

INSPECTION REPORT

WIVELSFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Haywards Heath

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114424

Headteacher: Miss R E Tipple

Reporting inspector: Rosalind Johns
22745

Dates of inspection: 19th and 20th May 2003

Inspection number: 247458

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Wivelsfield Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Whear
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wivelsfield Primary School educates boys and girls between four and eleven years. It is smaller than most other schools as there are 120 pupils in five classes. There are 63 boys and 57 girls on roll who attend full time. There are 17 children in Reception. There are 21 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs which is broadly the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need which is below average. Six pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There is one pupil whose mother tongue is not English which is lower than found in most schools. This pupil does not need specialist language support and takes a full part in all lessons and activities in the school. Six pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below average. During the last school year, six pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission and three left. This rate of turnover is below average. Pupils generally enter the school with average levels of attainment although their skills in communication, language and literacy are below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. The good leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governors provide a clear vision of the way forward and good systems to monitor the school's performance. By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve well because they profit from the consistently good teaching in Years 1 to 6 and because they are enquiring and independent learners. In 2003, the school was given a School Achievement Award by the Department for Education and Skills. The findings of the inspection are that pupils in the current Year 6 are reaching average standards in English, mathematics and science. However, this is good achievement for this particular year group. The school's overall good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in a calm and supportive ethos in the school. All pupils take a full part in all activities. This is a small school and costs for each pupil are high. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils of all levels of ability achieve well by the time they leave the school and develop skills for life-long learning.
- The good leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governors mean that there is a strong team spirit, a shared philosophy and a constant quest for improvement in all aspects of the school's work.
- In Years 1 to 6, teaching and learning are consistently good because teachers have the drive and ability to support pupils in their work and to help them become confident and independent learners.
- Pupils' very good attitudes, personal development and relationships and their good behaviour are firmly rooted in the high quality of the school's provision for their spiritual, moral and social development.

What could be improved

- The quality of pupils' writing, especially in Year 2, which does not match the standards reached in other aspects of their work.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development which, although satisfactory overall, does not adequately raise pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in British society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998. Since then, it has made a good improvement and is well placed to improve in the future. Key issues for action from the previous inspection have been addressed very carefully. Schemes of work and policies are fully in place and teachers' daily assessments are now used effectively to adapt the content of future lessons. The monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, teaching and learning and pupils' progress by the leadership and management of the school are now systematic and rigorous. This self-evaluation programme is the basis of the school's improvement. It has resulted in a very clear focus on improving the processes for tracking pupils' performance and exploring ways of doing better. This has led to pupils' good progress, which was satisfactory at the last inspection, and is also reflected in the higher quality of teaching and learning in the school. Leadership and management are now judged to be good because of this more critical and analytical approach. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is also better and provides a firm foundation for the positive work ethos in the school. Older, more able pupils are now challenged to think more deeply about subjects and to make the most of their abilities. In the Foundation Stage, provision for the children is now satisfactory although the accommodation is still small for the numbers present.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	A	B	C
Mathematics	B	A*	A	A
Science	D	A*	B	B

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

The table shows that, in 2002, standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools based on the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, standards were average in English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. At the higher Level 5, standards were well above average in all three subjects. Since 2000, results in English, mathematics and science have risen steadily in line with the national trend with a slight drop in 2002. The school narrowly missed its targets in 2002 for the number of pupils expected to reach Level 4 and above in English and did not reach them in mathematics. It has set challenging targets for 2003.

The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, pupils attain average standards in English, mathematics and science. This, however, represents good achievement for this small year group of pupils, many of whom have needed additional learning support as they moved through the school. In Year 2, pupils are reaching above average standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science and average standards in writing because few pupils are reaching the higher Level 3. In Reception, children are attaining satisfactory standards in all areas of learning and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Across the school, but especially in the case of younger pupils, standards in writing do not match those reached in other aspects of their work. This is because more rigorous assessments of pupils' individual performance in writing have only recently been put in place.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs, the more able, the gifted and talented and the few minority ethnic pupils achieve satisfactorily in Reception and well in Years 1 to 6. This is because they are keen to try out new experiences and respond readily to informed, carefully structured yet imaginative teaching.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy independent, investigative learning and are quick to tackle a challenge. Topics frequently capture their interest and imagination and they work in happy cooperation with their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In class, around the school and at play, pupils generally behave well. They react quickly to teachers' instructions and settle quickly to tasks so that no time for learning or play is lost. However, a few of them do not always meet the high expectations of work and response set by their teachers. There were no exclusions in the last school year.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school is a close-knit family community where pupils feel safe and enjoy learning. The very good relationships inspire pupils with confidence and they learn to be aware of others' needs as well as their own. They generally act responsibly and are kind and thoughtful in their care for younger pupils. As they move through the school, pupils develop mature attitudes and growing independence in learning.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Pupils' attendance is below average. Unauthorised absence is below average. This is caused by pupils from a few families who have had extended absences. Pupils are punctual and lessons get off to a prompt and effective start.

