

INSPECTION REPORT

HERSTMONCEUX CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Herstmonceux, Hailsham

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114506

Headteacher: Mrs B Lawson

Reporting inspector: Mrs Carole Skinner
23160

Dates of inspection: 10th - 11th May 2001

Inspection number: 193481

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

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:	Herstmonceux CE Primary School Hailsham Road Herstmonceux Hailsham East Sussex
Postcode:	BN27 4LG
Telephone number:	01323 833148
Fax number:	01323 834708
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Herstmonceux CE Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Parker
Date of previous inspection:	14 th -17 th April 1997

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
23160	Carole Skinner	Registered inspector
9588	Tony West	Lay inspector
15917	Bob Cross	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants
"Thule"
60 Joy Lane
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 4LT

01227 273449

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Herstmonceux Primary School educates boys and girls aged between four and 11 years. There are 202 pupils on roll, which is about average for primary schools. The school has similar numbers of boys and girls altogether, but there are 11 more boys than girls in Year 3. Twenty-three children attend full-time in the Foundation Stage. The school has a waiting list for pupils to enter some classes. There are 43 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is similar to the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational need. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is low compared with most schools. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language, which is also low compared with other schools. Approximately five per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is lower than the national average. During the last school year, 22 pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission, and 18 left it at times other than those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. This is a higher than average rate of mobility amongst the pupils. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average, though the pupils who are currently in the Reception class showed average standards when they were tested shortly after starting school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear direction for the school and the quality of the teaching is also very good. These factors have given rise to considerable improvement in the standards achieved by the pupils. In 2001, the school was recognised by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment as having achieved significantly improved results over the previous four years. The findings of the inspection show that standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has worked closely with the governors and teachers with responsibility for subjects to improve the standards attained by the pupils through rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and the curriculum.
- Pupils in Year 6 achieve very good standards in English, mathematics and science because of the consistently high expectations which the school has of them.
- The quality of teaching and the quality of pupils' learning at Key Stages 1 and 2 are very good and help pupils to achieve well.
- The pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are very good and have a significant impact on their attainment and progress.
- The very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development greatly enriches their learning.
- The very good quality provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them to reach good standards relative to their previous attainment.

What could be improved

- Some aspects of the management of the school, for example the role of the assistant headteachers, which is not fully effective in shaping the direction of the school.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage, particularly the quality of the learning environment, which does not meet the recommendations of the national guidance for children of this age.
- Provision for the pupils' cultural development, which, although good overall, does not adequately develop their awareness of Britain as a multicultural society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997 and, since, then, it has made a very good improvement. It has a very good capacity to continue to improve. One of the key issues for action in the previous inspection was to raise standards of attainment. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen significantly at both key stages as a result of improvements in the leadership and management of the school and in the quality of teaching. Teachers' expectations of pupils are now much higher than they were and their knowledge and understanding of different subjects have increased as a result of well-focused training. Major improvements in the school's provision for the teaching of information and communication technology have led to a significant rise in standards in the subject. Substantial improvements to the school buildings have also greatly enhanced the quality of education provided for the pupils.

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	C	A	A	A
mathematics	C	A	A	A
science	C	B	B	C

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

Pupils' overall performance in the national tests has improved significantly over the past four years, and at a rate higher than that seen nationally. In 2000, all of the pupils in Year 6 reached Level 4 (the national average) in all three subjects. Fifty per cent of the pupils attained above average standards (Level 5) in English, 36 per cent did so in mathematics, and 43 per cent in science. These results show that the school makes equally effective provision for the most able pupils and for those who have special educational needs. The school exceeded its targets for the percentage of pupils expected to reach Level 4 and above in the tests in English and mathematics in 2000 and has set challenging targets for the pupils in 2001, which it is on course to meet. The findings of the inspection show that these high standards are being maintained. In Year 6, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The school has successfully focused on raising the attainment of more able pupils in science. Standards are also well above average in these subjects in Year 2, where the school has concentrated on helping more pupils to reach high standards in reading. This has also been successful in raising attainment overall. Throughout the school, pupils attain high standards in information and communication technology, as a result of the improvements in teaching and the installation of a computer suite. Pupils' work in art that is displayed around the school is also of a high standard. Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to attain above average standards in all

areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and reach good standards relative to their previous level of attainment. Overall, pupils enter the school with above average standards and leave having reached well above average standards, which represents good achievement during their time at the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic in lessons and eager to participate in all activities. They show interest and enjoyment in their work and take a pride in their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in class and around the school. They are courteous to visitors and polite to each other and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and are quick to show initiative. The relationships between all members of the school community are based on respect and consideration.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and this has a positive effect on pupils' progress.

Pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour help them to get the most out of school and the very good relationships that exist help to create a happy school where learning flourishes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good, overall. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least good, and 63 per cent were very good or excellent. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and this results in pupils acquiring knowledge and learning new skills quickly. It also motivates pupils to apply considerable effort to their work and to strive for high standards in all they do. The quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is very good. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is very good, and this is why standards are so high. Teachers and assistants provide very good support for pupils with special educational needs, and work is planned to stretch the most able pupils. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are very good and enable them to plan appropriately challenging work to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Teachers make lessons interesting and exciting for pupils, and this sustains their interest and involvement and helps them to concentrate very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a varied and interesting curriculum for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2. It is well planned and makes very good links between different subjects. There are some shortcomings in the quality of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage as the learning environment is not tailored to meet their needs. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented very well and have a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is very well organised. Early identification of pupils' needs allows the school to set clear targets for them to achieve. Teachers and assistants provide very good support and monitor their progress carefully, which helps pupils to improve. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to the support provided for these pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership and manages the provision very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Pupils' spiritual awareness is fostered very well through acts of worship and the strong Christian ethos of the school. Moral and social development are promoted very effectively through a well-planned programme of personal and social education. The school enables pupils to develop a very good knowledge of their own cultural heritage. However, it does not adequately develop the pupils' understanding of Britain as a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. It has very good child protection procedures. Teachers know the pupils very well and take great care to ensure their welfare. This gives them confidence and security which greatly assist learning. There are some minor issues relating to health and safety procedures.

The strongest feature is the school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The main weakness is the lack of an adequate outdoor learning environment for children in the Reception class.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear direction for the school. She has worked very well with staff and governors to create a successful school with an effective focus on improvement and raising standards. Staff with responsibility for different subjects are very effective in developing and monitoring the curriculum, standards and the quality of teaching and learning. The role

	of the assistant headteachers is not yet fully developed and the headteacher currently has too many curricular responsibilities.
--	--

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities and support the school well. They have a very good understanding of the strong points of the school and know where further improvement is needed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses the performance of pupils and staff very well. Pupils' results in national and internal assessment tests are examined very carefully to see where improvements can be made. There is very effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning which helps to improve standards.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well to promote the pupils' progress. Although expenditure is linked appropriately to the priorities identified in the school development plan, this covers only one year and does not show how the school plans to maintain, or continue to improve, pupils' achievements in the long term. The school has good procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of spending decisions.

The very good leadership of the headteacher inspires pupils and staff to aim for the highest standards in their work. The governors ensure that the school receives good value for money spent. Although the leadership and management of the school are effective in bringing about improvement, there is no long term vision for future development that has been agreed by all staff and governors, and shared with parents.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the leadership and management of the school. • The high expectations which the school has of their children. • They are comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The quality of the teaching. • Their children like school. • The way the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The good progress which their children make. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents expressed concern about the large size of some classes.

The findings of the inspection agree with the positive views expressed by the parents. Although some classes contain over thirty pupils, this is not having an adverse effect on the quality of education provided or the standards achieved by the pupils because of the high quality of the teaching and the ratio of adults to pupils during lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has worked closely with the governors and teachers with responsibility for subjects to improve the standards attained by the pupils through rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and the curriculum.

