

INSPECTION REPORT

ELHAM C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Elham, Canterbury

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118741

Headteacher: Mr. Anthony Fielding

Reporting inspector: Marianne Harris
23288

Dates of inspection: 9th – 11th June 2003

Inspection number: 247954

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Vicarage Lane Canterbury Kent
Postcode:	CT4 6TT
Telephone number:	01303 840325
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Val Hall
Date of previous inspection:	4 th – 6 th June 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23288	Marianne Harris	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Science Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How good are curricular opportunities?
9646	Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12373	Margaret Dickinson	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music Information and communication technology	
32951	Elizabeth George	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education Educational Inclusion	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Elham Church of England Primary School is Voluntary Aided and has 118 pupils on roll between the ages of four and eleven. It is a smaller-than-average school located near Folkestone, Kent. The pupils are mainly from a white United Kingdom background and there are no pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, and the proportion who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, is close to the national average. These needs are mainly linked to mild learning difficulties. Attainment on entry to the school is above average in language and mathematics, and average in all other areas of learning, and by the time they enter Year 1 many children have exceeded the early learning goals (the nationally expected standard). Few pupils are eligible for free school meals and most are from a socially advantaged background.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Elham is an effective school. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Teaching throughout the school is good and the pupils achieve well. The leadership and management are good and the governors support the school well. There are clear plans for improvement and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average
- Teaching is good throughout the school and pupils achieve well
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, senior staff, and supported effectively by the governors
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good and this leads to pupils having very positive attitudes and behaving very well.

What could be improved

- Information and communication technology is not used effectively to support learning in other subjects
- By Year 6 standards in music are below average. The music curriculum is too narrow and restricts the pupils' musicianship skills.
- The school does not work closely enough with parents, and, as a result, some parents have negative views of some aspects of the school's work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 2001, when it was judged to be underachieving. There has been good improvement since that time. Standards are now well above average in English, mathematics and science, and higher attaining pupils have work that is well matched to their ability. Teaching has improved and is making more impact on pupils' achievements. Much work has been carried out to improve the accommodation, and concerns expressed at the time of the last inspection have been tackled effectively.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	C	A	C
mathematics	A	A*	C	E
science	D	B	B	C

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

The number of pupils who take the national tests each year is small and this means that the performance of just one child can affect the overall results for the school and cause the school's results to fluctuate year on year. For example, the performance of one pupil in 2002 mathematics test resulted in a fall in the overall test result. There has been much emphasis put on the teaching of literacy skills across the school and this has resulted in the improvement in the English test results. Similarly, science has been the focus for improvement since 2000 and results have improved. Children in the reception year come into school with above average skills and knowledge in language and mathematics, and by the time they enter Year 1 most will reach the early learning goals, and many will exceed them in all areas of learning. By Year 2 pupils attain standards overall that are well above average in English, mathematics and science and achieve well.

Standards of work seen by Year 6 are well above average overall. Pupils achieve well, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils have appropriate work that is well matched to their ability, and pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class so that they make good progress. Over the last few years the trend in improvement has been gently rising. The targets that the school set for test results were not met because the result of one pupil meant that the overall percentage was lower than expected. The school has set ambitious targets for this year and is likely to reach these, based on the work seen during the inspection.

In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally, except in music where, by Year 6, standards are not high enough. The recent emphasis on English, mathematics and science has meant that other subjects have not had a high priority in the school, resulting in standards that are only in line with what is expected nationally. The school is now focussing on these subjects in order to raise the standards and ensure that all pupils achieve well in all subjects. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with what is expected nationally, but the skills pupils learn are not used effectively to support learning in other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very positive about school. They settle to work quickly and get a lot done. They take a pride in their work and enjoy findings things out for themselves.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well together and respect each other.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching across the school is good. All of the lessons seen were satisfactory or better, with about three quarters being good or very good. Teachers have high expectations of both learning and behaviour and pupils are managed well. English and mathematics are taught well and this leads to the high standards. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils, especially those with special educational needs, so that all pupils make good progress and achieve well. Marking is very good. Teachers write encouraging remarks on pupils' work and let the pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils work hard and generally get a lot done. The purpose of each lesson is usually shared with the pupils and targets are set for them in order to raise attainment. However, this is a very recent initiative and pupils are not always sure which National Curriculum level they are working at.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and the programme for personal, social and health education is very good. The school works closely with other institutions and this makes the transition to the next stage of education smooth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in school and they make good progress and achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, but the school could do more to prepare the pupils to live in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Procedures for child protection are well established. Pupils' personal and academic progress is monitored effectively and this helps pupils to make good progress.
How well the school works with parents	Unsatisfactory. The school does not do enough to develop close links with parents and consequently many are critical of some aspects of the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and	Good. The headteacher and staff have a clear vision of how the school

management by the headteacher and other key staff	will improve further and plans have already been implemented. This shared view means that the school has good capacity to succeed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are very supportive of the school. They are very aware of the strengths of the school and where improvements need to be made.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school evaluates what it does appropriately to make sure that it gets the best value from all aspects of its work.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Money is spent appropriately and there are sufficient staff to teach the requirements of the National Curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • Behaviour is good • Teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Information about the progress their children are making • How closely the school works with parents and how approachable the staff are • Extra-curricular activities • The leadership and management of the school

