

## INSPECTION REPORT

**St Mark's CE Primary School**

Uckfield

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114552

Headteacher: Ms Verity Poole

Reporting inspector: Mike Chislett  
12108

Dates of inspection: 13-16 November 2000

Inspection number: 225028

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Lane  
Hadlow Down  
Uckfield  
East Sussex

Postcode: TN22 4HY

Telephone number: 01825 830375

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Ann Yarrow

Date of previous inspection: 25-28 November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mike Chislett (12108)	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Design and Technology, Information and Communication Technology Art Physical Education Special Education Needs U5s	Results and achievement Teaching Management and Efficiency Attitudes, Values and Personal Development
Susan Stock (9147)	Lay inspector		The school's Links with the Community Provision for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Pupils' Support and Guidance Partnership with Parents
Natalie Moss (22685)	Team inspector	English History Geography Music French Equal Opportunities	Learning Opportunities Assessment

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mark's is a small primary school serving the village of Hadlow Down and the area around. There are 48 pupils on roll, the youngest four of whom were attending part-time during the period of the inspection. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups. Pupils enter the school with a range of attainment which, overall, is about average. There are 13 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, a proportion that is above the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very low and below the national average.

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

The school is effective in most areas of its work owing to the very effective leadership of the headteacher. Behaviour is excellent and, by the time they leave the school, pupils attain well in mathematics and science. However, standards in writing and in information and communication technology are not as high as they should be. Good self-evaluation has led to stringent target setting that is having a positive impact on school improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The leadership of the school ensures a clear educational direction. The quality of self-evaluation is good
- Children in the Foundation Stage receive a very good beginning to their education
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent
- The school cares well for its pupils, procedures for promoting pupils' personal development are very good
- Parents are involved well in the life of the school and are provided with good quality information
- Pupils achieve above average standards in history, music and physical education (PE) across the school and in design technology at Key Stage 2

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

- Standards in writing are not high enough at both key stages
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below those expected nationally at both key stages

*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 previously inspected in 1996. The few key issues were straightforward to address. The school has undergone a complete change of teaching staff in the past two years. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved in English and science since the last inspection and most significantly in mathematics. Standards in Key Stage 1 declined until last year, but inspection evidence shows that they are now improving. The proportion of good quality teaching identified in the last inspection has been increased. Systems for school improvement planning have been put into place and the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is now regular.

## STANDARDS

Most year groups at St. Mark's CE are too small for National Curriculum test results to provide a reliable indication of standards. Inspection evidence indicates that at present standards in mathematics, science and most aspects of English are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. The ten pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 attained standards in mathematics and science that compare favourably with those nationally. The comparison with schools that had similar Key Stage 1 attainment in 1996, indicates that the pupils concerned made very good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in science during that period.

Some improvement has taken place in English standards overall, but these have failed to keep pace with improvements made nationally. The core of this under-achievement lies in weaknesses in writing throughout both Key Stages. The school had identified this through its own analysis last year and has set stringent targets for improvement in literacy. Targets have also been set to sustain the good attainment in numeracy. Inspection evidence indicates that by the time they are eleven, the majority of pupils are likely to achieve these targets.

Standards in the remaining subjects are mostly as expected. They exceed the expected levels in physical education, history and music at both key stages and in design technology at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in ICT are lower than they should be. By the time children in the Foundation Stage reach statutory school age, they are working at or beyond the appropriate levels in all areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is excellent, in classrooms and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and the quality of relationships between all pupils and adults in the school are good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Measures have been taken to reduce unauthorised absence.

Pupils' positive attitudes and excellent behaviour are a significant strength of the school. The inspection team took account of parental views in considering the quality of relationships and found them to be good, between all members of the school community.

Pupils are keen to come to school. The small amount of unauthorised absence has been reduced by prompt follow-up of pupil non-attendance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons. During the inspection it was good in 39% and very good or excellent in a further 39%.

Teaching in English and mathematics is mainly good and often very good. A remaining weakness in English is the teachers' low expectation of pupils' technical skills and effort. Teacher's knowledge of the full range of ICT is weak, but other subjects are taught well. With these exceptions the needs of all pupils are met. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well since work is well matched to their needs. Support staff make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum covers all required areas except information and communication technology (ICT). ICT does not yet contribute sufficiently to other subjects. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities throughout the year.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good and is exceptionally well managed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall good: provision for moral and social development is very good; spiritual development is good; Cultural development is satisfactory, more could be done to develop pupils' awareness of Britain as a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well supported. Academic assessment is good while strategies for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective.

Parents remain cautious about the permanence of recent improvements in pupils' attainment and progress. The school works hard to ensure good links with parents and it is successful in this.

Within an otherwise broad and balanced curriculum the development of literacy is much weaker than it should be. The requirements for ICT are not yet fulfilled.

The school ensures that, overall, it offers its pupils a high standard of care that contributes strongly to their good behaviour and continued progress.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very effective leadership and a clear vision for the school's improvement. She is supported well by the deputy. In the absence of a permanent staff team the headteacher carries too large a load.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities, other than ICT. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Led by the headteacher, the school has established a clear view of areas requiring improvement and is taking appropriate action.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used efficiently, especially those relating to special educational needs.

The headteacher's leadership is effective in enabling the school to improve.

Resources are satisfactory overall. However, there are weaknesses in the use of information technology within the curriculum that adversely affects standards across the school. The accommodation is inadequate overall and the building programme seeks to address this. Levels of teaching and support staff are good, although a full permanent team has yet to be established. The cost effectiveness of all projects is carefully considered.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children enjoy coming to school and that behaviour in the school is good.</li><li>• That the school is well led and that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li><li>• That the school expects their children to work hard and contributes well to their personal development.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children make better progress and that they should receive information about that progress.</li><li>• That the amount of homework should be kept under review and homework followed up in school</li><li>• That the school should work more closely with its parents.</li></ul>