1. The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear direction for the school. She is greatly respected, by governors, staff, parents and pupils, for her dedication, her commitment to providing a high standard of education for all pupils, and her ability to make the most of others' talents and expertise. She values the contribution of every member of the school community and shows her appreciation through words of encouragement and praise. The headteacher's vision, to create a very good school that achieves high standards in all areas of its work, is shared by governors and staff, and is communicated effectively to pupils and parents. This clear vision has enabled all involved with the leadership and management of the school to bring about a number of changes and improvements that have resulted in significantly improved standards of attainment.
2. The previous inspection identified the need to develop the role of curriculum co-ordinators and to make monitoring procedures more rigorous, with a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The school has made very good progress in addressing this issue. The co-ordinators in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology have been particularly successful in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the curriculum in their subjects. They have identified areas for improvement and have implemented strategies to raise standards. Classroom observations have a clear focus and lead to the setting of targets for individual teachers, which are later reviewed and progress evaluated. Analysis of national and internal test data enables co-ordinators to identify areas for improvement and introduce strategies to address them. Co-ordinators draw up action plans for their subject's development and have played an important part in implementing new schemes of work in line with national guidance, adapting these as necessary to fit in with the school's existing curricular planning. Regular monitoring of teachers' planning ensures that the headteacher maintains an overview of the progression in pupils' learning throughout the school.
3. Governors are also effective in monitoring all aspects of the curriculum. Each term, they make visits that have a precise focus, which is agreed with the headteacher and staff beforehand. They produce a report on the outcomes of their visit, which is shared with staff and other governors. Learning support assistants are monitored on a regular basis by the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the senior management team, who then set targets for further development. All staff and governors are positive about the purposes and benefits of monitoring, which is carried out in a spirit of openness and willingness to learn from each other. As a result, all involved respond quickly and constructively to issues that are raised and work together to find ways to improve the school's performance. There is a very clear link between the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance over the past four years, the action that has been taken as a result and the subsequent improvement in the quality of education provided for the pupils and in the standards they achieve.
4. Throughout, the headteacher has led by example as mathematics co-ordinator. She has been successful in inspiring and motivating staff, and, as a result, has created a high-performing team, whose enthusiasm and positive response to change has made a significant contribution to the school's development.

Pupils in Year 6 achieve very good standards in English, mathematics and science because of the consistently high expectations which the school has of them.

5. The school's initial assessments of pupils on entry to the school in the Reception class show that attainment is generally above average. In Year 6, the pupils' attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement. These judgements are consistent with the school's results in the national assessment tests in 2000 in English and mathematics, and slightly higher than those in science, as the school has focused on raising the achievement of the most able pupils in this subject. The school has exceeded its targets in both English and mathematics for the past two years, and has set increasingly challenging targets from year to year. Pupils' overall performance in the national tests has risen significantly over the past four years, and at a rate higher than the national trend. In 2000, all of the pupils in Year 6 attained the national standard of Level 4. In English, 50 per cent of the pupils reached the higher Level 5, in mathematics, 36 per cent, and in science 43 per cent. In comparative terms, this means that pupils achieved standards that were well above the national average at Level 5 and well above the average for similar schools. When compared with other schools which achieved similar results in the 1996 national tests for seven year olds, the school's performance was outstanding in English and mathematics, being in the top five per cent of similar schools.

