



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

INSPECTION REPORT

CROSS IN HAND CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Heathfield

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114496

Headteacher: Mrs Gillian Mills

Reporting inspector: Mr Selwyn Ward
9271

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 March 2003

Inspection number: 247471

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Brocklehurst
Date of previous inspection:	3 – 6 November 1997

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Libby Dickson 19653	Lay inspector		How good are pupils' attitudes and personal development? How well does the school provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Jo Cheadle 23233	Team inspector	Geography History Music	How well does the school make use of information from assessment? How well does the school provide for pupils with special educational needs?
Ray Morris 11982	Team inspector	Science Physical education	How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Sheila Roberts 20760	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art Design technology	How well does the school provide for pupils learning English as an additional language?
Roger Tapley 30244	Team inspector	English Information & communication technology	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cross In Hand is a Church of England primary school for boys and girls aged 4 – 11 years. With 338 pupils, the school is larger than average. Almost all of the pupils are white and of United Kingdom heritage, with only a very small number of pupils coming from ethnic minority backgrounds or learning English as an additional language. An average number of pupils have special educational needs, mostly covering a wide range of learning difficulties but including some with social and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is also average. Although children join the school from a wide range of abilities, overall, children's attainment when they join the school is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, and this represents the mixed social and economic backgrounds of the children. In common with many schools in the South East of England, the school has had a number of changes of teaching staff in recent years and has not always been able immediately to make permanent appointments to replace staff who leave.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very well led and effectively managed and, as a result, teaching is now very good. Pupils are now attaining above average standards and are achieving well. There is good provision for pupils' personal development, and this contributes to pupils being generally well behaved and keen to learn. Cross In Hand is a good and effective school. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching is very good.
- Children of all abilities are now making good progress and standards are above average.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development and, as a result, most children behave well, get on well with one another and are very keen to learn.
- Pupils are looked after well.
- Parents benefit from very good information about how well their children are doing which helps them to support their children's learning.

What could be improved

- Not enough geography is taught in the juniors.
- Marking does not always give pupils enough guidance on what they need to do to do better.
- Staff with subject management roles are not given enough delegated responsibility.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Cross In Hand was last inspected in November 1997. Teaching is very much better than was seen in the last inspection, and standards have improved as a result. Most of the issues identified in the last inspection have been tackled well. There is very good information for parents and this has resulted in a significant improvement in attendance. Information and communication technology is now generally well used. The school now makes sound use of the good information it collects on how well pupils are doing, although marking could still be improved. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

STANDARDS

The table shows results attained at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in national tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	C	C	C	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	D	D	D	
science	E	C	C	C	

Schools are categorised as similar according to the proportion of children known to be eligible for free school

Results in the tests taken at the end of Year 6 show improvement that is broadly in line with the national trend. Standards have continued to improve this year, due to the high quality of teaching, and they are now above average in all three of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement, with pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs, making good progress. The school has set targets for improved results in English and mathematics this year that are ambitious but achievable. Standards are similarly above average in the juniors in information and communication technology, music, art and design technology. In the physical education lessons seen, standards were well above average. Standards in the humanities are not as good. They are in line with national expectations in history and in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus in religious education, but they are below national expectations in geography because not enough geography is taught.

In the tests taken at the end of Year 2, results have fluctuated from year to year. Last year they were average in reading, writing and mathematics, although in comparison with similar schools, results in mathematics were below average. From work seen, standards are now above average overall, and this represents good achievement for pupils of all abilities. Standards are above national expectations in English, science, information and communication technology, art and music, as well as in the physical education lessons seen. In other subjects, including mathematics, standards are in line with those expected. Pupils achieve well in their reception year, so that the overwhelming majority are likely to attain the standards expected for children of this age. Many are likely to exceed these *early learning goals*, particularly in mathematical, creative and physical development, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive and interested in lessons and settle to work without fuss. They are keen to join in when teachers ask questions and they often work with enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. The majority of pupils behave very well in lessons, in the playground and around the school, although there are a number of boys in several classes whose behaviour can be unsatisfactory when it is not carefully managed. There were no exclusions last year.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships throughout the school are generally good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. Most children are polite, friendly and considerate. When asked to work together in pairs or small groups, they do so sensibly and productively. In the main, girls and boys of different abilities and from different backgrounds mix, work and get on well together and are all included in the full range of school activities, although a small minority of boys display sexist

	attitudes and make uncaring remarks about other children.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average. Almost all pupils arrive at school on time. Pupils' very good attendance contributes to their good progress. Because children are attending regularly, they are able to build on what they have learnt before and teachers are not having to spend a lot of time repeating work missed through absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6
Quality of teaching	very good	very good	very good

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good. The *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies* have been implemented very well and have made a significant contribution to improved standards. Basic skills, such as spelling, punctuation and mental arithmetic, are taught well, although there is scope for more problem-solving in mathematics. Teachers mostly set out clear learning objectives for lessons, so pupils know not just what tasks they are supposed to be carrying out but also why they are doing them. Whole class discussions at the end of lessons ensure that pupils help assess for themselves how much progress they have made. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they prepare lessons very well, so that time is well used and pupils get a lot done. Teachers generally have high expectations. In the most effective lessons, they set work that offers very good challenge to pupils of different abilities, including the more able. That is not always the case, however. In some lessons, work is not well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers organise lessons well, making effective use of teaching assistants so that lower attaining pupils are able to make good progress in their learning, and managing the behaviour of some pupils who might otherwise prove disruptive. Teachers know and get on very well with their pupils and, as a result, children are keen to do well in order to please their teachers. Staff are particularly effective at ensuring that all children are fully involved in lessons, and it was a notable feature of many lessons that when teachers asked questions, every child put up their hands to answer. Pupils also learn well because teachers encourage them to think and research things for themselves. Marking, however, is too varied. Although some marking gives pupils helpful guidance on what they need to do to improve their work, much marking offers little more than ticks and vague encouragement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Legal requirements are met and the curriculum is enriched through very strong community links and a very good range of out-of-school activities. Some subjects are taught in blocks, so that months can go by before the subject is returned to. This adversely affects standards, particularly in geography, where pupils in the juniors do not have enough opportunity to develop their skills in this subject.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. Pupils with physical disabilities are very well catered for and are able to take part fully in all school activities, including physical education. The school has identified a number of gifted and talented pupils and it makes good provision for them.
Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language	Only a very small number of pupils are learning English other than as their native tongue and there are none currently in the infant or junior classes. They are well supported and, as a result, they make as good progress as other children.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for pupils' social development is very good and this contributes to their good relationships and effective team working. The school provides well for pupils' moral and cultural development and provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, although opportunities for reflection and empathy with others are sometimes missed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Cross In Hand is a caring school where children's welfare is looked after well. There are effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and very good systems for dealing with attendance.
How well the school uses assessment information	Satisfactory overall. Good information is collected on the progress pupils are making in English and mathematics and the analysis of this data has helped to raise standards. Little use has so far been made of assessment information to plan teaching and learning in other subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents benefit from school reports that give very good information on how well their children are doing. Information provided by the school on what is being taught and some helpful booklets for those joining the school for the first time help parents to give good support for their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and is effectively managed. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction and, with the senior management team, does an effective job in managing the school. Staff with subject management roles who are not members of the senior management team are not, however, given enough delegated responsibility to carry out their roles to best effect.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are committed to and very supportive of the school. They make a sound contribution, but they are very dependent on the headteacher for information about what goes on in school and in setting the school's priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes good use of the principles of <i>best value</i> to evaluate the effectiveness of its work, although parents voice some criticism about consultation and the school accepts that this could be improved. There are very good performance management arrangements which cover all staff, and newly-qualified teachers are given good support.
The strategic use of resources	Spending is closely tied to a comprehensive improvement plan which identifies clearly the school's priorities for development. Funding is used very effectively and for the proper purpose, with, for example, the investment in information and communication technology making a very effective contribution to improved standards. The school is well resourced.
Staffing and the school's buildings and facilities	Although, at the time of the inspection, one of the Year 6 classes did not have a permanent teacher, the school has been able to cope well by calling on one of the part-time teachers who work regularly in classes providing cover to release newly-qualified staff and senior management team members. Every class has a teaching assistant for at least part of the day and these make a good contribution to pupils' learning and to the effective management of behaviour. The buildings and facilities are good overall. With two halls, a well-equipped computer suite, an attractive library and light and spacious classrooms, the accommodation has many very good features, although several teaching areas also function as thoroughfares.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children make good progress. • The teaching is good. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are not kept well informed about how well their children are doing. • The school does not work closely enough with parents. • Pupils do not get the right amount of homework. • There is not enough consultation over changes. • Bullying is not dealt with well.

