

INSPECTION REPORT

POLEGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Polegate Nr. Eastbourne

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114435

Headteacher: Mr C Hale

Reporting inspector: Mr D C Houghton
21121

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 September 2001

Inspection number: 217481

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oakleaf Drive Polegate East Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Booth
Date of previous inspection:	4 October 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21121	Mr D C Houghton	Registered inspector	Music	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
			Travellers	
9614	Mrs C Webb	Lay inspector		Pupils attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school look after its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21079	Mrs L Woods	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	How high are standards?
			Information and communication technology	
			French.	
25925	Mrs E Pacey	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
			Art and design	
			Design and technology.	
27061	*Mr I Stainton-James	Team inspector	Science	
			Geography	
			History	
			Physical education	
			Equal opportunities	
10367	Mrs N Myers	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
			English	
			Religious education	
			Special educational needs.	

*Sadly Mr Ian Stainton-James died in early October, shortly after completing the inspection.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Polegate School is a large primary school situated in the small town of Polegate, north of Eastbourne. There are currently 407 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11 years. Most pupils live in the local area, although a small number attend from places further afield. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and their attainment on entry is slightly below average. In the last two years there has been an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs joining the school. Just over 14 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is lower than the national average. Slightly more than two per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, but less than one per cent are beginners in English. Nearly four per cent of pupils are travellers, and approximately half of these pupils have some additional support from the local education authority traveller support team. Twenty-six per cent of pupils are currently on the school's register of special educational needs, which is broadly average. Four per cent of these pupils are at Stage 3 and above on the Code of Practice and nearly two per cent have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is broadly in line with the national average. The school is increasing in size and there has been a considerable amount of building extension work over the last few years. The school envisages that planned local housing projects will have a further impact by increasing the school population.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a warm, caring environment with a positive ethos for its pupils, and takes care to develop their initiative and personal responsibility. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Standards are below average in English and mathematics by the time pupils leave school in Year 6 and have shown a decline since the last inspection. However, this is due in part to cohorts with a higher number of pupils with special educational needs and it also reflects changes in the intake of pupils. Since the last inspection there has been a large change in the teaching staff all of whom are now committed to raising standards, although the expectations of the newly qualified teachers are not yet high enough. The school has recently implemented extensive assessment procedures that enable teachers to track the progress of individuals closely. The quality of leadership provided by the headteacher, the new deputy headteacher and other key staff is good. The governors take an active part in the life and work of the school, which provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and for Years 1 and 2 are good.
- The leadership and management are good and ensure a clear educational direction for the development of the school.
- The school takes good care to develop pupils' personal responsibility and initiative.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The governing body knows the school well and is effective in fulfilling its statutory duties.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology and geography by the end of Year 6.
- The quality and use of assessment to guide planning, and for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress.
- The provision of work for pupils with individual education plans in Years 3 to 6.

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 October 1999. It has addressed all the key issues raised at that time and overcome the serious weakness identified in relation to the Foundation Stage. The quality of education provided for the Foundation Stage has improved significantly, and is now a strength of the school. Children are provided with a well-balanced curriculum and very good opportunities for learning. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) has not yet been raised sufficiently because of delays in the installation of appropriate hardware and software. The new computer suite opened at the beginning of this term, and it is being used well by pupils to develop ICT skills and apply them to work in other subjects. The curriculum for infants and juniors is now well balanced and appropriate to pupils' learning. More able pupils are given extension work but tasks are not always matched appropriately to individual needs, especially for those with special educational needs. Standards in art are very good by the end of Year 6.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

Key

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

The table shows that that in 2000, standards were well below the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Compared to similar schools standards were well below average in English, and below average in science. In mathematics, standards were in the lowest five per of similar schools. These results are largely due to cohorts with an increasing number of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs. The 2001 test results show that standards are similar in English and science, but there has been some improvement in mathematics. The current Year 6 is unlikely to achieve the targets agreed with the local authority; the cohort has changed and now has more pupils requiring additional special educational needs help. The school has reassessed its performance, taking into account the pupils who have entered school since targets were agreed and has set new targets that are achievable. Results from the standardised tests at Key Stage 1 in 2000 were below average in reading but

average in writing and mathematics. The 2001 test results indicate a significant increase in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading and an increase in the percentage attaining Level 3 in mathematics. Current inspection findings indicate that attainment in science is satisfactory, but there is room for improvement in English and mathematics throughout the school.

Standards in art and design are well above average. They are average in all other subjects except for ICT, design and technology and geography where they are below average in Years 3 to 6. In geography and design and technology curriculum requirements are met, but not in sufficient depth for pupils to reach the expected standards. Standards for children in the Foundation Stage are broadly in line with expectations for their age in all aspects of the curriculum, except in some elements of personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy where they are below expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory because work is not always well matched to their level of attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most pupils are enthusiastic and work hard but a small number who do not enjoy learning cause disruption.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Many pupils are well motivated but there are a few who interrupt the learning of others.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and this has a positive impact on their self-confidence and personal esteem.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school although some arrive late.

The school has good procedures for developing pupils' initiative and sense of responsibility, for example the school council.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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 overall is sound and contributes positively to pupils' learning. Teaching is good and sometimes very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is satisfactory. Half the teachers in Years 3 to 6 are new to the school. Some have only been teaching since the beginning of term and have not had sufficient time to get to know the pupils well enough. There has been some improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection when more unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teaching in English and mathematics and the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and good in Years 1 and 2 and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers use a wide range of strategies effectively including questioning, instruction and exemplification. They do not always use their assessments

effectively to ensure that tasks are matched appropriately to pupils with different levels of attainment. In the Foundation Stage teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children, and work hard to develop their basic skills and positive attitudes to learning. Teachers manage pupils satisfactorily. Their expectations, whilst satisfactory overall, are too low in some lessons, in Years 3 to 6. A large number of teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils' learning in lessons particularly when working with small groups of pupils. Specialist teaching for traveller pupils and those who are learning English as an additional language provides good support for these pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory for pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 because targets in individual education plans are not always being taken sufficiently into account when work is planned.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The support provided by the local education authority is effective in developing pupils' competence and confidence in English and is contributing positively to the progress they make.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils know right from wrong. They are encouraged to develop good relationships and teachers use opportunities within lessons to develop pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. The provision for the care of pupils' personal development and their health and social well-being is good. Monitoring of their academic performance and personal development is unsatisfactory at present because it is still in its infancy.

The school works hard to maintain good links with parents. They are kept well informed about the work of the school overall, and have ample opportunities to discuss their children's progress at formal and informal meetings. Homework is sent home regularly and this helps parents to understand what their children are doing.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and are working effectively to raise standards. The role of the subject leaders is now firmly established.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors take a keen and active interest in the life and work of the school. They visit the school regularly and write detailed observations following their monitoring visits, which are shared with the governing body. The governing body and its committees meet regularly to review and discuss development targets.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively and the school has a clear picture of areas needing development. Monitoring, however, is at an early stage and has not yet had time to impact on standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The budget is set carefully and monitored closely. Specific grants are used well and planned expenditure is monitored in detail.

The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is good and used well, but some classes are over-crowded as numbers increase. Resources are good overall and used effectively to support teaching and learning. The school generally takes account of the principles of best value, but does not yet have a formal means of evaluating the impact of its spending decisions on standards.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The quality of teaching. • Their children make progress. • The school expects their children to work hard and to achieve their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework set. • The information they receive about their children's progress • The school working more closely with them.

Inspectors overall agree with the parents' positive views of the school. The school does try to work closely with all parents. Pupils are set homework, including reading, regularly and parents have formal and informal opportunities to discuss their children's progress. There is an active parents' association and many parents work in the school in a wide range of contexts, for example as teaching assistants and as volunteers.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children in Reception receive a very good start to their education in a lively and stimulating environment. According to the baseline assessment in current use, their attainment on entry is average. However, this is misleading to the school, as it does not sufficiently assess their level of ability in relation to the Early Learning Goals, which form the basis of the work in reception. In some aspects of their development, many children show below average levels of attainment, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Re-assessment of children at the end of their reception year, using the same system, implies that their attainment then is above average, which is also misleading. Evidence from work completed last year shows that the pupils currently in Year 1 achieved levels of attainment appropriate for their age in most areas of learning, which indicates good progress. However, a significant number of these children were below average in their reading and writing development.
2. The changing nature of the population in the area is having a marked effect on the level of attainment pupils demonstrate when they join the school. There is an increasing proportion of pupils throughout the school identified as having special educational needs and a significant number have behavioural difficulties, which has a negative impact on these pupils levels of achievement. Prior to the appointment of the headteacher and the new deputy headteacher few intervention and support procedures were in place.
3. The assessment tasks at the end of Year 2 show marked variations year-on-year as a result of the differing proportions of pupils with special educational needs in each group taking the tests. In 2000, pupils' attainment in reading was below average compared with national standards, and well below average compared with similar schools. This was mainly because few pupils achieved the higher Level 3. Results from the 2001 tasks show a good increase in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3, because of the school's focus on reading. Although detailed national comparisons are not yet available, results are likely to be average as a result of this improvement. Attainment in writing and mathematics, and in teacher assessment of science, in 2000, were average compared with both the national picture and with similar schools, and results from the 2001 tasks show similar levels of attainment.
4. Pupils' skills are developed effectively and progressively in the infant classes as a result of good teaching. Although early in the academic year, evidence indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science are on course to be average by the end of Year 2, and to meet the school's targets for their levels of achievement. High standards achieved in art and design and music are above average due to good teaching. In information and communication technology (ICT), history, physical education and religious education, pupils are achieving standards expected of their age and prior levels of attainment. In design and technology, however, standards are below those expected, because skills are not tackled systematically.
5. Standards in the English and mathematics test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 have declined over the past two years, which is a concern for the school. In 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or higher was well below average

compared to the national picture in these two subjects. Compared to similar schools, standards were well below average in English, and very low in mathematics. Results in the 2001 tests do not show any significant improvement and, against the published overall national level of attainment, are likely again to be well below average. Standards in science have been rising steadily over the years. They were, nevertheless, below average compared both with the results nationally and with similar schools in 2000, and are likely to be so again in 2001.