The findings of the inspection agree with the parents' positive views. During the inspection parents were questioned in some depth about the less positive views and concerns expressed through the Parents' Questionnaire and some additional comments on the backs of these. The inspection team agrees with parents that there has been considerable improvement in these areas due to the hard work of the headteacher, the more established systems now in place and the more settled staffing structure. The view expressed by some parents that the school should work more closely with them related to uncertainties over staffing during the term prior to the inspection. Inspection findings are that the school does work closely with parents. Homework is kept under review and followed up in school. The inspection found that there is still some concern over the pupils' progress, particularly in English and that the pupils' annual reports are not clear enough about pupils' strengths and weaknesses and what they must do to improve.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The small sizes of year groups at the end of each key stage means that statistical analyses of their results must be undertaken cautiously. The inspection team looked at the trends of results in English, mathematics and science over three years to make more reliable comparisons. In addition an analysis was made of the progress of individual pupils and these were set alongside the lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work in order to support judgements.
2. The evidence indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 1 fell steadily over the four years to 2000. In that year there were very few pupils taking the national tests, so the results are heavily dependent on individual variation between pupils. In Key Stage 2, meanwhile, the school sustained good standards in mathematics and science and these compared favourably with those nationally. In particular, the results in 2000 compare well against schools that had reported similar Key Stage 1 attainment in 1996. This indicates that the pupils concerned made very good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in science while in Key Stage 2.
3. The effective leadership and generally good quality teaching across the school as a whole indicate that the present cohorts of pupils are likely to attain standards in these two subjects at least in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages.
4. Some improvement has taken place in overall English standards at Key Stage 2 over the same period, but these have failed to keep pace with improvements made nationally. The inspection team found ample evidence that the core of this under-achievement lies in weaknesses in writing throughout both Key Stages. The school identified this through its own analysis last year and has set stringent targets for improvement in literacy.
5. The school's baseline assessments indicate that pupils enter the Foundation Stage with average levels of attainment in the areas of language and literacy. Children enter Year 1 having made good progress in this area. They continue to make satisfactory progress in reading, speaking and listening. Overall, inspection evidence indicates that by the time they are seven, the current group of Year 2 pupils will attain national expectations in English overall, but that sufficient improvement in writing is not yet secured.
6. Pupils' skills of reading and speaking and listening improve steadily in Key Stage 2 and the overall levels of attainment in English reflect relative strengths in these areas. Progress in writing remains unsatisfactory however and weakens the subject as a whole. With some exceptions pupils' writing lacks sufficient technical accuracy and this limits their ability to express their ideas with sufficient depth.
7. At present, standards in mathematics and science are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Until recently, progress in these subjects has been faster in Key Stage 2. This has resulted in test scores in mathematics above those expected nationally by the end of the key stage. Pupils' numeracy skills develop well and good opportunities are provided for their application in subjects such as science and geography.
8. Standards in the other subjects of the national curriculum are generally in line with those expected. There are some exceptions. Standards in ICT fall below because the full range of the subject is not taught and because ICT is not used enough to support other areas of learning. Standards in music history and physical education, particularly gymnastics, are above those expected at both key stages. Pupils attain standards in design technology above those expected by the end of Year 6.

9. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in all areas of the curriculum.

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

10. Almost all parents who responded through the questionnaire and the meeting expressed the view that pupils' behaviour was good and that the school was successful in promoting this. It was good at the time of the previous inspection.
11. This inspection found that pupils' behaviour is excellent in and out of lessons at all key stages, for example in assemblies and during lunch and breaks. Relationships between pupils are universally good. Very good relationships and mutual respect characterise the exchanges between teachers, support staff and pupils. Pupils are further encouraged through regular recognition of good behaviour and a school framework that sets clear expectations. This has a positive impact on their attainment and progress.
12. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and keen to discuss the reasons why they like it. They are supportive of each other and demonstrate an increasing understanding of the impact that their own behaviour can have on others. They are responsive and thoughtful towards visitors and display very positive attitudes to their learning in lessons. In a particularly high quality PE lesson, year 4 and 5 pupils were highly tuned to each other's intentions and actions. This resulted in exceptional individual and group performance. A high quality "circle-time" lesson was observed and this enabled older pupils to share feelings about each others' strengths in a supportive environment. Pupils are responsive towards visitors and their public and private self-confidence develops strongly through the opportunities provided by the school. Personal development is further promoted through the provision of high quality assemblies that enable pupils to consider their behaviour in relation to the wider world.
13. Some parents expressed reservations about relationships in one class. Inspection evidence was to the contrary, that relationships were supportive and productive of good quality learning and that pupils and teachers listened and responded sensitively to each others' views.
14. Attendance is good and levels of absence are low. Unauthorised absence ran ahead of the national average last year and the school has tightened up procedures to check on missing pupils. This has had a positive impact and unauthorised absence is now minimal. There have been no exclusions.

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

15. Teaching is good overall, with two fifths being very good or excellent. This is a higher proportion than at the time of the previous inspection. Although teaching is good overall in every key stage, it is consistently better with the oldest and youngest pupils. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. The early teaching of literacy is good. Young pupils are introduced to print and text and encouraged to hear and discriminate letter sounds that they later use in their writing.
16. Although reading and comprehension skills are taught well in English in key stages 1 and 2, the teaching of writing has been less successful. An examination of pupils' previous and present work shows that this situation is now improving. The teaching of writing remains weaker than the other aspects of English as teachers' expectations of technical accuracy and pupils' effort are sometimes too low. This limits pupils' own expectations and therefore reduces what could be achieved.

17. Mathematics and science are taught well. Numeracy skills are introduced successfully through the numeracy hour and good opportunities to apply them are taken in other subjects. This does not yet apply to the skills of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Teachers do not teach the full range of the subject nor, with honourable exceptions, is ICT exploited nearly enough to extend work in other subjects. This has a detrimental effect on progress.
18. With these exceptions, teaching meets the needs of all the pupils in the school, including those of higher attainment. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from teaching that is very well targeted to their individual plans. Teachers plan and organise successfully to teach classes of mixed age and varied prior attainment.
19. Across the full range of the curriculum, teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to teach foundation subjects well. This has a positive effect on learning and was particularly evident during the inspection in the high quality lessons seen in physical education, in the interest and range of work in history and in the quality of pupils' work that had resulted in design technology.
20. Teaching in the school is underpinned by thorough curriculum planning. This identifies links between subjects that are effective in deepening understanding and interest. Good examples of this are the use of ICT to design Tudor knot gardens, or the emails received through a time warp from Sir Francis Drake. Overall, the progression of pupils' writing and ICT skills is not identified and developed sufficiently across the curriculum. Suitable policies support the teaching of all subjects. This is an improvement on the position noted in the last inspection report, although several of these are in need of review to incorporate recent changes in the National Curriculum
21. Teachers show very good knowledge of the progress of individual pupils. Good use is made of skilful questioning in most classes to assess what pupils know and to identify the gaps in understanding. In the class with the youngest children, good quality written comment by teachers gives specific praise and clear direction for pupils' next steps. This is often linked to the individual learning targets agreed with the pupils. Although individual target setting is now established across the school, written feedback of the same quality is not.
22. The pace of learning in most lessons is good. Teachers make most lessons interesting and set questions and challenges that ensure that pupils think. In a minority of lessons the pace of pupils' thinking is too leisurely. This is particularly the case for some groups when writing, but slow pace was also a weaker aspect of some otherwise satisfactory lessons. In these instances not enough challenge was given to pupils when introducing mathematics or when reviewing history.
23. Learning resources are generally sufficient, although the new equipment and cabling for ICT has arrived too recently to make much impact so far. Physical education is carefully managed to overcome the limitations imposed by the accommodation. Support staff make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning, often participating in very good teaching.