This is a happy school where pupils are eager to learn. This is seen in the high levels of enjoyment, care and confidence with which they approach their work.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. It is satisfactory in Reception and good overall in Years 1 to 6. During the inspection, 16 lessons or parts of lessons were observed: two were very good, nine were good and five were satisfactory. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well in Years 1 to 6 and are developed effectively through other subjects. Pupils learn quickly and apply their new skills well because teaching methods achieve a good balance between imparting knowledge and enabling pupils to learn through enquiry and working things out for themselves. Strengths in teaching include teachers' in-depth subject knowledge which ensures that topics are taught rigorously and that new learning is introduced in a clear and systematic way. They use questions creatively to help pupils work through problems and make connections between ideas. Teachers also treat pupils with sensitivity and respect so that they take risks without fear of failure and enjoy the challenge. Explanations and instructions are clear and informative so that pupils settle to work promptly and no time for learning is lost. These features, together with improved tracking procedures and careful planning, mean that the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs, the more able and gifted and talented and those from minority ethnic groups are met well. However, more able children in Reception are not given appropriately challenging work. Weaknesses in teaching and learning in the school include not making effective use of teaching assistants' time at the beginning of lessons. There is some lack of firmness in the management of pupils so that the teacher has to waste time re-establishing routines and the focus of the lesson.

Strong features in pupils' learning are the confidence and eagerness with which they approach new learning and accept that not all will be successful. A weakness is when younger pupils call out when answering questions which breaks the flow of the lesson.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is well organised and interesting and offers pupils opportunities for self-expression while also recognising the importance of literacy and numeracy as keys to learning. It is enriched by a good range of clubs and brought to life well by visits, visitors, workshops and performances. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and there is an appropriate balance between structured and free play activities. The school is committed

	to equality of opportunity for all pupils and the relative needs of different groups are met well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and teachers provide work that is well matched to their needs. Most individual education plans contain targets that are precise and achievable so that pupils can experience success. Regular reviews and close liaison between all staff and the coordinator for special educational needs contribute significantly to the school's provision. The needs of the pupil with a statement are also met well and annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Times of stillness, prayer and reflection heighten pupils' spiritual and personal responses. Across the curriculum, teachers seize opportunities for pupils to marvel at the world around them. The school's very good provision for pupils' moral and social development encourages them to find their own identity while being part of the school and wider community. The school celebrates the richness of other cultures through literacy, art and music but does not prepare pupils fully to appreciate the cultural diversity of British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. The welcoming and family ethos of the school provides a safe environment where effective learning can take place. There are very good procedures for health and safety, first aid and child protection. Good assessment and monitoring systems in English, mathematics and science provide teachers with an accurate profile of each pupil so that they can give the right blend of help and challenge in lessons. An appropriate policy for race equality and another plan to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not disadvantaged are in place.

The curriculum is well planned and caters for individual creativity as well as providing solid foundations for independent learning. Occasional whole school curriculum days are an exciting and innovative way to learn. The school provides high levels of care and nurture within a strong and positive working ethos.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides strong and thoughtful leadership and clear direction for the management of well-paced change. The management team has worked hard to put structures and processes in place to move the school forward. Roles and responsibilities are delegated and carried out well. Staff work as a committed and coordinated team who believe in their ability to succeed and do the best for their pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. By working closely with the headteacher and staff, governors are able to play a key role in shaping the direction of the school. They gain their understanding of the strengths and needs of the school through a regular programme of visits, analysis of data, close liaison with coordinators and meetings of the full governing body and various committees. They use their individual interests and expertise well to support the school and are constructively critical while valuing the efforts of the staff. Governors monitor the progress of the school improvement plan closely but are not as fully involved in the earliest stages of strategic planning.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has adopted an increasingly self-evaluative approach so that there is a climate of openness and willingness to learn. There is a sharper and more effective focus on the measuring and analysis of performance data and on the school's tracking and monitoring procedures. Teaching and learning are evaluated rigorously and systematically. This programme has resulted in a good improvement in standards and in key areas in the school. The school improvement plan supports its aims well but the criteria to judge its success are not always clearly defined.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Efficient financial planning and administration ensure that spending is focused on educational priorities in the school improvement plan and is carefully monitored through the year. It has led to a number of improvements which have enhanced the learning environment for pupils. There are satisfactory procedures in place to evaluate the impact of expenditure on the standards reached by pupils. The school has over spent its budget. However, suitable steps are being taken to remedy this matter.