6. In both these year groups, however, 43 per cent of pupils were identified as having special educational needs, with a high proportion having Statements of Special Educational Need. Additionally, in the group of pupils taking the tests in 2001, a significant number with special educational needs joined the school in the course of that final year and this impacted on pupils' overall levels of achievement. The school has analysed its results in detail, including gender and cultural factors and is concerned to raise standards overall. Effective strategies have now been set in place to boost levels of attainment, and challenging targets have been set for current Year 6 pupils to achieve. These have had to be adjusted, however, as new pupils have joined the school with very low levels of attainment.
7. Despite improvements to teaching and the strategies for literacy and numeracy being introduced, resulting in pupils making steady progress in the core skills of literacy and numeracy, inspection evidence indicates that pupils' achievements in English and mathematics are likely to remain below average by the end of the current Year 6. Standards in science, however, are on course to be average by the end of the year. In the junior classes, pupils are achieving well above average standards in art and design, and above average standards in history. The introduction this September of an ICT suite presents the school with exciting opportunities to raise standards in this subject and to improve its use across the curriculum. However, older pupils currently have a low level of skill in using ICT, and standards are below those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils' achievements in design and technology, and in geography, are also below expectations for pupils' ages because there is a lack of emphasis on these subjects within the curriculum. Standards in music, physical education, religious education and French are average.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in Years 1 and 2 where work is well matched to the targets on their individual education plans. Good liaison between teachers and assistants guides effective support for pupils. The achievement of these pupils in Years 3 to 6 is not satisfactory. This is because most teachers do not provide work that is well linked to the targets on individual education plans, and too often pupils struggle with challenging whole class tasks that have not been modified to meet their needs. The standards achieved by traveller pupils, whilst well supported, are below average and they make slow progress. Those learning English as an additional language are also well supported and achieve levels appropriate to their English language skills.
9. Standards in the core skills vary. Speaking and listening skills are developed well throughout the school. Infant pupils' achievements are improving in reading and writing, due to more focused work having a positive impact, but are unsatisfactory in the juniors. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory in the infants but are less well developed in the juniors because the pace and demands of mental mathematics tasks are not high enough, resulting in slower progress. However, there are signs of a slight improvement in the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels now than in previous years.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Most pupils continue to develop the positive attitudes and values to school reported at the last inspection. Children and pupils like coming to school and almost all arrive on or before time in the mornings. Attendance is satisfactory. The few persistent latecomers are well known to the office, and all parents are regularly reminded of the importance to their children's education of regular attendance and punctuality. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons and eager to learn. Most pupils enjoy working together. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most behave well and want to learn, but a significant minority of pupils throughout the school do not always respect or obey their teachers. This causes some disruption that subsequently limits the education of their classmates. Sanctions are not yet consistently implemented by staff new to the school. However, pupils do not like being sent to see the headteacher when they misbehave. There have been four recent appropriate exclusions, but for short periods of time.
11. Play at break times is often exuberant. Pupils enjoy lively and well-organised games. Occasionally minor incidents occur but vigilant supervisors quickly and effectively deal with them. Instances of bullying behaviour are rare and are dealt with appropriately using the school's procedures. Pupils generally respond well to each other and show respect for their peers' different points of view.
12. Pupils' personal development is good. They are encouraged to care for others. Teachers deal with any concerns, and relationships throughout the school are good overall. During break-times it is quite usual to see Year 2 pupils enjoying the sandpit with the youngest children. Prefects and monitors provide good role models for younger pupils. The head boy and head girl oversee break and dinner times responsibly. Prefects are on duty at lunchtimes to help the youngest pupils choose their food and to carry it to their table sensibly. Membership of the school council is regarded as important, and representatives discuss seriously the matters raised by their classmates at their two meetings during the term. As a result, for example, fleeces as well as sweatshirts now form part of the uniform. Class monitors carry out their duties well, and the youngest children are very proud to be chosen as 'helpers' and take the registers to and from the office very carefully. All in Year 6 are proud to show parents and visitors around their school.
13. The school has adopted a fully inclusive approach to all pupils including those with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities. Pupils with behavioural problems are monitored effectively, through the liaison book system between teachers and their assistants, resulting in some improvement in attitudes. Pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds mix well with their peers and are an integral part of the whole school community. Relationships are satisfactory, for example, pupils relate well to, and show respect for, each other both in lessons and at break-times. The school's practice of inclusion is good and it makes effective use of curriculum subjects to raise pupils' awareness of different cultures, for example the African music played in assembly. The school welcomes into its community all pupils, whatever their background or special educational needs.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is sound overall and is contributing positively to pupils' learning. Teaching was at least satisfactory or better in nearly all lessons. It was good in almost half the lessons seen and very good in one in eight lessons. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in only one in twenty five lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection when one in nine lessons were deemed to be unsatisfactory.
15. At the time of the previous inspection, teaching for the youngest children was a serious weakness, being unsatisfactory or poor in over half of sessions seen. The school has worked very hard to address this issue, with notable success. During the inspection, teaching in the Foundation Stage was never less than satisfactory. It was very good in nearly half the lessons seen, and good or better in over one in three lessons. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Staff working in Reception are a very effective team. They have a clear understanding of the needs of young children and how they learn, and they work extremely hard together to provide a rich and stimulating range of activities throughout each session.
16. Lots of different activities, linked effectively to the current topic of 'Nursery Rhymes' and the different areas of learning, provide a very effective learning environment for children whose attention span, at this early stage in the term, is inevitably short. All staff understand the need to encourage children to think and talk about what they are doing in order to develop their vocabulary, knowledge and understanding, and most are effective in this. When a teacher acting the role of a 'gardener' visited the class, for example, she stimulated a lively discussion about different garden tools in which all children took part, demonstrating an impressive knowledge of the subject.
17. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. Very good teaching was observed in one in five lessons and good teaching in two out of three lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen at this key stage. Good teaching occurs where the pace of work is slick and is well matched to pupils' levels of attainment, for example in numeracy lessons. Teachers consistently question pupils effectively to reinforce their learning, and use a good balance of teaching strategies such as direct instruction and exemplification.
18. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with over nine out of ten lessons being satisfactory or better. Very good teaching was observed in nearly one in ten lessons and good teaching in over four out of ten lessons. The very good teaching occurs where pupils clearly know the teachers' expectations, for example in a Year 5 history lesson. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was largely due to the inexperience of, and lack of pupil management skills of, the newly qualified teachers at the start of the inspection. The improvement in their confidence was noticeable as the inspection progressed, and the quality of teaching in lessons seen later in the inspection reflects this improvement.
19. Teachers generally have sufficient knowledge and understanding to teach most subjects, although some feel less secure when teaching subjects such as art and music. This is overcome to some extent by the introduction of some specialist teaching for these subjects when teachers change classes. The introduction of the monitoring and support programme will provide an opportunity for teachers to share their expertise. Teaching of the basic skills in daily literacy and mathematics lessons is good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. In the infants, for example, there is an appropriate emphasis on teaching phonics, that is letter sounds, whilst in the junior classes there is a greater emphasis on teaching spellings. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully in place and are having a positive impact on teaching at both key stages, and learning is now more purposeful, especially in the infant classes.

The daily mathematics lesson contributes positively to improving pupils' mental calculations.

20. Planning is sound overall in Reception and Years 1 and 2, where work is generally well matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Learning intentions are clearly expressed and assessment opportunities are included in the planning, although they are not always sharp enough. All teachers plan literacy and numeracy lessons using the guidelines from the National Strategies. Whilst planning is satisfactory in the Years 3 to 6, too little attention is given to planning work in detail for groups of pupils with different levels of attainment. Consequently pupils are not always challenged appropriately, especially those with special educational needs. Much of this, however, is due to inexperience and to the early stage in the term. There are no formally agreed systems for teachers to share an understanding of the levels of work to be expected from pupils. As a result, teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve vary considerably. This not only has a negative impact on the attainment and progress of pupils, but also on their behaviour. In the very few lessons where work is insufficiently demanding, pupils lose concentration. Teachers use a range of teaching methods effectively. Most question pupils well and use a sound balance of instruction, exemplification and demonstration. Questioning skills are better developed where teachers have more experience, for example in a Year 5 religious education lesson where the teacher consistently asked searching questions that challenged pupils' thinking.
21. Teachers overall manage infant pupils well and junior pupils satisfactorily and this has a positive impact on learning. However, there are a significant number of pupils with challenging behaviour, who are on the special educational needs register, especially in the Years 3 to 6 and they are constantly testing teachers, especially those with less experience. It was noticeable that towards the end of the inspection that those teachers were beginning to develop effective strategies for dealing with these pupils, and that they were gaining confidence in their own pupil management capabilities. This resulted in less disruption and in all pupils having a more positive approach to learning. Teachers use resources effectively to reinforce their teaching. For example, in music untuned instruments are used to highlight rhythm and pitch and in history videos give pupils a greater insight as to how people lived in Victorian times. Teaching assistants in all classes provide valuable support and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, but on occasions they are not used efficiently, for example, in literacy during the first two parts of the lesson. Teachers are taking positive steps to make cross-curricular links using the new ICT equipment, for example, by developing word processing skills and using the internet to research information in science and history. Homework is set regularly to help to reinforce the work in class.
22. Teachers are getting to know their pupils well at this early stage in the term. However, the use of assessment to help and inform planning is unsatisfactory, and this is due to inappropriate assessment procedures in the past. The school has worked hard to produce new procedures, which have been fully implemented this term. These systems, together with tracking and monitoring procedures and in-service training, are giving teachers clear and consistent guidance on the use of assessment. This places the school in a good position to rectify this weakness, but it is too early in the school year to assess the impact of the new procedures.
23. All teachers are fully involved in writing individual education plans which clearly outline the way the curriculum is to be adapted to meet identified needs. Teaching fully meets pupils' special needs in the infants, where planning identifies sound curriculum

modifications. Teachers in the juniors are less successful at matching work to individual plans for the lower achievers. Consequently teaching for pupils with special educational needs in this key stage at present is unsatisfactory.

24. Traveller pupils are welcomed into the school and made to feel valued. The additional support the school provides in and out of the classrooms is good and enables them to integrate into lessons well. The small number of gifted and talented pupils, some of whom have individual education plans, are given valuable additional support, and work that challenges them. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are taught effectively in classes with additional support from a specialist teacher, which has a positive impact on their learning of English.