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by the parents, and with some of their concerns. Homework is satisfactory, but it is inconsistent and it is not always clear how much homework the pupils will have and when it will be set. Annual reports on the progress that the pupils make are not good enough. There is too little information about what each child has learnt during the year. Inspectors agree that the school does not work closely enough with parents and communication, overall, is unsatisfactory. However, inspectors disagree with parents about activities outside lessons and about the leadership and management of the school. The range of activities available to the pupils, including visits and other activities, is good. It is the judgement of the team that the school is well led and managed by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. Parents also raised concerns about the amount of supervision in the playground. Inspectors looked closely at this and found it to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The number of pupils who take the national tests each year fluctuates, and is always small. The performance of one child can have a significant effect on the results of the school overall, and this makes comparisons with other schools unreliable. However, the trend in results over the past few years has been one of improvement.
2. In the 2002 national tests pupils in Year 2 achieved well. Results overall were well above average in English and mathematics, and many pupils reached the higher levels. There are no national tests in science for pupils in Year 2 and attainment is judged by teacher assessments. These assessments show that pupils attained standards that were well above average, with many pupils reaching the higher levels. Work seen during the inspection confirm these high standards. When the children come into school, they have skills and knowledge that are above average in language and mathematics. They make good progress and by the time they leave Year 2 their work, overall, is well above average. This represents good achievement for all pupils.
3. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, pupils reach standards that are in line with those expected nationally. This is due to the emphasis on improving standards in English and mathematics, where the school has been successful, and now the emphasis is moving to other subjects. It was not possible to judge standards in Year 2 for music as there was too little evidence.
4. National test results for pupils in Year 6 fluctuate, as would be expected with small numbers taking the tests each year. Results in English were well above average, average in mathematics and above average in science. The difference in the results of all three subjects is due to one pupil not performing well in the mathematics tests. However, work seen during the inspection shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average, with a large proportion of pupils reaching higher than expected standards. This is due to the good teaching, the focus there has been on raising standards in English, mathematics and science, and the careful analysis of what the pupils are experiencing difficulty with. Overall this represents good achievement for all pupils.
5. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science pupils attain standards that are in line with what could be expected for their age. The school is now focusing on raising the standards in these subjects. The exception to this is music. Standards in music for pupils in Year 6 are below those expected. There are few opportunities for the pupils to learn to compose, discuss their work and the work of others, and to make improvements. Although pupils sing enthusiastically there are not enough opportunities for them to learn to sing a variety of songs and to learn the techniques used when performing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, which is better than reported at the inspection of June 2001. These very good attitudes enhance their learning and enable them to achieve well. A very high majority of the parents feel that their children like school and this shows as the pupils are very happy to come to school and very interested in the activities provided for them. For example, in a very good information and communication technology lesson in the Year 5/6 class there was a very good level of pupil involvement when they were learning that software can be used to control a device. Staff value pupils as individuals and this encourages them to respond positively to what the school offers. The majority of the pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons and this was clearly seen in a very good art lesson in Year 2 when the class was looking at examples of sculpture in the local area. Pupils' very good attitudes make an important contribution to the high standards in the school.

7. The previous inspection judged behaviour to be good; this has improved and is now very good. Pupils learn well because teachers do not have to waste time maintaining order. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson the pupils were very excited about the activity, searching for mini-beasts, but they behaved well and worked hard. No incidents of bullying, racial abuse or oppressive behaviour were seen in the school or at break and lunchtimes. The pupils play well together and use the equipment provided sensibly. Pupils interviewed during the inspection did not feel that bullying was an issue and there have not been any exclusions from the school this year. Very good behaviour is contributing positively to pupils' personal development and helping them to achieve well.
8. Attendance is good, which is not as high as reported at the previous inspection due to illness during the winter. Pupils are mainly punctual for the start of school and lessons start on time. The regular attendance of the significant majority of pupils is contributing to their positive attitudes to learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

9. There were 28 lessons seen during the inspection. Of these, 20 were good or better, with no unsatisfactory lessons seen. This means that teaching is good overall, especially in English, mathematics and science, where the focus has been on raising standards. There was no difference in the quality of teaching between the reception year, Years 1 and 2, or Years 3 to 6.
10. Teaching has many strengths and, in particular, the strategies for marking pupils' work. The school has focused recently on making sure that the pupils know how to improve their work, and this has had a significant effect on standards throughout the school. Work is marked in such a way that pupils are encouraged by comments on how well they have tackled their task, but sensitive comments mean that they know what to do to improve further. Corrections are usually carried out, and some older pupils write their own comments on what the teacher has written. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaving well. For example, in a very good science lesson pupils in Year 2 organised themselves into carrying out an investigation on how to ensure plants thrived. They discussed the equipment they would need and how they would carry out their experiment. Pupils were keen and enthusiastic and learnt that all plants need a variety of conditions to make them grow healthily.
11. Planning is good, and English and mathematics are taught well. Most of the pupils are in mixed-age classes, and teachers work closely together so that work is not repeated unnecessarily. The purpose of each lesson is usually shared with the class, and these objectives are returned to in the end session so that pupils know what it is they are expected to learn, and whether or not they feel that they have achieved this. For example, in a good mixed Year 4/5 English lesson, the teacher used a recent trip to the theatre to encourage play-writing skills. The teacher referred to the play they had seen, reminded the pupils about stage directions and encouraged them to use these in their work. At the end of the lesson the teacher encouraged the pupils to act out their scripts, following the stage directions, and then to evaluate their work in order to see how well they had learnt during that lesson. The pupils responded positively to this opportunity and all agreed that they had learnt the importance of giving and following directions when acting out a play. However, there are few examples of pupils' information and communication technology skills being developed through subjects other than English.
12. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class. Good use is made of teaching assistants who work closely with pupils needing extra help. This means that these pupils can participate fully in the lessons and can make good progress. Higher attaining pupils have a programme of work that challenges them to attain higher standards, and work in class is well matched to their abilities.
13. Homework was raised as an issue by parents. Inspectors judged homework to be satisfactory overall, but it is inconsistently set. This means that some pupils do not get as much as others and

learning in lessons is not sufficiently reinforced through tasks that the pupils can complete at home. However, teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

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

14. Overall the curriculum is broad, balanced and meets the needs of all pupils. Although parents expressed concerns over the number and range of extra-curricular activities, inspectors judged this provision to be good. For such a small school there are many opportunities for sport during appropriate seasons, and for visits out of school. Many of the pupils in the school have recently visited Canterbury Cathedral and the Marlowe theatre to see a production of *Bugsy Malone*. This had a significant effect on one group of pupils who used this experience to write and annotate their own plays, using stage directions and notes to the actors.
15. A particularly strong feature of the curriculum offered to pupils is the provision to develop their personal, social and health education. This provision is well planned so that pupils learn about growing up, the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and how to deal with a variety of conflict situations. This results in the pupils being happy to move on to their secondary schools feeling equipped to deal with a variety of situations.
16. National strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are well established and have been instrumental in raising and maintaining high standards in English and mathematics throughout the school. All pupils are included in lessons and those who have special educational needs are well supported so that they can fully participate in activities. However, the music curriculum is weak and there are few opportunities for pupils to compose music, evaluate their work and that of others, and learn about composers. Pupils sing enthusiastically, but, again, there are too few opportunities for them to practise their skills.
17. The school cultivates the pupils' personal, spiritual, social, moral and cultural development very well overall. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. Their responses in lessons show they have awareness and understanding of their own beliefs and those of others. For example, in a history lesson in the Year 4/5 class the pupils were able to give good examples of what Puritans believe when re-enacting scenes about the lives of the Puritans.
18. Pupils' social and moral development are also very good. The majority of the parents feel that the school is helping their child become mature and responsible. Although, pupils enter the school with good personal and social skills, the school builds well on these. Through the class and school councils and jobs in classrooms many pupils take on responsibilities and carry them out sensibly and with dignity. Relationships are very good between staff and pupils and amongst pupils. All adults are very good role models; they are consistently kind, considerate and show respect to pupils and each other. Consequently, there is a strong sense of inclusion in the school and pupils from a range of backgrounds play and work well together. This was particularly evident in a very good Year 2 science lesson as the pupils investigated what plants need to grow. During the inspection pupils said that they have lots of opportunities for investigations in science, mathematics and art lessons.
19. Through activities in art, history, geography, music and literacy pupils show awareness of their own culture and heritage but as reported at the inspection of June 2001 there is a relative weakness in the school's provision for preparing the pupils for life in multicultural Britain. There could be more opportunities in history, music and art and design for pupils to develop an awareness of other cultural practices, celebrations and customs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