The headteacher has created a strong team spirit among staff which has enabled her to sustain the momentum of change and improvement. The school makes full use of competitive prices and compares them carefully with alternative sources to make sure that it gets sound value for money when making spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is good. • The school has high expectations of their children. • The school is well managed and led. • Behaviour is good. • Their children are making good progress. • The school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some aspects of communication. • Information about their children's progress. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team endorses the positive views of parents. Communication with parents is satisfactory but they do not know when newsletters are due and this leads to problems. They receive satisfactory information about their children's progress although there is no formal opportunity to discuss reports in the summer term. The team considers that the school offers a good range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils of all levels of ability achieve well by the time they leave the school and develop skills for life-long learning.

1. At the time of the previous inspection in January 1998, pupils had entered the school with above average levels of attainment and, in Year 6, were attaining standards that were above national expectations in science and geography and in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and all other subjects. Progress was reported to be satisfactory throughout the school.
2. Attainment on entry to the school is now average with below average skills in communication, language and literacy. Pupils' progress remains satisfactory in the Foundation Stage but is now good in Years 1 to 6. In the 2002 national tests and assessments, pupils in Year 6 attained well above average standards in mathematics and above average standards in English and science. Compared with similar schools based on the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in mathematics, above average in science and average in English. At the higher Level 5, standards were well above average in all three subjects. Since 1999, standards have risen steadily in English, mathematics and science in line with the national trend with a slight dip in 2002. In this small school, the wide variations in the composition of different year groups and small numbers exaggerate differences in results. However, over the period 2000-2002, in the national tests in Year 6, pupils attained standards that were almost a term and a half in advance of those achieved nationally. The findings of the inspection are that pupils in the present Year 6 are reaching average standards in English, mathematics and science. However, this represents good achievement for this small group of pupils, many of whom have needed additional learning support as they moved through the school.
3. Pupils' overall progress has, therefore, improved since the last inspection. This is because teachers' expectations of all pupils, whatever their level of ability, are clear and very focused. Greater rigour and accuracy in assessment procedures provide more precise insights into the development of each pupil so that work can be more carefully matched to pupils' various levels of understanding and need. The careful analysis of data and of pupils' answers in national and internal tests and the scrutiny of pupils' work have also helped to raise standards. This is because specific weaknesses are pinpointed and addressed through planned programmes of work. In response to the key issue for action from the previous inspection, teachers' day-to-day assessments are now used much more precisely to adjust planning. This ensures that more able pupils are encouraged to be more adventurous in their learning and to forge ahead which was not the case at the last inspection. Teachers are also more open and analytical about their work and are constantly examining their own practice, reviewing initiatives and assessing the impact of their work on how pupils learn. The successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies, the work of coordinators who play a pivotal role in monitoring, evaluating and developing their subjects, and raising the profile of information and communication technology in the classroom have all had a significant influence on driving standards upwards.
4. The aims of the school include the beliefs that first hand experience is a powerful means of acquiring knowledge and skills and that independence and self-discipline are important in the learning process. In Reception, children are given sound opportunities to choose, explore creatively and initiate ideas of their own as well as receiving appropriately focused teaching. In Years 1 to 6, teachers give pupils the opportunity to extend their investigative skills by finding the answers to questions themselves. In the previous inspection, it was reported that there was some over direction in teaching. Teachers

now provide a learning environment that encourages creativity, discovery, curiosity and investigation. For example, pupils are beginning to think and work as

scientists. Pupils in Year 2 are developing good investigative skills when answering scientific questions as in their work on whether salt makes ice melt more quickly or in their study of forces on 'Wheely Day'. In experiments like Year 6 pupils' work on the movement of the Earth and irreversible changes and Year 4's study of organisms and their habitats, they recognise the need for a fair test and draw on their scientific knowledge to explain their predictions and conclusions.

5. Teachers also prompt pupils to discover different approaches to the subject, make choices and learn from their mistakes. Year 2 pupils chose different kinds of musical instruments to create their own weather sounds. The Year 4 teacher gave pupils' natural curiosity about the past full rein when they excitedly examined pictures of old and new Wivelsfield. They have also visited the Church, War Memorial and grave of the Bartlett family to find out more about Wivelsfield and their school in Victorian times. Year 3 pupils have also enjoyed being history detectives and finding out about the Vikings and the legacy they left behind. Recently, teachers have modelled the role of leader in the guided reading sessions and pupils are going to take on that responsibility. Through this approach, teachers not only make learning meaningful and fun for pupils but are laying solid foundations for life long independent learning.