6. Standards are similarly high in Year 2, where they are well above average in English and mathematics. In English, by the age of seven, pupils speak confidently and audibly and listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. Their ability to read expressively and with understanding was illustrated very well in a lesson where they read aloud together a 'rap' version of *The Princess and the Pea* and accompanied their reading with percussion instruments to maintain the beat and accentuate the rhythm of the 'rap'. Pupils' writing is imaginative and well constructed. They demonstrate a very good grasp of grammar and spelling rules and enjoy experimenting with different styles and genres. For example, pupils produced some very good work when they turned a traditional tale on its head and wrote stories about 'The Three Wolves and the Big Bad Pig'. Pupils attain equally high standards in mathematics where their numeracy skills are also very good. They mentally add two two-digit numbers and identify solid shapes, such as a sphere, a square based pyramid and a tetrahedron, by the number of faces or edges they have.

7. As they progress through the school, pupils continue to build on this very good foundation and achieve consistently high standards. In Year 6, they express their ideas articulately and convincingly when speaking to the class, and read aloud with very good expression. Pupils have very good comprehension skills and use these well to analyse a text. For example, when exploring the grammatical features of a report about a road accident, pupils in Year 6 gave good reasons to explain why new paragraphs had been introduced, and were able to deduce information from the text. Pupils in Year 6 achieve very high standards in their writing. Some examples seen were highly imaginative, written in a flowing style with adventurous choices of vocabulary: words such as 'ironically' and 'convincingly' are used very well to enliven the story. Pupils create tension and build excitement as they develop the story line... "The plane began to gyrate out of control and it was rapidly losing height". Factual writing about Ancient Greece is very well organised and beautifully illustrated, with helpful contents and glossary pages.

8. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented very well and helps pupils to continue to develop very good numeracy skills. By Year 6, pupils are competent in using a variety of mental strategies to work out mathematical problems, and can explain clearly how they worked things out. They have a very good understanding of fractions and the equivalent percentages, and use this

knowledge well to calculate the totals represented on simple pie charts. The most able pupils use a computer program successfully to create tables and graphs to represent a collection of data. Average attaining pupils use the 1991 census information to solve problems. Work on display shows that pupils have produced graphs to show the perimeter of regular polygons. In an excellent science lesson in Year 6, pupils showed very high levels of independence and initiative as they suggested how to investigate a question and planned what to do. They devised their own questions and experiments, selected suitable approaches and identified variables and constants when planning their experiments. Their very good understanding of what constitutes a 'fair test' and use of scientific vocabulary was evident as they carefully measured the amounts of water and dye needed for their investigations and discussed the details with each other.

9. Pupils also attain high standards in information and communication technology, which represents very good improvement since the school's previous inspection, when standards were below average. This is due to a number of factors: the installation of a suite of computers in the library, well-focused training for both teachers and assistants, and the implementation of a new scheme of work. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology to support and enhance pupils' learning in other subjects. For example, high standards were seen in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils solved mathematical problems by creating a variety of charts and graphs using a data-handling program. In a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils used a spreadsheet to record how many pupils travel to school by different means. They entered data and converted it to pie charts and column graphs. A very good Year 3 lesson showed how well information and communication technology is used to develop pupils' literacy skills. Pupils enjoyed reading a collection of amusing rhymes from a CD-ROM and then compared their own reading with that of the recorded voice, which helped them to improve their reading skills.

The very good quality of teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 helps pupils to make very good progress in their learning.

10. The quality of teaching is very good, overall, and explains why pupils do so well. During the inspection, 17 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. The quality of teaching was excellent in one lesson, very good in ten, and good in the other six. Parents believe that the quality of teaching is a strength of the school and the findings of the inspection confirm this view. The figures show a significant improvement on the previous inspection, when less than twenty per cent of the teaching was very good or better, and nine per cent was less than satisfactory.