20. The school takes very good steps to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. This is better than reported at the last inspection as the school has addressed concerns regarding health and safety due to cramped accommodation. Risk assessments, fire checks and practices all take place as required and arrangements for first aid and medical support are appropriate. Although some

parents expressed concerns about supervision in the playground, the pupils are appropriately supervised at break and lunchtimes. Arrangements for child protection are good with the headteacher as the named responsible person. The school has established very good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. In PSHE pupils can discuss personal issues and are learning to keep themselves healthy and safe, for example in the Year 5/6 class pupils discussed taking risks in different situations.

21. There are good procedures in place to monitor and promote good behaviour and to eliminate oppressive behaviour. The consistency with which staff apply rewards and sanctions is a major contributor to the very good behaviour in the school. All staff manage the pupils in a consistent manner so they know how they are expected to behave and understand the consequences of not behaving well. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are contributing effectively to pupils' very good attitudes to learning.
22. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are effective and helping the pupils to mature noticeably as they go through the school. PSHE provision, the acknowledgement of success during Friday assemblies and the very good relationships in school are all helping pupils to develop confidence and contributing to their very good attitudes to learning.
23. The school has good arrangements in place for the monitoring and improving of attendance. Parents strongly support the regular attendance of their children and this is contributing effectively to pupils' personal development.
24. The procedures for assessing and recording pupils' academic progress are good. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics. From when they first start school, pupils are assessed and the information is collated effectively so that their progress can be tracked by the headteacher and staff.
25. The information the school holds on pupils' attainment is used well. For instance, the higher and lower attaining pupils are identified at an early stage and their progress is monitored carefully to make sure they are doing as well as they should. The highest attaining pupils are helped further by being given additional work in English and mathematics, which they do as part of their homework. The information is also used well to set targets for each pupil to predict the levels they should attain in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. This helps teachers to be aware of pupils' academic potential and set appropriate goals for pupils' learning, and this is one reason why pupils' achievement is good.
26. Whilst the procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are working well in English and mathematics, they are not yet as well developed in some of the other subjects of the curriculum, such as art and design, history and geography.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

27. At the time of the last inspection the school had a satisfactory partnership with parents. However, the partnership is now unsatisfactory. There was a high response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and a significant number of parents expressed negative views of some aspects of the work of the school. Parents do not feel that the school works closely with them, they do not feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem or that the school is well led and managed.
28. The information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. The headteacher sends out weekly newsletters and teachers provide parents with information about the curriculum their children will follow. Curriculum information evenings and parent/teacher consultations are well attended and parents were consulted about the school development plan. The school's website is currently being developed to provide more information about policy and practice in the school. Reports are an aspect of communication that could be improved. In their present format they are unsatisfactory as they do not give parents enough information about what their children know, understand and can do and the standards they have reached.

29. Induction procedures for families and children into the reception year are good and helping the youngest children to settle into school. Many parents are willing to help in school and on visits and some run after-school clubs. A significant number of parents do not think the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team does not agree with them as pupils expressed enthusiasm about the clubs and said that attendance was good. The science week was well supported by parents and they are invited to Friday assemblies, church services, the book fair and sports day. The home/school agreement is well received by parents and parents are supportive of their children with their homework although a high number do not feel they get the right amount of work to do at home. The inspection team agrees with the parents. Although some homework is set in all classes a pupil interviewed during the inspection said that it is rarely given in his class. The friends' association is very active and raises a lot of money for the school. They hold social and fundraising events including a curry and race evening, firework fiesta and a summer fete, which are well supported by parents, staff and governors. Parents have a lot to offer this school but they do not feel that they are involved enough. This inspection finds communication an area that is satisfactory, but needs to be improved if the school's leadership is to have the confidence of all parents and to carry them with it in the vision it has for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

30. Overall the leadership and management of the head teacher, governing body and senior staff are good, and show continuing improvement.
31. Senior teachers have continued to develop their roles as subject leaders, effectively focusing on raising standards and tracking the progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher meets every week with the chair of governors, and makes effective use of external advisers and consultants. All staff and governors are very committed to improvement and the school has a good capacity to succeed.
32. The headteacher has led the staff in the analysis of data showing the relative strengths and weaknesses of pupils in different aspects of science. This led to whole staff discussion and targeted teaching to raise attainment. Leaders of mathematics and English have subsequently used this approach in setting targets for improvement in their subject. The headteacher has encouraged staff to focus on the use of assessment to inform learning. Marking of pupils' work shows that teachers are implementing this strategy, with evidence of encouragement alongside clear targets for improvement. The headteacher is addressing all issues raised in previous inspections well. He is ensuring that the monitoring of teaching focuses on the learning outcomes for pupils; and that standards of work seen are judged against National Curriculum levels. All this has been effective in raising the quality of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science.
33. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and make a good contribution to shaping the direction of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. The chair of governors is clear about the need for governors to work with the headteacher to improve communication with some parents.
34. Governors and staff have written a new three-year school development plan. The plan sets out key priorities for the school to address, such as improvement in accommodation to provide better library and outdoor play facilities and improvement in teaching and learning of foundation subjects by reorganising the curriculum to ensure greater cross-curricular links and more creative use of time, resources and teacher skills. These are appropriate targets for improvements and show that staff and governors are committed to improving what the school does for the pupils.
35. Performance management of teachers is well established and makes a good contribution to raising standards. Performance targets are set which link with the school development plan, as well as targets to improve pupil attainment and professional expertise.