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

24. The curriculum for children under five is good. The Foundation Stage teachers plan a suitably challenging curriculum, which closely follows the nationally recommended early learning goals for this stage. There are good opportunities for children to choose their own activities and to engage in self-directed structured play. There are strong curriculum links between the school and the local nurseries which children attend before they enter the school. These ensure that children move as smoothly as possible from one place of learning to another.
25. The curriculum for both Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils is satisfactory overall. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements except in ICT. The needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are met. Religious education follows the Diocesan Agreed Syllabus.

26. Teachers' planning of the curriculum is effective and takes full account of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy strategies. Good opportunities are planned for the development of numeracy and, in some cases, literacy skills in some other subjects. There are too few opportunities planned for sustained writing across the whole curriculum. With few exceptions, ICT is not yet exploited to extend learning in other subjects, as it should be.
27. Parents feel that the school strives hard to ensure that all pupils have good access to the curriculum. The inspection found this to be so. This access is supported well by the school's equal opportunities policy and the effective practices for pupils identified as having special educational needs.
28. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their social and creative skills through extra-curricular activities. Many of these draw effectively on opportunities available through the local community, including the Village Schools Association (VSA). The VSA organises curricular and sporting activities involving a group of schools. The school organises a residential visit for Year 6 pupils at Seven Sisters' County Park during which they canoe and cycle. The football, gardening, art and recorder clubs for older pupils are popular. Parents provide very good support to these. Visits to places of local interest, such as Hever Castle, make an important contribution to the curriculum, particularly in geography, history and science. Pupils' learning is further enriched through their participation in the school choir and in various local events.
29. The provision for pupils' personal education is very good. Pupils of all ages are well informed about issues relating to their health, safety and well being. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss their concerns, or simply share their thoughts and observations through 'Circle Time'. In some religious education lessons and assemblies, pupils reflect on themselves and their part in the school community. Very good relationships exist between teachers and pupils. These help to ensure that pupils recognise that they are valued and that their problems will be listened to and helped.
30. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school has maintained the strengths in its provision for the pupils' spiritual, social and moral development noted in the last inspection and has improved its provision for cultural development.
31. The good provision for pupils' spiritual development is enhanced by very good opportunities for reflection, provided through assemblies and sometimes in lessons. Since such opportunities are not identified routinely in teachers' planning some are lost. Assemblies are effective in enabling pupils to begin considering a variety of issues in depth. Focus is assisted through the 'Thought for the Week' and 'Target for the Week' which relate to each other. Pupils are encouraged to express their thoughts and reflections by placing private notes on a notice board, writing prayers for the 'Prayer Tree' and responding to a painting displayed in the hall.
32. When spiritual development is part of the pupils' learning it makes a significant contribution. A good example of this was in Class 1 when pupils made comparisons between Noah's Flood and the recent flooding of the town of Uckfield. Here, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the flood's impact and to empathise with local people, at the same time expressing wonder at the power of the natural world.
33. Provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. The adults in the school provide good role models. Pupils are treated with respect and care, encouraging trust and good relationships. Pupils contributed to the school's Code of Conduct and feel ownership of it. The well planned Personal, Social and Health Education programme makes a very good contribution to the pupils' understanding of moral issues, for example, when discussing relationships, bullying, rights and responsibilities. The pupils understanding of moral issues in the wider community is fostered through their support of a wide variety of charities, for example, the NSPCC, the Blue Peter Appeal and the Poppy Day Appeal.

34. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils know each other very well and are encouraged to take appropriate responsibility. This is illustrated by the way in which the younger pupils happily approach the older pupils during break and lunch times and the pleasure all pupils demonstrate at the achievements of their fellow pupils. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, beginning in the Foundation Stage with the agreeing of personal targets. Older pupils, in an outstanding physical education lesson, were expected to carry their learning forward with minimum teacher intervention. In this lesson an emphasis on self-discipline and self-evaluation made a very good contribution to pupils' social maturity.
35. The school assists the social development of pupils by encouraging them to think about relevant issues such as responsibility for themselves and their role in and contribution to the wider community. The pupils have opportunities to apply this when they are involved in such activities as the Uckfield Festival, local fêtes and celebrations.
36. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The school has improved its provision since the previous inspection. Western culture is introduced to the pupils through the music used in assemblies and through other work. For example in a Year 3 art lesson pupils used their knowledge of Roman mosaics to create their own; in a Year 6 French lesson pupils were introduced to French culture via the language. Visitors to the school, such as an African Drumming workshop and representatives from other faiths offer a wider cultural perspective. However the school could do more to promote pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of modern society.
37. Resources for religious education have been strengthened to give pupils the opportunity to study comparative religions of Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. The head teacher is aware that there is still more to do to improve this area of its work and cultural and multi-cultural education is part of the current school improvement plan.

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

38. The school has recently established new procedures for supporting and promoting pupils' attainment and progress. These are effective in raising achievement and improve on those reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' academic and personal development is closely tracked throughout their time in school, beginning with initial assessments made on entry. This information is used well for the purpose of analysing whole school results and for setting termly and shorter-term targets for pupils' next steps. Classroom teachers keep assessment records for each pupil and these are generally used well to guide subsequent planning. In English and mathematics, schemes of work have clear curricular objectives linked to targets for each pupil and progress towards these is effectively tracked.
39. Lesson plans identify opportunities for assessment and teachers use questions well to gain understanding of what the pupils know and can do. In the main, pupils receive good quality feedback about their work from teachers. Other than with the youngest children, this is not always recorded in marking so that pupils are not all as clear as they should be about the improvements they should make.
40. The school has maintained the good levels of support for pupil's welfare and safety reported in the previous inspection. It has dealt successfully with the key issue with regard to health and safety. The policy is now reviewed regularly and is given the full attention of the Governing Body.
41. The head teacher is the Child Protection Liaison Officer and ensures that staff are aware of appropriate guidelines and procedures. There are good day to day welfare routines and pupils are well cared for in a safe environment. The pupils' attendance and punctuality are promoted and monitored effectively. Parents and pupils receive clear messages about the importance of regular, punctual attendance, which has already had an impact by reducing the level of unauthorised absences.

