, Minorca and London. They can confidently identify England and are aware that Ticehurst is in the South East.

195. The older pupils study Ghana and Chembokali in India. Through the presentation of stimulating resources they are encouraged to draw comparisons between their own environment and other parts of the world. They do this sensitively as shown by a group writing to a child in Ghana who were careful not to appear to devalue that child's background and education. They can use atlases and have a good understanding of the weather features of the areas they are studying. In the oldest class their knowledge and understanding led to an interesting debate between the pupils about the use of electricity, reflecting the development of logical thinking and higher levels of understanding.
196. All teaching in geography seen during the inspection was good. The teachers' secure knowledge of the areas the pupils were studying was supported through the good use of the scheme of work and the enthusiastic use of the resources available. Teaching was made relevant to the pupils by making good links with other subjects and by relating it to topics which would interest pupils such as the Comic Relief fund-raising programme. Challenging questioning techniques led to a maintained interest in the lessons and a higher level of thinking skills. In history, in some junior classes, pupils use worksheets which are more not well matched to their abilities so that work is too easy for some and too hard for others. The pupils with SEN are supported during lessons sometimes and encouraged to make appropriate contributions to discussion.
197. Pupils' behaviour in geography was very good. Pupils in all lessons were keen to answer questions and listen carefully. They are quick to settle down to the work set. This enthusiasm extended in one case to a younger child seeking support from her parents to download information from the internet about St Lucia and being confident to show this to the class. When they work in supervised groups pupils are sensible and co-operative.
198. The introduction of new schemes of work has been the management priority and observing teachers and comparing pupils work is something that is planned for the future. There is no formally agreed system for finding out what pupils have learned in either geography or history. There are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to watch others teaching geography and history or for all teachers to discuss the pupils work in these areas. The geography and history resources within the school are good, as is the use of the local environment for visits.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

199. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with the national expectation for pupils of this age and pupils' achievement is sound. In all classes pupils, often working in twos and threes, make regular and appropriate use of computers to develop their ICT knowledge, skills and understanding, as well as to enhance their learning and presentation in other subjects including art and RE.
200. The infants are familiar with the computer keyboard and use of the mouse and can find their way with relative ease around screen menus and input commands into modelling and simulation software to support numeracy, literacy and science. In Year 1 and Year 2 English lessons, the infants make satisfactory use of opportunities to use the word processor to draft and redraft poetry and other writing. They use graphics software appropriately to draw mathematical shapes and investigate symmetry.

201. Other uses of ICT in Year 2 include applications within other subjects for the digital camera and the 'Roamer' programmable device. Pupils using the 'Roamer' vehicle know how to clear commands from the memory, how to select the correct arrow direction, and with difficulty, to input the correct angles to perform a desired sequence of movements. Others successfully use a laptop computer to play a 'buy a toy' game, practising their ability to add sums of money.
202. Junior pupils regularly work in pairs on the computer, either in their classrooms or during the regular ICT lessons in the ICT suite of five work stations. They enhance the presentation of their descriptive writing by using the word processor, along with clipart and other graphic images to support work in English and RE.
203. Older juniors use CD-ROMs and internet search engines to research in-depth topics, such as ocean creatures in Year 4 and map work in Year 5. Year 5 pupils are also learning to use spreadsheets through whole class lessons to develop their skills. Additionally, there are opportunities to use programmable devices, such as the 'Roamer' to program precise directional movements in activities which supports the geographical or mathematical understanding. Pupils, from time to time, are also able to use an interface for control purposes within design and technology.
204. Despite a wide range of abilities in junior classes, boys and girls make satisfactory progress in lessons and between classes. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 can demonstrate elementary skills in navigating a website; can manipulate the mouse to select choice buttons, and know the function of a search engine. They can download the pages they need with little assistance and can print them into hard copies. Pupils in Year 5 can enter into a spreadsheet data they have been given, but the absence of choice for pupils in planning the spreadsheet limits their achievement at the expected level in the National Curriculum. Recently, the pupils have begun to use e-mail appropriately to write to schools and children abroad and to others, such as their deputy headteacher who has been on maternity leave from the school.
205. Pupils of all ages enjoy using computers and approach tasks sensibly, with interest, confidence and good concentration. Learning is satisfactory in the infant classes and good in the junior classes where the quality of teaching aids the pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs or whose first language is not English, make satisfactory use of ICT and learn well, either supported by their class teacher or their assigned learning assistant
206. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some strengths, particularly in the older classes. The infants have regular opportunities to use the computers alongside the other activities they are involved with in their classrooms. The programs integrate well with the lesson objectives and enable these young pupils to progress with minimum teacher intervention. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the lesson planning and learning objectives are not clear and not matched to the configuration of the computers or software in use, so that, for example, the spelling corrector is enabled when not required, or the volume has been turned off when it should be on, thus confusing the learning.
207. The juniors are mostly taught in the computer suite, initially as a class or in large groups to establish or consolidate basic understanding, followed by smaller groups working in twos or threes under the guidance of their teacher or learning support assistant. The recent loan of a number of laptops from the neighbouring secondary schools, is improving the frequency of use of ICT in Years 5 and 6. Teachers are mostly confident users of ICT, both in their administration

and planning, and in teaching within lessons. They have good expectations for the pupils they teach.