36. The headteacher currently fulfils the role of special educational needs co-ordinator and the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. He meets with learning support assistants each week to exchange information. He offers a weekly session for parents of children with special educational needs in order to discuss any concerns that they may have. The good support given in the classroom enables pupils to make good progress.
37. The school has a clear commitment to including all pupils in activities and to promoting the well-being and achievement of each pupil. Key subject leaders have monitored data to ensure that there is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. In the previous inspection, it was found that the organisation of the school prevented equal access to the curriculum for some pupils. The school has reorganised into five classes with only two year groups in each class. There is a separate area for pupils in the reception year. This has resulted in smaller class sizes and better accommodation for all pupils. Improvement in the quality of teaching and better differentiation of tasks within the core subjects means that most of the work set matches the prior attainment of pupils. Improvement in the attainment of higher attaining pupils has been good. The school has adopted a policy for pupils who are gifted and talented and has put into place schemes of work for extending such pupils in English and maths. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
38. The school has sufficient teaching and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and to provide adequate support for pupils at all levels of attainment. Learning support assistants are experienced and well trained and support the work of teachers well. Two new teachers have joined the school since the last inspection, and report that they have been well supported by management and colleagues.
39. Overall the school's accommodation is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The provision of additional teaching space has enabled the school to move to five classes with fewer pupils in each class. The L shape of the classroom is therefore less of an issue and teachers have used these creatively to provide space for information and communication technology or practical areas. There is less furniture stored in the hall. The outside of the building is still in need of refurbishment. The current library facilities are not well located in the information and communication technology suite with insufficient space for dual use. The provision of a dedicated space for library facilities is also included in the planned building work.
40. The school has an adequate range and number of learning resources in most subjects. Subject leaders have identified needs and prioritised spending. There are inadequate musical instruments for class use. Some other resources are on loan from Kent LEA and this service is about to be withdrawn. Some subject leaders report that this will have an adverse effect on resources for foundation subjects and are concerned about the budgetary implications for the school.
41. Financial management and administration are satisfactory and good use is made of management information systems. Educational developments are supported by sound financial planning and the senior staff and governors prioritise expenditure according to the school's development plan. Subject leaders prioritise spending in their subjects and monitor expenditure with help of the school's administration officer, who provides good administrative support to the school. In the last year the school spent a considerable sum on supply teachers to cover the long-term sickness absence of staff. This unplanned expenditure had a negative effect on the amount of money available for resources and some subject leaders lost a part of their budget. Money for non-contact time for teachers was also adversely affected. It is to the credit of the headteacher and finance committee that the school ended the financial year in credit. Specific grants, such as funding from the National Grid for Learning are used appropriately.
42. The headteacher and governors make satisfactory use of the principles of best value when spending decisions are made, although more could be done to consult parents on aspects of the school's work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the standards of education provided to pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should: *(Paragraph references are in brackets)*

KEY ISSUE 1

Plan more opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology skills in all subjects of the curriculum by

- Deciding where skills can be included and planning these into lessons
(paragraphs 11,68,73,78,94)

KEY ISSUE 2

Improve standards in music by the end of Year 6 by:

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to compose their own music
- Giving pupils the opportunity to appraise their work and that of others
- Teaching pupils the techniques needed to sing a variety of songs
(paragraphs 5,97,98,99,101)

KEY ISSUE 3

Work more closely with parents so that they feel more involved in the life of the school and have a more positive view of its work by:

- Seeking the views of parents
- Improving the detail in the end-of-year reports
(paragraphs 27,28,29,42)

In addition, the governors may wish to include these minor weaknesses in their action plan:

- Improve the provision for multi-cultural education so that pupils are better prepared to live in a multi-cultural society by providing more opportunities for pupils to learn about a variety of other cultures in history, art and music *(paragraph 19)*
- Setting out the expectations for homework throughout the school and ensuring that it is consistently set *(paragraph 13)*
- Further developing assessment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science *(paragraphs 26, 78, 86, 90)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	11	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	32	39	29	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	118
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	17

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	5	9	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (80)	100 (87)	100 (80)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (80)	100 (80)	100 (93)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. The numbers of boys and girls taking the tests were less than eleven, and have, therefore, not been reported separately.

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	9	10	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	12	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (93)	63 (100)	89 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	14	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (100)	74 (100)	95 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. The numbers of boys and girls are less than eleven and, therefore, not been reported separately.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	113	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6
Average class size	23.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	139

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/3
	£
Total income	302955
Total expenditure	293093
Expenditure per pupil	2484
Balance brought forward from previous year	9862
Balance carried forward to next year	1992

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	51

Percentage of responses in each category

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

My child likes school.

47

47

6

0

0

My child is making good progress in school.

37

41

8

6

8

Behaviour in the school is good.

22

71

4

0

4

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents raised concerns about the supervision at lunch times. Inspectors looked carefully at this and found it to be satisfactory.

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

43. Children come into the reception year in either the September or the January before their fifth birthday. When they join the school they have a variety of pre-school experiences, and, overall, they have skills and knowledge in language and mathematics that are above those normally expected for their age. In other areas of learning their knowledge and skills are average. The children make good progress during their time in the reception year, and, by the time they join Year 1, most will achieve the expected goals for children's learning (the Early Learning Goals), and many will exceed them.
44. The reception year is well managed as the class contains pupils from Year 1 as well as those just beginning at the school. The staff work very well together to make sure that the children get the appropriate provision and that they can all make good progress. Higher attaining children work with Year 1 pupils and those who need extra support have their needs met effectively.
45. Teaching and learning in the reception year are good for all areas of learning. Planning is good and activities are well matched to the abilities of the children. Regular assessments are carried out and the information is used well to plan the activities. The classroom is very well organised and this results in confident children who know where everything is kept and can organise their own activities when appropriate. Children with special educational needs are well supported so that they can participate in all of the activities and they, too, make good progress.
46. The leadership of the reception year is good. There are clear plans for improving the outside area so that more activities can take place there. Links with the local playgroup are good and this results in the children settling into the school routines quickly and happily.

Personal, social and emotional development

47. The provision for personal, social and emotional development is good and the children make good progress. They are happy to work together and take turns, sharing equipment and activities well. Behaviour is very good and this results in a harmonious atmosphere where all children are respected. Staff encourage good manners and the children respond positively, saying "please" and "thank you" where appropriate. The children are very confident and are ready, willing and eager to learn.