42. The school has very effective procedures for promoting and monitoring pupils' behaviour. The emphasis is on community behaviour that benefits all as well as individual accolades for effort, contribution and good work. Parents are very appreciative of this aspect of the school's work. On the very few occasions when behaviour is less satisfactory the school supports the individual concerned and involves parents fully. The consistent approach by the adults in the school in implementing the school's behaviour policy makes a very good contribution to its overall success.
43. Pupils' personal development is supported successfully at all ages through a well-planned programme. Pupils benefit very much from the strong moral ethos which pervades the school and which creates a very friendly, calm atmosphere. They reciprocate by involving themselves in many activities both in and out of school. Parents are very appreciative of the opportunities the school provides to encourage their children to mature socially.

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

44. Overall the school has maintained the satisfactory views of its parents since the previous inspection. The school has been quite unsettled recently and has gone through a period of considerable change. Views expressed through the parents' questionnaire and meeting reflected the uncertainty felt by many to result from this transition. However during the inspection parents questioned expressed growing confidence and satisfaction with the school. This view is supported by the inspection findings that the school now maintains an effective partnership.
45. The headteacher sets a lead in establishing very good links with parents. Further links are established through visits by staff to local pre-school provision before parents and pupils are welcomed into school. The school builds on this initial contact by supplying parents with an excellent package of information that is regularly updated. Parents receive an individual file that contains a variety of information. This includes the school's behaviour policy, a literacy support programme, together with forthcoming topics, assessment procedures, homework timetables and an explanation of national curriculum levels. This is a reflection of the school's determination to include parents in all areas of its work. It is much appreciated by parents and has contributed to their growing confidence and support of the school.
46. Parents are particularly active in fund raising for the school. This is achieved through the 'Friends' which organises regular social and fund raising activities. In addition there is also an ambitious project to raise money for the school's new buildings. Parents also offer significant help regularly in the classrooms and with extra-curricular activities. One of particular note is the Garden Club which has completely transformed part of the school grounds by clearing and then establishing a very attractive pond and quiet area with picnic tables.
47. Parents are encouraged successfully to be involved in their children's learning at home through the topic information they receive and through a developing programme of regular homework across all the year groups. A particularly good feature of this is the daily notice board to welcome Class 1, which tells parents about the day's literacy focus and how they might support and encourage their children. However parents are right to voice some concern over their lack of understanding of their children's progress through their annual reports. These are not clear enough about their strengths and weaknesses and what they must do to improve. Parents have access to staff through routine channels such as consultation meetings. Ample opportunities to talk more informally with class teachers and the head teacher are provided during the working week.
48. There is a shared belief in a mutually supportive partnership to which both the school and its parents are committed and which benefits the pupils' learning and personal development.

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

49. The management of the school is good and the headteacher provides very effective leadership. She has a clear vision for the school and for its improvement based on the need to raise standards further, particularly in writing. She has carried out detailed analyses of assessment results and the school's work and has used these to identify strengths and areas for further development. She is supported well in this work by the deputy headteacher. The headteacher monitors very effectively the progress of the school improvement plan and of teachers' curriculum planning. She ensures that supportive feedback is given where necessary. Communications among staff and within the school community are effective.
50. The previous report found that the school was well led. The present headteacher was appointed in 1998. Since then, she has updated the school systems for development and curriculum planning and introduced target setting for all pupils. Pupils' progress towards these is effectively assessed. She has introduced effective systems for monitoring teaching, which the previous inspection found to be lacking. The paperwork to support all school systems is thorough and is used effectively to improve practice. Provision for special educational needs is very well supported. Pupils' needs are identified perceptively and resources are targeted efficiently. These pupils benefit from the school's effective systems and make good progress.
51. There are sufficient teachers and non-teaching staff to ensure that the needs of pupils and of the curriculum are met. However, during the recent period of high turnover of teaching staff, the headteacher has carried a heavy load of curriculum responsibility. This continues to be too high and places demands upon her which are unlikely to be sustainable. Professional development for the permanent members of staff is carefully targeted and is effective in further improving the quality of education provided. Appropriate systems for performance management are being implemented. Although the situation has improved this term, a full team of permanent teachers has yet to be established and this remains an urgent need.
52. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory requirements other than those for ICT and is supportive of the school's work. The headteacher rigorously evaluates and reports progress towards the school's targets. Several individual governors are regular visitors to the school and this assists the governing body to keep itself informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have established an appropriate system of working groups to discharge their duties effectively. The school buildings provide inadequate accommodation, particularly in inclement weather. The governors have worked with the diocesan authorities to plan for their improvement. In this, as in other areas, the principles of best value are applied.
53. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive document underpinned by clear aims and objectives and thorough action planning. The headteacher's meticulous monitoring and evaluation of the plan is effective in ensuring that the school's expenditure is properly targeted and that its impact on the quality of education is identified.
54. The need to harness the full potential of information and communication technology in teaching and learning in the school has been identified in the improvement plan but this area remains unsatisfactory at present.

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

54. The governors and staff should address the following matters in writing the action plan, in order to raise standards and further improve the provision the school makes:

(1) **Improve standards in writing in both key stages\* by:**

- focusing on improving pupils' technical skills of writing, especially spelling and punctuation
- providing teachers with further opportunities for training in the delivery of these technical skills
- ensuring that teachers expect pupils to write longer pieces of work on a regular basis and provide opportunities for them to do so
- spreading good habits in writing and ensuring a greater amount of written work throughout the teaching of other subjects
- improving the quality of marking on pupils' written work, to show them how they can improve

(paras 4, 6, 16, 20, 22, 70 - 73, 75)

(2) **Improve standards in Information and Communication Technology (ICT)\* by:**

- considering suitable professional development for teaching staff
- seeking to implement the full range of the national curriculum orders for the subject
- exploiting the potential of ICT in teaching and learning other subjects

(paras 8, 17, 20, 72, 85, 109, 110)

\* indicates that this issue is already identified in the school's improvement plan

In addition to these key issues the school should consider the following areas for the action plan:

- the need for governors and staff to achieve a period of consolidation in which new practices relating to monitoring of teaching and curriculum quality can become more firmly established (para 51).
- take steps to promote pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of modern society; (paras 36 and 37).
- ensure that pupils' annual reports contain clear information about strengths and weaknesses and set out what pupils need to do to improve further. (paras 21 and 47).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

23

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	35	39	22	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		46
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		13

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

## **Attendance**

### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

### **Attainment**

Attainment figures are not published because the cohorts were smaller than 11 pupils.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	42
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	11.5
Average class size	15.3

