

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BRAMBER FIRST SCHOOL**

Worthing

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125968

Headteacher: Mrs V Stevens

Reporting inspector: Mr C Ifould  
20962

Dates of inspection: 30 September - 03 October 2002

Inspection number: 248728

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bramber Road Broadwater Worthing
Postcode:	BN14 8QB
Telephone number:	01903 219277
Fax number:	01903 219097
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Gilbert
Date of previous inspection:	01 December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20962	Mr C Ifould	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
31243	Ms P Dodd-Racher	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development 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?
21171	Ms S Handford	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Areas of learning for children aged under five Special educational needs English as an additional language	
27225	Ms A Sketchley	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bramber First School is for boys and girls aged four to eight, and serves an area of mostly private housing on the outskirts of Worthing. There are currently 169 pupils on roll, including 23 part-time Reception children. Very few pupils are from ethnic minorities and they are all fluent in English. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is about average, and includes two children with statements. Pupils' attainments on entry to school are similar to those found in most other schools, but there has been a significant increase in the number pupils joining and leaving the school during the year. A high proportion of new arrivals have special educational needs.

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

This is a good school that meets pupils' needs well, including those whose recent arrival gives the school less opportunity to make a difference to their learning. Standards have been rising steadily and the school enabled a high proportion of its pupils to meet national expectations and do well in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics in 2002. The overall quality of teaching is good, and the school's leadership and management are effective. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Teaching is good, and the school is well led and managed; there is a very strong shared commitment and capacity to improve.
- Standards in mathematics, science, art and design, and design and technology are high; overall standards are rising. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils identified as having special educational needs, including those with statements, are well provided for.
- There are good relationships and good behaviour is promoted well; there is a lack of bullying, sexism and other oppressive behaviours. Pupils' social and moral development is also good.
- The school works well with parents in welcoming pupils into the school and promoting their regular attendance. Parents think highly of the school.
- The internal and external accommodation is of a high standard.

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

- The breadth and balance of provision for teaching and learning geography, information and communication technology (ICT), and religious education.
- The use of assessment, tracking, reporting and setting targets to promote learning and raise standards.
- The provision for pupils' multicultural awareness.
- The identification of opportunities for using and applying numeracy and ICT to support teaching and learning in other subjects.

*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 December 1997 and has successfully addressed the key issues for action raised. Teachers now plan and organise lessons to meet all pupils' needs and pay good attention to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Curriculum coordinators play an increasing role in checking on teaching and learning directly. In addition, standards of attainment and behaviour have improved considerably. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and has developed secure planning to guide teaching and learning. A settled staff, including an effective new headteacher, is in place. The school has made good progress since the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	D	C	C	C
Writing	B	C	B	B
Mathematics	A	B	B	B

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

Results in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics in 2002 improved on those in 2001, especially the proportion of pupils gaining a level higher than is expected nationally. This reflects continued raising of standards over a period of time. The school agrees targets with the local education authority, and met or was close to meeting them. Standards in mathematics, science, art and design, and design and technology are above expectation when pupils leave the school. They are below expectation in geography and religious education. In all other subjects, including English, pupils' attainments match those expected for their age. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainments.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to school and try their best to achieve what is asked of them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour has improved since the last inspection; the majority of pupils behave very well in lessons and when playing and eating together.
Personal development and relationships	The good quality of relationships is a strength of the school; pupils' personal development is sound.
Attendance	The majority of pupils attend school regularly and on time; this is an improving feature of the school.

Boys and girls enjoy school, and work and play together readily. Pupils learn well from the positive images provided by adults and behave and relate well to each other. They value qualities such as perseverance and thoughtfulness which adults are ready to recognise and praise. The relationships between children and adults promote good standards of behaviour and care. Participation in an effective project has improved the poor attendance and lateness of a minority, and the attendance rate is now broadly in line with the national average.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Year 3
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 is good overall throughout the school, with examples of very good and excellent teaching. English and mathematics are taught well. Teachers plan together in teams and are clear about what they intend pupils to learn and do. They manage pupils well and work hard to promote good speaking, listening and attention to learning. Classroom assistants support pupils' learning effectively. These measures help all pupils to participate fully in lessons. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and understanding, and introduce subject specific language successfully. Pupils respond well to the many positive features of lessons and are keen to do what their teachers ask. They were not yet given many opportunities to be independent during lessons but persevered and co-operated well to complete tasks.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school teaches the Foundation Stage curriculum, all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The time allocated to teaching some subjects and ages is insufficient. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Any special educational needs are identified early and good provision is made to support these pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils from homes where another language is spoken are fluent in English and progress as well as their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of other cultures needs more attention.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well looked after in their time at the school. Assessment, tracking and reporting of their academic attainment and progress needs to be built on.