Communication, language and literacy

48. The children make good progress in communication, language and literacy due to the good provision. They are confident speakers, and listen attentively to the teachers and other children. They all write their name and many are beginning to write sentences neatly in their books. The children enjoy sharing their news and writing about this, illustrating their work with thoughtful pictures. There are many opportunities for them to write and they learn to form letter correctly. They systematically learn letter names and sounds, and use these when attempting to write on their own. The children love acting out stories and enjoy traditional tales such as Jack and the Beanstalk. Displays around the classroom are attractive and encourage the children to read and comment on various stories.

Mathematical development

49. Provision to develop children mathematically is good. All the children count confidently to ten and beyond. They are beginning to add up and take away, using relevant songs to support their learning. The children know most of the basic shapes and have made large pictures using these shapes. They talk about this work enthusiastically and with pride. Higher attaining children have discussed symmetry and are able to demonstrate what happens when they make a symmetrical

butterfly. The children learn mathematical language and use this during activities. When cooking they are able to talk about heavier and lighter, and discuss more than and less than accurately.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

50. The outside area is used particularly well to encourage the children's knowledge of their developing world. The children plant a wide variety of seeds and watch them grow, tending them carefully so that they flourish. They talk about what the plants will grow into and are confident when deciding how to look after them. Children use computers confidently and control the mouse well, using relevant programs. They make models using a wide variety of construction resources and talk about these confidently, explaining clearly what each model does. Children talk about their experiences and begin to understand about the passing of time by discussing what they did the day before and what they are going to do tomorrow.

Physical development

51. The provision for children's physical development is good. Children are confident when using scissors, they hold pencils correctly and this leads to neat writing. When cooking they use a variety of tools safely and are able to mix cakes confidently. During physical sessions in the hall the children dance and sing well. The outside area is used well to enable the children to ride wheeled toys, run about and learn to climb and balance confidently.

Creative development

52. Displays in the reception classroom are very good and show that the children have access to a wide variety of creative experiences. The children have looked at Van Gogh's sunflowers and painted their own in his style. They have also completed self-portraits and produced some very thoughtful and accurate work. There are many opportunities for the children to use the several role-play areas to make up their own stories and act out their experiences. The children sing enthusiastically and sing simple counting rhymes to support their learning in mathematics. They are able to explore loud and soft sounds, and enjoy moving to music.

ENGLISH

53. Pupils in Year 2 and 6 attain well above average standards in English. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. There continues to be some fluctuation in standards from year to year, particularly in Year 6, which reflects the differences between year groups in a small school.
54. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well. Most pupils enter the school with skills in communication, language and literacy that are above average; pupils in Year 2 attain levels that are well above average nationally and this is sustained to the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they receive well-planned and effective support. There is no evidence of significant difference in the attainment or achievement of boys and girls.
55. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average across the school. Pupils in Year 1 were telling each other about their pets. They spoke with confidence in the group and listened to one another well. In Year 2 pupils took part in drama based around a familiar story. They explored words to convey feelings of fear, and discussed which words conveyed the strongest emotions. They successfully worked in small groups using the vocabulary in retelling the story. In Year 6 pupils looked at extracts from the text of "Goodnight Mr Tom" and discussed why the author has chosen to use non-standard English. As a whole class they enthusiastically contributed words that are non-standard equivalents of "yes" and "no"; they discussed how such words change over time and are often regional. Year 6 girls interviewed live on a local radio programme during the inspection spoke confidently and were very articulate in describing their forthcoming school performance of Little Guys and Dolls.

56. By Year 2 standards in reading are well above the national average. Higher attaining pupils read fluently with good expression. They have a good understanding of the story and are able to predict what might happen. They tackle unfamiliar words with confidence using a good range of reading strategies. Pupils in Year 2 identified by the school as lower attainers in reading reach standards in line with the national average. They read simple passages and show awareness of phonics, graphics and context. However, they sometimes lose the sense of the story where they struggle to decode unknown words. Reading is well supported by parents who hear reading at home and form a rota to support reading at school.
57. In Year 6 standards in reading continue to be well above average. Pupils clearly want to take ownership of their own reading. Pupils bring their own books to read and enjoy buying books from the book club. Higher attaining pupils are widely read and very articulate in describing the characters and plot of the story. The few lower attaining readers are accurately identified by the teacher and supported well by assistants during group reading activities. However, there is no overview from teachers of the books chosen by pupils for individual reading and they are not always well matched to their abilities. Pupils' library skills are not well developed. Some do not belong to the public library and access to the school library is limited.
58. Standards in writing are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Since the last inspection, the school identified writing as an area of whole school development and, there has been considerable improvement in the number of pupils attaining the higher level in Year 2 and Year 6. Staff are developing a portfolio of written work taken from across the school and levelled against national criteria. This has helped teachers to judge comparative standards and to ensure pupils in mixed-age classes are attaining at appropriate levels.
59. In Year 2 most pupils are using a joined-up cursive script and the standard of presentation is high. They use basic punctuation correctly and appropriate connectives in their sentences and produce a range of writing for different purposes such as a diary, a letter and a storyboard with captions. A display of descriptive writing about animals in the local environment is very good. They enjoy writing group stories which are scribed by the teacher and learn how to edit them and change vocabulary for greater effect.
60. In Years 3-5 pupils built on a successful visit to the theatre to write their own play scripts which include stage directions which communicate the emotions of characters such as "shout". In another lesson, pupils wrote an advertisement for an imaginary product using rhyming couplets and alliteration.
61. In Year 6 pupils write for a wide range of audiences in appropriate forms, including letters to persuade and complain; articles for a newspaper about a newsworthy event such as a burglary; and descriptive writing about the local area. Many pupils show good structure in story writing and use imaginative and descriptive vocabulary to create deliberate effects. Higher attaining pupils are able to use paragraphs appropriately and consistently in their writing. Pupils use information and communication technology and handwriting to present their work and the standards of presentation are high. Standards in handwriting have improved since the last inspection.
62. Strategies for pupils to develop their literacy skills through subjects other than English are good. For example, in geography, pupils describe what they like about living in Elham; in history pupils write an account of their journey as a Tudor explorer, using tea-stained paper to make it look authentic; in science pupils use their literacy skills to report findings.
63. The quality of teaching and learning in English is mostly good. The literacy strategy is fully implemented and teachers have high expectation of pupils. Everyday assessment of pupils' work is informing planning and teachers provide different tasks for pupils of differing ability. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Marking is very good and teachers make detailed comments which encourage pupils, and make clear what they must do to improve. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, as are pupil attitudes to work and their behaviour in the classroom. Teachers have good strategies for managing lively behaviour and the good pace of lessons observed resulted in pupils attending and learning well.