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

25. Teachers in the reception classes plan a rich and varied range of activities for the children throughout each session. Using half-termly topics, currently 'Nursery Rhymes', teachers provide exciting and relevant opportunities, which capture and hold children's attention and interest. These topics are very effectively inter-linked within the planning to ensure full coverage of the different areas of learning, identified in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage, over the course of the year. The serious weakness in provision for children under five, identified in the previous inspection report, has been fully addressed.
26. The curriculum for the infants and juniors is broad and relevant and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, including religious education. Sex education and education about drugs misuse are both taught, although there are currently no schemes of work for them. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The overall curriculum is balanced. However, within subjects the balance is not always as satisfactory; for example, in design and technology the design and evaluation elements are under-developed, and in geography work is not covered in sufficient depth.
27. There is a useful whole school overview of the curriculum that shows the work to be covered each year. Teachers use it sensibly to select units of work from the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. These schemes of work are then used to plan weekly and daily lessons in more detail. Subject leaders and the deputy headteacher monitor all planning closely to ensure that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. All pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and traveller pupils, are supported effectively in class to help their learning and they have full access to the curriculum. The different ethnic and cultural backgrounds of these pupils positively enrich the curriculum and help the understanding of others. However, the range of opportunities provided for groups of pupils who learn at different rates is limited by some inconsistency in teachers' planning work to match their needs. This is especially true of pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6, where curriculum modification is inadequate to meet the needs identified on individual education plans. Too often teaching assistants have problems in explaining the work that is provided, because it is too difficult for the pupils. As a result they do not make the progress expected of them. The school is implementing the National Literacy and National Numeracy strategies appropriately. Additional booster classes are provided for older junior pupils, illustrating teachers' commitment to raising standards in English and mathematics. Pupils identified as having high levels of achievement are supported through individual education plans.

28. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to join in extra curricular activities. There is a range of sporting activities such as football, netball, basketball and karate. A choir, a well attended recorder club, as well as drama and the very popular and successful Young Engineers' Club effectively support the curriculum. These activities enrich the curriculum and provide good opportunities for pupils' social development. Visits and visitors successfully promote and enhance work in the curriculum, for example, visits to Newhaven Fort reinforce work about World War 2 in history, visits to the art gallery support work in art, and a visit to a local outdoor centre develops pupils' physical, personal and social skills. Visitors such as theatre groups and living history groups combine to bring the curriculum alive for the pupils and stimulate their interest learning. There are good links with the local community and other schools. Many parents and grandparents come to work in the school and provide very good stimulus for learning. For example, a beautiful Romany caravan was made by one of the traveller pupil's grandparents. Pupils play bingo with elderly people, and compete successfully in a wide variety of local and national competitions. All of these activities provide a sound basis for pupils to move on to their next stage of learning.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is now good, and is regularly promoted through assemblies and in lessons. In one assembly a regular visiting speaker amused the pupils with Jimmy, his puppet who admitted not telling the truth and that he knew this was wrong. Pupils then listened carefully to the story of David and Goliath. Pupils learn about values, for example when one pupil said that her teddy was priceless and explained why, when they were comparing prices of different items. Pupils are encouraged successfully to become aware of the wonders of nature and science. In Year 2, for example, the teacher, after telling pupils to keep very quiet as she had a surprise, opened a cupboard to reveal a bantam chicken and audible gasps of delight were heard as pupils greeted their special visitor. Similar emotions were aroused when electrical circuits were completed in a science lesson and 'we have light' was heard.
30. The school provides well for pupils' moral and social development. The school makes good provision for pupils to exercise a sense of responsibility. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility throughout the school and to care for others. Prefects and monitors have specific duties, such as helping younger children play, and helping their teachers to set up classrooms for the afternoon. They enjoy doing this and carry out these duties conscientiously. Pupils are aware of those less fortunate than themselves, and collect enthusiastically for local and national charities. They know right from wrong, and most think about the implications of their actions on others. Pupils voice their opinions through the school council, and members act collectively for the good of the school community. Talks from the school nurse and local police officer ensure that all are aware of problems they could face outside school. The school takes great care to ensure that all pupils, including those from different cultural backgrounds, are well prepared for living and taking responsibility in today's society, and promotes citizenship for all effectively.
31. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. Visits are made to the local art gallery and museum, and pupils participate in the local music festival. Through working alongside the visiting artist pupils learn the use of different styles and media. Examples seen of Year 6 work demonstrate how influential and beneficial this week was to their learning. Pupils' knowledge of the Victorians is enhanced by visits from theatre groups. Those from different cultures share their different traditions; for example one new pupil was proud to talk about his country. All enjoyed the Japanese

meals week. The school has satisfactory links with a French school and useful exchange visits, linked to the local community twinning links, take place and support the curriculum. Religious education lessons raise pupils' awareness of other religions and cultures. Pupils are encouraged to talk about the artefacts in the excellent displays which enrich one area of the school. A visit to a synagogue enhances pupils' awareness of the beliefs of others and they appreciate the plants associated with the Sukkot. Taped music from an African band, which visited the school, is sometimes played during assemblies. Pupils are effectively taught about Britain as a multi-cultural society, and learn about different traditions such as bonfire night and harvest.

32. The school is very much part of the local community, participating in the Polegate carnival. The Parents and Friends Association organises fortnightly bingo sessions, enjoyed by local residents as well as some parents. Members of the local community visit the school to talk to pupils, for example, a traveller pupil's grandparent.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school continues to provide a caring and supportive environment for all pupils, and makes good provision for pupils from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. It has facilities for disabled people and provides effectively for both the more able pupils and those with special educational needs. Good relationships are being established between teaching staff and pupils at this early stage in the term. Breakfast is provided for those attending the early morning 'booster' classes. Health and safety has a high priority although a number of girls were observed wearing unsuitable footwear during the inspection. Risk assessments take place regularly and the caretaker deals with any hazards he finds on his daily round. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory and there are qualified first aiders on site when pupils are at school.
34. The school has good systems to encourage and monitor pupils' attendance. Registers are scrutinised regularly and 'first day absence' telephone calls made if no reason for absence has been received by 10.00am. The educational welfare officer and other personnel are appropriately involved when required. The school reminds parents continually of the importance to their children's education of good attendance and punctuality.
35. The school has well-written and comprehensive discipline and bullying policies but, with the number of new teaching staff and at this stage of the term, they are not yet implemented consistently and consequently are not as effective as they should be. Pupils and teachers negotiate class rules at the beginning of term and they are then clearly displayed and regularly referred to. Rewards vary between teachers and classes but include stickers and golden tickets: pupils are proud to receive them and most work hard to gain a golden certificate. Sanctions include 'time out' in another class, and ultimately being sent to the headteacher.
36. Procedures for encouraging and supporting pupils' personal development are effective but monitoring, though on-going, is not formally recorded other than in the annual reports and this is unsatisfactory at present. Pupils are expected to care for others which most do so sensibly. Pupils with special educational or other needs, and those from other cultures are well integrated with, and supported by, their peers. Monitors are chosen from each class and carry out their duties conscientiously. This is effective in helping pupils to regulate their own community. School council membership is valued, and representatives meet regularly to discuss issues raised by their classmates.

37. Talks from the school nurse, the local police officer and other agency representatives alert pupils to the dangers and difficulties to be found outside their school community. Pupils are made aware of their responsibilities as citizens in the multi-cultural society of Britain today. Educational and residential trips increase their knowledge of the world and develop pupils' self-reliance and independence. Pupils are well-prepared for transfer to their secondary schools.
38. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers assess carefully children's level of attainment when they first start school. However, the baseline assessment in current use is not helpful to the school, as it does not sufficiently assess their level of ability in relation to the Early Learning Goals, which form the basis of the work in the reception classes. This is under review. The assessment is repeated at the end of the year, and shows clearly the progress that children make during their time in Reception. Again this is not particularly informative in relation for children's readiness for the National Curriculum in Year 1, and gives a false picture of their attainment on entry to compulsory schooling. Teachers in the reception classes assess continuously throughout each activity and have a very clear picture of each child's achievements. These assessments are collated systematically and examples of work retained in relation to each of the areas of learning. At the end of the year, each child is presented with a portfolio of their work in each area of learning, which provides a lovely record of work done, and an effective measure of the progress they have made.
39. The school has a satisfactory range of very new assessment procedures. A great deal of work has been undertaken to establish these procedures, which should be useful and effective in raising standards, once well established. Pupils' attainment is assessed when they enter full-time education and they are then tested regularly each year. Test results are analysed to find out how well boys and girls, and pupils from other cultures, are succeeding. However, the results are not yet used effectively to identify in detail where areas of the curriculum need to be developed. Test results are now being used to track individual pupils' progress as they move through the school, but being very new procedures, they currently only show results for one year. Consequently there has not been enough time for them to be effective in illustrating patterns in pupils' learning, or to make any impact on standards. The new systems are being used systematically to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils to achieve, and include personal as well as academic goals. Although the targets are beginning to be monitored, there is not yet any formally agreed system to share this information with pupils, so that they know what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve further. The school has effective systems for identifying the needs of pupils who require extra support, in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice. However, systems for monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of individual education plans, and the use of classroom assistants, are unsatisfactory.
40. The use of assessment is unsatisfactory at present because not all teachers are currently using any previous assessment, or assessment gained during lessons, to help them plan for the next stage of learning. Consequently the attainment and progress of significant groups of pupils is restricted. There is, for example, insufficient notice taken of the needs of pupils within the sets in mathematics who learn at different rates, or those who are younger and have had different learning experiences. As a result groups either do not always understand what they are being asked to do, or find it too easy.