208. ICT is competently led by the deputy headteacher. There has been significant improvement both in the provision of modern computing resources and standards of attainment since the last inspection when ICT was a key issue for the governors to address. There is a new and appropriate policy for ICT. Access is no longer limited and the time allocated has improved for ICT lessons and the use of ICT across other subjects of the curriculum. Teachers' knowledge has improved and further training is planned soon. There is better short term planning and much more direct teaching of ICT skills. While there is still an emphasis on the development of communication skills, the use of the national schemes of work is ensuring that a wide range of knowledge and skills are being developed. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are inputting data into spreadsheets, though mostly as exercises rather than as part of data handling of work arising from other subjects which would be better. Activities in science offer wider scope for pupils to use ICT to manage and present data from investigations, but currently this is not exploited well. To ensure there is more consistent quality in teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation need to be improved to be more effective and pupils' ICT capability needs to be assessed regularly with a view to extending pupils' levels of skill when applied in other subjects.

## **MUSIC**

209. Observation of the music lesson and singing in assemblies and hymn practices, show the attainment of the pupils meets national expectations and achievement is sound. The standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
210. The pupils have a developing sense of rhythm and are beginning to make use of notation to record sounds in Year 3. The singing throughout the school is tuneful and melodic. The pupils have good listening skills. Younger children are able to remember songs by heart. The small amount of teaching seen was satisfactory.
211. Currently there is no extra curricular singing but instrumental music is better served. The peripatetic music service offers opportunities for pupils to learn the trumpet, violin and guitar. Learning musical instruments is also encouraged through public performance by the recorder group. In addition there is an annual award of a music prize funded from a bequest to the school.
212. The school does not have a curriculum leader for music although support is provided by a supply teacher who was previously a full time member of staff. Further valuable support is provided by some governors who play the piano for the older pupils during hymn practice. There is a wide range of musical instruments in both the music trolley in the hall and in classes. Plans for the term identify relevant objectives and activities.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

213. The last inspection found the pupils' attainment satisfactory. Only three lessons were seen during this inspection but they showed that the pupils' attainment is at least as good as it was then and for the infants the work was better this time. They are achieving well, and the juniors are achieving satisfactorily.
214. The infant pupils can move creatively, using different levels, travel and balance. The oldest juniors, in year 6, are also creative and can work collaboratively to link movements into

sequences, planning together how to take each other's weight and make transitions from one way of supporting their bodies to another. They could improve their performance if they were more precise in their movement and made a greater effort to really make very well controlled movement.

215. All the children show good attitudes and maturity in their PE. They are co-operative with each other and their teachers, they will challenge themselves to do difficult balances and can make sensible, encouraging comments on each other's work. Their behaviour and concentration are good throughout.
216. Whilst they do not have many PE lessons, the scheme of work ensures that the classes will cover the curriculum over each year.
217. At the last inspection the junior attainment in gymnastics was inhibited by the lack of a space in the hall for the climbing frame to be used. This time year 6 were doing competent gymnastics without the frame and although they were crowded in the hall they did not allow this to stop them working well. It is true, however, that the frame occupies a great deal of the space when it is up and is not used as much as it might otherwise be. Whilst the school does not have grass pitches there are appropriately sized ones marked out on the asphalt playground and these are well used.
218. The teaching is good for the infants and sound for the juniors, better than at the last inspection. Then, the teacher's subject knowledge and understanding were sometimes lacking, not a problem now. Now, the teaching is enthusiastic and competent. The teachers model good attitudes to the children and dress appropriately for PE. They discuss safety with the class, make sure they warm up properly as part of the lesson routine and give them work to do which help them to reflect on the effect that exercise has on their bodies. The teachers use language well to explain clearly to their classes what is to be learned. For example, one teacher explored the word "balance" very carefully before the class attempted to do it. The teachers are good at explaining to children how to improve, coaching individuals helpfully during the lessons. Tact and care were used for one confused pupil with special educational needs who forgot the instructions and for another who was poorly co-ordinated but who was able to succeed in shooting a ball through a hoop after careful tuition and explanation. Discussion in games lessons leads to pupils' being able to think tactically. Demonstration, by the teacher or selected pupils, is also used suitably, and improves performance for the others.
219. The teachers are aware of the importance of achievement for both genders and make sure that, when they chose children to demonstrate, they chose boys and girls equally. There were, however, difficulties for two girls who were excluded by their peers when the ball was being passed so that everyone still needs to be vigilant. Separate boys' and girls' teams were used in that lesson to minimise such events.
220. Whilst the teachers dress suitably for PE lessons there are one or two pupils who do not. There were pupils doing gymnastics in socks during the inspection, which the teachers should not allow. Socks prevent the children's feet from making full contact with the gymnasium surface and allow their feet to slip. The teachers are not sufficiently rigorous here nor with girls with long hair and children with loose t-shirts, who need to streamline themselves for gymnastics lessons so that nothing catches on their surroundings.
221. More rigour is also needed in gymnastics to encourage the pupils to execute their movements with precision. For example, where they stretch their arms, they need to learn to stretch their