The good leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governors mean that there is a strong team spirit, a shared philosophy and a constant quest for improvement in all aspects of its work.

6. In her welcome letter to parents in the school prospectus, the headteacher states that the staff and governors believe in setting high standards in all aspects of school life including discipline and achievement. This shared philosophy means that all work together as a team with a common vision for leading the school forward. The sense of purpose, harmony and community is strong with a determination by all that the needs of pupils must come first. The headteacher provides continuity and challenge for all staff. Her sensitive but purposeful leadership is shown by the fact that she leads by example in all aspects of school life. She combines a concern for the well-being of all pupils and respect for the professionalism of staff with a drive to achieve standards that are as high as possible. The headteacher is well supported by other members of the senior management team which acts as a 'think tank' to evaluate current initiatives, and the implementation of new ones, before presenting them to staff. This unity and commitment to critical evaluation and self-driven improvement have resulted in a well-ordered, happy school where pupils thrive on learning.

7. As a result, the school has made a good improvement since the previous inspection in 1998. Key issues for action from that inspection have been addressed very carefully. Appropriate schemes of work and policies are now in place. Assessment opportunities are built into teachers' daily planning and are used to adjust and develop the next stage of pupils' learning. Clear and successful procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, teaching and learning and pupils' progress by the senior staff and the governing body have been put in place. In this inspection, pupils' progress, which was reported to be satisfactory in the last inspection, was judged to be good by the time they leave the school. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now good overall. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved satisfactorily although there are still constraints caused by accommodation. Leadership and management, which were judged to be satisfactory in 1998, are now good.

8. Central to this good improvement is the school's monitoring and evaluation programme which has evolved over the years and has led to a much more self critical approach than at the time of the previous inspection. It ensures that the school keeps abreast of issues as they arise or develop. The headteacher, coordinators and governing body are all involved in this crucial analysis of the school's performance through lesson observations, scrutiny of work, yearly overviews, moderation meetings, monitoring of planning and discussions with pupils. In addition, information is also gained through careful assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science and methodical analysis of data from national and internal tests to guide the work of the school. Data are also used to check trends such as boys' and girls' achievement and the progress of pupils with special educational needs, and in setting individual and group targets. The school compares its results both nationally and locally with other schools. Careful scrutiny of pupils' responses in national and internal tests helps to ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are highlighted and strategies put in place to address them. For example, the school identified that guided reading could be improved and could also be used as a means to improve writing. Planning is monitored by the headteacher to ensure that it encompasses the wide range of ages and abilities especially in the mixed age classes. In this way, the school builds up a frank and objective picture of its performance which helps it to assess the impact of change and to provide information for the development of the school improvement plan as a springboard to improved standards.

9. However, moderation meetings to level pupils' individual performance in writing and to provide an individual record of achievement in writing have only just begun and there is no recent benchmarking with other schools. There are no whole school systems for monitoring pupils' performance in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

10. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are careful and systematic. Teachers themselves are thoughtful and analytical about their teaching and search constantly for ways to improve their performance for the benefit of pupils. The headteacher carries out frequent observations, often with a particular focus such as the plenary session, and oral and written feedback is given. Coordinators and governor 'shadows' linked to different subjects also evaluate classroom teaching in their areas which helps to highlight problems and provides direction for the subject. Strengths are recognised and built upon and problems are addressed through professional debate, within an atmosphere of trust and respect, and at inset meetings. However, there is not enough sharing of current good practice within the classroom. Performance Management procedures, which are also partly in place for support staff, help to set particular targets and evaluate success. They also encourage staff to take collective responsibility in the pursuit of school improvement.

11. Governors are very active in the school, work closely with the headteacher and staff and help to shape the vision and direction of the school effectively. Governor 'shadows' have a good structured programme of visits and an agreed protocol for reporting their findings to their colleagues. They have made a good response to the key issue for action from the last inspection to develop their role in the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, teaching and learning and children's progress through the school. Their rigorous and informed procedures mean that they fully understand their monitoring role and are confident to support and challenge the work of the school. Staff and governors are very positive about the purposes and benefits of monitoring. All respond quickly and constructively to issues and work together to find ways of improving the school's performance. Governors obtain a further understanding of the school through the analysis of assessment data, reports from the headteacher and subject coordinators, staff and moderation meetings, regular meetings of the full governing body and its committees and school events. They have a good knowledge of educational matters through further training and use their own interests and professional expertise, for example, in finance and building, to support the school. This enables them to have a good insight into the strengths and needs of the school. However, although they monitor and review the school improvement plan

through the curriculum committee, they are not closely involved in its earliest stages to give them a finer grasp of strategic planning for school improvement.