64. Then subject is very well led and managed. Areas for improvement have been identified accurately through a careful analysis of test data. This has resulted in reviewing planning so that it takes account of identified weaknesses in provision, and standards have risen. Higher attaining pupils have extra English work and this, too, has contributed to the higher standards. The subject strongly supports pupils' personal and social development although opportunities to explore materials and stories from other cultures are not well developed.

MATHEMATICS

65. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards in mathematics that are well above average. Many pupils reach the higher levels and this is good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school achieve well.
66. By Year 2 pupils know many number facts and can discuss symmetry confidently, identifying whether or not a shape is symmetrical. Many pupils reach the higher standards in mathematics and solve number problems accurately using a variety of strategies.
67. By Year 6 a significant number of pupils reach higher than expected levels and enjoy mathematics lessons. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems, such as using a 12 and 24hour clock accurately, and most are confident mathematicians.
68. Teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers have high expectations and plan work well, taking into account what the pupils already know. Higher attaining pupils have work that is well matched to their ability and pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively in class so that they can take an active part in lessons. Teachers mark work particularly well so that pupils know what they have done well and what they need to improve their work. In a good lesson on angles the teacher explained clearly what the pupils had to do, sharing the purpose of the lesson so pupils knew what they would learn. During the lesson the teacher expected pupils to answer questions with precision and confidence. This meant that any pupils who were unsure of how to measure angles could be supported and make good progress. This careful questioning and effective support was evident in many lessons, and resulted in good progress being made. Pupils respond positively and enjoy mathematics lessons. They work well together and get a lot done. Work in books is neat and well presented, although there are few examples of information and communication technology being used to support learning in mathematics.
69. The subject is well led and managed. Careful analysis has been carried out on where the weaknesses of the subject are and planning has been reviewed so that these gaps in knowledge can be addressed. This has led to raised standards in the work seen during the inspection. The national strategy for teaching numeracy has been implemented well in the school, and standards in mathematics have risen.

SCIENCE

70. The school has had a sharp focus on science over the last year and this has resulted in standards rising. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach standards that are well above average and this represents good achievement.
71. By the time they reach Year 2, pupils set up investigations and use a variety of scientific language to explain carefully what they are doing. So, when they set up an investigation into what will make a plant thrive, they can decide what factors they will vary, and what they will keep the same. The pupils know about mini-beasts and where they live and have written very detailed accounts using words like "moist" and "habitat" correctly.
72. Pupils in Year 6 know about how plants adapt to their environment, make accurate predictions, and can record investigations clearly. When looking at the results of their investigations such as how to prevent a nail from rusting, pupils are able to interpret their graphs and records and draw conclusions from their work.

73. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have high expectations of both learning and behaviour. Consequently, pupils settle to work quickly and get a lot done. They learn all aspects of science and record their work neatly in books. Marking is very good and tells pupils what they need to do next to improve their work, as well as what they have done well. This results in pupils using correct scientific vocabulary and being confident when using these words. Pupils in Year 6, for example, are able to discuss the pH balance of soil with confidence and predict which root systems they may find in different soils. Information and communication technology is used well in some science lessons. Pupils in Year 6 used a CD-ROM to research different plants and worked very well independently. Work is generally well planned so that pupils of all abilities can fully participate in lessons and achieve as well as they can.
74. Science is well led and managed. The recent focus on science has resulted in a careful analysis of what the pupils are not too sure about. Plans have been reviewed to take account of this, and work planned so that pupils attain higher standards. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

75. Standards are average by Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. By Year 2, many pupils use paint and a variety of other materials well to develop their skills and express their ideas. The most effective work occurs when pupils work with three-dimensional media. Some of the pupils' relief sculptures, using a range of re-cycled materials, are particularly effective. They have given careful consideration to elements such as shape, composition and colour. Pupils use colour and texture creatively when making clay tiles, based on Van Gogh's painting, 'Starry Night'. Pupils' painting skills are of an appropriate standard for this age. There is less evidence of how pupils develop their drawing skills, using pencils and other materials in Years 1 and 2.
76. By Year 6, there are strengths and weaknesses in standards. Pupils control paints and pastels appropriately. They mix paints carefully when painting landscapes and experiment with different amounts of water and different brush effects when painting skies. Some work shows careful attention to detail, most notably the landscape paintings of Year 5 and 6 pupils. However, drawing skills are not as well developed as they should be by this age and sketchbooks are not used well to develop and experiment with visual ideas. Pupils learn about the work and style of different artists and gain insight into the techniques they use. They are familiar with a number of famous artists though they have little knowledge of artists from non-Western cultures. The standard of art work is better higher up the school than it is in Years 3 and 4. Discussion with pupils shows that the amount of art they do varies from year to year. They do much more work in the Year 5 and 6 class than in previous years. Although this is not affecting the standards by Year 6, it shows that the progress they make between Years 3 and 6 could be more even.
77. Only two lessons were observed. There is not enough evidence to give a secure overall judgement on teaching. However, scrutiny of pupils' work suggests that the quality of pupils' learning depends very much on the confidence and expertise of individual teachers. In the lessons seen, teaching was at least good. Both teachers had good subject knowledge and this was enhancing pupils' learning well. Year 5 and 6 pupils were making good progress in producing a colour wash of a sky and landscape. In both lessons, teachers asked well- focused questions to draw pupils' attention to particular points and encourage them to look carefully at particular effects. Pupils were confident in expressing their opinions about art. In the Year 1 and 2 lesson, for example, many were bursting with suggestions and ideas when looking at photographs of Andy Goldsworthy's landscape sculptures. The higher attaining pupils used some specific art terms. For example, one pupil exclaimed "It looks like the same *texture* as the huts the Aboriginal people make!" Learning was very effective in this lesson, partly because the idea of making their own landscape sculptures inspired pupils and partly because the teacher transmitted her own enthusiasm for art so well. Pupils enjoy art lessons and work hard. Even in the classes, where pupils report they do very little art, they were still keen and enthusiastic about the subject.