11. Many factors contribute to the very good teaching, but perhaps the most significant is the very high expectations that teachers have of the standards that pupils are able to achieve. This represents a big improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when expectations were sometimes too low, particularly for the more able pupils. A very good example was an excellent science lesson in Year 6, where the teacher's exceptionally high expectations of the pupils enabled her to provide a very high level of challenge for them as they devised and carried out their own investigation. This gave rise to very mature discussions of ideas and procedures and high levels of independence and initiative on the part of the pupils. This lesson was also very successful because of the teacher's excellent knowledge of the subject, and particularly of what is required to achieve very high standards in experimental and investigative science. Teachers generally have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and they communicate this effectively to the pupils, which enables them to acquire new knowledge and skills at a brisk pace. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher very skilfully showed pupils how to construct an argument to persuade others to a particular point of view. Her very good knowledge of how language is used to create a persuasive text and her skilful teaching of

how to differentiate between fact and opinion enabled pupils to make very good progress in constructing an argument on a chosen subject.

12. Throughout the school, the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented very well and are having a significant impact on raising standards of attainment. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is very good, and builds progressively on pupils' knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. In Year 2, the teacher's lively and expressive demonstration of how to read a 'rap' version of a well known story inspired the pupils to read with greater expression and pace. The teacher reinforced pupils' knowledge of different strategies for reading as she questioned them about how to predict and work out unfamiliar words from the context of the passage. She devised an interesting range of activities to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of words that contained '.ear', including a race-track game and a piece of text on the computer with those words missing. In Year 2, the school employs an additional teacher as the class size is over 30, and this has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. The two teachers work very well in partnership to ensure that pupils of all abilities receive sufficient challenge and support. In the lesson seen, the additional teacher worked with a group of pupils who have special educational needs and provided very good, focused support to improve their knowledge and understanding of sounds.

13. A very strong feature of the teaching throughout the school is the contribution made by the team of well-trained and experienced learning support assistants. They have considerable knowledge and expertise and have undertaken extensive training to enhance their skills. They work together closely with class teachers to plan work and support pupils in the classroom. In the lessons observed, they played a very important role in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding through questioning, clear explanations and checking pupils' progress. One assistant has very high levels of expertise in information and communication technology and is employed specifically to develop pupils' skills in this area. In a Year 4 lesson, she worked with half of the class on the computers while the class teacher worked with the rest of class on another task. She was very good at asking pupils questions that made them think and work things out for themselves. This worked very well, and ensured that the pupils received valuable instruction and clear guidance on how to use a spreadsheet and create different types of graph.

14. Another strong feature of the teaching is the very good planning for lessons, which shows clearly what pupils are expected to learn, and takes into account the pupils' previous attainment. As a result, the activities that are planned for different groups within each class are well matched to their needs and provide appropriate levels of challenge for all. At the beginning of each lesson, teachers share with the pupils what the lesson is about and what they are intended to learn. This helps pupils to develop a very good knowledge of their own learning. Teachers also make very accurate assessments of pupils' achievements and use these to plan further work for them. Their marking of pupils' work is of a high standard. It is helpful and offers constructive comments that show pupils how to improve.

15. Underpinning all of these features, which explain why pupils make such good progress in their learning, are the excellent relationships that exist between teachers and pupils. There is a relaxed, happy but purposeful atmosphere in every class, where teachers evidently enjoy teaching and pupils clearly take great pleasure in learning. This is because teachers make lessons interesting and exciting for the pupils

The pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are very good and have a significant impact on their attainment and progress.

16. Pupils' very positive attitudes towards school have a significant impact on the quality of their learning. They are eager to come to school and participate with enthusiasm in a wide range of

activities. In lessons, pupils are attentive and interested, and this helps them to understand new ideas and apply them to their work. They are confident in asking questions and offering suggestions and clearly enjoy learning. Much of this is due to the very good teaching, which is lively and engaging. In assemblies, pupils listen with rapt attention and become totally engrossed in what is happening. When the local police liaison officer came to speak to them about her job and the role of the police, they showed great interest and were quick to answer questions and offer ideas. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed an assembly led by the headteacher, especially when she showed them how she could ride a scooter.