41. Teachers encourage their pupils effectively during lessons. However, there is no formally agreed policy for marking and recording pupils' work. As a result, marking is variable. Some teachers make good evaluative comments whilst in other classes much work is left unmarked and uncorrected. In these cases pupils do not know how well they are doing or what they need to do in order to achieve a higher standard. The school is aware that this is a problem that needs addressing, and has plans to do so in the near future.
42. The assessment co-ordinators have a very clear understanding of the use and importance of good assessment procedures. They have devised a good action plan to improve the effective use of assessment, and a clear vision for its development in order to raise standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents are generally satisfied with the provision the school makes for their children's education. The school has developed effective links and satisfactory relationships with the parents and is determined to build on them for the benefit of the pupils' learning. Parents support the school's aims and ambitions for their children and are generally pleased with changes made over the past two years. Some parents participated in the Sunday 'work-in' at the end of the summer term to improve the school environment, and the majority have returned the home/school agreement, underlining their support for their children's education. Many parents provide valuable, additional help in school by hearing pupils read or helping in the classrooms, and others accompany their children on educational visits or assist with swimming lessons. Most try to help their children with work at home and the school has produced useful guidelines to assist them in this. The homework diary is used as an effective means of communication between home and school, but the reading record contains only praise and page numbers rather than useful comments. The overall impact of these positive links with parents on their children's education is good.
44. A small number of parents feel that the information they receive about their children's progress is not good enough. Inspectors found that parents do receive sufficient and good quality information from the school. The brochure and governors' report contain comprehensive and useful data and the 'Polegate Press', detailing school news and future events, is sent out regularly. Class teachers write to parents at the beginning of each term to inform them about the work their children will be doing. Other letters are sent out as and when necessary. Parents like the annual reports, which record individual children's achievements, although they do not include academic targets. Regular consultation meetings are well attended. Teachers are always available at the end of the school day to speak to parents who have concerns. Parents of children with special educational or other needs are involved appropriately with their individual education plans and invited to reviews. Traveller parents and pupils are well supported by the school, working in conjunction with the local education authority traveller service. Should there be a problem the friendly and very approachable school secretary is always on hand to give assistance, for example with form filling.
45. The enthusiastic Parent and Friend Association plans and runs many successful fund-raising events, such as the Christmas Bazaar and recent Summer Fayre, combined this year with a Grand Auction. These events are very well supported by teachers as well as families and friends in the community. Last year they gave £5000 towards the information technology suite, and funded the data protector and interactive whiteboard. The school is very appreciative of their efforts and of the resources they provide.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. Leadership and management of the school are good and have developed effectively since the last inspection. The new deputy headteacher works very closely with the headteacher to create a positive ethos. They have a clear vision for the educational development of the school which closely reflect its aims, including a commitment to good relationships and a mutual respect for others. They are well supported by the governors, a new senior management team and the staff. Since the last inspection there has been a 50 per cent change in staff. There is now a determination to raise standards by implementing any changes necessary to ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately and fully included in the life and work of the school. The school has a good school improvement plan that clearly highlights the important areas for development. It is well written with appropriate targets that are manageable and achievable and will contribute effectively to raising standards. The head and deputy have recently introduced new assessment procedures that will enable the school to track individual pupils' progress accurately, and enable teachers to use their assessments more effectively in planning work. Since the last inspection, teamwork within the staff has developed positively. The increasing size of the school has enabled it to have a non-class based deputy headteacher this year. This has given the school a valuable opportunity to implement a regular monitoring and support programme, which should enable the school to highlight strengths and weaknesses within teaching and learning and to draw on individual teachers' expertise for appropriate support when required. It is too early to assess the full impact of this initiative but first indications are positive, for example the support provided for newly qualified teachers. Staff plan together to ensure consistency within the curriculum. Co-ordinators are now developing detailed subject action plans, monitor planning and are now taking responsibility for their own budgets. The new senior management team meets regularly to discuss issues related to the development of the school. The headteacher has worked hard since the last inspection to maintain the good, caring ethos within the school. The school is now well placed to start raising academic standards, especially by the end of Year 6. The day-to-day running of the school is smooth and efficient.
47. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who is a member of the senior management team, works closely with a large team of teaching assistants, and liaises well with outside agencies to provide support for about one third of the pupils. Administration is good and funds are well managed and prudently allocated. However, there are no effective monitoring systems to ensure that classroom provision meets the targets on pupils' individual education plans. Travellers' children are welcomed into the school and are well integrated. They are supported effectively, not only by the local authority travellers' support team but by the schools' own procedures and ethos of inclusion, which ensure that their time at school is valuable and positive. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by the local education authority support team. The school has established good relationships with these families who willingly provide both resources and expertise on their particular cultures.
48. Governors are very supportive of, and are interested in, the school. They make regular visits and write good, informative reports that are fed back to the full governing body. The chair of governors is an effective and frequent visitor, who meets regularly with the headteacher. All governors have a class and subject link with the school. The full governing body and its committees meet regularly, and meetings are recorded appropriately. All committees have clear and appropriate terms of reference. The

governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively and ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities. There are a number of new governors, and some others are new to their roles. At present there are two vacancies on the governing body; this means that some governors are taking additional responsibilities at present.

49. There are sufficient and appropriately qualified and committed teachers to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. There are four new staff teaching in the junior part of the school this term, three of whom are newly qualified teachers. At present the school has one temporary teacher. The school has taken the decision, because of large class sizes, to employ a large number of teaching assistants to provide support within classes. They are generally used effectively and many pupils benefit from their help and support. Teaching assistants are effectively supported and trained by the school, and meet regularly with a senior member of staff. The teachers for traveller children, and those learning English as an additional language, visit regularly and work effectively alongside class teachers in support of these pupils. The school has a good induction programme to support new teachers to the school, especially those who are newly qualified. Performance management systems are thorough, well established and are integrated into the school's wider developmental objectives. Teachers agree clear and manageable targets at their termly review meetings. The school plans to introduce performance management targets for teaching assistants shortly. Teachers are encouraged to attend appropriate courses and visit other schools to support their professional development, as well as the educational development of the school, as identified in the school improvement plan.
50. The school makes good use of its accommodation. However, with the rapid rise in the number of pupils on roll, many classrooms are full and there is little room for movement. The school has just opened a new computer suite and resource area that includes the re-established library. These areas are being used well and are making a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The hall is extensively used for physical education, assemblies, lunches and extra curricular activities, such as choir and karate lessons. However, whilst it was reasonably sized when the school opened, the rise in numbers has made it difficult to accommodate all pupils, for example, in assemblies. Outside, the school has good accommodation, including a well-used swimming pool and a not-so-well used environmental area. A hard working caretaker and cleaning staff keep the school clean and tidy. The appearance of the school is enhanced by attractive displays that support pupils' learning, for example, the exhibition of artefacts from different religions. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy their designated outside area, which is stimulating and encourages learning.
51. The school has sufficient resources which resources are easily accessible and generally used well to deliver the National Curriculum. These are very good in ICT and religious education, and good in the Foundation Stage, English, history, and music. In all other subjects they are at least satisfactory. Resource requirements, as outlined in Statements of Special Education Need are fully met. The library is well-stocked and the reading scheme is supported well by a wide range of reading books for pupils to extend their reading skills. Specialist materials for pupils with special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language, are sound. There are adequate resources to support pupils from other cultures. The school's own resources are supplemented by those from the local education authority loan scheme.
52. Management and control of the school's finances are very good. The knowledgeable bursar supports the headteacher very effectively and together they prepare the

budget, which is submitted to the governing body for approval. The finance committee carefully monitors it and the bursar ensures that the school makes wise purchases. Whilst the principles of best value are followed well, the governing body does not yet have a formal mechanism for evaluating the cost effectiveness of its decisions, or the impact on standards. The few recommendations in the most recent audit report have been fully implemented. The school makes good use of specific grants, for example those for special educational needs, and in establishing new ICT equipment within the school. The very high underspend in the last financial year was due to grants being paid into the school's budget to cover bills that were not settled until the next financial year.

53. The school has fully addressed the serious weakness identified in the previous report regarding the Foundation Stage, which has now become a strength of the school. The other key issues have been satisfactorily addressed. The hardware and software for ICT has recently been fully installed, and this will enable the school to start raising standards of attainment. The curriculum is now well balanced and the more able pupils adequately catered for, although to some extent this has been at the expense of the less able pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6. The school has adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes of work which are providing a secure curriculum base. There is some sharing of expertise, for example in art, music and ICT. However, standards in the core subjects appear to have dropped since the last inspection especially by the end of Year 6. This is due in part to higher numbers of pupils with special educational needs in recent cohorts, and in part to a change in the attainment levels of pupils entering the school both in the Foundation Stage and at other times. Taking into account the changes in staff, the new determination to raise standards, the newly implemented assessment procedures and the overall satisfactory quality of teaching, the school has the capacity and capability to improve rapidly and achieve, or even exceed, its targets. It is providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. The governors, headteacher and staff should now:-
- (1) Raise standards, especially by the end of Year 6, in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, design and technology and geography by;
 - building on the commitment of all staff to improve levels of attainment;
 - ensuring that work in lessons is matched more effectively to pupils' levels of attainment within lesson plans;
 - raising teachers' expectations as to the quality and quantity of what pupils can achieve both within lessons and over time;
 - developing the effective use of the newly installed information and communication technology hardware and software, and ensuring that it is used to the full in all curriculum areas.

- ensure that the design and evaluation elements in design and technology are given appropriate emphasis.
 - develop pupils' skills in geography to a greater depth.
(Paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 7, 18, 20, 21, 23, 26, 40, 46, 64, 67, 72, 79, 81, 91, 94, 95, 104)
- (2) Continue to develop the new assessment procedures and ensure their effectiveness by;
- carefully mapping the progress of individual pupils as they pass through the school;
 - monitoring planning and results to ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are acquired systematically;
 - training all teachers, especially those who are new to the school, so that they are conversant with the procedures and keep consistent records of pupils' academic and personal development;
 - ensuring that teachers use their assessments effectively to provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils;
 - developing a consistent marking policy.
(Paragraphs 20, 22, 27, 39, 40, 41, 46, 69, 71, 78, 85, 107, 113)
- (3) ensure that work for pupils with special education needs is appropriate especially for junior pupils by;
- matching work carefully to the targets described in their individual education plans.
(Paragraphs 8, 23, 27, 70, 76)

55. In addition to the issues identified above the following points should be included in the action plan:

- make full use of the environmental area to support teaching and learning, especially in science. (Paragraphs 50, 85)
- formally monitor the impact of expenditure on standards. (Paragraph 52)
- take steps to ensure that classroom assistants are used efficiently. (Paragraphs 27, 49)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	96
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	70

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	15	46	31	4	0	0
Percentage	0	16	48	32	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

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)		407
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		58

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		108

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	27	33	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	25	26
	Girls	29	32	33
	Total	51	57	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	95 (86)	98 (86)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	26	25
	Girls	31	33	30
	Total	54	59	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (90)	98 (83)	92 (93)
	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 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	24	22	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	11	19
	Girls	17	12	19
	Total	30	23	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (67)	50 (65)	83 (74)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	20
	Girls	18	14	19
	Total	32	26	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (70)	57 (65)	85 (78)
	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	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	398
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29.5
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	443.9

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	4	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	748684
Total expenditure	676272
Expenditure per pupil	1748
Balance brought forward from previous year	65403
Balance carried forward to next year	137815

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	400
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.	54	38	3	3	2
My child is making good progress in school.	42	46	6	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	54	13	3	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	46	13	9	11
The teaching is good.	38	52	1	2	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	31	21	9	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	45	9	4	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	27	60	1	3	9
The school works closely with parents.	21	46	22	6	5
The school is well led and managed.	24	52	7	9	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	57	7	3	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	48	10	8	14

Other issues raised by parents

Parents commented positively on the improvements in management and in the Foundation Stage since 1999. There were a few concerns regarding behaviour, which are shared by the inspection team. No bullying was seen during the inspection, but inspectors noted that the school has effective procedures for dealing with any incidences.