fingers too, as far as they can. The teachers, while remaining positive and encouraging as they are, could ask for more here.

222. Timetabling for PE has to take into account the need for the pupils to change in their classrooms and cross the playground to the hall. Currently the classes have two lessons a week but each lasts an hour. This minimises the amount of changing and walking about but produces lessons that are not frequent enough and too long. More regular exercise would benefit the pupils better. Noise levels rose in the Year 6 lesson and a shorter, more disciplined session would support their progress better.
223. The school supports the PE curriculum with two clubs, membership of the local sports association and use of the specially provided bags which provide different equipment each term for the children to play different games, so the experience for the children is quite rich. The school is not using an assessment system for PE. The curriculum co-ordinator has ensured that the clear, helpful scheme of work covers all that the National Curriculum requires, although he has had only a little time to monitor the quality of the teaching and does not really have an overview of standards in this subject.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

224. By the time they are 7 and 11, the pupils' knowledge and understanding in RE is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and their achievement is sound. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection. While there is no clear improvement this reflects the fact that the school's priorities have been appropriately focused on raising standards in other subjects.
225. During the week of the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons of RE so judgements here are based on analysis of pupils' work and discussion with pupils about their knowledge and understanding in the subject. By Year 6, pupils are able to talk confidently about their learning, relating issues they have discussed and religions they have studied. They explain their class discussions on the issues of non-violence and respect for life and relate this to their understanding that many Hindus do not eat meat. They are aware of the moral issues relating to violence and they know that not everyone has the same views. For example, some pupils in the class believe hunting animals for sport is acceptable while others disagree. They explain what they know about Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam demonstrating sound understanding of some of the beliefs, festivals and practices of these religions. They speak with enthusiasm of visitors who have talked to them about their religions. They have visited the local church and are looking forward to their visit to a Hindu temple.
226. Throughout the school wall displays and books of pupils' work show their knowledge and understanding of religion. They think about prayer and write prayers to share with others. The youngest pupils show their spiritual understanding when they thank God "for the colours of the rainbow and for all the toys". Pupils in Year 5 develop their thoughts and feelings about important issues in prayer, too. For example, one pupil writes, "Thank you for all you have given us. Could it be the same for all countries and villages? Every person should be able to buy clothes and food and have clean water. We take advantage of the amount of money and wealth so please help us understand the needs of others." Currently work in Years 5 and 6 shows pupils are learning important facts about the Hindu religion. In lessons pupils understand the message of the stories they hear. For example, a lower attaining pupil in Year 3 explains, "It was a special moment for Zacchaeus because he'd never seen Jesus before and he wanted to meet him."

227. Children with SEN make good progress in RE because everyone's response is valued and the management of the pupils is good. Children learning English as a second language make satisfactory progress. There is enough challenge for the more able pupils in the infants, but from there in the juniors not enough is demanded.
228. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout. Teachers effectively use stories from the Bible to illustrate important issues. For example, the story of Zacchaeus is used to help pupils think about friendship and being "nice to people". Teachers' knowledge of RE is secure although they do not always allow sufficient time for pupils to reflect on their responses and feelings. Teaching is more focused on learning about the religions studied than about learning from these religions. Although teachers manage pupils' behaviour well pupils are sometimes expected to sit for too long listening to the teacher and they begin to lose concentration. Assessment of what pupils know and understand in RE is not well developed. Teachers do not make use of the possible assessment statements in the locally agreed syllabus to record what the pupils have learned.
229. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has ensured that lesson planning corresponds to the locally agreed syllabus. While all teachers use the long-term plans as the basis of their lesson plans there is inconsistency in the formats they use to plan their work for a term and in the amount of detail in the planning. This makes it difficult for the co-ordinator to ensure that all aspects of the subject are being covered. There are suitable artefacts for teachers to use to support learning. The teachers make good use of local resources such as the local church and visitors from other faiths. Some appropriate use is being made of Information communication technology to support the subject. For example, pupils use the internet to find out about religions they are studying.