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	53

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	191724
Total expenditure	191548
Expenditure per pupil	3756
Balance brought forward from previous year	10622
Balance carried forward to next year	10798

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	50
Number of questionnaires returned	26

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	46	15	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	27	50	15	8	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	38	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	8	50	27	4	12
The teaching is good.	38	35	15	4	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	38	35	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	42	15	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	46	15	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	31	38	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	35	42	12	0	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	42	8	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	54	8	8	12

### Other issues raised by parents

There were other positive comments raised at the parents' meeting and on the backs of some questionnaires. These described the school's approachable and effective leadership and the prompt response to problems and issues raised by parents. There were also a number of concerns. These related to recent changes of teachers, the need to establish good relationships between some pupils and teachers and the need for consideration of pupils' particular needs. Several staff changes were recent when the questionnaires were sent out so inspectors also interviewed a number of parents in school. These parents responded positively although a concern about the quality of relationships between pupils and teachers was expressed. The inspection team agreed with the positive comments and could not find evidence to support the concerns.

## **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**

55. The last inspection found provision for children under-five to be good. The judgement of this inspection is that it continues to be so.
56. Children are admitted at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Those born in the second half of the school year were attending mornings only at the time of the inspection. Baseline assessments indicate that pupils enter school close to the average in personal and social development and in the other areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. At the time of the inspection there were six children in the Foundation Stage, only two of whom attended full-time. The curriculum provided for these children is fully relevant and contains all the recommended aspects.
57. Teachers' planning relates well to the early learning goals and teaching in all the areas of learning of the Foundation Stage is consistently very good. The teachers pay good regard in their planning to the specific needs of the youngest children within a largely Key Stage 1 class. These children settle happily and quickly. They develop positive attitudes to school and make good progress. They are on line to meet and in some cases exceed the expected outcomes in all of the areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.
58. The accommodation is only adequate, but the room is comfortable for the numbers in the class. It is exceptionally well organised and provides a rich learning environment for the youngest children. Areas of interest encourage pupils to read, explore and write. Their individual; and group work is celebrated and interpreted through good quality displays. Equipment and materials are of good quality and stored so as to be accessible to pupils. The corridor to the playground provides a suitable home for sand and water. There are plans to develop the outside area when storage facilities in the new building come on line.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

59. There is a strong and successful emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills. The teachers and learning support assistant provide excellent role models for the children and provide many good opportunities for them to work in group tasks and play co-operatively together and with the Year 1 pupils. Good opportunities for structured and imaginative play are provided through role-play areas, such as the post office. Any children needing extra support are identified early and helped effectively. A very effective system of individual pupil target setting supports personal and social skills and children's progress in the other areas of learning.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

60. Children's speaking and listening skills develop well as a result of planned opportunities to work and explore together and through the very effective teaching activities. They listen attentively to adults and to each other. They are becoming increasingly confident in voicing their ideas or views, for example when discussing their self-portraits after an art session. Most are developing a good grasp of letter names and sounds through regular use of a variety of printed material and appropriate teaching of phonics and use these to help with reading and writing. The children's enjoyment of books and stories is successfully promoted and all choose to use the book area in the classroom. They take pleasure and pride in the class books to which they have all contributed.

### **Mathematical Development**

61. Most children can name and talk about 3D shapes owing to very good teaching linked to practical activities and reinforcement. Some can count to 100 and all enjoy looking for number patterns. An attractive numeracy area in the classroom supports work in this area and practical activities linked to the "Ourselves" topic provide opportunities for measuring and comparing.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

62. Early geographical skills such as spatial awareness and simple mapping are developed through a study of the village of Hadlow Down. The children helped to create a three dimensional model of the village, constructing and painting the most significant buildings. They use simple tools and materials with increasing skill and with good levels of care. All are able to use the mouse on the computer to produce drawings as well as to play games to reinforce other aspects of their learning.

### **Physical Development**

63. Children co-operate well together and some show good control over racket and ball in physical education. They show increasing awareness of space and of themselves and others when working in the hall and at playtimes. In designing hinges children used tools and glues carefully and showed increasing control translating their designs into practice.

### **Creative Development**

64. Children use their imaginations well in role-play as well as with sand, water, painting and model making. Very good opportunities are provided for listening to and sharing stories. The class story of the bear hunt was re-told imaginatively by children during the inspection. Children enjoy unaccompanied singing and using simple instruments where they are able to think about and describe the sounds made.

### **ENGLISH**

65. The majority of pupils enter the school with average levels of ability in all areas of language and literacy. The school's records and the scrutiny of previous work undertaken by the inspection team show that attainment at the end of KS1 in 2000 represented satisfactory achievement for the pupils concerned. National comparisons are not appropriate due to the very small number of pupils in Year 2 in 1999 and 2000.
66. An analysis of standards in English at the age of seven over the last four years show that reading has been close to the national expectation, but writing has been below it. Standards in English for pupils aged eleven, as reflected in the 2000 national test results, were below the national average. They were well below average in comparison with similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are now rising and that this year's results are likely to show a significant improvement. Standards in writing remain weaker than they should be.
67. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening at Key Stage 1. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to improve these skills through class discussions about their work and they make good use of open-ended questions to promote oral skills. Pupils are good listeners, with many pupils responding to teachers' questions enthusiastically. They continue to make good progress in their speaking and listening skills through Key Stage 2 and most speak well by the time they are eleven. The very good behaviour in lessons is reflected in pupils listening attentively to what their teachers are saying and being keen to respond to questions. Pupils listen to and respect the opinions of others, and often articulate their ideas and opinions in a mature manner. A very good example of this was seen in a circle time lesson in which pupils reflected on attributes that made co-operative working effective.