Around a third of the parents returned their questionnaires and their views were generally positive. Inspectors agree with all of the favourable views expressed. Inspectors consider that the school works hard to involve parents and has been effective in this. Reports give parents very good information about how well their children are doing. Inspectors found the use and amount of homework to be satisfactory. Although bullying is dealt with satisfactorily, there is a small minority of boys who continue to make unkind remarks to other children. Most of the concerns expressed over lack of consultation concerned the recent changes to the school uniform and logo. Although clearly more could have been done to involve parents over the changes, including the move from *Harry Potter* to *West Ham* strip ties, the school has otherwise good arrangements for gauging parents' views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Throughout this report, references to *Key Stage 1* relate to the infant years (Years 1 and 2) when pupils are aged 5 to 7 years. The junior years (from Year 3 to Year 6) are referred to as *Key Stage 2*, when pupils are aged 7 to 11. Children in the reception year, who are aged 5 and under, are considered to be in the *Foundation Stage*. Schools' test results are compared with the national average, as well as against "*similar schools*". Schools are grouped as similar according to the proportion of children attending who are known to be eligible for free school meals. In judging standards, inspectors analysed results attained in the national standard assessment tests (SATs) taken at the end of Years 2 and 6, both in 2002 and in previous years. Inspectors looked at and judged work currently being done in lessons and at work done throughout the past year. They listened to children read and discussed children's work with them as well as with their teachers. Whereas judgements on attainment relate to comparisons with nationally expected standards, *achievement* relates to the progress pupils make over time as they move through the school. English, mathematics and science are referred to as *core subjects*, and a degree of priority was given in the inspection to looking at these subjects. Other curriculum subjects are sometimes referred to as *non-core* or *foundation subjects*.
2. Although children join the school with a wide range of abilities, overall their attainment is average. They get off to a good start in their reception year and achieve well, so that the overwhelming majority are likely to attain all the *early learning goals* for children of this age. Many are likely to exceed these *goals* particularly in mathematical, creative and physical development, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Because of the good support they receive, the very small number of pupils learning English as an additional language make similarly good progress as the other children.
3. In the tests taken at the end of Year 2 in 2002, results were in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, the results were average in English but below average in mathematics. Results have fluctuated a little from year to year, particularly in mathematics, but there has been a generally improving trend in pupils' test scores that is in line with that seen nationally. From work seen, this trend has continued. Standards are now above average overall, and this represents good achievement for pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs. Standards are above national expectations in English, science, information and communication technology, art and music, as well as in the physical education lessons seen. In other subjects, including mathematics, standards are in line with those expected. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in the infants.
4. In the tests taken last year at the end of Year 6, results were average in English and science in comparison with results attained nationally. In mathematics, results were below average both in comparison with results attained nationally and those of similar schools. When compared with similar schools, the results in English were above average and those in science were average. Test results show a generally improving trend that is in line with that seen nationally although since before the last inspection, results in mathematics have been consistently below average and lower than those attained in other subjects.
5. Standards in the juniors have continued to improve this year, due to the high quality of teaching, and they are now above average in all three of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement, with pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs, making good progress. Standards in mathematics have improved significantly as a result of the effective use made by teachers of their assessment of gaps in pupils' knowledge and

understanding and the focus made by the school in remedying weaknesses. The school has set targets for improved results in English and mathematics this year that are ambitious but achievable. In test results in recent years, girls have tended not to do as well as boys in mathematics and science. This has also been recognised in the school's own analyses of results and, as a result, additional support has been given to girls through *booster* classes arranged to raise standards of pupils who might be on the borderline between National Curriculum levels. These have evidently been successful. Inspectors found no evidence of any significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in current work.

6. In other subjects in the juniors, standards are above average in information and communication technology, music, art and design technology. Inspectors were not able to see the full range of physical education activities that take place over the course of the year, and obviously could not look at past work in this subject, and so are not able to make an overall judgement about standards. However, in physical education lessons seen, standards were well above average. Standards in the humanities are not as good. They are in line with national expectations in history and in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus in religious education, but they are below national expectations in geography because not enough geography is taught.
7. In the questionnaire responses, 92 per cent of parents expressed the view that their children make good progress. Inspectors agree. Pupils are now achieving well throughout the school, and this represents good improvement since the last inspection when more able pupils, in particular, were not making enough progress. Standards are generally higher than were described in the last inspection. With the recent improvements in teaching and pupils now often learning very well in lessons, the school is well placed to raise standards and achievement still further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. In their questionnaire responses, 96 per cent of parents indicated that their children enjoyed school. Inspectors' discussions with pupils confirm that view. Pupils' very positive attitudes, their good behaviour and the good relationships that they forge with one another and with adults are notable strengths of the school. These aspects enhance the pupils' quality of learning and thus the standards of work that pupils achieve.
9. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. This reflects a further improvement on the previous inspection when they were judged to be good, and this very positive attitude is a very direct outcome of the good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils concentrate well and take a lively interest in their lessons. This is often as a result of good or very good teaching, and interesting lessons. For example, in a Year1 mathematics lesson, pupils showed impressive levels of concentration and motivation when they enthusiastically rose to the challenge of creating a 'magic square' where all the columns added up to 6. Pupils are keen to answer questions and readily offer their own ideas and suggestions. They listen well, as shown by Year 5 pupils, who listened intently while their teacher read them the story of Ganesh. They were immediately able to recognise that the story was written in the style of Rudyard Kipling, and then followed this up with their own work in a similar style. In more than four out of every five lessons seen, pupils' attitudes were good or better. These are higher proportions than are usually found.
10. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have the same positive attitudes to school as their classmates. They are happy to work with adult assistants and the special needs co-ordinator. They try hard to concentrate and do their best. In some lessons a few boys do not make as much effort as they could to behave well. They sometimes irritate other pupils, affecting their learning.
11. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground is good. They move around the school in an orderly manner and respond well to instructions. They hold

doors open for adults. In classrooms, teachers encourage pupils with smiles and praise, and the expectation of good behaviour. A small number of pupils, mainly older boys, have personal behavioural problems. Some find it difficult to work without the support of an adult and need constant encouragement. However, mainly due to interesting lessons and the skilful management by teachers and teaching assistants, this does not cause undue interruption to the flow of lessons. In the playground, pupils show no signs of unacceptable behaviour and play together well. They show respect for property, for example, when using the computers or in the library. There were no exclusions last year.

12. Relationships are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils are polite, friendly and considerate. They settle quickly to group work in lessons in a range of activities from physical education to literacy sessions. Good co-operation was seen, for example, in a Year 4 physical education lesson, when pupils worked well, with control and precision in a paired activity to develop their fitness skills. Good relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils characterised many of the lessons observed during the inspection, and these encourage pupils to make good progress and grow in confidence. Most pupils understand how their actions will affect others, and are sensitive to the feelings of others. No incidents of oppressive behaviour were observed during the inspection, although there were isolated instances when individual boys displayed sexist attitudes and inappropriate or insensitive remarks about other pupils.
13. Pupils' personal development is good. In lessons they are encouraged to work and think independently and to make choices in their activities. The majority want to contribute to the life of the school community. They are involved in the daily routines of the school, and responsibilities increase as they get older. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have gained in confidence, they help to organise others during playtimes, and read stories to the younger children. They deliver registers, help in the library and take responsibility for starting up the school computers.
14. Attendance rates have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now well above the national average. Unauthorised absence is low, and punctuality is generally good. Because pupils attend regularly, they are able to build on what they have learnt before, and teachers do not have to spend time repeating work that has been done already. In this way, pupils' improved attendance has contributed to the progress that they are now making.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Part of the focus of the inspection was on literacy and numeracy, so some priority was given to observing the teaching of English and mathematics, particularly as these subjects account for around half of the school day. Inspectors saw all classes being taught at least one of these subjects. In most cases, inspectors were able to observe full lessons and, in judging teaching, inspectors sought evidence that pupils were learning and making progress.
16. Teaching is now very good in all three key stages (reception, infants and juniors). Inspectors observed 81 full, or part lessons. All were satisfactory or better, three quarters were judged to be good or better and a third were judged to be very good or excellent. At the last inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, although one lesson in five was considered unsatisfactory and there was a much lower proportion of very good or excellent lessons. This means there has been very good improvement in teaching since the last inspection. This also confirms the positive view of parents, of whom 90 per cent considered teaching to be good, with 98 per cent expressing the view that their children were expected to work hard and do their best. English and Mathematics are now taught very well and the *National Literacy* and *Numeracy Strategies* have made a significant contribution to the rise in standards. The teaching seen in the inspection was generally of a higher standard than was evident in some of the work seen from earlier in the year. This is largely due to the success of the leadership and management of the

school in building a very effective teaching team following a period of quite high staff turnover.

17. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. In a Year 3 art lesson, for example, the teacher used examples from paintings by Lowry to illustrate how the effect of movement can be achieved. This received a very good response from the pupils who worked hard to recreate the effect in their own drawings. Working with a group of able Year 5 pupils, the teacher's in-depth knowledge of Rudyard Kipling and his era enabled her to reproduce and explain another simple story written in his style. From this, pupils wrote sentences themselves using dialogue, vocabulary and language devices similar to Kipling's. As a result of this very good knowledge, basic literacy and numeracy skills are very well taught, although the use and application of mathematical knowledge to solve problems is less well developed. Good planning and use of learning resources is another strength of teaching. In science, for example, the teacher in a Year 2 class carefully planned a sequence of three lessons in which pupils would be taken step by step through the process of carrying out an investigation into toy cars running down a ramp. Good use of questions, with the teacher taking care to involve all of the children, directed their thinking so that, by the end of the second lesson, pupils were already making statements about how the investigation could be carried out accurately and fairly. In a Year 6 science lesson, the preparation and provision of a wide range of instruments and objects for creating sound ensured that pupils made good progress in learning what the teacher had planned.
18. A key feature of lessons is teachers' high expectations, both of what pupils should learn and the pace at which they should work. In a particularly effective Year 3 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were not only learning to double and halve numbers, but were also set additional challenges to consolidate the basic skill they had acquired. This resulted in particularly good challenge for able pupils who confidently multiplied pairs of numbers, and even attempted multiplying numbers with fractions such as $9\frac{1}{2}$ by $2\frac{1}{2}$. In most lessons, pupils worked at a brisk pace and got a lot done. Pupils also learn well because teachers encourage them to think and research information for themselves. When Year 1 pupils were shown numbers on a grid in which they were told the rows and columns totalled six, the most able quickly spotted that the teacher's example was incorrect. The teacher, having emphasised the need to check what other people tell them, then challenged them to rearrange the numbers so that they were correct. Information and communication technology was well used in a Year 5 history lesson when pupils researched information related to Greek theatre. They confidently used internet search engines, computer based encyclopaedias and books to find a range of interesting information. The pupils found their research absorbing and it provided a useful platform on which the teacher could begin to teach the more advanced research skills of selecting and combining relevant information.
19. Lessons are generally very well managed by teachers so that pupils concentrate on their work and maintain positive attitudes to learning. Teachers ensure that pupils know what is to be learnt by discussing this with them at the beginning of the lesson and checking at the end that it has been learnt, and by doing so in a way that engages their interest. This reinforces pupils' views of themselves as successful learners and stimulates their enthusiasm for the lesson. After a lesson when they learnt to provide a division sum to go with every multiplication sum, Year 3 pupils were challenged to demonstrate their knowledge by being "multiplication and division gladiators". This involved them competing against, and challenging, each other to provide related division and multiplication facts to go with given numbers such as 1000, 20 and 50. Not only did the teaching secure the interest of the whole class, it provided them with an opportunity to demonstrate what they had learnt and even to raise the level of challenge by competing with each other. Almost all teachers know and get on very well with their pupils and, as a result, children are keen to work hard and do well in order to please their teachers.
20. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning and work well with teachers. They not only help individual pupils understand what is expected of them, but also ensure that all pupils that have a particular learning need or have a physical disability are fully included in the lessons. They are particularly helpful in managing poor

behaviour. Their contribution is less effective when, as observed in one lesson, the teaching assistant was not sufficiently active in helping the teacher support a group of boys who were finding it difficult to concentrate on the task in hand.

21. There is a very small number of pupils in the school who are learning English as an additional language, but those that are learn very well, as do children with special educational needs. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is effective because teachers make good use of regular assessments of how well pupils are doing to plan for future learning. Pupils are regrouped according to how well they have achieved in previous lessons, and this promotes their good attitudes because they do not feel that they are always in the same "bottom group". Individual education programmes are well prepared and set well focused targets for learning. On a few occasions when they were not adequately supported in lessons, boys with behavioural difficulties misbehaved, although even where this occurred, teachers did not allow them to disrupt the learning of other pupils.
22. Although one in five of the parents who returned their questionnaires expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of homework, inspectors consider that homework is used satisfactorily.
23. In the infant and junior classes, satisfactory use is made by teachers of marking and assessment to modify their planning, although this is a particular strength of teaching in the reception classes. Pupils have a very good understanding of their own learning, particularly in English and mathematics, and make perceptive comments on their end of year reports. The marking of pupils' work, however, is not used as well as it could be for developing this. It is inconsistent across the school and is confined mainly to congratulatory comments or remarks about features such as presentation. It rarely gives pupils a clear indication of the strengths and weakness of their work and what they need to do next to improve. With this one exception, all the weaknesses in teaching and learning identified for improvement at the last inspection have been substantially improved.

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

24. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities, including a very good range of extracurricular activities, including various sports, art, computers, drama, a wargaming club, keyboard and instrumental opportunities. Extracurricular activities are open to all, regardless of gender or special educational needs, and many are supported by professional coaches and make good use of the very strong links the school has with the local community. They contribute very positively to the children's all-round education, build constructive relationships, and enable gifted pupils to extend skills taught in lessons. For example, clubs enable pupils to develop very good skills in art and to develop their internet research skills. Helpful links are made with other subjects through activities such as *Science Week* in which pupils were involved in a forensic investigation consisting of analyzing handwriting, footprints and other evidence to solve a "crime". This enabled the development of descriptive language, problem-solving and interpretational skills of a high standard. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are well taught and developed in other subjects, although more opportunities could be taken to apply mathematical problem-solving skills in subjects such as science.
25. A notable strength is the end of summer term projects, in which the whole school works together with the local community to offer high quality experiences in the performing arts. In 2002, the project celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Pupils developed skills in art and design, music, dance and drama, to a high standard. Previously, pupils have explored the music, art and culture of India, and very good use was made of outside organisations, ranging from the local Indian restaurant to groups as far afield as the Gravesham Hindu Association. Pupils' achievements in the arts have resulted in the

award of the *Arts Mark Gold* in 2002. The school has also achieved the *Active Mark* for achievement in physical education.

26. Some subjects are taught in blocks, which sometimes lead to months going by before the subject is revisited. Although other subjects are affected, it has had a particular impact on standards in geography where the long gaps between periods of study of the subject make it difficult for pupils to develop and progressively build on their skills and understanding. This is not so significant in the infants because some aspects of geography are brought in to work in other topics. In the juniors, however, there is simply not enough geography being taught.
27. The school has good links with pre-school groups and Heathfield Community College, which is the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. These good links help pupils to make a smooth transition at the change of school and ensure that information is properly shared. The school is taking part in a speaking and listening project initiated by the local authority and designed to develop the communication skills of a targeted group of pupils in the *Foundation Stage*. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have good opportunities to visit the Community College to develop their confidence when moving to secondary school.
28. There are only a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school supports them well and they make similarly good progress to other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported with work appropriately adapted to meet each child's needs. This helps to ensure that these pupils make the same progress as others.
29. There is good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) linked to the science and some other subjects. *Circle Time*, where pupils have the opportunity to talk about their feelings and concerns, contributes positively to PSHE and the school has developed lunchtime activities in response to past incidents of bullying. Texts used in English lessons are often chosen with emphasis on PSHE, and appropriate links are made between geography topics and citizenship. Relationships and sex education are taught in the juniors. There is a satisfactory drugs policy, which links drugs education to biological topics in science. The internet safety policy is well advertised and provides guidance for all staff. There is a home-school agreement on internet safety to which the majority of parents are committed, and the school responds well to concerns, providing, usually, relevant alternative work where parents have not given consent for their children to use the internet for research.
30. In their questionnaire responses, 94 per cent of parents said the school helped their children to become mature and responsible. Inspectors agree. The school's provision, overall, for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
31. Opportunities for encouraging spiritual awareness are satisfactory. Assemblies give pupils a sense of belonging to a whole-school community and the opportunity to celebrate the contributions and achievements of others. They are planned around particular themes such as *being kind and helpful to others*, often supported by relevant stories from the Bible. They reinforce strong moral and social values such as *friendship* and *respect*, although the spiritual dimension and opportunities for reflection are relatively weak. During the inspection, pupils enjoyed watching a Year 3 class give a presentation that effectively illustrated the theme of *teamwork*. Music forms an integral part of the assemblies and help to create a sense of occasion. Subjects, such as art and history, provide opportunities for pupils to experience and reflect on the work of artists such as Lowry and William Morris, or to explore the meanings of poems. In lessons, pupils' views and answers to questions are valued and, on occasion, teachers encourage pupils to reflect on their own feelings. A particularly effective example of this was seen in a Year 5 guided reading session when pupils expressed genuine sadness at the death of the character in the text.
32. Provision for moral development is good. There are effective incentives for encouraging pupils to behave appropriately. Staff set clear expectations of what is right and wrong

from an early age. Awards presented at the weekly celebration assembly acknowledge effort and good behaviour as well as good work. During *Circle Time*, pupils consider why it is important to obey rules and consider others. The school encourages pupils to support a wide range of charities, and pupils' own ideas for helping others are encouraged.

33. Arrangements for developing pupils' social awareness are very good. Teachers plan carefully for the development of pupils' social skills through paired and group activities in lessons. From these experiences pupils learn to collaborate and be sensitive to one another's ideas. The school committee is a very good example of where pupils take enjoyment in demonstrating responsibility. Through their representatives, pupils contribute to the school community and, in doing so, develop their skills in negotiating, consultation and decision-making. The current whole-school project on citizenship is having a fundamental impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of what makes a good citizen, while *Circle Time* reinforces good social values. Older pupils, spoken to during the inspection, felt that these sessions gave them the opportunity to "*help each other with our problems*". Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to show initiative in their own learning. For example, Year 3 pupils showed a good level of maturity and independence in an art lesson when they were asked to sketch moving figures in the style of Lowry, from live models. Pupils' social development is enhanced by the wide range of extracurricular activities and outings and, for Year 6 pupils, a residential visit. These enable pupils to mix with others, form new friendships and to appreciate one another in a different environment.
34. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural heritage through history, art and English. Through subjects such as religious education and music, they learn about the lives and traditions of others, and in history they study civilisations such as Ancient Greece and Rome. The school works hard to provide pupils with opportunities to appreciate art, literature and music from around the world. In art, paintings in the style of artists such as Kandinsky and William Morris are displayed around the school. A good range of visits to museums and other places of cultural interest, for example Hever Castle and Newhaven Fort also enhance pupils' cultural development. A particularly successful feature was the school's very successful and project *Colours of India* when pupils made a close study of the clothes, food and arts of India. Carefully selected music as pupils enter and leave assembly brings another cultural perspective as well as creating a sense of tranquillity and occasion.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. Cross In Hand is a caring school where pupils are looked after well. The school has clear and well-established procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, and these have notably improved since the last inspection. The very good relationships between staff and pupils also help to create a comfortable and caring atmosphere where pupils feel valued and supported.
36. There are effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour and most have developed good strategies to ensure that pupils remain well behaved and actively engaged in their work. Pupils have a say in their class rules and so have a stake in keeping them. They also have personal targets which encourage them to behave well. Outside the classroom, good behaviour is encouraged through the award of 'raffle tickets', with the winners each term being chosen to go out to lunch with the headteacher, courtesy of a local retailer. Through *Circle Time*, the school is helping pupils to understand the impact of their actions on others, although there are still a few who do not conform to the school's expectations.
37. Child protection is the overall responsibility of the headteacher and procedures are good. She is familiar with local arrangements and liaises with outside agencies as necessary. Careful attention is paid to ensuring that all staff are aware of the need for vigilance.