78. The leadership of art is satisfactory and, on balance, there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Computers were not being used enough at that time to support art but information and communication technology is now making an appropriate contribution to pupils' learning. There is a need for more careful monitoring of art teaching, to ensure pupils experience this regularly and make more even progress between Years 3 and 6.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

79. Evidence from discussions with pupils and analysis of their written work indicate standards by Years 2 and 6 are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when there were weaknesses both in standards and the school's provision. No lessons occurred during the inspection so a judgement on teaching cannot be made.
80. By Year 2, pupils understand the principles of designing, making and evaluating. They design a mechanism for rescuing pussy from the well and sketch out their ideas first. The pupils draw simple diagrams to explain what their designs will do and add labels to show particular facets. They investigate winding toys and learn vocabulary such as 'axle', 'wheel' and 'support'. Year 1 and 2 pupils work on the same topics but the older pupils have a greater knowledge. This is shown clearly in the additional detail they provide when drafting out their design ideas. The pupils are given helpful prompts to help them evaluate their work. When designing and making Christmas biscuits, for example, they were given specific points to consider, such as shape, size and decoration. This helped the pupils to think about how successful they had been and to organise how they recorded their evaluations.
81. By Year 6, pupils have learned how to use a range of tools, including G clamps, hand drills and bench hooks. They are able to talk competently about the different aspects of design and technology. In Year 4, pupils investigate different alarm systems and use buzzers, batteries and lights to make their models. When comparing the written work from Year 4 to Year 6, there is evidence of increased detail and depth. The older pupils, for example, draw their designs in far more detail and explore and present alternative solutions. They include more information on the materials they will use and give measurements. Pupils in Year 6 realise that, in the business world, finishing is an important element of design and technology if products are going to attract buyers. Pupils are adept at evaluating their designs once they are complete. For instance, they explain the strong and weaker aspects of a recent project, which involved them making a toy for reception-aged children. One pupil knew that the main problem with his group's toy was the handle and he explained what they would have done differently another time. One pupil wished she had used a more interesting ingredient when making bread; she felt that poppy seeds were too obvious.
82. Leadership of the subject is good. The weak aspects from the last inspection have been addressed. Pupils' progress is now better because there is a secure scheme of work in place, supported by an adequate assessment system. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to support pupils' learning. Teachers have had the opportunity to develop their expertise, which has improved pupils' achievement. The co-ordinator has given good support in leading the improvements over the last few years.

GEOGRAPHY

83. It was not possible to observe the teaching of geography during the inspection. Judgements are based upon discussion with the subject leader and Year 2 teacher, teachers' planning, pupils' work, displays throughout the school and Year 6 pupil interviews. The evidence indicates that, as at the time of the last inspection, pupils reach average standards in Years 2 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and included in all activities and their work is matched appropriately to their needs and capabilities.
84. In Year 2 pupils learn about recycling and conduct a class survey to investigate which materials are recycled and how many families take part. They present data in simple bar graphs showing good links to mathematical learning. In Years 3 and 4 pupils learn about permeable and

impermeable rocks and different types of soil. A good display of rocks and soils samples enables pupils to explore their properties. Pupils investigate the rate at which water drains through the soil and record and evaluate their evidence appropriately. Some pupils have used the Internet to research information about rainforests and others have used a computer modelling program to design a classroom for 22 children.

85. In Year 6 pupils learn about features of rivers and valleys. They research how people cause floods by deforestation, farming and city building. They design a leaflet to draw attention to flood safety and look at ways to improve the environment by designing a sports and recreation area around a lake. Pupils make good use of the local environment; the Nailbourne walk. They observe local wildlife, signs of flooding, pollution and litter. They write very well presented and detailed descriptive accounts showing well above average literacy skills.
86. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory and resources are adequate. Since the last inspection a scheme of work has been introduced which provides a framework for teachers' planning. As at the time of the last inspection, many whole-class tasks are set. Work is still not clearly related to secure assessments of pupils' geographical knowledge, skills and understanding. The school's current development plan prioritises the development of a more integrated approach to curriculum planning with greater emphasis on foundation subjects. The subject leader recognises the need to assess and plan against National Curriculum levels rather than to deliver schemes of work.

HISTORY

87. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one history lesson. Judgements are based upon discussion with the subject leader and Year 2 teacher, teachers' planning, pupils' work, displays throughout the school and talking to pupils. The evidence indicates that, as at the time of the last inspection, standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and included in all activities.
88. In Year 2 pupils learn about the Great Fire of London. They write factual accounts about why the fire spread and imaginative eye-witness reports entitled "I saw it happen". In Year 6 pupils learn about the Ancient Greeks. Work sampling shows extensive and very well-presented work showing that some pupils have researched aspects of Greek religion and culture using information and communication technology. In recent work about the Victorians pupils have researched and written about the life of a child and have considered issues about "childhood at work".
89. The quality of teaching and learning in the lesson observed was satisfactory. Pupils learn about the new lands discovered by the Tudor explorers. They are enthusiastic and talk animatedly about commodities that explorers might trade. They show a developing awareness of issues of exploitation. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils which enables them to feel confident in contributing to class discussions and to ask questions which demonstrate their interest. For example, the question "Did they discover California?" led to the teacher showing pupils a map of America and discussing where the explorers landed. However a lack of differentiation of written tasks resulted in some pupils not making as much progress as they should.
90. Leadership of history is satisfactory. The subject leader has developed her role since the last inspection. She has purchased additional resources to help teachers in their planning and teaching. She has conducted an audit of resources and organised them to ensure that they are accessible. Resources are adequate. The subject leader is identifying historical skills which can be incorporated into an integrated approach to the teaching of the foundation subjects across the school. The subject leader is aware of the need to ensure that the development of historical skills need to be based upon secure assessments of what pupils know and can do already.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