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

56. The quality of education for children under five was a serious weakness when the school was last inspected. The school has addressed the issues raised very effectively indeed, and the quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage of their education now is lively, stimulating and exciting, with a wide range of relevant, linked activities provided in each session, and their progress is sound. All children start school in the reception classes in September, with the youngest attending part-time to begin with. At this early stage of the term, judgements are based on the stepping-stones to learning described in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

57. For the majority of children, their personal, social and emotional development is appropriate for their age in most aspects of this area of learning. They settle quickly to activities, and on the carpet to listen to their teachers. Teaching is good and the children make sound progress. Staff consistently and continuously reinforce their expectations, for example, making children re-enter the class if they were too noisy the first time, and children understand, at the time, the reason for doing this. At this early stage in the term whilst most listen to adults attentively, some are sitting in a world of their own and not engaged in the focus of the session, despite the best efforts of the adult leading it. Few children listen to each other. Although most patiently wait their turn to speak, some shout out in very loud voices if they have an opinion to express. Most have very short attention spans and staff are careful to provide a wide variety of different activities to engage their interests throughout each session. They encourage children effectively to complete one activity before moving to another, but do not insist if it is inappropriate. Most children work happily beside their peers, but have not yet started to help each other in their tasks. A small number of children show poor behaviour; pushing, snatching and swearing, and do not treat the classroom equipment with respect. Staff deal quietly and effectively with this behaviour whenever it occurs.

Communication, language and literacy

58. For most children, their communication, language and literacy levels of achievement are appropriate for their age, but in some aspects, attainment is below expectations for the beginning of the reception year. Teaching is good, and often very good as staff work hard to engage children's interest in discussing stories, and in one class, 'Chip' the puppet plays an invaluable part. Many children consider him another of their teachers, and hold conversations with him as the session proceeds. As a result of teachers' high expectations, all children join in enthusiastically with chanting nursery rhymes, which they have learnt by heart. A small number of children recognise initial letter sounds and rhymes within them. Few children, however, use complex sentences or develop their ideas, either in class discussions or in independent activities, and in this area, their level of achievement is below expectations for their age.

59. Children handle books carefully and notice detail within the pictures, but few use the pictures to tell stories or develop ideas. When looking at a book about Noah's Ark, for example, children eagerly identified the animals present, and some which were not!

Most children hold books the correct way up, but many lose interest after a short time and move on to different activities. Staff use shared reading sessions effectively to foster an appreciation and love of books, which is currently below expectations for children's ages. Children enjoy mark-making, and 'write' their names with serious concentration on their work, although few are yet writing letters in a recognisable form or using mark-making in their independent play. A significant number of children are left-handed, with one child seen writing upside down and back to front.

Mathematical development

60. Children's mathematical development is appropriate for their age and they are making sound progress. Teaching is consistently good; staff take every opportunity to reinforce counting skills, for example, when taking the register, and mathematical concepts such as position and shape. As a result, children count confidently to ten and recognise and name simple shapes around the classroom. In a lively number game, children correctly sequence number cards, which reinforces the concepts of 'more than' and 'less than'. Children sort and count objects in independent activities, such as making a flower out of cubes. They work with intense concentration, supported by sympathetic adults, when undertaking these tasks.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. Children have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the world, fostered effectively through the wide variety of interesting activities provided in each session and through good teaching. However, their ability to ask questions and talk about what they see is below expectations for their age, despite effective encouragement by all staff. Children understand the need to care for living things; they meet guinea pigs in the classroom and plant bulbs in the garden. They concentrate intently when investigating soil under the expert guidance of the teacher, finding an amazing number of bugs in their explorations during a very good session. They handle these living things with thoughtful consideration, but are less adept at describing their findings and feelings, and show limited curiosity; taking things as they find them. They talk confidently about their families, but again the language is simple. Children handle equipment confidently, if somewhat heavy-handedly, for example, when investigating the tools in a graphics program on the computer. Whilst, at present, their levels of achievement are below expectations, they are making sound progress. Disagreements, such as over who is going to control the tape-recorder, are dealt with swiftly by the teacher. Children were not observed using large construction equipment or engaged in sand and water play, but the reception classrooms are well-equipped with materials to support such investigations.

Physical development

62. Children's physical development is appropriate for their age. They move confidently around the classroom, school and playground, and control their bodies and small apparatus well in physical development lessons. When running round the circle in a playground game, children moved confidently, although not always in the right direction. Teachers place a high emphasis on developing children's independence in dressing and undressing, with marked success, and changing for physical activity is a lively session. Children handle tools and materials with a reasonable degree of control, for example, when modelling mice in play-dough. They tackle fixing the string tail with serious concentration, although the finished mice are difficult to recognise as such. Teaching is good and pupils are achieving at levels appropriate to their age.

Staff are careful to allow children to complete activities for themselves and discuss their progress with them as they work, and the quality of learning is good as a result. Children made a very good attempt to cover a balloon with paper strips, under careful guidance from an assistant, and were pleased with their finished results. Children were not observed constructing with large materials, but scary spiders hanging from the ceiling indicate that staff provide these opportunities appropriately.

Creative development

63. Children's creative development is appropriate for their age, although their ability to play imaginatively together or alone is below expectations. In the 'kitchen' for example, several children play alongside each other happily, but develop their own story lines independently and mostly silently, despite the best efforts of staff to encourage them to talk about what they are doing. Children enjoy experimenting with painting and drawing, and make creditable attempts at observational drawings of the visiting guinea pigs. They chant and sing familiar nursery rhymes with great gusto, and enjoy playing musical instruments. In a good session, the teacher encourages careful listening as children attempt to distinguish between high and low notes. Although most find this difficult at first, careful reinforcement, using instruments and songs results in good progress, by the majority of children, in recognising them.

ENGLISH

64. Standards in English were average at the time of the last inspection, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have remained at this level by the end of Year 2, but have declined by the end of Year 6. This is partly because of the increase in the percentage of pupils with special educational needs, and partly because there has been considerable staffing instability in the juniors, involving changes in subject leadership. The latter has delayed the introduction of assessment and monitoring systems. These have now been put in place, which demonstrates the school's capacity to improve. Standards in national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were well below average and remained at this level in 2001. Standards at seven were average for writing in 2000 tests but below average for reading. The 2001 results show that writing standards have been maintained and that there has been a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining higher reading levels, due to the emphasis placed on this aspect by the school. As these pupils had entered the infants with below average standards, this represents good levels of achievement by the age of seven.
65. Speaking and listening skills develop soundly throughout the school in response to teachers' careful use of question and answer sessions in all subjects. Most pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to each other and have a confident approach when expressing their own opinions. They think quickly in oral sessions in mathematics, and show close understanding of technical points when discussing English grammar. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use knowledge gained in other curriculum areas to inform Literacy Hour discussions. For example, pupils use their historical learning most effectively when evaluating texts about wartime experiences. In a minority of lessons, in which the content is not pitched at the right level, pupils are not asked to think hard enough and a proportion 'switch off' during discussions. Nevertheless, by the time pupils reach Year 6, most sustain fluent conversations using complex sentences on matters that interest them. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with behavioural difficulties, traveller pupils and those learning

English as an additional language take a full part in speaking and listening because teaching assistants and the local authority peripatetic teachers provide good support.

66. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in the early stages of reading. They learn to use the links between letters and sounds effectively in the Literacy Hour and can often correct their own errors when reading aloud. Learning benefits from regular reading at home, and from the work of skilled teaching assistants and parent volunteers at school. However, a significant number of eleven-year-olds do not reach sufficiently high standards in reading because their understanding of vocabulary is weak and they find it challenging to make predictions or to draw inferences from the text. Good readers find information appropriately from a range of sources but a significant number of less able readers have poorly developed research skills. Pupils' learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in developing their reading skills.
67. Standards in writing by the time pupils reach Year 2 is at the expected level. The more able pupils write well-structured story plans, for example identifying the who, when, why and where of a seaside adventure. Teachers regularly provide a variety of well-matched tasks so that the quality of learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. The quality of learning in writing is unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 3 to 6, and standards by Year 6 are overall below average. However, learning for the more able pupils is sound because teachers match writing tasks to their reading and writing levels. Independent writing is not always taught effectively in the Literacy Hour and pupils are not always given sufficient time to complete their tasks. This prevents pupils from building up the writing skills they need to produce work of consistently high quality. Standards in handwriting are sound overall in the infants but are below average in much of the work seen in the juniors. Younger pupils regularly practise forming letters correctly and most writing is legible. Older pupils respond to the levels expected by teachers, which for most junior classes, is too low. Spelling is systematically developed throughout the school and standards are seen to be rising. Spelling homework is regularly given and tested conscientiously. The use of ICT is now improving, and pupils are developing their word processing skills effectively.
68. The learning of pupils closely mirrors the quality of teaching in English. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is a much higher proportion of good or better teaching in the infants. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy but have not yet had the confidence to adapt it to meet the requirements of pupils at Polegate School. This is largely because teachers have not had secure assessment systems to guide curricular planning. They have been put in place this term, together with a programme of well-targeted monitoring visits for all teachers.
69. A strength of teaching is the good questioning skill which most teachers exhibit. In the very best lessons, teachers build skilfully on the answers given by pupils, challenging them to think more deeply. Year 1 pupils, for example, discuss alternative endings for the story of Red Riding Hood, finally deciding that the wolf is really sorry and will be a slave forever. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 do not systematically develop the strategies and recording systems used by infant colleagues to support slow readers. In Key Stage 2, teachers do not always match appropriate texts effectively for independent tasks to pupils' reading levels. More able pupils read texts in co-operative groups, extracting a range of information, whilst lower ability pupils are often unable to get started and cause behaviour problems. There is some lack of consistency from class to class, for example, in one class, pupils wrote interesting, lively and well-constructed narratives based on Romeo and Juliet but in a parallel class, teacher expectations

were much lower and as a result pupils' achievements were lower. Writing in subjects other than English varies considerably, in line with individual teacher expectations. Marking of work is often cursory and rarely do pupils see it as a source of guidance for self-improvement.

70. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in the infants but make unsatisfactory gains in the juniors. Work in Years 3 to 6 is not well linked to their individual education plans and these pupils do not always receive tasks that are at an appropriate level. They consequently lose concentration and some become disruptive. Pupils with English as an additional language and traveller pupils are well supported by outside agencies both within class and through individual work, and this has a positive impact on their levels of achievement.
71. The new subject leaders for English are knowledgeable and are fully aware of the shortcomings. They are working hard to raise standards. They are taking action to build on strengths and to address weaknesses. Additional learning opportunities have been introduced for more able and slightly below average pupils. Assessment, tracking and monitoring systems have been introduced. Reading schemes in the infants and lower juniors have been revised and renewed. The library has been moved, restocked and is beginning to be used effectively.

MATHEMATICS

72. Test results indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 are average. By the end of Year 6 test results are well below average and indicate that there has been a decline in standards since 1999. These standards are lower than those indicated in the last inspection report. This is supported by evidence from the scrutiny of work and lesson observations, which indicate that attainment at the end of Year 2 is likely to be average, whilst by the end of Year 6 it is likely to be below average. However, the 2001 test results show that at both key stages there has been a slight rise in pupils' achievements, with a greater percentage attaining the higher levels. Results in mathematics over the past four years have shown considerable variations with each group of pupils taking the tests. This reflects firstly the changing nature of the pupils in each group, some of which have very high numbers with special educational needs; secondly some lack of teachers' subject expertise which the school has recognised and has since addressed by providing additional training.
73. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented, but with varying degrees of success. In the infants and the juniors there is an appropriate emphasis on developing numeracy skills and each lesson begins with mental and oral work. In many classes the mental mathematics sessions are challenging, with expectations of rapid answers. However, in some classes in the juniors this part of the lesson is too slow and does not always make appropriate demands on pupils. As a result a significant number of pupils do not develop sufficient mental agility in mathematics and this restricts their progress.
74. Infant pupils successfully count and order numbers to 20 and can accurately count forwards and backwards in 10's to 100. Pupils identify coins accurately and use them to work out their own addition sums. Older pupils learn about the value of tens and units and use their knowledge well to add large numbers with two digits. They develop good strategies for adding nine and 11 to other numbers. As a result of lively, challenging teaching pupils grow in confidence and enjoyment of mathematics during

their lessons. Consequently they make satisfactory progress because they are interested and are keen to please their teachers.

75. Junior pupils correctly identify what sort of sum is required to solve word problems. They try to explain their mathematical thinking, but frequently struggle to express themselves in clear mathematical terms. They learn effectively about the properties of three-dimensional shapes, and how to distinguish between those that are regular and those that are irregular. Pupils look at patterns of numbers to learn times tables but do not always apply themselves to their tasks sufficiently to be able to make appropriate progress. Older pupils recognise simple fractions and their equivalents, although some are still rather unsure about terms such as numerator and denominator. They begin to relate fractions to decimals and percentages but, at this stage of their learning, lack a clear understanding of the relationships. When the pace of lessons is brisk and lively, pupils develop their own strategies to solve number problems and they apply logical thinking enthusiastically. Evidence indicates that they are given a broad range of mathematical experiences covering the full requirements of the National Curriculum. The majority of pupils in the juniors are alert and willing to listen and learn and are making satisfactory progress. However, there is a small but significant number who lose concentration when work is not challenging and this restricts the progress they make.
76. Pupils with special educational needs in the infants make sound progress because they are given appropriately challenging tasks. However, those in the juniors do not always make appropriate progress because tasks are not matched sufficiently well to the targets identified in their individual education plans.
77. Insufficient account is taken of what pupils have learnt before setting new, appropriately challenging work, especially in the juniors. The needs of pupils of different ages and those who learn at different rates in the same set are not always addressed. As a result, the work given to them is too often inappropriate for their maturity and ability, and pupils lose their concentration and interest. In some classes there are small groups of pupils who have unsatisfactory attitudes towards mathematics, and this restricts their attainment and progress. Tests are beginning to be analysed and targets for individual pupils are beginning to be set. Assessment systems in place are very new and have yet to make an impact in raising standards in mathematics.
78. The quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory, and the satisfactory standards now being achieved in the infants reflect good teaching. Teachers now have a satisfactory understanding of mathematics. In the good and very good lessons their enthusiasm infects the pupils and grasps their attention. Lessons are demanding and pupils enjoy rising to the challenge of their work. However, teachers are not always clear about the levels of work that should be expected from their pupils, or what they can achieve. As a result some of the activities lack challenge which restricts pupils' progress. Some lessons lack pace and teachers do not always have high enough expectations. Much of this is due to inexperience as some teachers have only recently qualified and have only been at the school for three weeks. Teachers identify assessment opportunities on lesson plans but do not always use these assessments effectively to plan new work. They are used more effectively in the infants. Teachers' records of what their pupils have done are currently inconsistent and are not yet always passed from class to class to inform the following teacher. The marking of pupils' work varies in quality; some teachers make useful evaluative comments to let pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However,

there are too many instances of unmarked work, or of poor quality work being uncorrected.

79. The new subject leader has been in post for three weeks and has not yet had time to prepare a clear action plan. He is enthusiastic and very keen to raise standards in mathematics as quickly as possible. There is some evidence of mathematics being used in other areas of the curriculum, for example, time lines in history and graphs in science. However, mathematics has not yet been fully integrated into other areas of the curriculum, which limits pupils' understanding of the application of mathematics in other curriculum areas. The use of ICT in mathematics has yet to be fully developed, but there has not been sufficient time to for pupils to use new equipment to support their learning.

SCIENCE

80. In 2000 the results of the national tests for Year 6 pupils were below the national average. However, for those reaching level 5 or above, the school's performance was close to the national average. Since 1998 standards have risen in line with the national trend but not as much, and as a result remain just below the national average. Overall boys' performance has been better than that of the girls. Results of teachers' assessments for Year 2 pupils show their performance to be in line with the national average. Overall, achievement in science is satisfactory and standards observed during the inspection indicate that standards for seven and eleven year olds are just about in line with the national average.
81. The quality of learning in science is satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils make good progress in their understanding of life and living processes. This is achieved by very enthusiastic teaching of the various topics, and by teachers making considerable use of living resources, such as Matilda the bantam chicken, the guinea pig, snails and other creatures. Pupils are also aware that pushes and pulls are types of forces, and that shadows change when light moves, a theme that is further developed later. Pupils make simple observations and record their findings appropriately, for example, having weighed the guinea pig they record that in a week the guinea pig has gained 30 grams. Work is effectively linked to English and mathematics. At present there is limited use of ICT to support the subject, although it is used for recording through graphs and pie charts. In lessons pupils are introduced systematically to scientific vocabulary and are encouraged to use the appropriate words in their discussions.
82. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 begin to understand the importance of fair testing and predictions when conducting a scientific enquiry. They make simple observations and record them on charts or in simple graphs. They develop their knowledge of physical processes appropriately through gaining an understanding of the concept of day and night. An effective practical demonstration, for example using bodies, torches and globes, enabled pupils to understand the main principles the solar system. Pupils make sound progress and by Year 5 they are challenged appropriately to make simple electrical circuits, for example, by designing and making a 'How steady is your hand?' game. The introduction of interesting facts about muscles, such as there are 15 in your face and it takes 200 to make one step, to a class of nine and ten year olds was a great source of amazement. Year 6 pupils study inquiringly about how micro-organisms cause decay, and their learning is supported by a visit from the environmental health officer who talked to the pupils about bacteria.

83. The teaching of science in the school is good and all teaching is satisfactory or better. The good teaching is the main reason why the standards in science are rising. In the best lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge, use questions effectively, pace their lessons well, make good use of resources and have high expectations of the pupils in terms of their behaviour and learning. This enables pupils to work for sustained periods of time and to carry out tests accurately. Homework is used with good effect to consolidate the lesson, and also to give pupils the opportunity for individual research.
84. Most pupils respond positively to their science lessons, listen carefully to their teachers and work well together when required. They are keen to answer questions, which they do confidently but not always using scientific language. There is, however, a small minority of pupils who, in spite of the teachers' efforts, do not behave well, call out during lessons and do not concentrate on their work. Their general lack of appropriate social skills and acceptable levels of good manners is having a negative effect on their learning and placing an unreasonable strain on their teachers. Those pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make satisfactory progress as a result of the support given to them by their class teachers and the teaching assistants.
85. Through the industrious efforts of the subject leader the school has a very effective scheme of work, which ensures the systematic development of skills. All aspects of the National Curriculum for science are successfully taught. The school grounds are used extensively, although the environmental garden with its two ponds is somewhat overgrown and underused. Assessment has been introduced at the end of each unit, but is not being fully used to assist planning. There are adequate resources for science in the school and the subject makes some contribution to the pupils' social development through opportunities to work together and to share resources.

ART AND DESIGN

86. By the time they reach Year 2 pupils attain high standards in art for their age and they make good progress. Pupils in Year 6 achieve very good standards and make very good progress. This is an improvement on the last inspection report when standards were judged to be satisfactory overall, with good progress through the juniors.
87. Evidence from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils in the infants experiment carefully with a variety of media to explore the effects that they can create, for example with oil pastels. They make very good use of sketchbooks to try out ideas, and make observational drawings and portraits of themselves. They learn to use colour effectively through using a range of materials to make bright collage flowers, and they become sensitive to different textures through making bark rubbings. Pupils successfully learn a range of printing techniques and materials; for example, using string and other everyday items to make interesting marks and patterns. In all examples of work it is possible to see that pupils have been encouraged to experiment, so that they develop their ideas very thoroughly before producing the finished piece of work.
88. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are successfully taught to look carefully at the proportions of faces and the human body which results, for example, in well made three-dimensional models. They examine the work of famous artists such as Paul Cézanne and as a result develop a good understanding of how artists compose their work. They are encouraged to develop their own compositions and still life drawings of Victorian

artefacts. Older pupils at the end of the key stage produce some excellent pencil drawings, based on photographs of people in action, which show a good understanding of perspective as well as proportion and movement. High quality learning is seen in powerful drawings of a kick-boxer, and the flowing lines of a graceful dancer show talent and maturity that is exceptional for pupils of this age. Art from other cultures and periods of history is studied and ICT is used in art to create patterns from prints. Work on the Egyptians, for example, inspires a fine, collaboratively produced silk print accompanied by a very good stitched collage. A portfolio of work carried out during the previous year contains work of a similar standard and illustrates the very good development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in art as they progress through the school. Stunning pastel portraits, for example, based on the work of Picasso; observational work on plants developed to very effective collages of flowers and high quality work based on Klimt were on display. Impressive painted portraits based on work in history provides evidence of very good teaching about proportion and the use of paint. It is a very great shame that work of this high quality is in a portfolio and not on display where it can be properly celebrated. Pupils with special educational needs work alongside their classmates and make similar progress.