Health and safety is given a high priority. The school has appointed a member of staff with responsibility for this area and the governors are actively involved in termly tours of the school to identify potential hazards. The local authority regularly checks the fire equipment, electrical items and physical education equipment. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues when necessary during lessons, such as in science, physical education and design technology.

38. Pupils with special education needs are well cared for. Needs are quickly identified and in the vast majority of cases, support is quickly given. In some cases, pupils with behavioural needs are not always supported in the best way. When pupils have statements setting out their needs, very good support is provided to help them to make good progress and ensure that they are included in all learning and social activities. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are very thorough and give a clear picture of the progress that these pupils make. Assessment information is used effectively to plan for future learning to ensure that good progress continues.
39. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. The school promptly follows up any unexplained absence. Calls are made on the first day of absence to parents who have not already notified the school of their child's non-attendance. These procedures have helped to improve the attendance since the last inspection. The school regularly reminds parents of the need for regular attendance, asking them, if possible, not to take their child on holiday during term time.
40. There are good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Staff know pupils very well and keep written records of their achievements and of any concerns. A good summary of pupils' personal development is written into pupils' end of year reports. The numerous extracurricular activities, the School Committee and personal and social education lessons all contribute to pupils' personal development by helping to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
41. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory overall. The school now has good procedures for assessing how well pupils are doing in English and mathematics and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Information about pupils' performance in each of these subjects is regularly collected, and teachers can easily check if individuals are on line to achieve the targets that have been set for them. When it appears that pupils are not making enough progress, this information is used to change what or how the pupils are taught. As a result, pupils are moved between ability groups in the class, given specific work for their needs and provided with necessary adult and specialist support. This is positive and having a direct impact on raising standards in English and, more recently, in mathematics. The procedures have been fully in place only since September after a long period of testing them out in individual year groups. This year, the school is extending this testing and amending of procedures for assessments to science in a similar way, and there are plans to follow with other subjects. This method will mean that complete procedures for assessing how well pupils are doing in all areas of their learning will be very slow in completion and it will be a long time before it can be used in other subjects to guide teachers' planning. As yet, subject co-ordinators have no individual responsibility for organising assessments in their own subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents support the school and want their children to do well. They feel that the teaching is good and staff have high expectations. Consequently they feel their children are making good progress and the school is doing its best to help them become mature and responsible. They appreciate that their children like school. The inspection team agrees with all of their positive comments. A small but significant number of parents were concerned about homework. The inspection team found that, on balance, an appropriate amount of homework is set and this helps to reinforce learning.

43. The school's links with parents are very effective and this is a very good improvement since the last inspection where weaknesses were identified in the information that was provided to parents. Parents are regularly invited to attend information sessions, aimed at enabling them to help their children at home. The school makes regular efforts to solicit the views of parents and respond to their views. Although parents appreciate this sort of action, a number of parents felt aggrieved that they were not consulted over the recent changes to the school logo and uniform. The quality of information provided for parents is very good overall. Newsletters are sent out regularly and parents are given information regarding the curriculum and topics that pupils will be studying during the year. Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers through reading diaries. The school brochure is informative and well presented. In addition, new parents receive a useful information booklet setting out further details of school life. The school's internet website is another accessible source of information for parents, and this encourages the use of email for easy communication between home and school.
44. A significant number of parents felt that they were not well informed about the progress their children are making. The inspection team found that pupils' reports are of very good quality. They state clearly what pupils know, understand and can do. Targets are helpful, clearly explaining what pupils need to do in order to improve. Reports are enhanced by the general comments teachers make on pupils' attitudes and personal development, and these show very good knowledge of pupils by staff. Some parents were concerned about how closely the school worked with them. Inspectors judge that the school has a good partnership with parents and this enables parents to support their children's learning.
45. Parents' involvement with the school makes a good contribution to its work and to the attainment of pupils. Many come into school to help with swimming, reading and extracurricular activities. Parents help on school trips to ensure that there is an adequate ratio of adults to pupils. A good number support the school through the Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association which organises fundraising and social events. The funds raised have been used to improve the stock of library books, and subsidise the running of the school swimming pool. At home, most parents are supportive and listen to their children read or help with homework tasks. There is always good attendance at parental consultation evenings.
46. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed. Communications from the special needs co-ordinator are clear and informative, keeping parents up to date on changes and allowing them good opportunity to play an active role in their child's education. The co-ordinator has been at the school long enough to know many parents well and has a good relationship with them.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The school is very well led and effectively managed and this represents good improvement since the last inspection. Parents clearly value the leadership and management of the school, with 96% expressing positive views in their questionnaire responses. The headteacher provides very strong leadership which results in high expectations and in the school's aims and values permeating its work. There is a strong ethos of caring and equality which supports the achievement of all pupils, including those who have learning difficulties or a physical disability. Parents themselves commented that *"Every child is special"* and that this strength *"comes from the headteacher"*. With the senior management team, the headteacher does an effective job in managing the school. Together the team have established a strongly shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. Staff with subject management roles who are not members of the senior management team are not, however, given enough delegated responsibility to carry out their duties to best effect. As a result, the effort made by staff which has led to the very good progress made in teaching and learning has yet to have as great an impact on some other aspects of the curriculum. An example of this is in the

development of new procedures for assessment. Although these have been very effective in English and mathematics, the arrangements for extending the benefits to other subjects are too slow because they have not been delegated to subject co-ordinators.

48. The co-ordinator for special needs work is experienced and knowledgeable and leads and manages the provision well. She keeps up to date with all special needs issues in order to keep teachers and parents well informed. Her support for teachers in creating individual educational programmes ensures that targets are clear, measurable and appropriate. She has already proposed plans to address the issue of behaviour needs in school in order to support pupils more effectively where this is needed. She manages the deployment of teaching assistants well to ensure that support is available where it is needed most.
49. Governors are committed to and very supportive of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties well and take their responsibilities seriously ensuring, for example, regular health and safety checks. Many, including the chairman, are frequent visitors to the school and are well known to staff and the children. Visiting governors, some of whom have 'adopted' particular year groups, do not always have a specific focus when doing so but report back orally to the whole governing body. Governors are well organised and make a sound contribution to shaping the direction of the school. The school's finances are monitored effectively and the recommendations of the last external audit have been implemented. Spending is very closely linked to planning priorities drawn together by committees which focus on main aspects of the school's work such as curriculum, staffing and buildings. Many aspects of the school's performance are compared with that of other schools and they are vigorous in their pursuit of value for money when negotiating with the local education authority and contractors, and they plan to review their procedures for consulting parents. In this way, governors make good use of the principles of *Best Value*. They keep themselves abreast of governors' developing role by attending training provided by the local education authority and have recently had specific advice on interpreting the school's results. They remain, however, very dependent on the headteacher for information about what goes on in school and in setting the school's priorities. They do not always, for example, receive information about standards directly from all subject co-ordinators. This reduces the rigour with which they hold the school to account.
50. The school has a comprehensive improvement plan that identifies clearly the school's priorities for development, although it is limited to four terms which does not encourage a long term view. The headteacher and senior staff have good procedures for monitoring teaching and learning and assessing standards in English and mathematics but there is too little direct involvement of many subject co-ordinators as they have no opportunity, for example, to observe the teaching of their subjects. The school makes good use of external benchmarks against which to compare its performance. As an example, the school has twice been awarded the Basic Skills Agency *Quality Mark*, which is dependent upon the school measuring itself against a required standard of teaching, pupils' attainment and communication with parents. As a result, the school's priorities for development are very good and are firmly aimed at raising standards. Funding is used very effectively and for the proper purpose, with, for example, the investment in information and communication technology making a very effective contribution to improved standards. The school office is run efficiently and good use is made of new technology. The bursar manages the day to day running of the school's budget effectively and produces regular statements of expenditure for the purpose of monitoring by the headteacher and governors.
51. The buildings and facilities are good overall, and there is good disabled access around the school. With two halls, an attractive library and light and spacious classrooms, the accommodation has many very good features, although several teaching areas, including the main hall and library, also function as thoroughfares. Buildings and grounds are well maintained. Resources for learning are good. Subject co-ordinators ensure that the curriculum is properly resourced and in several subjects, such as physical education with good outdoor facilities including a swimming pool, this is particularly well done.

52. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good and the school has coped well with recent staff absences and recruitment problems. The headteacher and senior staff have been particularly successful in building a very effective teaching team following a period of quite high staff turnover. Teachers' knowledge of the curriculum is good and those with particular subject responsibilities are well qualified. The school has invested wisely in support staff and these teaching assistants are generally well managed by teachers so that pupils' learning benefits as a result. The school has very good arrangements for performance management of staff, including teaching assistants and administration staff. Development targets are firmly linked to school improvement and staff view the process as a positive opportunity to develop as professionals by, for example, agreeing targets identified as competencies needed for senior roles in school leadership. Newly-qualified staff are well supported and the school is valued by higher education institutions as providing very good training for their students.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. Inspectors have identified the following key issues for action. In order to improve the standard of education provided for pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in geography by
 - (i) increasing the amount of time devoted to teaching geography in the juniors
 - (ii) ensuring that pupils build and develop their skills in this subject as they progress through the school
 - (iii) better matching work to the different abilities of pupils
(paras 6, 25, 88-91, 93)

- (2) Improve the quality of marking by
 - (i) ensuring that work is consistently marked
 - (ii) giving pupils guidance in the marking on what they need to do to improve their work
 - (iii) better matching marking to pupils' individual learning targets
(paras 22, 68, 75, 80, 89, 93)

- (3) Ensuring that staff with management roles are given the opportunity to manage their subjects and responsibilities effectively by
 - (i) involving them more in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects
 - (ii) enabling them to take a strong lead in arrangements for assessment in their subjects so that rapid progress can be made in their implementation
 - (iii) giving them an increased role in reporting to governors on standards
 - (iv) ensuring they have adequate time to carry out their responsibilities
(paras 41, 47, 49, 50, 81, 84, 87, 91, 94, 102, 109)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan. (Paragraph references are in brackets)

- A. Continue work on encouraging good behaviour and continue to ensure that the misbehaviour of a small number of pupils does not interfere with the learning of others. (paras 10, 12, 21, 36, 38, 48, 79, 101)
- B. Ensure that children in the *Foundation Stage* benefit from the opportunity to use suitable large equipment in to support their physical development. (paras 56, 106)
- C. Provide more opportunities for investigation and problem-solving in mathematics. (paras 17, 24, 73, 76)
- D. Ensure that governors are not just dependent on the headteacher for finding out what goes on in school and for identifying the school's strengths and areas for improvement. (paras 49)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	24	34	19	0	0	0
Percentage	5	30	42	23	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 one percentage point.

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)	338
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	50

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils learning 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	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
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 2001/02, which is the most recent year for which national comparative data is available.

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	25	29	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	19	22
	Girls	27	28	28
	Total	48	47	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (88)	87 (91)	93 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	25
	Girls	28	28	29
	Total	50	51	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (93)	94(93)	100 (90)
	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	29	22	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	22	28
	Girls	17	12	17
	Total	41	34	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (76)	67 (61)	88 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	22	28
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	40	39	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78(78)	76 (75)	88 (88)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
316	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
6	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)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	212

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	780,560
Total expenditure	744,348
Expenditure per pupil	2,121
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,824
Balance carried forward to next year	36,212

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1

Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.6
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	338
Number of questionnaires returned	105

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	37	6	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	57	10	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	51	17	3	1
The teaching is good.	55	37	8	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	36	25	10	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	35	11	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	35	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	40	21	6	3
The school is well led and managed.	60	36	1	2	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	41	5	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	34	11	3	9

(Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Each questionnaire represents almost 1percentage point.)

Other issues raised by parents

Several parents were unhappy about the recent change of school uniform and logo and were annoyed that they were not consulted over it.

A few parents were unhappy with the way that bullying is dealt with.

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

54. Children enter the reception year in the September before their fifth birthday and attend either full- or part-time for the first two terms. On entry, although children come with a wide range of abilities, taken overall their attainment is average. The majority of children have received good preparation for school through pre-school provision and supportive parents. By the end of the reception year, children of all abilities achieve well in all of the areas of learning and almost all are expected to reach the *early learning goals* (the standard expected for children at the end of the *Foundation Stage*) by the time they start in Year 1. Their standards in language and literacy are in line with the national average, but in all other areas of learning, they are above. More able pupils are constantly challenged by work designed to extend their knowledge and understanding, particularly in literacy skills. Children with special educational needs do very well due to the purposeful support given both by the class teachers and the very capable classroom assistants. Children for whom English is not their mother tongue are well supported and make good progress. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.
55. Teaching and learning are very good in all areas of learning. Children feel secure and valued and consequently become confident learners. Pupils are exceptionally well managed. Expectations of children's behaviour and progress are high and children respond very well to this. What the children are expected to learn is discussed with them at the beginning of each lesson. Children are assessed when they join the reception classes and detailed assessments are carried out throughout the year. These assessments are used well to guide lesson planning. The support given by the classroom assistants is well focused to enable all pupils to do well.
56. The leadership and management of the *Foundation Stage* are very good. Learning is very well planned and teamwork is strong. Teachers plan well together ensuring consistency in provision between the two classes. Resources are very good overall and are very well used. The classrooms are attractive and stimulating, with displays that are built up following each lesson, so that they are relevant to current learning. This was well illustrated during the inspection when, following a design lesson, both classes displayed some very good samples of repeat patterned weaving. There is no separate designated outdoor play area, as the area outside the classrooms is open to the main playground, and is used as a thoroughfare by other classes. There is no large climbing apparatus suitable for the children, and they use the good supply of wheeled equipment and bats and balls on the main playground. Therefore, when playtime is shared with older pupils, the younger children cannot use their play equipment.

Personal, social and emotional development

57. The provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good, and children develop very good social skills as a result. The children learn to take turns, such as when working on computer activities in the classroom. They form good relationships with each other and with the staff, showing awareness of the needs of others. Children are both sensitive and positive when evaluating each other's work. They are encouraged to become independent and, when appropriate, make their own choices from the range of play and creative activities available. They tidy away after themselves, but many boys need encouragement to do this. Most children undress and dress themselves independently for physical education.

Communication, language and literacy

58. Children in this year's reception classes started school with average reading, writing and speaking skills. The development of these skills has been given a priority and literacy lessons are very well planned to ensure children achieve to the best of their abilities. During literacy lessons, children listen attentively and are encouraged to answer questions, for example, about the feelings of characters in the story '*Little Baa*'. Most children speak clearly and confidently to adults and to each other. There are many very good opportunities provided to develop reading and writing skills, including reading aloud from 'Big Books'. The children enjoy reading together with the teacher, although some, especially the youngest, do not join in the reading aloud as they are unsure of the words and others have loud voices which dominate. More able children read from their reading books confidently, accurately and with good expression. They can retell the events of the story clearly. Children of average ability re-tell the story from their books, using picture clues and also basic phonic skills to help with new words. Lower attaining children are more hesitant in reading, but show a sound knowledge of letters and are beginning to use the first letters to attempt to read the words in their books. They are given very good opportunities to write and their skills are sound in this area. Average ability children, writing in sand and also on paper, wrote correctly, words which have the 'sh' sound, such as, *fish* and *shoe*. More able children wrote full sentences accurately, such as, "*The sheep is woolly*".

Mathematical development

59. Children start school with above average attainment in mathematics, and the good opportunities to develop this area of learning ensure good progression. They sing number songs daily and, during registration, count the numbers of pupils present, and are frequently accurate in taking away any absences to reach a daily total. Nearly all the children count accurately to ten, and many count beyond twenty. They have done a survey on types of shoe fastenings in their class, and collated them for a display. The children use computer programs in the classroom to reinforce their knowledge of number. They have good knowledge of shape, and correctly identify triangles, rectangles and circles. They understand the principle of repeating patterns, using both shapes and colour, and produced some good examples using paint and also weaving very good repeat patterns using fabrics. In role-play at the farm shop, one group of average ability children used numbers of objects correctly, although they made no attempt to identify the value of different coins. Children learn about capacity through play activities with the sand and water trays. Most understand *empty* and *full*.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. Children are provided with very good opportunities to develop their learning in this area. They have recently visited a sheep centre, where they saw two lambs being born and have been learning about things such as their wool. Their learning about this was enhanced when a visitor came to show them how to spin the wool. They have also been learning about spiders, their natural habitat, and what they eat. They have good opportunities to use a variety of construction materials and have designed and made some special slippers, choosing appropriate materials. In using information and communication technology, the children *log on* and *off* correctly and show good mouse control, double-clicking confidently. They learn about changes over time by looking at family photographs, and about their local environment by making a three-dimensional map of the school. They have visited the local High Street, taking photographs to display and then making maps of the area. Their religious development is well provided for by learning about celebrations, beginning with their birthdays and then Christmas and Easter. They also learn about celebrations in other cultures, such as Diwali for Hindus. Their sense of awe and wonder is being developed, by looking at the wonder of new life in springtime, in the flowers and the lambs they saw on their visit.

Physical development

61. Overall, children's physical development is good, despite the shortcomings in the outdoor play area. The staff use the playground well to give the children opportunities to use wheeled apparatus, bats and balls. They use the school hall for work on larger apparatus, and children show very good awareness of space when in the hall. Children show good co-ordination and balance when using the apparatus. Children's skills are well developed through activities which involve drawing, writing and cutting out. Weaving was a particularly good activity for developing these skills. The children handle construction materials well.