68. In reading at Key Stage 1, teachers spend a high proportion of time on key words and on the promotion of phonic skills, though this is a recently developed emphasis. Those pupils with identified reading problems receive good support from teachers and make good progress. Time set aside for guided reading during the literacy hour is used well by teachers, with the majority of pupils developing their reading skills and levels of understanding. By the time pupils are seven, the majority have a reading age at least in line with that expected. The quality of reading is also positively influenced by the good support given by parents through the home-school reading scheme.
69. Most pupils make good progress in reading as they move through Key Stage 2. They read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and are introduced to interesting newspaper and magazine material. In addition, pupils read poetry and prose, are introduced to pre-twentieth century material, and read literature from other countries and cultures. Many pupils display good reading habits and regularly read at home. Pupils have satisfactory library skills, and some are now able to retrieve information from the Internet. Some pupils display sophisticated reading skills, and can confidently discuss the characters and issues in the books they read. Teachers use guided reading activities in an effective manner and provide suitable opportunities for silent reading. Reading skills are used well to promote learning in other subjects, such as in researching historical topics or exploring the impact of recent flooding in Uckfield.
70. The last inspection report judged that standards in English were in line with national expectations at both key stages. Progress was judged to be appropriate. Standards and progress in learning fall short of that at present in both key stages. This is because progress in writing is unsatisfactory. Overall, pupils have too little practice in writing at length and too little expertise in the technical skills of writing expected of their age. Consequently their ability to express their ideas with sufficient accuracy is under-developed.
71. Despite their weak technical skills pupils write freely, most with an evident desire to communicate their ideas and with sensible or imaginative content. By the age of seven, writing covers an appropriate range of styles, but few pupils write at length and with sustained account or description. Few make consistent and correct use of capital letters and full stops and the standard of spelling is weaker than expected for their age. The few pupils identified as having special educational needs receive carefully targeted support and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
72. Most pupils' technical skills remain under-developed by the age of eleven. Pupils' use of extended vocabulary is often inhibited by the difficulties they experience in spelling correctly. This means that pupils are not well prepared overall for the written component of the national tests, as they have not acquired sufficient ability to express their ideas lucidly. Some pupils do communicate well in writing. Good examples were seen in one class when Year 6 pupils wrote a first person account of a day based on the novel, 'Children of Winter'. At both key stages, pupils write in a suitable variety of genres, including letters, diaries and playscripts, often using well-chosen literary stimuli from poetry and prose. Some good use of ICT to encourage writing was seen in Key Stage 2 during the inspection. This is a very recent development and overall it is not used sufficiently.
73. The school has identified the weakness in writing and has initiated extra time for the teaching of English skills and additional literacy lessons for under-achieving pupils. Extension work is provided for higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their writing. They are supported well through the carefully graded work provided by classroom teachers and support staff.

74. The quality of teaching in English is good overall. All teaching is satisfactory or better and in three-quarters of the lessons observed it was good or very good. At its best, it is taught with interest and enthusiasm. Lesson planning is sound and an appropriate variety of activities is offered in the classrooms. A strength of some of the teaching is the consistent, skilful and challenging use of question and answer to assess the degree of understanding gained by pupils. This was demonstrated well in a Year 1 class. Here, the teacher's probing questions helped the pupils enthusiastically explore the language used in 'Monster, Monster, Big and Hairy'.
75. Reading and comprehension skills are promoted productively by teachers to aid work on reading and to study the structures of stories. The pace with which teachers conduct lessons is often good, ensuring that pupils learn at an appropriate rate. Low expectation of the technical skills of writing and the quantity of work produced by pupils reduce the effectiveness of the teaching in a significant minority of lessons, in both key stages.
76. With the exceptions noted above, most teachers possess adequate subject knowledge. Teachers generally give helpful verbal comment and encouragement to pupils. Except in the youngest class, marking of written work does not clearly identify what pupils need to do next. In these cases the absence of regular feedback relating to spelling, punctuation and form contributes to pupils' standards in these areas being weaker than they should be. Homework is effectively used to reinforce work done in class.
77. The National Literacy Strategy documents are used successfully to form the basis of the scheme of work. The co-ordinator ensures some monitoring of the subject and assessment is now thorough. The school has set itself rigorous targets to improve progress in writing intending that almost all pupils should attain the national expectation and many exceed it. Taken together with the well-founded plan for improvement, the inspection team's judgement is that the school is now well placed to improve standards in English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. The school's records and the scrutiny of previous work undertaken by the inspection team show that attainment at the end of KS1 in 2000 represented satisfactory achievement for the pupils concerned. National comparisons are not appropriate due to the very small number of pupils in Year 2 in 1999/2000.
79. Ten pupils underwent statutory National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000. Almost all these pupils attained at least the national expectation of level four, with almost one third attaining level five. National comparisons are unreliable given the small size of this cohort, but prior attainment data shows that this represents good progress for the pupils concerned throughout the key stage.
80. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected for their age. However, whereas progress for Year 2 pupils is broadly in line with these expectations, it is often better by Year 6. In addition to mathematics, numeracy skills are used effectively to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum, such as the use of measurement in science. The local environment is used well to enrich the mathematics curriculum, as in the example of a problem-solving trail in local woodland.
81. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages. It is effectively planned across the school and fully meets National Curriculum requirements. Full account is taken in planning and in most teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has helped to ensure balanced coverage.

82. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is planned carefully to meet the diverse needs presented by three-year groups in a class. This is translated most effectively into practice with the older pupils. For example, in one lesson seen, the oldest pupils were given a challenging mental mathematics activity, pitting their computational skills against the clock. The teacher meanwhile, focused on the younger pupils. This appropriate division resulted in good progress for all. The same older pupils continued to demonstrate a high level of interest as they worked as a group to discover the angle sum of a triangle and the angle sum of a point.
83. Most teaching in Key Stage 1 is planned equally thoroughly. In a well paced lesson, Y1 pupils enjoyed an oral-mental activity counting rapidly, spotting number patterns on a 100 square and working out the rules of a number game, before working independently to find the attributes of a variety of three dimensional shapes.
84. Planning and teaching are less effective where the teacher's understanding of the numeracy strategy is insecure. The oral activity at the start of one lesson for the youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 was too slow. The teacher did not use any strategies to find out whether all pupils understood the answers offered by one or two pupils. The group work undertaken by Year 4 pupils in this lesson was very effective in extending pupils' understanding of simple fractions. Very good support was provided to pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs, by teaching assistants in this lesson. They make a very positive contribution to mathematics teaching throughout the school.
85. The previous inspection found that mathematics was taught well and that standards were in line with those expected nationally, but that there was limited use of ICT in mathematics. This remains the case.
86. The management of the subject is thorough. Targets set for individual pupils are suitably challenging. The co-ordinator's careful analysis of last year's National Curriculum performance has resulted in a comprehensive numeracy action plan. Within this, particular action aimed at improving standards in Key Stage 1. Inspection evidence indicates that this aim is not yet secured at the older end of this key stage.
87. Homework is set for the older pupils. In addition to the practice of tables and number bonds, older pupils undertake tasks that link effectively to work in hand in the classroom. This makes a positive contribution to the standards achieved.