The school has recently ensured that all families receive a home visit prior to their children joining Reception. This is the beginning of a positive relationship between homes and school that helps pupils' learning and development throughout their time at Bramber. Parents feel positive about the school and the work it does with and for them and their children.

The school places strong emphasis on a practical, first-hand curriculum and this provides an effective context and means of promoting learning for pupils of this age. The range and number of opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities are good and a strength of the school; half of all pupils have taken part in the programme. Many subjects are taught well through a topic-based approach. As the school is now aware, pupils in Year 3 are taught for less time than is found in most schools and some subjects, such as geography and religious education, are not taught sufficiently for all pupils to learn what is required. The school has participated in an excellent project that has been very effective in ensuring that most pupils arrive at school regularly and on time.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and her deputy give good leadership to the school, with the support of the coordinator for younger pupils who joins them in the senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their role well. The chairs of the governing body and its various committees are well informed and proactive in their work. Governors carry out satisfactorily what is required of them by statute.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Key staff analyse results of national and other tests in order to see how they can further raise standards. The effectiveness of the school's development plan is evaluated at least annually.
The strategic use of resources	Most resources are used well. Support staff work well with groups and individuals and make a good contribution to learning. The library and classroom computers are not used as effectively as they could be.

The school has built a settled staff team and they work well together. Their commitment and capacity to succeed are strengths of the school. The built and outdoor accommodation are also very good, and are used well to promote pupils' learning. The school has adequate resources and these are organised and used well.

The headteacher leads her staff well and they give good support to her and to each other. Governors work closely with staff and play their role effectively in guiding and holding senior managers to account. Good support is given by administrative and caretaking staff. The school works hard to ensure that it obtains best value in spending its budget.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the active part they are now able to play in the life of the school</li> <li>the information they receive about what is going on at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the amount of homework expected of their child: sometimes more, sometimes less</li> <li>the quality of information they receive about their child's progress</li> </ul>

The inspection team found that the quantity and quality of homework meet what is expected and found in most schools. It agrees with parents that the overall quality of written reports to parents could be improved and that the school's results in national tests could be better explained.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When children finish their time in Reception, most achieve the expected standards for the end of the Foundation Stage. Some exceed them, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development. At the end of Year 2, pupils attained in line with expectations in national tests in reading in 2002; in writing and mathematics, pupils attained higher than national expectations. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 3, standards in English are broadly as expected for their age: standards in mathematics continue to exceed expectations. Teachers' assessments of standards in science put pupils' attainments similar to those found in most schools at the end of Year 2; standards in science remain the same at the end of Year 3.
2. Over time, there is an upward trend in the results of the three aspects tested and compared with those of seven-year-olds nationally. Results in reading have been below those found in most schools but exceeded them in 2001: results in 2002 improved on these. Writing standards dipped below the national average in 1999 but have exceeded them otherwise. Results in mathematics have always exceeded those found in most other schools.
3. Some seven-year-olds exceed the nationally expected Level 2 in these tests. Over time, about a third of pupils have gained Level 3 in reading, which is broadly in line with those found in most schools. In 2002, 40 per cent of pupils attained the higher level, which is a greater proportion than that found nationally. The proportion gaining Level 3 in writing has slowly improved from seven per cent in 1997 to 15 per cent in 2001. This proportion is broadly in line with that found in other schools; nationally, standards of writing are weaker than those of reading. In 2002, results in writing were well above the national average at 21 per cent. In mathematics, there has also been a steady improvement from 22 per cent in 1997 to 47 per cent in 2002. This percentage is much better than that found in most schools.
4. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 3, their attainments in mathematics, science, art and design, and design and technology exceed expectations. In mathematics, pupils make good progress in committing calculations to paper and carry out the four basic operations with increasing accuracy as the numbers involved get larger: many pupils work confidently with three-digit numbers and with simple times tables. They have good knowledge of shapes and their properties, and measure with increasing accuracy using standard and non-standard units. They begin to use graphs to display their findings related to topics. In science, pupils carry out and record fair tests. They learn about the properties and uses of light, and how to make electrical circuits in order to light a bulb. They gain good knowledge of their bodies and what they need to eat and do to stay healthy. Their knowledge of bones and the purpose of skeletons is good. In art and design, close observation and drawings skills are introduced early to pupils and they use these to good effect in the two- and three-dimensional work they produce. Paintings of poppies, pencil drawings of cereal crops and a display of pottery work enhanced the environment during the inspection. In design and technology, investigations of machines used on building sites and of human skeletons led to the design and making of artefacts based on these. Pupils evaluate their work thoughtfully and suggest improvements and alternatives.
5. Standards in geography and religious education are below those expected by the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus respectively. The school recognises that there is a need to develop these subjects' inclusion in the topic cycle more carefully. The school is now aware that pupils in Year 3 are taught for considerably less time than is found in most other schools and that subjects like these receive less attention because of this.
6. In all other subjects, including English, standards are in line with expectations when pupils leave the school. Pupils are encouraged to listen well and the majority do. Some pupils' speaking is not sufficiently well developed when they arrive at school but most older pupils can speak