Creative development

62. The children have many good opportunities to explore and develop their creative skills. They use a variety of materials to make pictures and collages, such as the 'spiders' webs', where they used silver and glitter very effectively on a black background. They learn to manipulate materials by using modelling dough to make figures and models. The provision for music is good and they enjoy singing nursery rhymes and counting songs, using musical instruments to accompany them. They clap and tap a beat, confidently following the teacher's lead.

ENGLISH

63. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 since the last inspection have been in line with the results seen nationally. In the national tests in 2002, the results were above average when compared to similar schools. In the tests taken at the end of Year 2, results have varied. In reading they have fallen from an above average to an average standard while in writing they have matched the national trend. The work seen among the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils during the inspection show that standards have risen since last year's tests. In both the infants and juniors, standards are above average. These higher standards are the result of some very good teaching, with teachers in the infant and junior classes planning their lessons well using the *National Literacy Strategy* as a guide.
64. Throughout the school, the teaching of reading is well organised and managed. Teachers give attention to teaching letter sounds and patterns, and pupils use this knowledge to tackle unfamiliar words. Shared reading sessions are used effectively to discuss texts. These are well chosen to interest both boys and girls and to match the pupils' reading levels. The most able infants are encouraged to select books that appeal to them and not to stick rigidly to the reading scheme. A Year 2 pupil explained she preferred reading *'Robbie Woods and his Merry Men'* because it was funnier than the traditional tale. The range of books in the library is good and is sufficient to satisfy the most avid readers – of which the school has several. Very good use is made of a computer program logging pupil loans and returns. Most pupils are able to *log on* to the system to record their choice of book to take home to read. This gives them an added sense of responsibility as well as providing their teachers with an updated record of their reading habits. Pupils also evaluate their reading habits, sharing their views with parents in their reading diaries.
65. The teaching of writing has improved since the last inspection. There is now a better focus on teaching pupils how to organise their writing, and a more systematic approach to teaching punctuation and handwriting. This very good teaching is leading to better standards in the infants. Pupils in a Year 2 class described the character of *Rumpelstiltskin* accurately by using information in the story well. In the juniors, pupils are also making good progress. They understand the basic rules of grammar and use different tenses accurately. The pupils give good attention to plot and ending when planning their stories. They use different forms of writing well. For example, when writing dialogue for plays and reports in their science experiments. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as work is set that is well matched to their

abilities. Throughout the school, pupils are required to draft and re-draft their work; consequently, they always know how to achieve their best. The school has correctly identified spelling as an area of relative weakness on which it is focussing attention.

66. When pupils enter the school they have average speaking and listening skills. The very good teaching in the reception and infant classes mean that, by the end of Year 2, pupils' skills are above average. The pupils enjoy discussions and all are confident in answering questions and expressing a point of view. This is because teachers plan carefully to enable all pupils to discuss their ideas amongst themselves. Pupils in a Year 1 class suggested some good ideas for an exciting place to begin their story after working with their 'talking partners'. This meant that those pupils who had initially been reticent about participating played a full part and contributed successfully. Older pupils are good at speaking and listening. This is because they have plenty of opportunities for debate, discussion and to present information to support an argument. By Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are above average.
67. Teaching is very good across the school. The teachers have an extensive knowledge and love of literature. They use this well and motivate their pupils to read widely. The whole class session at the start of the lessons is used to remind pupils of what they have already learned. This sets the scene for what is to come. A great deal of thought goes into preparing activities that capture pupils' interest so that they find learning fun and are motivated to do their best. In a lesson planned to identify features of persuasive arguments, a Year 6 teacher told the class she was banning some of their lunchtime clubs. The pupils' produced many reasons for her not to take this action. At the end of the debate she listed features pupils had used to persuade her to keep the club open. All pupils appreciated the trick and were also relieved that the clubs were not cancelled! Homework is used effectively to support work carried out in the lessons. The pupils also know that they are expected to work hard and behave well. Teaching assistants are deployed well to make sure pupils with behavioural difficulties make satisfactory progress.
68. The quality of marking is too inconsistent. It is generally good in Years 2 and Year 6, where errors are appropriately identified and targets set so that the pupils usually know what to do next to improve their work. In most other classes, work is marked to record facts learnt. Opportunities are lost to remind pupils to focus upon the next steps in their learning. In some classes, too much marking negatively identifies errors and therefore pupils become disparaged.
69. Teachers successfully develop pupils' literacy skills through subjects other than English. Much use is made of the development of the pupils' report writing skills when explaining their science results. Good use is made of history, information and communication technology, geography, art and music. A Year 6 class produced *Powerpoint*[™] presentations on their computers showing how the Greeks designed their temples. A Year 3 class gathered information from a CD-Rom on different musical instruments. They wrote descriptions identifying the grouping of the instruments into woodwind, percussion, strings and brass.
70. Management of the subject is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has been in post for three and a half years and has been influential in improving teaching and learning during this period. The weakness identified in the last inspection in the teaching of writing for infants has been successfully tackled. Information from tests and other assessments is used to good effect to plan an appropriate level of work for pupils of different abilities and to set them targets. These are regularly shared with parents at discussion evenings. The information is also used well to determine where extra support is needed, for example in identifying the need to concentrate on improving pupils' spelling. There has been good improvement in English since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

71. Results in the tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated from year to year. In last year's tests, results were in line with the national average but were below the average of similar schools. In the tests taken at the end of Year 6, results were below average last year, both when compared with results nationally and with those of similar schools. Although there has been a generally improving trend in test results, this has only in line with the national trend so that results in mathematics have remained consistently below average over recent years. From work seen, the school's focus on improving standards in mathematics has now yielded success. With the recent improvements in teaching and learning, standards in the current Year 2 are now in line with national expectations and in Year 6 standards are now above average. This represents satisfactory achievement in the infants and good achievement in the juniors. Whereas, in recent years, more able pupils have generally not done as well as they should, now pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs, are doing well in the juniors. Girls have tended to less well than boys in the Year 6 tests in the past but inspectors found no evidence of any significant difference in the achievement of girls and boys.
72. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of numbers, knowing what each digit represents in a two-digit number and they can read, write and order whole numbers to 100. Pupils complete and extend simple number sequences. They calculate mentally, or with the use of pencil and paper, using addition, subtraction and multiplication with combinations of single-digit and small two-digit numbers. They are beginning to understand division, using knowledge of the 2, 5 and 10 times tables, and by using sharing and grouping. The emphasis is mainly on number, but pupils also understand reflective symmetry and the properties of simple two-dimensional shapes, and are able to read simple scales using standard units of measure. Standards are average because most pupils are attaining at a similar level. Some of the work does not sufficiently challenge more able pupils to do better than the nationally expected level.
73. By the end of Year 6, nearly all pupils' are working at least at the nationally expected level and a significant number are attaining at a higher level, which represents improvement on previous years. This stems from very good teaching, high expectations and the improved quality of planning in the juniors. Pupils solve increasingly challenging mathematical problems, often involving numbers to 2 decimal places, and make good use of different strategies for working out their calculations. They estimate answers using knowledge of place value and mental strategies, and check their answers using inverse operations. There is little evidence of pupils in either the infants or juniors working with extended problem-solving or investigational mathematics and these skills are not being built upon as pupils move up the school. This is a weakness, although pupils do have satisfactory opportunities to use and apply their mathematics in other subjects.
74. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is now very good overall. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well, making good use of resources. Pupils learn most where teachers have designed interesting activities that provide challenge according to pupils' ability. For example, in Year 1 a "magic square" activity was used to develop ability in adding three single digit numbers and create a 'magic' total vertically and horizontally. The most able were challenged to work with some two-digit numbers, whilst the least able were supported in simply adding three numbers horizontally. Pupils make less progress in lessons, however, where activities are not sufficiently challenging or where there is not enough difference in the work provided for pupils of differing ability. In a Year 5 lesson, very good use was made of computers and the internet to enable pupils to work on timetables. Pupils are grouped well, which enables teachers to sustain teaching and make very good use of support staff. Maximum participation is ensured by the use of whiteboards, games and paired work, and well directed questions, which results in pupils being enthusiastic and anxious to please. Teachers are confident and their subject knowledge is good.
75. The school has improved the way it checks on pupils' progress by regularly assessing their skills and understanding. This has enabled teachers to see if pupils have made enough progress and provide extra support where necessary. However, written feedback

to pupils through marking is too limited. It consists mainly of ticks and comments about effort or presentation.

76. The co-ordinator has made good use of the support provided by a numeracy consultant and her effective leadership has resulted in improved standards, particularly in the juniors. She has introduced a consistent approach to planning based on the *National Numeracy Strategy*, which has contributed to higher expectations. She has provided in-service training very effectively and evaluated its success. She has been involved, with the **Error! Bookmark not defined.** in monitoring teaching and learning in each class, and has an overview of progress through scrutinising teachers' plans. Mathematics is well resourced. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, although this has been most evident over the past year.