12. The priorities that are identified through self-evaluation are supported satisfactorily by the school's sound financial management and administration. There is careful monitoring of the school's spending patterns but it does not compare costs with other schools in any depth. Governors ensure that they obtain value for money when buying goods or services. They have made a conscious decision to retain experienced staff although this involved greater expenditure. The school has a substantial financial deficit which means that it has to report regularly to the local education authority on budget issues. It has appropriate strategies in place to meet the requirements of the three-year plan. Governors have sound procedures in place for gauging the effects of expenditure and initiatives on the standards achieved by pupils, for example, they monitored the impact of the cost of extra teaching assistants on the quality of pupils' learning.

13. The school's comprehensive monitoring programme enables staff and governors to examine the impact of change and provides good information towards the development of the school improvement plan. However, although this plan gives a broad strategic overview of all subjects, it is insufficiently detailed and is not underpinned by action plans except in information and control technology.

14. At the time of the last inspection, it was reported that the school building and site did not allow for the effective delivery of the whole curriculum although the school was offering a sound quality of education. In spite of its constraints, staff, governors and parents have worked imaginatively to enhance the facilities at the school such as the Adventure Trail, pond area and Reception playground. They continue to work together in the pursuit of the dream of a new school building to provide a high quality and stimulating environment for pupils where the demands of the curriculum can be fully met and the school can play a fuller part in life of the community it serves.

In Years 1 to 6, teaching and learning are consistently good because teachers have the drive and ability to support pupils in their work and to help them become confident and independent learners.

15. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. It is satisfactory in Reception and consistently good in the rest of the school. During the inspection, 16 lessons or parts of lessons were seen: two were very good, nine were good and five were satisfactory. These figures show a significant improvement since the previous inspection when 42 per cent of lessons were good or better, 51 per cent satisfactory and seven per cent unsatisfactory. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in Years 1 to 6 and account for pupils' good achievement. Staff work very efficiently as a team who are always ready to learn and develop their skills to ensure the best possible deal for their pupils. The school has addressed the key issue for action from the previous inspection well which was to make effective use of teachers' day-to-day assessment to influence planning and subsequent teaching. Teachers now use this assessment information much more effectively to adjust and develop the next stage of planning, to adapt teaching styles and to ensure that the level of challenge is right for individual pupils. This means that the more able and gifted and talented pupils ask good questions of themselves and take chances in learning. Less able pupils also do well because they are enabled to grasp more basic skills and concepts.

16. One of the school's aims is that it seeks a high quality of pupils' achievement that arises from a consistent set of high expectations. At the heart of the successful teaching in the school are good and clearly expressed expectations of pupils' commitment and of the quality and pace of work so that

all abilities are challenged at their own level. In a Year 2 lesson on two and three-dimensional shapes, the classroom was a hive of activity as pupils drew different shapes and described their attributes. In a Year 4 lesson about the habitat of woodlice, the teacher encouraged her pupils to think creatively before committing themselves to planning a fair test. Such expectations are founded on teachers' own subject expertise so that their explanations and demonstrations are fluent and well informed, presentations are lively and stylish and they have a vision of what pupils can achieve. In a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson, the teacher's command of the subject was evident in the clear and systematic way in which she introduced the idea of function machines by relating it to real life. Similarly, in a science lesson on litter and the environment, the teacher made pupils think critically and logically when selecting a suitable approach to answer scientific questions.

17. Linked to this depth of subject knowledge are teachers' skills in asking questions. This helps pupils to think more precisely about what they are saying and how to express their ideas clearly. The Year 4 teacher questioned her pupils perceptively to help them think carefully and make relevant observations about how Wivelsfield had changed over time. In a Year 3 lesson on adding alternative lines to nursery rhymes, the teacher carefully framed her questions to make pupils work things out for themselves and to respond to the humour of the rhyme. Teaching is often exciting and imaginatively presented so that pupils are fired with enthusiasm and enter fully into the spirit of the lesson. In a Year 4 history lesson about Wivelsfield past and present, pupils enjoyed looking for clues in pictures and identifying familiar parts of the village. 'The village shop is still alive!' exclaimed one pupil delightedly. There were also gasps of amazement when the teacher showed them a photograph of their classroom and Class 4 pupils in 1938. In a Year 2 literacy lesson comparing two characters from the *Katie Morag* stories, the teacher built up suspense very effectively when pupils questioned the characters of Granny Mainland and Granny Island so that they gained a fuller understanding of the hidden meanings in the text. When Year 5/6 pupils were focusing on headlines in their work on journalism, the teacher used the report of a fire at the school so that the sense of immediacy promoted learning well.

18. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is the same as the rest of the school. In most cases, pupils' individual targets are well thought out and provide good guidance so that pupils make good progress in their understanding of basic skills and have growing confidence in their achievements. More able pupils and the gifted and talented also achieve well because the clearer focus on pupils' individual levels of understanding and need means that they are encouraged to be more adventurous in their learning.

19. Most teachers move lessons along quickly by their spirited approach so that pupils remain eager and alert, no time is lost and learning is accelerated. However, occasionally, the pace is comfortable rather than challenging so that pupils relax into a leisurely rate of working. At the beginning of some lessons, teaching assistants remain uninvolved instead of observing and encouraging pupils and recording their responses.

20. However, most teachers have a relaxed and natural control of pupils. This creates a happy but stimulating environment where pupils grow in confidence and develop a sense of achievement. Within this supportive atmosphere, they are not afraid to ask questions, express their feelings or say that they do not understand because teachers value their contributions and treat them with sensitivity. There was no sign of over direction by teachers reported at the last inspection. Pupils were given many opportunities to think for themselves and the independence to choose and experiment. In this way, teachers successfully channel pupils' natural enjoyment of learning and enable them to achieve well.

Pupils' very good attitudes, personal development and relationships and their good behaviour are firmly rooted in the high quality of the school's provision for their spiritual, moral and social development.

21. 'In this school, we believe that the whole child is important and that his/her social, moral, emotional, physical and intellectual development are interrelated.' One of the school's core values is demonstrated and endorsed in its very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and good provision for spiritual aspects. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when moral and social development were both good and spiritual development was satisfactory. It results in a happy school, with a strong sense of a close-knit family, where pupils feel valued and supported as learners.

22. At the last inspection, it was reported that there were weaknesses in the school's provision for spirituality. The school now has a stronger spiritual dimension as a place of learning and pupils' spiritual awareness and personal responses are developed well through times of stillness, prayer and reflection. Assemblies are a celebration of the school's ethos and values as well as having religious significance. In an assembly developing the theme of Jesus as the Light of the World, pupils recognised light as a symbol of comfort, joy, love and peace and sang *Give me oil in my lamp* with feeling. Across the curriculum, teachers are sharply aware of the importance of seizing opportunities to encourage the development of pupils' curiosity and imagination and to channel it into a spiritual response. Pupils sow seeds and watch them grow, marvel at chicks hatching, go badger watching, and benefit from their outside learning environment. YR/1 children drew bluebell pictures and made a book following their walk. In this way, they develop a keen sense of wonder at the order and mystery of the natural world. Pupils' individual creativity is also given full scope which promotes personal growth very effectively. In Year 4, they have been looking at three-dimensional sculptures and have drawn their own patterns on clay tiles. Year 3 pupils have painted pictures from around the school inspired by Rousseau's *Tropical storm with a tiger*. As part of their Colour and Design project, Years 1 and 2 created the sun and sunset with their weaving on the spokes of a bicycle wheel and Year 6 have modelled their own 'SATs monster'.

23. As a result, pupils are eager and responsive learners. They have a sense of pride in the school and know that they are there to learn. This is shown in the way they quickly become absorbed in activities, contribute willingly to oral sessions and answer very carefully. In a Year 1 numeracy lesson on coins of different value, pupils were attentive and interested and this helped them to understand new concepts and apply them to their work on paying for their monster with different coins. Pupils show effort and perseverance in practising their skills and regard mistakes as a step in the learning process. When Year 3 pupils were writing simple verses in a humorous poem, they were keen to improve the format and rhyme of their alphabet poems and showed that most of them would settle for nothing less than their best work. Pupils are confident in asking questions, make intelligent comments and make the most of independent learning opportunities. Year 4 pupils had a good understanding of how to conduct a fair test and select a suitable approach when they questioned their teacher about organisms and their habitat. Across the school, pupils look for and enjoy a challenge. They understand their teachers' good expectations of their performance and try very hard to meet them.