cogently and in sentences when given the opportunity. Pupils are beginning to read aloud fluently and with expression from more complex texts. They write in an increasing range of styles and for different audiences. Spelling and handwriting become more secure. The school has identified that some boys do not achieve as well as girls in speaking and writing, and gives careful attention to encouraging better performance from them.

7. The school agrees targets with the local authority for reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 2. It has met or exceeded most of those targets for the past two years. This is despite the challenges caused by the increasing amount of transience among pupils and the high incidence of those with special needs. Fourteen of the 47 pupils who took the national tests in 2002 had joined since the beginning of Year 1. Five of these had less than a year at the school. Overall, 15 of this cohort, including one with a statement, were on the register of those having special educational needs; this is a high proportion. Throughout the school, pupils identified as having special educational needs receive very good support to achieve standards in line with their abilities and aptitudes. Those with English as an additional language have good English competency and achieve as well as other pupils.
8. Pupils achieve well at the school. They enter Reception from a variety of backgrounds and experiences with attainments at or just below those found nationally. An increasing number join and leave the school at times other than the beginning of the year. They make good progress in Reception and attain expectations before entering Year 1. Good progress is made in mathematics, science, art and design, and design and technology, and satisfactory progress in most other subjects. Progress is less than satisfactory in geography and religious education. While in school, the great majority of pupils are keen to learn and do their best to achieve what is asked of them. The proportion of those who hinder their own or others' learning is very small, and teachers and classroom assistants are successful in minimising such incidents.

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

9. Pupils enjoy coming to school, work willingly and concentrate well. Their behaviour is good, and their personal development is sound. The calm, kindly and supportive ethos created by all staff, and the good links between home and school, make a big contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. The popularity of extra-curricular activities highlights the extent to which pupils appreciate school. During 2001/02, more than half of all pupils attended at least one after-school club.
10. Boys and girls work and play happily together. No bullying was seen during the inspection and the small number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully integrated into the school community. Relationships between pupils are generally good. There can be occasional lapses when pupils are not fully engaged in work or play, or are confused or frustrated, but the vigilance of teachers and support staff means incidents of misbehaviour are rarely allowed to escalate. There was one permanent exclusion in the year preceding the inspection, because staff and pupils were at risk of injury from a pupil who has since been placed in a residential school. The exclusion in no way reflects normal standards of behaviour in the school.
11. Many pupils strive successfully to live up to the school's 'Teddy Rules'. They learn to respect others' feelings, but older pupils do not get sufficient introduction to the wider range of values and beliefs that they will encounter as they grow up in the United Kingdom. Pupils attach great importance to attributes such as kindness and effort, reflecting the extent to which staff praise important life skills and qualities that are helpful in a busy community.
12. Children aged under five often play sociably with each other. Many can take turns, share and devise imaginative role-plays. By the time pupils reach Year 3, most listen carefully to adults, but many lack sufficient experience of speaking at length or of asking questions about causes, reasons and meanings. Pupils do tasks around the school willingly when asked, but older children would benefit from more opportunities to take on responsibilities during the school day.

13. Pupils with special educational needs relate well to those who support them, and most try hard to achieve their best. They work well in groups with adults and other pupils, who are kind and helpful to those who need special help.
14. Attendance is satisfactory at just under 95 per cent, and is improving. Most absence is due to illness or family holidays taken in term time. Almost all parents ensure that children arrive at school punctually. This means that morning activities are not constantly interrupted by late arrivals, and productive work begins on time at the start of school.