91. Standards in information and communication technology are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily in all years. The school has made good progress in raising standards and improving the quality of provision since the last inspection, when standards were lower than they should have been.
92. In Year 1, pupils use computers to enter words and short phrases and learn to change text, by altering the font or colour. They enter information into a data program to sort information, such as pupils' favourite colours or pets. They have experience of using art programs to create graphics and programming information into a device that moves it according to their instructions. By Year 2, pupils have further developed their skills across the different aspects of information and communication technology. They become more adept at entering text, amending it as necessary, and introduce pictures to enhance their work. In one case, pupils used a graphics program to produce eye-catching representations of the Great Fire of London, to enliven their writing. They are able to make some assumptions from the data they have entered on pupils' birthdays, such as the greatest number in any one month. Pupils now enter more complicated instructions into a programmable device to make it move in different directions.
93. In Year 3 and 4, pupils learn to organise text and pictures and make decisions about the most effective layout and style when producing a page for a class magazine or producing a party invitation. By now, they are clearly understanding the use of ICT in the wider world, for example, how desk-top publishing techniques such as these can influence people as to whether they read something or not. Pupils take their data- handling a step further and interpret data from graphs and charts in more depth. By Year 6, pupils have developed an appropriately broad range of skills. They use information and communication technology to devise effective presentations that combine different types of information, such as text, pictures and graphics. They are familiar with spreadsheets and interpret these for a range of purposes. Pupils send e-mails and use the Internet to search for information to help them with their research.
94. This evidence implies that achievement could be better than satisfactory. The reason why this is not the case is that much of this work is carried out in the information and communication technology suite where pupils have blocks of lessons, in groups of eight, over several weeks, taught by a learning support assistant. At other times, pupils have very little opportunity to use computers within their classes. During the inspection, there was very little evidence of this and discussions with pupils confirm this is normally the case. They only use computers for producing neat copies of their written work and, in some years, pupils report they very rarely use computers other than in their sessions with the learning support assistant. Whilst pupils are clearly acquiring the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding in their ICT lessons, teachers are not making sure these are applied more frequently, across a range of subjects in order to broaden pupils' experiences further and give them more practice.
95. There was insufficient evidence of teaching during the inspection to make a secure overall judgement on its quality as only one lesson was seen. In this instance, teaching and learning were very effective. Pupils were given a very clear outline of what they were going to learn and how they would be applying their skills in their design and technology project later in the term. The learning assistant's own knowledge of the program was very secure and this meant that pupils quickly grasped some essential points about how to program a device that controls motors and light. The lesson moved at a slick pace and the assistant asked some probing questions that really made pupils think. She insisted throughout that they used correct terminology: 'power' rather than 'speed', for example, when referring to motors. This ensured there was no confusion in pupils' minds. There was a good balance between consolidating the most important points from the previous lesson, such as the distinction between input and output ports, and practising new skills. All eight pupils learned a great deal in this lesson, where every minute was used well.
96. Leadership and management of information and communication technology are satisfactory. The curriculum is planned well and this means that pupils have a suitable balance and range of learning opportunities, to help them develop their information and communication technology skills. The deputy headteacher has devised a portfolio of pupils' work which provides useful information to help teachers when they assess attainment in information and communication technology.

However, the procedures for assessing the subject are at a relatively early stage and are still being developed. This means class teachers are not necessarily aware of what individual pupils can do in terms of information and communication technology and how they can best develop their skills further. The main aspect that requires development is ensuring that teachers use and build upon pupils' information and communication technology skills in other subjects.

MUSIC

97. Only singing was observed during the inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on pupils' standards and achievement by Year 2. However, discussions with pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 show that standards by Year 6 are below average and pupils underachieve between Years 3 and 6. This represents a decline since the last inspection, when standards were found to be in line with what is expected. Pupils report that they do very little music in class: one said "We never sing in class" and several said they rarely played instruments.
98. There is not enough evidence to judge the overall quality of teaching. No music lessons were observed during the inspection apart from the weekly whole-school singing session. It is not feasible or appropriate to cover the singing requirements of the National Curriculum solely through whole-school singing sessions. These sessions enable pupils to learn songs and hymns for singing in assembly but there is insufficient attention to developing singing skills and techniques at an appropriate level for each year group. It is also very difficult to monitor pupils' standards and check that they are participating and developing good singing posture, tone and technique.
99. Discussions with pupils show they have very sporadic access to classroom instruments between Years 3 and 6. These instruments are not readily available and the range and quality is unsatisfactory to support the range of creative music-making that is required. Pupils are missing out on developing their performing skills, using classroom instruments. They have very few opportunities to explore sounds and create their own music in response to a range of stimuli: consequently, their composing and appraising skills are weak. They do not use information and communication technology enough to support their learning in music. Their knowledge of musical elements such as dynamics, structure and pitch is hazy and they are not experiencing a broad diet of music from different times and cultures. All these are substantial aspects of the National Curriculum and their absence is directly hindering pupils' standards by Year 6.
100. The school has a good reputation for the shows that they put on and parents speak highly of these. During the inspection, a recorded excerpt from the current show showed that singing standards were in line with what is expected by Year 6. In the weekly singing practice, and in assembly, Year 6 pupils sing in tune though their singing is a little restrained and it lacks expression.
101. Leadership is unsatisfactory. The school has not maintained the standards found at the time of the last inspection. At that time, pupils were singing in parts, they were developing their knowledge of the different elements of music and they were having opportunities to play instruments. Music was playing a strong role in its contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural developments. This is no longer the case because the quality of provision has slipped. The co-ordinator has had the opportunity to monitor standards and the quality of provision and has not picked up on the weaknesses.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe a limited amount of physical education, and no dance, gymnastics, swimming or athletics were seen. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. No difference in the attainment or progress of boys and girls was seen.
103. In the Year 2 games lesson seen, pupils developed throwing and catching skills with balls and bean-bags. Pupils practised receiving and sending skills, working in pairs and in teams, learning to

throw over different distances and to compete as teams. Pupils learnt to use a “chest pass”. They show enthusiasm for games and the ability to play co-operatively together. Pupils from Years 3-6 were observed in an extended games lesson. All pupils warmed up appropriately and took part in a carousel of activities; rounders, cricket and hockey. Most pupils have good throwing and catching skills and many can strike a cricket ball with accuracy. In hockey, many older pupils can travel with, receive and pass a ball. The pupils are well- behaved, enthusiastic and work well together in mixed-age groups. Some higher attaining pupils in Year 6, both boys and girls, left the school during the afternoon to take part in a local cricket tournament. Cricket is a strength, and pupils are rightly proud of the fact that they won the tournament last year.

104. All pupils in the current Year 6 class report that they are able to swim at least the nationally expected 25 metres, although it has not been possible to provide swimming lessons in school time as it is both costly and time-consuming and would have a detrimental effect on other areas of the curriculum. There is a satisfactory range of extra- curricular sports activities, such as cricket, football, rugby and netball.
105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject. However, the teaching of games is given priority and staff are less confident in the teaching of other aspects such as dance. The team teaching of Years 3-6 observed during the games afternoon was particularly effective and was well planned and organised. Pupils of all abilities were challenged and had the opportunity to learn and practise a variety of skills.
106. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory and resources for physical education are adequate. Older mats identified at the time of the last inspection are being replaced on an annual rolling programme. Improvements to the building since the last inspection mean that the hall is no longer regularly used as a classroom and there are fewer potential hazards around the room.