17. In lessons, the dining hall and around the school, the pupils' behaviour is consistently very good. In the assemblies observed during the inspection and in a significant proportion of the lessons seen, it was excellent. Pupils are polite to each other and to adults, and show consideration for others by standing aside to let someone pass or by holding doors open. Pupils behave in a mature and responsible manner because this is what the school expects of them. Parents are very appreciative of this. Observations of pupils in lessons, around the school and at playtimes show that they also have respect for their own and others' property, and take care of the school environment. The pupils' very good behaviour helps to create a very effective climate for learning which contributes well to the progress they make.

18. Pupils' personal development is also very good. They are fully involved in the daily routines of the school and enjoy taking responsibility for jobs such as giving out hymn books and ensuring that pupils walk sensibly from assembly to the classrooms. Older pupils willingly help younger ones and show initiative by noticing what needs to be done and offering assistance. They are able to plan and organise their work independently when asked to do so and take a great pride in their achievements. Pupils respect other people's feelings, values and beliefs and have a very good awareness of how their actions might affect others.

19. The quality of relationships between all members of the school community is excellent. Pupils work and play together in harmony and often with very high levels of maturity. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils collaborated very effectively when they devised an investigation, and their discussion of ideas and procedures was exceptionally mature. Teachers provide excellent role models for relationships, showing respect for pupils and treating them with sensitivity and consideration. As a result, they create a very positive and encouraging climate for learning, which pupils respond to very well, and which is reflected in every aspect of school life.

The very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development greatly enriches their learning.

20. The school's very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development greatly enhances their learning and ensures that pupils make very good progress in their personal development. Religious education and collective worship make an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual development, as they give very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on values and beliefs and to consider their relevance to their own lives. In an assembly observed during the inspection, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the words of the Lord's Prayer as they sang it and to remember to carry it with them, into the school and into the wider community. Teachers foster pupils' curiosity and sense of wonder at the world around them and encourage them to value and respect others. The school's strong Christian ethos shines through in all aspects of school life, but particularly in the relationships and attitudes of all members of the school community.

21. Through a very effective programme of personal and social education, teachers lead pupils to develop a strong sense of justice, based on moral principles and the ability to make clear distinctions between right and wrong. The school is very effective in providing pupils with a strong moral code as

a basis for their behaviour. This is promoted throughout the life of the school and is very much appreciated by parents. Teachers foster values such as honesty, fairness and mutual respect in their everyday relationships with the pupils. They also provide very good opportunities for pupils to discuss moral issues. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils discussed their feelings about bullying. Through role play, they explored the thoughts and feelings of the characters involved, and considered the relevance of the moral principles to their own lives.

22. The school is very effective in promoting pupils' social development. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, which help them to play an important role in the life of the school community. Some pupils are responsible for getting out and putting away playground equipment, others for preparing the hall for assembly. Year 6 pupils act as monitors in the corridor to ensure that pupils walk to and from assembly in an orderly manner. They also nominate pupils for awards if their behaviour is particularly noteworthy. Teachers provide numerous opportunities for pupils to collaborate on shared tasks, as was seen in science, mathematics and information and communication technology during the inspection. Pupils in Year 5 have participated in a debate about fox hunting. Pupils are encouraged to consider wider world issues, such as poverty, and they support a number of charitable causes, both at home and abroad. The very high quality of the relationships in the school is a fundamental factor in promoting the pupils' very good social behaviour and self-discipline.

The very good quality provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them to reach good standards relative to their previous attainment.

23. The key to the school's successful provision for pupils with special educational needs is that there is a shared philosophy and approach, based on teachers and learning support assistants taking joint responsibility for setting targets for pupils, planning suitable work and regularly reviewing pupils' progress. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage through assessments that are carried out soon after they start school and ongoing assessments during the Reception year and Year 1. The quality of pupils' individual education plans is very high. They present a clear picture of each pupil's needs, and the targets that are set are very specific, challenging but achievable and easily measurable. This helps teachers and assistants to assess how well a pupil is progressing. There is very good liaison between class teachers and learning support assistants, both in the morning and at the end of the day, to discuss and plan activities, and to review pupils' progress. Teachers and assistants are very well aware of pupils' individual targets and often refer to them in lessons.

24. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides very efficient leadership and works closely with teachers and assistants to provide high quality support for pupils. She meets regularly with learning support assistants to discuss their work, provide training and seek their opinions. The assistants speak highly of the teachers and feel that their contribution is both recognised and valued by teachers and governors. All have attended training courses and are committed to improving their knowledge and expertise. In 2000, governors, the headteacher and all staff carried out a comprehensive review of the school's provision for special educational needs, with a clear focus on evaluating its cost effectiveness. Documentation shows that careful monitoring of the role of teachers, assistants and the co-ordinator for special educational needs has led to significant improvements in the school's provision, particularly in raising the profile of learning support assistants and providing extensive training to enhance their expertise. There are very good arrangements for involving parents of pupils with special educational needs in reviewing their children's progress. Parents receive their child's individual education plan at the beginning of each term and are invited to review their child's progress towards the end of the term. The co-ordinator makes herself available to parents after school to discuss any concerns, and parents appreciate the efforts that the school makes to support them and their children.

25. The co-ordinator also has time to teach all pupils who are Level 2 or higher on the school's register of special educational needs. This is done both in classes and by withdrawing pupils to work in a separate room in small groups. She also helps class teachers to adapt pupils' work in literacy and numeracy to meet their needs and address their targets. During the inspection, the co-ordinator was observed working with a group of pupils in a Year 5 literacy lesson, where she provided very good support that helped the pupils learn how to put together an argument using a carefully structured framework.

26. The school makes equally good provision for the most able pupils in the school. Their needs are recognised and identified in accordance with the school's policy for pupils with 'marked aptitudes'. This includes pupils with high academic potential or ability in a specific area, such as music, art, or physical skills, as well as those who possess leadership skills. Teachers ensure that pupils are challenged through skilful questioning, open-ended and problem solving tasks, discussion and creative work. They are also encouraged to develop specific skills or talents through a wide range of extracurricular activities. Again, the provision is successful because of the close liaison between the co-ordinator for special educational needs and teachers with responsibility for subjects, who advise colleagues of ways to extend and enrich the curriculum. The school devotes one week each term to a chosen curriculum area, during which pupils are offered an exciting and stimulating range of activities. These weeks play an important part in extending and enriching the curriculum for all pupils, and those who are very able have opportunities to excel in many activities. Some very able pupils have individual education plans to help maximise their potential. These are of very high quality.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Some aspects of the management of the school, for example the role of the assistant headteachers, which is not yet fully effective in shaping the direction of the school.

27. Although the leadership of the headteacher and teachers with responsibility for subjects is highly effective in bringing about improvement, some aspects of the management of the school are not sufficiently well developed. There are two assistant headteachers, each of whom is key stage co-ordinator. One has recently been promoted to the role. As part of their responsibilities, each carries out an analysis of trends in the school's performance in national tests and identifies aspects that need to be improved. They also have responsibility for whole school issues, such as homework, behaviour and the school's partnership with parents. However, the strategic role of the assistant headteachers in helping to shape the future direction of the school is less well developed. The governors have identified this as a priority for development during the next school year. This issue is also linked to the delegation of curricular responsibilities, which is due to be reviewed in the light of recent staff appointments. The headteacher currently holds too many curricular responsibilities, and is aware of the need to redistribute some of these.

28. The governors, headteacher and staff have recently been discussing their long-term vision for the school, in preparation for putting together a new school development plan. The existing plan covers only the current educational year and, although it explains how the school intends to meet its aims, it does not show how the school plans to raise pupils' standards or even to maintain present levels. Subject co-ordinators have their own development plans and, whilst these are very good, they do not have the authority of a whole school plan and do not have a clear enough focus on standards of attainment. The criteria by which to judge the effectiveness of some initiatives are not sufficiently measurable. The governors also have a separate development plan that deals with premises issues. Many very good ideas and initiatives are not recorded in the main school development plan, for example plans to raise standards of attainment in information and communication technology. This gives a fragmented feel to the process of school development planning and limits the usefulness of the plan itself in driving the school forward.