SCIENCE

77. Results in the 2002 national tests in Year 6 were in line with those found nationally and those of similar schools. There has been a generally improving trend in results. In recent years, the standards attained by boys has generally been better than that of girls although, in current work, inspectors found little difference between the attainment of girls and boys. Work seen during the inspection suggests results are likely to be above average by the end of this year. There are no national tests for pupils in Year 2, but teacher assessments show that in 2002, by the end of Year 2, pupils attained standards that were well above those expected, both nationally and when compared to similar schools. Inspectors found standards in Year 2 currently to be above average. Pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those with special education needs, achieve well because they benefit from good teaching.
78. Science is taught well. There is a strong focus on pupils carrying out practical investigations and they do this well. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were encouraged to pose questions about what they could find out about cars running down a ramp. The teacher used questioning well to extend pupils' thinking. As a result, pupils responded thoughtfully and established key points for their investigation such as what they needed to measure, what they needed to keep the same, and how they might use a table to record results. Teachers have good subject knowledge and ensure that pupils use correct scientific vocabulary. This promotes more precise thinking. Year 6 pupils, for example, talk about solids, liquids and gases with confidence when discussing how well sound is transmitted through different materials, and use the terms solute, solvent and solution when considering the density of water in experiments on floating.
79. The school provides a range of stimulating activities to bring the subject to life. A whole week's project centred around a "police" investigation into a staged 'break in' at the school provided opportunities for the youngest children to investigate patterns in footprints and carry out simple chromatography tests on handwriting. Older pupils, meanwhile, investigated the acidity of soil samples and the change in temperature as plaster of paris sets. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well to this. Teaching was weaker when a few activities were not carefully enough planned to ensure that they offered a sustained challenge throughout the lesson. As a result, a small number of pupils sometimes became troublesome or worked for periods of time with little application.
80. Work in books is generally neat and well presented. A notable feature is the opportunities provided for pupils, including the youngest, to apply and develop their literacy skills through writing, rather than relying on pre-printed worksheets for recording work in science. The school is rightly planning to create similar opportunities for more use to be made of mathematics and information and communication technology to support learning in science. The subject currently makes satisfactory use of information and communication technology and makes a sound contribution to pupils' numeracy. Marking, however, gives pupils insufficient information about what they need to do to improve. There is a good assessment scheme in Years 5 and 6 but this has not yet

been extended lower down the school and this has limited its contribution to raising standards. Pupils are interested in science and the subject makes a good contribution to their social and spiritual development. Pupils work together well, especially when carrying out investigations, and make thoughtful suggestions on how things could be improved. Their behaviour is generally good and they have opportunities to reflect on the nature of the universe and life itself, for example through studies of the solar system and watching the incubation and hatching of hens' eggs.

81. Science is well organised. The recently appointed co-ordinator is well qualified and ensures that the good level of resourcing, which includes the school's own pond, is effectively used. She has had little opportunity, however, to have a direct influence on learning as she has yet to observe teaching and has had, to date, only limited involvement in analysing pupils' attainment and setting targets for improvement. Taking into account the level of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, especially of scientific investigation, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

82. At the end of both key stages, standards are above average. This represents good achievement. It is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. In the infants, pupils develop a good understanding of the principles of colour. In Year 1, they learn how to mix colours to produce shades of brown, green and orange, which they used very successfully to paint their individual pictures of teddy bears. They have produced some very effective repeat pattern paintings, such as their Christmas tree designs, using only two colours. In Year 2, they have used pastels on a black background very effectively. They also designed and produced some unusual and very effective textile collages, based on peppers and cacti.
83. In their work based on Lowry, pupils in the younger junior classes have produced some very good work in depicting movement. In a very good lesson seen, they used live models, posed in a moving position, to sketch and finally draw in detail, to successfully reproduce movement. They understand how to capture the style, with attention to detail, of a painter such as Lowry. In connection with their history work on Ancient Greece, older pupils have designed and made some outstanding, very large masks, such as those used in Greek theatre. They used a variety of methods and materials very successfully. These included moulding with *mod roc*, which was then painted and glazed. They applied the knowledge learnt in history well, which included the oversized mouth to allow the actors' voices to carry. In collage, pupils use a variety of appropriately chosen materials to show different effects, such as rock and grass, water and skin. They use layers and a three-dimensional effect to emphasise the different surfaces. There is a successful after-school art club where pupils are making model birds, inspired by the work of Picasso. They use rolled paper and paper mache, then paint and glaze the surface to achieve the correct appearance.
84. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was very good. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The subject is well co-ordinated and resources are very good. Standards in the school have been judged against the *Artsmark Gold* award for schools in England. This recognises that the school has made a strong commitment to art. Although teachers assess pupils' work on an informal basis, there is no formal assessment of individual pupils' work tied to National Curriculum levels which might help to further raise standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Just two lessons were seen during the inspection, both in the infants. Photographic evidence, design books, samples of finished work, and discussions with pupils show that pupils achieve well and attain standards throughout the school that are above national expectations. This shows good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average.
86. Pupils in the infants made some good moving teddy bears from card, using split pins and a lever. They discussed the effect of moving the lever, accurately predicting what would happen when it was moved. They chose the way they would decorate their teddy bears and then evaluated the success at the end of the lesson. They were very enthusiastic and took great care to cut around the templates very accurately. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have planned and designed 'moon buggies', which they then made and evaluated very well. They made good suggestions for improvement and as homework are going on to design and build model rocket ships. Pupils in Year 6, planned and designed 'Celebrity Slippers', specifically for one particular celebrity of their choice. They matched design and suitability of fashion and materials to the named celebrity, and using their imagination, producing some very good designs, which they evaluated.
87. The new co-ordinator is knowledgeable and is beginning to lead the subject well. He is developing a system of assessing pupils' skills and knowledge against the levels expected in the National Curriculum. This is currently being tried out solely in Years 3 and 4. Resources are good, enabling a range of materials and techniques to be used.

GEOGRAPHY

88. Standards in geography are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. There was less work to look at from the junior classes and there were no geography lessons taught in the inspection week. It was impossible therefore to judge the overall quality of teaching, but learning has been unsatisfactory. Pupils talked to inspectors about their work. Standards are below expectations by the end of Year 6 and pupils are not doing well enough in the junior classes because not enough time is spent teaching the subject. The way in which the subject is taught, with gaps of many months between blocks of teaching, means that pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop adequate skills or knowledge and understanding. Although attainment is better now in the infants than at the time of the last inspection, overall standards are not as good as they were and improvement in geography has been unsatisfactory.
89. In the infants, pupils begin developing mapping skills in Year 1 by drawing their route to school. This work is extended in Year 2 when pupils use directions and add symbols and a key to their maps. They compare life in Heathfield with the lives of the Horta family in Tocuaro, Mexico. They think about the reasons why the food they eat is different and why the Horta family home is very unlike homes in Heathfield. While pupils attain reasonable standards overall in this work, there is little difference between the work produced by more able and lower attaining pupils. All pupils do the same work without specific challenges for any of the ability groups within the class. In addition, it is not always clear which geographical skill is being learnt, because teachers do not mark pupils' work by making reference to how well they have understood and used a new skill. Marking most often comments on how well work has been presented.
90. In the juniors, pupils in Years 3 and 4 study the local area, looking at changes over time and the impact of these changes on peoples' lives. Good links are made with work in history as pupils study Victorian and modern day features of Heathfield and talk about how lives changed when the railway was built. Pupils develop and apply their literacy skills when they write letters to the council stating their views for and against a new bypass in the village. Pupils also explore citizenship and environmental issues when they discuss the changes that would need to be made to build a new swimming pool. Pupils' work is well organised and standards are often good in this year group. However, in other year groups, pupils do not progressively learn better geographical skills, mainly because they do not have opportunities to learn geography often enough. In addition, when geography is taught, the level of challenge is not always appropriate to the year

group. For example, pupils in Year 4 also studying the local area learn the same level of geography skills as in Year 3. Pupils in Year 6 told the inspector that they “*did not do much work in geography*”. They talked about their most recent project about rivers, but struggled to explain the water cycle. Only the boys in the group who attended Scouts could explain grid references on maps. Pupils did not know the capital of Wales and thought that the Nile was the longest river in England.

91. The subject co-ordinator is new to the role and has only recently returned to school after a period of absence. She has not as yet had the opportunity to make an effective contribution to improving standards, but has clear plans for how she wishes to develop the subject throughout the school by raising standards through improved teaching and learning.