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

15. Teaching is good overall, and this is spread evenly throughout the school. More than 60 per cent of lessons were good, with a quarter of these being very good. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, and also a small amount that was excellent.
16. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is mainly good, and on some occasions very good or excellent. Teachers and support assistants give well-focused support to children that ensures that they learn well. There is good support from the assistant responsible for a child with a statement of special educational needs and all adults understand his needs very well. He is well integrated into the class. The teachers understand what children require to learn successfully. The difficulties of teaching children in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class are largely overcome by planning that ensures that the younger children are provided with different activities. However, this was not satisfactory on one occasion, where the Reception children were left unsupervised and were unable to get on productively. Most teachers model new vocabulary and encourage children to express their ideas fully, so that they develop their ability to talk about what they have learned. At times, opportunities for learning are not fully exploited, such as in a music lesson, where children were introduced to musical instruments, but few were given the opportunity to handle and use them. In the excellent lesson, the outstanding element was the very good use of praise to reward children's effort, and to encourage them to behave appropriately. This positive reinforcement of children's behaviour and attitudes is an element common to all the adults. Teachers assess children's progress regularly to set targets for their development. The school is soon to adopt the new local authority *Early Learning Record* that will provide for ongoing assessment against the Foundation Stage stepping stones.
17. Teaching of children in Years 1, 2 and 3 is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory and some is very good. The school is organised into two groups of classes: Reception and Year 1 occupy one 'wing' of the building, and Years 2 and 3 the other. Each 'wing' has a mixed age class. Teachers in each 'wing' plan together to provide a consistent curriculum for each age group; teachers then modify their teaching strategies and methods, support or resources to match the needs of pupils in their own class. Pupils' needs are usually well met through this strategy. Teachers provide challenging work in many lessons that extends those pupils who are of higher ability.
18. Teachers have good subject knowledge and realistic expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. They and the classroom assistants manage pupils well. Pupils are well supported and distracting behaviour is rarely a feature. During the inspection, some lessons failed to establish or maintain a brisk pace but pupils were learning all the time. Support staff and most resources were well used. However, computers based in classrooms were hardly used at all and this is most unsatisfactory. Basic skills, especially literacy, are emphasised in many lessons and this helps all pupils to join in lessons better. 'Plenary' sessions at the ends of lessons are sometimes used well, but not always. Groups and individuals were rarely told that their work would form the basis of this checking-up and consolidation session, and learning objectives weren't always referred to sufficiently. This does not help pupils to have good knowledge of their own learning. Most marking does not follow the school's policy and give pupils an idea of how far they have met what was expected nor what they need to do next in order to improve. Teachers and others adults use praise positively and there is good use of homework to support and extend learning.

19. Teachers enable pupils identified as having special educational needs to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. They work closely with the special educational needs coordinator and teaching assistants to promote these pupils' learning. There is very good targeted teaching by the coordinator and support assistant for special educational needs. This is well planned to support pupils' different learning needs. There is a strong emphasis on providing for pupils to develop their coordination skills and their knowledge of letter sounds. These sessions occur in small withdrawal groups where very good learning was observed because of the very good skills of the special educational needs co-ordinator and the support assistant, who know pupils' needs well.
20. Where pupils have weak literacy skills, they are withdrawn from their class during the literacy hour to have their session with the special educational needs coordinator. In the one session seen, the teaching was very good and there was evidence of good liaison between the class teacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The very structured approach to their learning enabled pupils to make very good progress so that they could begin to draft a poem. A very good feature of the lesson was the emphasis on the group working together and helping each other.
21. There are a small number of pupils who need help to modify their behaviour so that they can benefit from lessons. The majority of teachers and teaching assistants are consistent in applying strategies to help these pupils settle to their learning. Teachers are particularly sensitive to the needs of those children with statements of special educational needs and ensure that they are able to participate fully in all lessons.