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage, particularly the quality of the learning environment, which does not meet the recommendations of the national guidance for children of this age.

29. The school is developing the Foundation Stage curriculum in line with recent national guidelines and is providing a good quality of education overall, that takes account of the differing needs of pupils and prepares them well for the National Curriculum. Many pupils are ready to tackle aspects of the National Curriculum before the end of the Reception year and the teaching provides appropriately for this. However, some aspects of the school's provision are less well developed. One of the principles of the Foundation Stage curriculum requires the school to provide a rich and stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that is well resourced and inspires children to initiate their own learning. It should make good use of outdoor space, to enable children to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible in the classroom. The Reception class is currently housed in a relatively small classroom. Although there is an outdoor area nearby, this has not been developed as a resource for the Foundation Stage and was not used during the inspection. Limited space in the classroom means that opportunities for imaginative role-play are few, as there is only a small and uninspiring 'home corner'. There are insufficient planned opportunities for children to select from a range of activities and resources in order to develop independent learning. The school is aware of the

need to develop the Foundation Stage curriculum and has identified this as a priority in the school development plan. It has recently appointed a new teacher who has expertise with this age group.

Provision for the pupils' cultural development, which, although good overall, does not adequately develop their awareness of Britain as a multicultural society.

30. Overall, the school makes good provision for the pupils' cultural development. Pupils learn about the cultural traditions of their own area by visiting places such as Herstmonceux Castle, Bodiam Castle and the local trug shop. Subjects such as art and music maintain a high profile throughout the school and pupils are given a wide range of experiences to enhance their appreciation of different styles, artist and musicians. However, there is insufficient emphasis on raising pupils' awareness of Britain as a multicultural society through the curriculum and everyday routines of the school. This includes ensuring that the images presented to pupils through books, displays around the school, choice of music and other resources, are truly representative of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society in the 21st century. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to experience, through art, music and literature, the rich variety of cultural influences in our society, in order to prepare them for life in an increasingly multicultural environment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

31. To maintain the school's very good rate of improvement, the headteacher, governing body and staff should:

(1) improve some aspects of the management of the school by:

- developing the strategic role of the assistant headteachers to ensure that they make an effective contribution to shaping the future direction of the school; *
- reviewing the delegation of curricular responsibilities in order to make the best use of the expertise of staff and reduce the headteacher's current high level of involvement;
- agreeing a long-term vision for the school * and producing a comprehensive development plan that shows clearly how the school intends to maintain or improve further the standards achieved by the pupils and the quality of education provided;

(Paragraphs 28-29)

(2) improve the quality of provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage by:*

- developing the learning environment, both in the classroom and outdoors, to ensure that it is stimulating and helps to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning.

(Paragraph 30)

(3) raise pupils' awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.

(Paragraph 31)

*these items are identified as priorities in the school development plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	59	35	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	202
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	43

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	21	10	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	21
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	30	30	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (82)	97 (88)	100 (88)
	National	[83] (82)	[84] (83)	[90] (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	21
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	30	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (82)	100 (88)	100 (85)
	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	17	11	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (80)	100 (91)	100 (89)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	10	8	7
	Total	23	21	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (80)	75 (71)	71 (86)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (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	159
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	88

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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	365338
Total expenditure	362635
Expenditure per pupil	1814
Balance brought forward from previous year	11817
Balance carried forward to next year	14520

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	199
Number of questionnaires returned	90

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	38	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	33	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	54	3	0	5
The teaching is good.	72	26	1	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	43	4	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	23	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	23	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	41	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	30	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	31	7	1	1

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents expressed concern about the large size of some classes.