HISTORY

92. As at the time of the last inspection, standards in history are in line with expectations by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards have been satisfactorily maintained since the last inspection. The best aspect of pupils’ work is their knowledge and recall of historical facts and events. As only two lessons were seen during the inspection, both in the juniors, it is impossible to judge the overall quality of teaching and learning in the subject. In the lessons observed, the development of pupils’ research skills was good.
93. In the infants, pupils link their work effectively with geography topics. For example, *Barnaby Bear*, used in geography, links with the history of the teddy bear. Visits to historical venues, such as Bodiam Castle, visitors and links with activities in other subjects helps to enliven the subject for pupils and serves to compensate for the effect of the blocking arrangements that weaken learning in geography. In the juniors, pupils learn about Britain since the 1930s, World War II, the Romans, the Vikings, the Tudors and the Victorians. Year 6 pupils have good recall of people from history and historical events. For example, they could name the wives of Henry VIII and explain what happened to them and why. Good links are made with literacy when pupils write letters in the role of either Henry or Catherine of Aragon, presenting both viewpoints about their divorce. “Viking” visitors give pupils an exciting opportunity to learn about life in Viking Britain. The current topic about the Greek Theatre is suitably supporting the development of pupils’ research skills, as well as enabling good links to be made with other subjects, such as art. Pupils make good use of a range of resources to find out for themselves what the Greek Theatre was like. However, planning and work in lessons shows no difference between the historical skills developed by Year 5 pupils and those developed in Year 6. In addition, when teachers mark pupils’ work, they do not comment on the learning of new skills or historical facts, relating these to the original learning intention of the lesson. As a result, pupils cannot measure how well they are doing and the school cannot accurately track their progress, ensuring that each year group learns increasingly more complex skills, as they get older. In most cases, teachers’ comments in marking are related to how well work is presented – which is not effective as, in many books, work is presented untidily.
94. The subject co-ordinator has started a collection of pupils’ work with the intention of guiding teachers when planning their lessons. This is a positive development, but the samples of work are of limited use at the moment because they are not all correctly matched to the levels required in the National Curriculum and show that some skills are repeated in different year groups. The effectiveness of leadership and management of the subject is restricted as the co-ordinator has had little involvement in checking on how well pupils learn and are taught.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

95. In both the infants and juniors, pupil's attainment in information and communication technology is above national expectations. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection, when the subject was below the expected standard as it did not meet National Curriculum requirements. The school has turned a weakness into a strength by focussing on providing excellent resources and training to staff, so that standards have risen to a high level. Recently, the school has made provision for a computer suite. It has purchased an 'interactive white board' (a projection screen which can be used to control a computer) so that staff can teach the necessary skills effectively. New computers have been installed in classrooms so that pupils are able to use their skills when working in other subjects. Recently the school has purchased 'broadband' technology that enables quick and effective access to the internet.
96. The development of mouse and keyboard skills is evident from an early age. Pupils in the reception classes use the new computer suite regularly; they follow instructions to colour in patterns using a paint program. Pupils in Year 1 know how to change a font and put full stops into their sentences using a word processor program. They *click* and *drag* items using a mouse. The more able pupils in Year 2 *log on* using their user name and enter details in their file. All pupils program a floor robot to follow a desired pathway. Their understanding of specialist vocabulary is good. All pupils turned their white boards correctly to *landscape* when asked to do so by their teacher in an English lesson. By Year 6, pupils can produce a *Powerpoint*[™] presentation on geographical and history topics. They understand the need for correctly framing questions when collecting information from the internet.
97. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers are becoming familiar with the computer suite and are quickly learning the possibilities it offers to enhance learning in other subjects. During the inspection good use was made of this facility. Pupils use computers to add to the quality of their work. Pupils have corrected and typed their poems and stories, added illustrations to their work, and provided captions and titles to projects and displays. Some use is made of computers to show real data such as timetables, pulled by pupils from live internet sites, in mathematics lessons. Pupils' word processing skills are good because they use these skills regularly in their English lessons. A Year 3 class used music software to improve their compositions and, as a result, they achieved a high standard of work. Digital cameras are used regularly to record work across the curriculum. A recently formed computer club for Year 6 pupils has enabled them to search educational websites for topics younger pupils study at school. They feel especially proud when they see teachers using this information to plan lessons. Good use is made of teaching assistants who work with pupils on developing their skills during the lessons. Their personal files record work of good quality so they can see the standard they are expected to achieve. Where teaching, although satisfactory, was less effective, instructions given to the pupils were too complex and limited their progress, particularly with pupils with learning difficulties.
98. The subject co-ordinator is very effective. She has produced a very good action plan which is helping to raise standards through guiding important developments such as staff training. Staff have received training in the use of the equipment available, which includes an excellent range of resources. The school website is now in operation. It is comprehensive, with a calendar of events, examples of pupils' work and photographs showing pupils working at a range of activities in school. Newsheets for parents are regularly added. There is an email facility for parents' questions concerning school procedures. There are formal procedures for assessing pupils' progress over time. The school's policy includes appropriate consideration for the need to ensure that pupils use the internet safely. The school has quite rightly identified the setting of pupils' individual learning targets as the next stage of development in further raising standards.

MUSIC

99. As at the time of the last inspection, attainment in music is above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good maintenance of standards since

the last inspection. The strength of pupils' attainment is in their singing, which is confident and tuneful with good articulation of words. Pupils achieve well and show real enjoyment of singing together and performing for an audience.

100. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lessons seen, most teachers had good subject knowledge and were confident in demonstrating by singing themselves and giving pupils rhythms to follow. In a music assembly for the infant classes, the teacher started with breathing exercises to prepare for singing. Pupils were used to this preparation work and behaved very sensibly, concentrating on their own breathing. An excellent activity to warm up voices helped pupils to develop better articulation and expression in their voices. The teacher very accurately demonstrated a song to help pupils sing all the notes of the scale. Her demonstration helped pupils to attain good standards when they sang themselves. They understood that when the teacher used her "little singing voice" she was listening carefully to how well they were doing. In this way, the teacher could help individuals to improve. Because pupils behaved very well and paid very good attention to the teacher, they quickly learned a new song and were able to perform it with good results.
101. Where teachers were less confident, they made good use of the school's music programme to plan well-structured lessons ensuring continued development of pupils' skills. In Years 5 and 6, pupils sang in a round, keeping in time and most often holding the tune. They understood the term *ostinato* and the difference between *rhythm* and *pulse*. In both of the lessons observed in the juniors, some boys were less well behaved than their classmates, although they still showed great enjoyment of singing and performing. Teachers managed their behaviour well and lessons ran smoothly.
102. The co-ordinator was on maternity leave at the time of the inspection and so it was not possible to assess at first-hand the impact she has had in maintaining standards in music. There is currently no way of formally checking how well individual pupils are doing or whether the skills and knowledge they are learning are increasingly more challenging so that even better standards could be achieved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. Not all aspects of physical education could be seen during the inspection and it was obviously not possible for inspectors to look at past work in this subject, so inspectors are unable to make an overall judgement on standards. Nevertheless, standards in all the lessons seen were well above national expectations. This suggests very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were mostly average across the school and when all teaching was judged satisfactory. Teachers' planning shows that all aspects of the National Curriculum are taught.
104. Year 2 pupils' throwing skills are well developed and, as a result, they concentrate on dodging techniques to play simple team games involving throwing and keeping possession of a ball. Pupils understand how particular games require certain skills so that by Year 4, for example, they talk confidently about how throwing and related actions vary in football, netball, bowls and badminton. A feature of all the lessons seen was the extent to which pupils co-operate and concentrate on improving their performance. Pupils in a Year 5 lesson, for example, tried very hard at throwing, dribbling and catching in timed team activities in order to improve on previous best times. Swimming is taught to all age groups during the summer in the school's own outdoor pool and, by Year 6, almost all pupils attain the national target of swimming 25 metres. Many exceed this, with a number of pupils obtaining water survival certificates at various levels. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good and often very good progress in lessons. A particular strength is the full involvement of those with disabilities. Gifted and talented pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills in after-school activities and are encouraged to join local sports clubs.

105. Teaching is very good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject. All lessons begin with a warm up activity and teachers explain the reasons for this carefully, describing the effects on the body's muscles, hamstrings and circulation system. As a result, pupils develop a sound appreciation of the health aspects of the subject. The pace of lessons is high, resulting in effective use of time so that pupils do a lot and, when working outside, they remain warm. Teachers demonstrate the activities required, so pupils watch carefully and learn quickly. There is an emphasis on using correct vocabulary, so pupils use terms such as *strike*, *control* and *court*, with confidence. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and remain focused throughout each lesson.
106. The subject is managed by a well-qualified co-ordinator who is enthusiastic about physical education and promotes the subject well. There are good resources and extensive provision of activities and sport, including extracurricular activities. The involvement of the community and adults other than teachers in providing coaching in sports, such as football and croquet, has contributed to the school being awarded the nationally recognised *Active Mark*. The subject contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development through the development of fair play, and by helping children to achieve well and feel good about themselves. Performing dances from other societies, such as Maori, also broadens their understanding of other cultures. The provision of suitable gymnastics apparatus for the youngest children was identified at the previous inspection as needing improvement and this still remains a priority.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

107. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations in the locally-agreed syllabus. This represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils cover a good range of topics and make satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding. Where tasks are well designed and allow scope for extension, pupils' skills develop well, but too often more able pupils are not challenged beyond the level of the average, and sometimes too much is expected of lower attaining pupils.
108. By the end of the Year 2, pupils have learnt about churches and synagogues, the work of the local rector and have an understanding of the significance of festivals such as Passover and Easter and how they are celebrated. They have a good knowledge of religious symbols and what they represent. Pupils write their own simple prayers. By the end of Year 6, pupils have been introduced to the main features of Christianity and Islam and are given satisfactory opportunities to empathise with the perspectives of religious viewpoints that may differ from their own. For example, pupils can write sensitively in role as Moslems exploring the impact of participating in the Hajj. Sometimes, however, such opportunities are missed. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and festivals, such as the rituals associated with Christian Advent and Jewish Hanukkah. Where pupils are given the opportunity to reflect upon their own experiences and feelings in relation to religious stories or symbols, they make better progress. Such opportunities, though limited in both key stages, are more evident in the juniors. For example, in Year 3, the teacher made good use of role-play to help pupils understand the temptations that Christ faced and how they deal with temptations in everyday life.
109. The teaching seen ranged from satisfactory to good. There was a higher proportion of good teaching seen in the juniors than the infants. The co-ordinator has been effective in developing the school's scheme of work and resources within the limitations of her budget. She is aware of the priorities for the subject, but has not had opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning or significantly provide for the training of colleagues. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.