## **SCIENCE**

88. Science receives an appropriate timetable allocation at both key stages. The week's lessons in Key Stage 1 fell outside the inspection period. Evidence from work on display, as well as from that provided for scrutiny and from talking to pupils indicates that attainment is in line with national expectations. Year 1 pupils showed good standards in discussion with inspectors. They were enthusiastic about work linked to mathematics when they had researched and charted combinations of hair and eye colour in their class. They had recorded work carefully in their "Our Bodies" books. The teacher had read this work carefully and had given high quality written encouragement and feedback to pupils.
89. The teaching of the subject is carefully planned using the non-statutory schemes of work to ensure balanced coverage. One unit from this scheme was translated into the effective lesson seen at Key Stage 2. Here the teacher carried out a careful and clear demonstration of the condensation cycle. The interest generated by this and the clarity of the teaching was shown subsequently. Year 4 pupils were able to record their own account of the experiment using a suitable writing frame. Their recall was good and they were able to describe carefully what happened when seeking to separate salt from water. The pupils' responses were based on careful prediction and observation and demonstrated an appropriate understanding of what was required to ensure a fair test.

90. Attainment was high for this group of pupils and all of the class demonstrated positive attitudes to the subject. Their practical skills were good and they worked hard and conscientiously in recording their work in their science books. These well-kept records indicate that attainment in science, including the aspect of investigation, is generally at least in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage.
91. Year 6 pupils in 2000 performed well in National Curriculum assessments. All attained at least the level expected nationally and almost one third attained the higher level five. The small cohort means that national comparisons must be treated with caution, but inspection evidence supports the view that science is well taught across the school. This was also the finding of the previous inspection.
92. The headteacher is acting as the temporary science co-ordinator. She has a good understanding of the subject's needs and has ensured that sufficient resources are in place. The outdoor area and wildlife garden offers good opportunities, which are used well, for the study of life processes.

## **ART**

93. It was possible to see one art lesson in each key stage during the inspection. Teaching in both was good. In Key Stage 1, this was in the youngest class and pupils' attainment was good compared to national expectations in this lesson. Besides mixing their own paint with care and attention to shade, pupils talked enthusiastically about the "feeling paintings" they had produced earlier
94. Standards attained by pupils at the end of both key stages are in line with national expectations. Good teaching was seen in Key Stage 2 when Year 3 pupils worked on Roman mosaics using clay, macaroni and seeds. Good practical advice and encouragement by the teacher enabled pupils to transfer their designs skilfully into practice. Pupils experimented with their designs and developed them imaginatively. Discreet individual assessment by the teacher helped to ensure that pupils identified as having special educational needs achieved well. Older pupils in the key stage made good use of ICT in designing their Tudor knot gardens.
95. Teaching in the subject is securely underpinned by the use of the non-statutory schemes of work. The work of other artists, such as Van Gogh, is considered and this contributes appropriately to the pupils understanding of colour and form. Pupils' own art is attractively displayed and cared for and quality and creativity is encouraged. Some additional good work is encouraged through the weekly art club to which many pupils belong. Overall, however, there is too little evidence at the end of Key Stage 2 to confirm that the subject strengths noted in the previous report have been maintained.
96. The co-ordinator has only recently returned to school after maternity leave. Working with the headteacher she has introduced portfolios for individual pupil's artwork and new sketchbooks. The latter contain little work at present, but provide good evidence of pupils' pride and enjoyment in the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97. There were elements of design in the art lessons seen and one design and technology lesson was observed in Key Stage 1. Planning for the subject is thorough and shows that a good range of design and technology topics is covered through the school. It was not possible to make a fair evaluation of work completed by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. The sample of work produced by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 shows standards overall above that expected nationally. The chairs made as part of the study of the Tudors and the supporting written work show evidence of good design, making and evaluation. Some pupils had extended this work at home.

98. Teaching in the Year 1 lesson was very good. The idea of a hinge was thoughtfully introduced and pupils were set to task finding suitable ways of making and fastening one. They combine good practical skills and concentration for their age and demonstrate considerable invention using a range of materials and fixes. Their learning about the materials and their properties was extended by high quality individual discussions with the teacher as they worked. They recorded their efforts carefully in their workbooks and shared what they had discovered in a very well managed plenary.
99. The previous inspection found that standards were satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. This inspection judgement indicates that standards have improved still further.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

100. Throughout the school, standards in geography are in line with those expected nationally, largely because of the emphasis on practical study. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection.
101. By the age of seven, pupils convert drawings into plans and draw accurate maps of the local area, using keys. They think carefully about what they have done and make sensible suggestions as to how it might be improved.
102. By eleven, pupils compare and contrast different physical features. They understand the relevance of climate to people's habitat and lifestyles. In local studies, they demonstrate an awareness of the natural and human features of the locality. They know something about the features and ways of life of many other countries. Number skills are used well. Most Year 5 and 6 pupils can use a table of statistics to plot features they are studying on a bar graph. Pupils use their speaking and listening skills to describe and explain aspects of the areas under study.
103. It was not possible to observe geography lessons during the inspection, because of timetable arrangements. It is therefore impossible to make overall judgements on the quality of teaching. From the analysis of work, teachers' planning and discussion with both pupils and teachers, it is clear that work is well planned, relevant and challenging.

## **HISTORY**

104. Standards in history exceed national expectations by the ends of both key stages. Standards have thus been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Teachers' planning is generally effective and they use a good variety of methods and strategies to encourage the skills of thought and deduction through direct learning and practical activities. The purpose of learning is made very clear to pupils and the pace of lessons is often good.
105. Pupils from five to seven successfully distinguish between past and present and develop a sense of chronology. They study the lives and works of famous people, as well as important historical events. Pupils from seven to eleven identify and date features in the past, evaluate evidence and begin to examine source material effectively. They study the Victorians, the Celts and the Romans in Britain with interest and enthusiasm, as observed in a Year 2 lesson on a Roman 'feast'. Throughout the school, pupils are able to absorb facts well and express an enthusiastic response both to the period under study and people associated with it. This was shown in topic books written by Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, where pupils had used research techniques to examine Tudor times and compare them with their own experiences. There is evidence of independent research skills being promoted, using a range of sources.

106. Adoption of the non-statutory scheme of work is helping to ensure a steady progression of skills as pupils move through the school. Supported by this, teachers' planning ensures a good and wide coverage of topics and learning goals and provides a stimulating variety of activities to support the teaching. Emphasis is firmly laid on helping pupils to think for themselves and on the use of first-hand and secondary source material to aid this process. Work is planned to ensure that higher attaining pupils can extend their skills and knowledge by undertaking personal research and that pupils with special educational needs are always involved and progress at a good rate.
107. Teaching observed in both key stages was satisfactory and sometimes very good. Teachers explain the purpose of lessons well and revise what pupils have learnt in a lively manner. Question and answer methods are used very effectively, both to engage pupil's interest and to help them to deepen their understandings of people and period. Management of pupils is very good, having a significant impact on the quality of learning. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject. History is used to provide a context for some interesting and increasingly extended pieces of writing.
108. The impact of teaching in the subject is reviewed by the co-ordinator and planning modified as a result. Pupils' personal development is extended well through work in the subject. Pupils study the ways of life of other cultures and learn to understand how the past has affected the present. Visits to sites of historical interest help to enhance the curriculum. Resources in the form of historical artefacts are few, but these are used well and are supplemented successfully by visits to sites of historical interest and by visitors to the school.

#### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

109. The previous report noted satisfactory attainment in the area of ICT but reported a limited range of work. National Curriculum expectations have altered considerably in this area since 1996 and direct comparison of levels of attainment is inappropriate. Pupils in every class have access to well maintained and up to date equipment. Some of this has only recently been installed and connection to the Internet took place just prior to the inspection. Appropriate use of the class computers takes place throughout the school. Year 1 pupils, for example, used a drawing programme to create colourful monsters relating to earlier discussions. Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils used a more advanced art programme to design Tudor knot gardens. In the same class, the new Internet connection enabled the older pupils to question Sir Francis Drake, through a time-portal, about the progress of the Spanish Armada. Beyond these effective examples, there are only limited instances, at present, of ICT being used in the teaching of other subjects. There is too little use, for example, of word-processing to enable extended drafting of writing throughout the school.
110. The school is well aware of the deficiencies in the subject at present, that National Curriculum requirements are not met and that, overall, standards in the subject are lower than expected nationally. A range of measures to secure improvement has been identified in the School Improvement Plan and the acting co-ordinator has developed a comprehensive action plan.

#### **MUSIC**

111. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson. It is therefore not possible to make any judgements about teaching and learning. At the previous inspection standards were in line with national expectations. On limited evidence available in the lesson seen, assemblies and sung graces, the school has improved this standard of attainment in music, both by the age of eleven and by the age of seven, and it is now good.
112. Pupils are acquiring good listening skills through songs and games, where they demonstrate an understanding of loud and quiet sounds. Pupils have a good musical vocabulary and are able to describe sounds that their instruments make and recognise different groups of instruments by their main features. They enjoy their music making and respond enthusiastically.

113. Pupils sing with enthusiasm, particularly when they join together in the hall for assembly. They learn to pitch their voices accurately and sing unaccompanied. They make commendable efforts and are well supported by the teachers. Pupils listen carefully and attentively to music played on entry and exit in assembly.
114. There is a successful recorder club and a choir. They offer additional opportunities to many older pupils. Some older pupils benefit from extra-curricular tuition on instruments such as the violin. The school takes part in community activities such as singing at the local church and in Mayfield Festival. Peripatetic music teachers from the local education authority visit regularly, enabling the school to offer guitar and string groups. Although these were not inspected, pupils played their instruments in assemblies with sensitivity and pleasure.
115. The new music co-ordinator is committed and enthusiastic and recognises the need to develop pupils' skills in composing and appraising. This was clearly seen in the Year 4, 5 and 6 lesson observed, where pupils were continuing a unit of work composing music to suit Henry VIII or Elizabeth 1, to complement their topic work in history. The adoption of the non-statutory scheme of work provides a secure foundation for developing all pupils' musical abilities. Teachers make effective use of this and the supporting resources.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

116. The previous inspection found that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were in line with national expectations but that attainment in gymnastics at Key Stage 2 fell below that. The three lessons seen during this inspection indicate that standards in gymnastics are consistently higher than expected in Key Stage 1 and often much higher in Key Stage 2. Taken together with other evidence of recent achievement by pupils, standards in PE are judged to be in excess of those expected nationally.
117. Good teaching in Year 1 enabled pupils to sharpen their skills of ball and racket control. Good praise and feedback was given to which pupils responded with enjoyment and effort.
118. Year 2 and Year 3 pupils demonstrated complete concentration in a very well taught lesson focusing on different shapes made by their bodies and the related linking movements. The teacher, who is the subject co-ordinator, gave clear and direct feedback enabling pupils to develop their shapes and extend their control over them. Her choice of pupil examples demonstrated her secure subject knowledge as well as her understanding of individual pupils' progress. She set demanding but attainable challenges, which the pupils needed their full attention to meet.
119. The lesson seen with year 4 and 5 pupils was the culmination of a number of lessons during which pupils had been working on a sequence. Pupils were reminded that their sequences were to be recorded using the school's digital camera and this was an additional incentive to perfect their performances. All the pupils worked in absorbed silence as they mirrored their partners' movements and refined their routines. The teacher worked with one pupil as an equal partner and ensured that pupils took full responsibility for the high quality peer support evident in the lesson. The final group sequence involved full concentration from all and brought silent gasps of appreciation as it was accomplished. This was an outstanding lesson in every respect and made a strong contribution to the positive interpersonal ethos in the school.
120. The small size of the hall means that the staff need to manage the timetable effectively to enable the two older classes to be subdivided for PE. This works well.
121. The non-statutory scheme of work has been adopted and forms a suitable basis for planning the subject. Pupils receive a course of swimming lesson during the year and older pupils take part in adventurous activities through the local consortium of village schools. A variety of team sports are developed through extra-curricular activity. Athletic activities are limited to the drier months. The previous report noted that the small field was often waterlogged and this remains the case.

## **FRENCH**

122. French is offered weekly to all Year 6 pupils. The previous inspection judged attainment to be in line with the average; it is now better than that. Pupils can understand classroom commands, statements and instructions familiar to them; they can use short phrases and appropriate vocabulary with some ease to conduct brief interchanges with the teacher. Pupils' pronunciation is generally accurate, following the good example provided by the teacher. They make satisfactory use of vocabulary to interpret short sentences and questions and are able to join together groups of words into a phrase or sentence. Analysis of written work shows that pupils' work is productive and focused and their grammatical skills are being well developed.
123. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good. From evidence of teachers' planning, analysis of pupils' work and discussion with the co-ordinator, it is clear that pupils' learning begins well in Year 6 and continues to improve until they leave school. In the lesson seen, management was good and teaching strategies were very well used to promote interest and involvement. French was used consistently as the teaching language to challenge pupils' comprehension. This led to a good level of achievement. The purpose of activities was made clear to pupils and this ensured that learning was never random or without focus. Pupils display positive attitudes to the subject. They are developing a good deal of knowledge and understanding of the French culture and way of life. Oral skills are well developed through dialogue. The teacher's expectations of higher attaining pupils are good and they are being well challenged through the work that they do.