89. Pupils' work shows great thought and a high level of creativity, and pupils take great pride in their accomplishments. Teachers, who help them to evaluate their work thoughtfully and carefully as it progresses, encourage the level of confidence that pupils develop.
90. The quality of teaching in art is nearly always good. Teachers plan their work thoroughly with the assistance of the co-ordinator who gives good technical advice. As a result, the range of pupils' skills and techniques is built on systematically and developed well. Good direct teaching is followed by practical activities which interest the pupils. However, sometimes insufficient time is given to pupils to develop their own ideas. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching occurs when teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and standards of work are not sufficiently high. The good and effective teaching is a result of the clear leadership from the enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader. Teachers sensibly ask for and use the advice they are given and this in turn enables the subject leader to monitor and have a positive impact on the teaching and standards in art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Standards in design and technology are below those expected at the end of both key stages. This represents a decline since the last inspection when standards were judged to be satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and good by end of Year 6. The reason for this is because the design and evaluation elements of the curriculum are under-developed. There is an over-emphasis on the use of printed instructions for pupils to follow when constructing items, rather than encouraging them to develop their own ideas. They also spend insufficient time in analysing the techniques, materials and finished products that they have made. As a result, pupils do not make the expected progress and their achievement is unsatisfactory.
92. Photographic evidence from the infants, shows pupils holding cars that they have made. They draw and sew simple purses of felt and they make attractive fish mobiles from papier-mâché wrapped balloons. However, they do not make notes about their ideas and there is no evidence that they evaluate the finished product. Pupils in the juniors make toys with moving parts, some of which are finished with care, others show

limited pride in the finished result. Photographs show them making biscuits in food technology with obvious enjoyment. Good health and safety notes are made as well as a very useful and informative visit from the environmental health officer who talked about food hygiene to accompany and support pupils' learning. The finished biscuits are one of the few products to be evaluated and the exercise is carried out well. Pupils make musical instruments, some of which are colourful and effective. However, the designs are drawings with no annotations about methods or materials, and there are no effective or useful evaluations of the work. Throughout the school, pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn why the design and review processes are important. Not enough work uses ideas or methods originating from pupils or developed by them. There are few examples of pupils using skills learnt in literacy or numeracy within design and technology. As a result, much of their work is below the standards expected and their progress is restricted. Pupils with special educational needs work alongside their classmates carrying out the same tasks, and their progress is similarly limited.

93. Pupils are obviously keen and enthusiastic to make products. This is amply demonstrated by the attendance and waiting list for pupils joining the Young Engineers' Club. However, although pupils at the club make exciting and very successful items, such as an award-winning battery-driven go-kart, the club clearly has to have a restricted number of pupils and they too use others designs, such as those downloaded from the internet rather than creating their own. The club illustrates some of the missed opportunities to develop design and technology throughout the school by harnessing the pupils' enthusiasm and creativity.
94. There were insufficient opportunities to make a firm judgement on the quality of teaching during the inspection. That seen was satisfactory. However, a scrutiny of work, photographic evidence and talking to pupils during the lessons indicates that teachers are not sufficiently aware of the importance of the design and evaluation elements. The subject leader is very enthusiastic and has been the driving force behind the very successful Young Engineers' club. The club has a high profile, both within and outside the school, with many successful entries to competitions. The subject leader is aware of the shortcomings within the subject, for example the lack of use of ICT, and has both the will and the expertise to address them in the future.

GEOGRAPHY

95. During the inspection, because of timetable arrangements, it was only possible to observe two short geography lessons. Judgements upon the quality of provision, standards and progress are based on an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator. Evidence from this inspection indicates that the overall standards of work in geography are satisfactory in the infants but below national expectations in the juniors. Overall progress is unsatisfactory. Only a limited amount of work was available from pupils and, although in discussion with Year 6 pupils it was possible to learn what had been studied, their knowledge of the various topics lacked depth and understanding. They talked enthusiastically about the field trip but only in general terms.
96. From an early age pupils are introduced to maps and begin to develop mapping skills, for example, drawing a map to show their journey to school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 begin to show an awareness of their local area and visit the seaside as a contrasting area. They successfully compare life in India to that at home. By considering and debating the effects of the new by-pass, pupils in Year 3 begin to understand the

effects of man upon the environment, for example how local walks have been restricted. The local rivers such as the Cuckmere, give the opportunity for pupils to make a river study, which they also link in with their science. Although pupils have studied life in other countries such as Africa and India their recall was limited and their knowledge variable. There is little opportunity for individual work or initiative as much is done on work sheets. Good use is made of ICT to represent statistical data, for example, when preparing graphs and pie charts for recording investigations, such as a traffic survey, but the use of computers for research is limited.

97. The subject leader has only been in post since September but has already prepared a policy and re-drafted the scheme of work, which is based on the Qualification and Curriculum Authorities scheme, and has adapted it to the needs of the school. It is too early to assess its impact on pupils' learning and on standards.

HISTORY

98. By Year 2 pupils' attainment in history is broadly in line with the expectations for their age, but by Year 6 it is above. In the infants pupils make satisfactory progress. They develop an awareness of chronology; for example, through their studies of toys from the past and present, pupils recognise the differences between old and new. Pupils were surprised that children in the past actually played with some of these toys because they lacked the sophistication of modern ones. Good links are made with science when learning about Louis Braille and the importance of touch. Year 2 observe the different aspects of the sea-side holiday 50 and 100 years ago through the use of a video. Skilful questioning and the use of modern technology by the teacher ensures that pupils are well aware of the differences compared with today. As a result pupils came up with interesting comments such as, 'Why did people dress up to go the seaside?'
99. In their studies of children in World War 2, pupils in the juniors begin to empathise with evacuee children. The teacher's use of a television programme, to support learning, and closely linked to their English studies, helps pupils to understand the difficulties experienced by children in 1940. Through the study of invaders and settlers, pupils in Year 4 begin to make connections between history and geography and to be aware of why people live where they do. In Year 5 pupils are amazed that the 'Two Nations Speech' although over a 100 years old is still used today. In these lessons pupils' learning is further enhanced by the study of Victorian photographs and in particular by the fascinating display of Victorian artefacts. This opportunity provided by teachers for 'hands on' experiences brings the subject to life for the pupils. In Year 6, their study of Great Britain since 1948 gives pupils a chance to question first-hand their grandparents, and maybe their teacher, as to what it was like to live during those times. Consequently pupils are quick to learn what is meant by primary and secondary evidence. The visit of a local police officer, who fascinated pupils with an interesting talk upon the role of women in the police force and how it has changed over the years, further enhances their learning. Pupils show interest in their learning and discuss differences between the past and present, expressing opinions about events. As a result their levels of achievement are above average by the end of Year 6.
100. Throughout the school, pupils' response to history is very good. Much of this is due to the enthusiastic way the teachers deliver the topics. Pupils take a pride in what they know and have found out, and are always eager to show and discuss the work they have done. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an

additional language make satisfactory progress with the good support provided by the teaching assistants.

101. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the subject is good. Lessons are effectively planned and the objectives are shared with the pupils. Good questioning gives pupils the chance to think for themselves as well as sharing what they know and understand. The good relationships that exist between the teachers and the pupils ensure that the pupils experience a positive learning environment in which they are able to flourish. Teachers use assistants well, and through their expertise they play an important part in ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met. Regular homework helps pupils develop their independent and research skills.
102. Management and leadership of the subject are good. Clear priorities and curricular guidelines have been firmly established. The scheme of work is comprehensive, providing good support for the non-specialist teacher. ICT is being used in videos, word processing and for research through the internet. The subject is well resourced and particularly benefits from the high quality of the displays for the various topics. Visiting speakers and visits to places of interest, such as Anne of Cleves' house, all increase the awareness and importance of history to the pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. The previous inspection identified as a key issue raising attainment and progress in ICT, particularly in the juniors, by improving teacher expertise and by ensuring that hardware and software meet the needs of the modern curriculum. The school produced a detailed action plan in response to these recommendations, with clear and challenging targets to address the issue. However, planned provision of an ICT suite and access to the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) meant that training was delayed, through circumstances beyond the school's control. Funding allocated was carried forward, and the suite, expected in September 2000 was finally achieved in September 2001, with NOF training due to start in November 2001.
104. The suite is already in extensive use, although there are still technical problems to be ironed out. The part-time technician provides invaluable help for teachers, and in supporting pupils in lessons. The excitement and enthusiasm with which teachers have embraced the new opportunities it provides, and their willingness to implement improvements, are having a positive impact on the quality of learning and pupils' progress. ICT is beginning to be used well to support learning in subjects across the curriculum, such as word-processing in English, data handling in mathematics, graphics in art and design, and research in history. A digital camera is used extensively to record pupils' work in a number of different activities. However, whilst standards are average by the end of Year 2, they are below average by the age of eleven. Consequently these pupils' level of achievement is unsatisfactory at present, although their learning is now satisfactory. Realistically it will take at least two years before overall attainment can be expected to reach expected standards for the oldest pupils.
105. All pupils have equal opportunity to use computers and are fully included in lessons. They greet their lessons in the suite with enthusiasm, and most behave sensibly and responsibly. Less able pupils are supported well by teachers, classroom assistants and their more competent peers during lessons. Teaching is good in the infant classes and sound in the juniors. Most teachers use the suite with half a class at a time, which enables pupils effectively to work individually and make satisfactory progress at the set

task. In Year 1, for example, pupils experiment enthusiastically with the functions of a graphics program to produce self-portraits. They discover new effects as they experiment, and teachers make good use of these discoveries to advance the learning of the whole group. Unfortunately the facility to show individual work on each computer screen is not working, as this would improve teachers' ability to share individual achievements with all pupils. Pupils in Year 2 are also investigating the same graphics program, drawing plates of food in connection with their science work. The quality of learning improved significantly between one session and the next, as the teacher split her class for the second session, enabling them to work independently. Pupils log on, load and save their work, and manage the mouse competently, but their keyboard skills are slow.