24. The school seeks to empower children to become responsible members of society. This is based on the very strong moral framework within the school with its emphasis on truth, fairness and mutual respect. Teachers' calm and positive management of pupils' behaviour also acts as a very good basis for moral understanding. They gently guide pupils to make distinctions between right and wrong, to take responsibility for their own actions and to consider the effects upon others. Moral issues are well taught and discussed: Year 3 pupils talked sensibly about the need to work together and find solutions to problems in a personal, social and health education lesson. Pupils devise their own

class and playground rules, which are endorsed by parents, and try hard to keep them. Rewards for good work and behaviour include 'smileys', certificates and a courtesy cup. Sanctions such as loss of playtime, lines and compensating for what they have done wrong emphasise effectively to pupils the importance of upholding the values of the school. Pupils also learn about their responsibility for the poor and disadvantaged through their involvement in charities such as Children in Need, sponsoring an adopted girl in India, shoeboxes for the needy in Belarus and the local hospice at Wivelsfield.

25. Therefore, pupils have a very good awareness of the school's high expectations of their behaviour and of the need to respect the rights and property of others. With such consistent guidelines, they generally behave very sensibly in the classroom, around the school and at play. They respond quickly to teachers' instructions, handle equipment and resources responsibly, understand the importance of routines and procedures and take care of the school environment. However, a few pupils do not readily respond to the expectations of adults and this detracts from the overall quality of pupils' behaviour in the school. During the inspection, in assemblies, there was an undercurrent of restlessness as well as some unnecessary calling out.

26. The school sees the child's education as an interaction between the child and the environment which includes people as well as materials and knowledge. This is at the heart of the school's very good provision for pupils' social development which is based on praise, recognition and encouragement. Parents at the pre inspection meeting spoke warmly of the family atmosphere in the school where older pupils care for younger ones. There is a social skills nurture group for a small number of pupils who are having difficulties with behaviour. All staff show high levels of care and this, combined with their open, friendly manner, encourages pupils to have positive attitudes towards social behaviour. 'Friends are very important people and should be treasured' announces a notice in Year 3. In Year 1, pupils give their reasons: 'I had a good playtime because.....'

27. As they move through the school, pupils are encouraged to develop feelings of self worth and an awareness of responsibilities to others through very good opportunities for personal development. They work very well in pairs and groups, share resources generously and delight in the successes of others. In YR/1, pupils enjoyed 'Sharing book time' together and Years 1 and 2 pupils in a music lesson cooperated well as they exchanged weather words for a vocal sound. They also had fun on 'Wheely Day' when they investigated forces together. They like helping with school routines such as class helpers whilst Year 6 are very responsible in taking care of the younger ones. Pupils learn the importance of teamwork and cooperation in clubs, such as football, netball, gardening, recorders, infant activities and German. There is particularly good emphasis on social development in 'circle time' where pupils have a safe and open forum for discussion and can relate positively to others. The school's good programme for personal, social and health education guides pupils into considering the effects of their actions and to celebrate the achievements of others. The School Council, which includes children from YR, gives pupils good opportunities to feel that they can make things happen and has been influential in many ways including establishing a 'friendship stop' at playtime and playground markings. Feelings of self worth and performance skills are both promoted very well, for example, by opportunities to take part in productions like Year 2's *The Elephant Child* and for older pupils *Oliver!* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Visits to places of interest like Brighton Pavilion, Newhaven Fort, the Golden Hind and Sealife Centre help pupils to learn in unfamiliar surroundings. A residential trip to Bowles Outdoor Pursuits Centre enables them to acquire the social skills of living and learning in a community away from home. Visitors like theatre groups, music workshops, Skylab and representatives from museums and the emergency services also broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils are also developing good skills as independent learners and are taking more responsibility for their own work through discussing learning objectives, using the library and through individual targets to show them the next stage in learning. The Year 2 teacher was able to assess her pupils' understanding of the lesson very easily when they evaluated their own learning and held up 'What do I think today?' cards.

28. Across the school, the very good relationships between pupils and the adults who support them give security and stability. Teachers work hard to build up pupils' confidence and self respect, for example, in Year 4 'Star of the Week' and in Year 1 'What does your silver sentence say?' In a YR/1 'circle time' on being special, the teacher let every child peep into the magic box, containing a mirror, to catch a glimpse of the special person inside. All the children kept the secret and reacted very happily. Pupils are usually thoughtful, ready to help others and show good humour and tolerance. Older pupils help the younger ones at lunchtime, listen to them read and also interview, design and write a book about the younger child. In discussion, they generally listen carefully, share their ideas and respect the views of others.

29. From time to time, the whole school works together, for example, going back in time to a Victorian school, dressing in period clothes and travelling on the local steam railway for a Victorian picnic. Such projects very effectively develop pupils' curiosity and imagination as well as reinforcing the idea of a community where all are expected to learn together and support one another.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The quality of pupils' writing, especially in Year 2, which does not match the standards reached in other aspects of their work.

30. The school has highlighted the writing aspect of English as an area for development across the school but especially to raise the level of attainment in Year 2. In the 2002 national tests in Year 2, overall standards in writing were average but no pupil attained the higher Level 3. In the current Year 2, standards in writing are not as good as those found in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science. In Year 6, over the three years 2000 – 2002, standards in English have been lower than those in mathematics and science.

31. Overall, assessment procedures in English are good and provide the school with a great deal of useful information. However, it does not use the full range of assessment information provided sufficiently sharply to identify very specific areas of weaknesses which require a clear focus. The assessment of pupils' writing to the levels of the National Curriculum is also insufficiently developed. A portfolio of levelled writing to provide a record of individual pupils' progress through the school has only just been started. There is no moderation of writing with other schools. As a result, pupils' targets in literacy are too vague and do not provide the precise focus needed to show pupils how they can reach higher levels of attainment. In Year 6, marking of pupils' writing is constructive and clear but, in Year 2, it does not show pupils how they can develop their ideas or improve their work.

Provision for pupils' cultural development which, although satisfactory overall, does not adequately raise pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in British society.

32. Central to the headteacher's vision for the school is the concept of global citizenship. She believes it to be an important plank in the continual quest to raise standards and the quality of education in the school. Although the school considers itself to be a small but very proud community, it also aims to give pupils opportunities to view themselves as part of the global community.

33. Overall, the school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development. They are encouraged to value their own heritage and the school's position in the village community. Pupils took part in the Jubilee procession through the village and there are links with the church and the Wednesday club at Wivelsfield Green. Pupils visit places of interest like Singleton, Bignor Roman Villa, Seven Sisters Country Park, the Globe Theatre and the Golden Hind. Visitors such as a journalist, authors, theatre groups, members of the emergency services and a skipping workshop help to bring the curriculum alive. In Reception, dolls and dressing up clothes reflect cultural diversity effectively. Pupils gain a broad understanding of world faiths through studying Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and aspects of Buddhism. They have taken part in re enacted Christian weddings and baptisms and have celebrated Christingle, Pesach, Divali as well as traditional Christian festivals. Pupils learn about the impact of invasion through their studies of the Vikings and are fascinated by the

contrasts between Wivelsfield past and present. There is a link with a Japanese school and pupils study Japanese, African and Indian art. They enjoyed listening to the Watoto children's choir and performing Mowgli songs with an India musician. Pupils have also cooked Indian dishes. They explore the work of artists such as the Impressionists and listen to the music of Western composers like Vivaldi.

34. However, not enough emphasis is given through the curriculum and everyday routines of the school to raising pupils' awareness and understanding of Britain as a multicultural society. There are insufficient resources such as displays, artefacts, books, games, musical instruments, links with schools with a high number of minority ethnic pupils, role models, languages, dual labelling to develop multicultural links across the curriculum. Pupils in the school are not given a broad enough range of experiences to enable them to be fully aware of the impact of the rich variety of cultures and to prepare them for life in a multicultural British society.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

35. In order to improve the quality of education offered to the pupils the headteacher, governors and staff should:

(1) Improve the quality of pupils' writing across the school but especially for more able pupils in Year 2 by: (Paragraphs 30 and 31)

developing the assessment of pupils' writing to National Curriculum levels across the school; extend and refine the use of target setting to provide the precise focus needed to improve pupils' rate of progress.

(2) Raise pupils' awareness and understanding of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society. (Paragraphs 32, 33 and 34)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

16

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

10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	9	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	13	56	31	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than six percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

118

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

6

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

21

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

6

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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
	2002	9	8	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (86)	94 (95)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	17	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (95)	100 (95)	94 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	13	6	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	13
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	16	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (93)	84 (93)	89 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	12
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	12	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63(87)	79 (93)	84 (93)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

* Data omitted because of small numbers of pupils involved.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	92	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.66
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Year 6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	74

Financial information

Financial year	2002/3
	£
Total income	317818
Total expenditure	335619
Expenditure per pupil	2844

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	-17801

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.76
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.87
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	118
Number of questionnaires returned	44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	39	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	52	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	48	9	0	2
The teaching is good.	62	36	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	50	14	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	16	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	39	54	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	32	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	27	7	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	47	14	0	5