106. Most pupils in the junior classes are developing their word-processing skills, but overall their familiarity with the keyboard and functions of the program in use are below expectations for their age. Through careful teaching and improved access to appropriate hardware, however, these skills are progressing steadily. In Year 3, for example, pupils change font style, size and colour when designing posters. They understand the value of impact in creating an eye-catching effect, and of word-processing to create a neat finished product. The teacher, however, missed the opportunity to link this work to their current history topic. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 are at a similar level in their skills of cutting, pasting and editing on screen in connection with their literacy work. Teachers make good use of research on the internet to support pupils' learning. In Year 4, for example, the classroom computer is used well to help pupils research alliterative and rhyming words as they write poems. In Year 6, pupils investigate paintings of Romeo and Juliet by famous artists, in connection with their literacy lessons. They need considerable help, however, in copying them and writing their own captions. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one session, as the teacher was slow to provide appropriate help for pupils.

107. Co-ordination of work in ICT is at an early stage of development. Two subject leaders share the responsibility and are determined to ensure the new facilities are used to maximum effect. An appropriate scheme of work is firmly in place, and teachers in parallel classes plan closely together to ensure pupils have similar experiences. Monitoring and assessment of pupils' achievements and progress, however, are still at the planning stage, and the school does not maximise on the opportunities provided by around three-quarters of pupils having access to computers at home. The school is aware that additional equipment is needed to monitor and sense physical data, and that the ventilation in the suite is inadequate.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

108. French lessons take place in Years 5 and 6. The specialist teacher has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the language and the country, which he shares effectively with pupils. Teaching is always good and often very good; lessons are lively and interesting. Pupils look forward eagerly to them and they make sound progress. The teacher's accent provides an excellent role model for pupils. He places a high emphasis on correct pronunciation and encourages pupils to emulate this with extensive praise. He conducts lessons, particularly for the older pupils, as much as possible in French. As a result, the quality of spoken French is good for the majority of pupils, although at this stage in the term, they are only using single words and short phrases. In Year 5, pupils pronounce the letters of the alphabet correctly, through effective rhymes with towns and cities in France. Year 6 pupils already have a reasonable vocabulary, and state their names, ages and subject preferences in

correct, short sentences. All pupils are encouraged sympathetically to take part in the lesson, and the teacher ensures that everyone 'has a go' in both individual and choral speaking.

109. Examination of work achieved by Year 6 pupils last year shows appropriate attention to reading and writing French, with, for example, paragraphs describing 'Ma famille et moi' and an extensive written vocabulary covering a wide range of topics, such as the weather, colours and parts of the body. Although new to the school, the current teacher is following the detailed scheme of work provided by the previous teacher, and his expertise should ensure standards that are appropriate for pupils' ages by the end of the academic year.
110. The diary of a residential visit to France, by Year 6 pupils in June 2000, provides a lively and evocative account of their experiences in words and photographs, making a positive contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Pupils corresponded with pen-pals of the same age in the town, which is twinned with Polegate, and made friends with them during their visit. Their visit to the nursery school, for example, and joint activities such as football matches, were valuable in developing their social and cultural understanding. The new teacher is hopeful that this exciting, additional dimension to French teaching in the school will continue.

MUSIC

111. Standards in music by the end of both key stages are average. Whilst pupils' levels of attainment meet expectations, their progress is good in the infants but erratic in the juniors. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to listen carefully. They know the sounds made by different instruments and can locate where different sounds come from. They can recognise differences in pitch and tempo in a simple series of notes, and in different musical compositions. In Year 1, for example, pupils read cards with 'fast' or 'slow' written on them and then play an untuned instrument accordingly. In Year 2, pupils can sing a series of notes successfully after listening to their teacher. They make good progress and begin to sing songs, such as 'I Hear Thunder', in two parts confidently. They enjoy joining in songs when they recognise the shape of the melody. In the juniors pupils continue to develop their listening skills. In Year 4, for example, they use the words of poems, together with a simple tune, to sing in three or more parts, whilst clapping and using their voices in different ways to keep the rhythm. They know and can explain the meaning of terminology, such as 'dynamics', 'timbre' and 'texture', which shows good levels of achievement. By the time they reach Year 6 they use several untuned instruments, using different beats simultaneously to maintain the rhythm of different tunes, and they are aware of different styles of music from various cultures, such as Caribbean music. The composition aspect of pupils' work is less successful and progress is uneven, with older pupils often doing work at a similar level to the younger ones. Pupils learning English as an additional language, traveller pupils and those with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons.
112. In general, pupils respond well to music. However, there are a few pupils in some classes, especially the older pupils, who try to disrupt proceedings. There is a successful choir and the school is fully involved in some local initiatives such as a carol concert, and music festivals where the school has links with France through the 'One Hundred Belfrey's' concert. All pupils have the opportunity to learn the recorder in Year 2. It is then taught as an extra curricular activity in the juniors for pupils wishing to continue learning to play. There is also an opportunity for pupils who wish to, and have the aptitude for, to learn to play the violin or clarinet.

113. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The number of lessons observed was small and whilst one unsatisfactory lesson was observed all others were good. Teachers plan their work carefully. They use a commercial scheme, but this does not always provide enough support for those teachers whose expertise is limited. The school is sensibly using the expertise of its subject leaders to do some specialist teaching, especially in the juniors. As this becomes firmly embedded, progression at this key stage is likely to become more secure. There is a new policy for music which includes a clear action plan, highlighting the involvement of music within the life of the school, but it does not include enough direction for its development though the key stages. At present, assessment procedures lack clear guidance on how to track the development of pupils' skills and are too dependent on individual teachers, some of whom have limited expertise.

114. Resources for music are good. There is a wide range of tuned and untuned instruments, videos, tapes and CDs, which are readily accessible and frequently used in lessons. Music is used effectively to forge links with other local schools and with local and wider communities, for example the links with France.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. By the ends of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils achieve standards similar to those found in most other schools. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. They are introduced to gymnastics, dance, games and swimming in reception and in Years 1 and 2. When pupils move into Year 3 they are introduced to athletics and adventure activities. In Years 3 and 4 the adventure activities are centred on orienteering, whilst in Years 5 and 6 pupils enjoy visits to residential centres, where in addition to new experiences of a physical nature, such as rock climbing, their personal development is also enhanced.

116. In their physical education lessons pupils use their bodies to good effect in controlled movements. They put movements together into sequences, for example, in dance in Year 6, pupils put together a short piece to illustrate conflict and tension, inspired by their study of 'Romeo and Juliet' in English, and 'West Side Story'. From an early age pupils are taught to throw and catch with growing accuracy, as was seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils showed improving hand/eye co-ordination as they progressed from beanbags to balls. These skills form a useful basis in the development of their netball and football skills as they get older. Pupils set up and put away small and large apparatus safely and efficiently. By the time the pupils leave the school, over 95 per cent swim in excess of 25 metres. Matches in football and netball are played against local schools, which supports and enhances the learning of games skills. Pupils also take part in various football and rugby festivals, and swimming galas with some success.

117. Pupils generally have good attitudes to their learning and enjoy physical activities. Most work well together in small groups and individually. They are pleased with the improvements in their performance and learn readily from each other. Self-evaluation of performances plays an important part in physical education at Key Stage 2. Teachers are beginning to use the video camera effectively to help pupils evaluate their performances. All pupils and most teachers wear appropriate clothing for physical education. Teachers continually emphasise the importance of warm up and cool down activities during exercise. Other aspects of safety, such as the danger of wearing jewellery when taking part in physical activity, are being addressed.

118. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory with the majority being good. Lessons are well-constructed in gymnastics and dance, and include warm up and cool down elements. Teachers use pupils to demonstrate good practice, whilst affording the opportunity for self-evaluation and critical analysis by the rest of the class. The good relationships that exist promote the pupils' self-confidence. In the good lessons there is a balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to practise and explore movements. The pace of lessons is brisk and the control and management of pupils is overall good, and any disruption is dealt with firmly and fairly.
119. A well-qualified physical education specialist leads the subject well. A complete scheme of work and the clear and concise policy ensure that pupils are taught the knowledge, skills and understanding systematically through the various activities. There is an extensive provision of extra curricular activities in physical education, with after school clubs for netball, football, basketball, karate, stool ball, rounders, cricket and swimming. These clubs are open to all pupils, with boys and girls competing equally with each other for places in the football, netball and swimming teams. There are adequate resources to support the teaching of all aspects of the subject and the hall, grass area, together with the covered swimming pool, provide satisfactory accommodation for indoor and outdoor games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. Standards at the ages of seven and eleven are broadly in line with what is expected by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. The school has increased the amount of lesson time allocated to religious education and so has made satisfactory improvements. Pupils' achievements are particularly well supported by opportunities to handle and look at an exciting range of good quality resources.
121. In the infants, pupils effectively learn about the traditions that occur when living in a group, for example, when 'honey apples' are used to illustrate an aspect of the Jewish faith. In Year 2 they make sound progress when they learn about the rules of the Jewish faith. Pupils compare these rules effectively with the Ten Commandments and the rules that govern their lives. They then successfully write some school rules based on their learning from different faiths. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn about the Christian faith through an appreciation of familiar Bible stories, such as the Good Samaritan. Older pupils in the juniors become increasingly aware of the important aspects of the Muslim faith and show respect by washing their hands before touching copies of the Qur'an and learning to read it. They discuss their own feelings and those of Mohammad. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and learn to respect the beliefs of others. By the time they leave school, pupils have a wide knowledge of their own and other faiths.
122. Pupils, in general, respond well to their lessons. They are excited when the teachers use a wide range of resources effectively to illustrate their work. Pupils of all ages gain confidence when putting forward their own ideas. The quality of teaching and learning is good. All lessons include a good balance of teacher talk and pupil activity. Teachers plan exciting ways to gain pupils' attention from the start of each lesson. Teachers work hard to provide well-organised opportunities for pupils and show respect for other religions. Good teaching, both in lessons and in assemblies, gives pupils time to reflect and extend their learning.

123. Subject leadership has recently been taken over by the headteacher who has expertise in this area of the curriculum. The school has identified some lack of confidence in teaching the subject. A good programme of 'teacher training' has been started, so that all teachers work alongside the headteacher for half a term. Very good displays throughout the school enhance pupils' interest and, through that, the quality of their learning. The spiritual aspects of religious education are successfully enhanced through extra-curricular activities; for example, there is a lunchtime school club, Jesus and Me (JAM), open to all Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. This is exceptionally well organised by a local Christian group and pupils become fully involved and enjoy their activities.