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

22. The school provides a relevant curriculum for its pupils, placing a strong emphasis on learning by first-hand experience, including many visits to places of interest. There are, however, weaknesses in the breadth and balance of the curriculum between subjects. The school devotes considerable time to science, mathematics, art and design, and design and technology. Pupils reach standards that are above national expectations in these subjects. Links across the curriculum through topics such as *Colour, Light and Electricity* are good in these subjects, but this is at the expense of in-depth study in other subjects. Enough time is given to teaching and learning of English, ICT, physical education and music; this ensures that pupils reach a standard that is in line with that expected nationally.
23. However, insufficient time is allocated to geography, history and religious education. Where these subjects have clearly defined learning intentions, as for example in the topic on *The Victorians*, work is satisfactory. However, despite some careful planning, pupils do not study all the required aspects of these subjects, nor with sufficient depth and regularity to develop their skills steadily. Pupils in Year 3 spend less time in lessons than is found in most other schools and this does not allow them to benefit from additional time that may be given to redress the balance in time allocated to teaching subjects. The school is now aware of this shortcoming and plans are in hand to address this situation. Teachers are clear about what pupils should achieve by the end of Year 3: this is an improvement since the last inspection. Sex and health education are taught appropriately in the context of other work. Despite the imbalance between subjects, the planned curriculum continues to meet statutory requirements, including religious education that follows the locally agreed syllabus.
24. The successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has contributed considerably to the overall improvements in standards in core subjects since the last inspection, reflected in results of national tests. There are many opportunities for pupils to strengthen their literacy skills through the good cross-curricular links that have been established in other subjects. Good emphasis has been placed on pupils learning to read and write well at an early stage. Listening skills are consistently emphasised in lessons although opportunities for developing

speaking skills are not planned as systematically. Numeracy skills are less well developed across the curriculum. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in a range of problems and investigations. The science curriculum enables pupils to build their knowledge steadily and opportunities for experimenting and investigating are good.

25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school follows the national code of conduct on the identification and assessment of pupils. Children in Reception are watched closely so that any special educational needs are identified early in their school career. There are individual education plans for all pupils who are on the school action plan for special needs. These set clear and achievable targets for pupils and include linked learning strategies. Those with statements of special need are provided with good support in line with the requirements in their statements. Pupils who have emotional, behavioural or social problems are given special support in a social skills group so that they are helped to deal with their problems and develop more positive attitudes.
26. There are occasions when pupils are withdrawn for short focused sessions. These are effective and occur mainly during literacy sessions and help to develop pupils' literacy skills. Pupils withdrawn for longer periods have sessions closely linked to the focus of the class lesson.
27. A small number of pupils are identified as gifted and talented and some of these have access to enrichment programmes. The school monitors these pupils' development so that their skills and abilities can be met, for example, through encouraging a talented singer to participate in school performances and arranging for pupils keenly interested in environmental issues to attend courses run by the local authority.
28. Attention to equal opportunities is good overall. There is scope to give the under-fives in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class a stronger Foundation Stage curriculum to match that in the Reception class.
29. Since the last inspection, the attention to moral development has improved from sound to good, and provision for social development remains good. Arrangements for cultural development are now sound rather than good because pupils' understanding of other cultures and the changing culture of the United Kingdom needs to be developed more systematically through the whole curriculum.
30. The school's provision for spiritual development is good. It was judged very good at the time of the last inspection, but does not fully match up to the changing definition of this aspect. In the 1997 report, the focus was on religious knowledge and appreciation, but now there is a wider concept including pupils' abilities to question, think deeply, consider what motivates themselves and others, challenge constraints to the growth of the human spirit, and search for meaning and truth.
31. The assemblies four days a week, and hymn singing on the other day, all make a positive contribution to the harmonious ethos of the school, creating a sense of community in which all play a part. The assemblies where good work is celebrated and shared help to increase pupils' confidence. 'Teddy Assemblies' in which rules are reinforced, polite behaviour encouraged, and effort and kindness rewarded, are valuable for pupils' moral and social development. Class assemblies give pupils the chance to co-operate and show teamwork. A weekly assembly focuses on children who are celebrating their birthdays. These assemblies contribute to the happy ethos but could be developed further to make a bigger contribution to pupils' spiritual development, their questioning and speaking skills, and their capacity to reflect on their experiences.
32. Staff show respect for pupils' home faiths, to the extent of changing school events so that all can participate. For example, a 'Spring Gardens Exhibition' took place rather than an 'Easter Garden Exhibition' so that no religious group was excluded. Bramber School functions as an inclusive

community where children are valued as individuals, due to the active efforts of the head teacher and staff to create a haven where children feel secure.

33. Not all subjects impact sufficiently on pupils' personal development. Art and design, design and technology and science successfully expand pupils' awareness of their own capacity to copy and create pictures and artefacts. Pupils' advancing literacy and numeracy skills, essential to their future personal development, owe much to English and maths lessons. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs offers pupils the chance to participate in sport, craft, language and music activities that build skills through activity. History, geography and religious education, though, could make more contribution to pupils' understanding of cultures, cultural change, and the non-material world of the human spirit. Children's reading books reflect the ethnicity of modern Britain well, and staff respond with interest when pupils tell them about particular festivals, such as the Muslim Eid ul Fitr, but pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultural life in the United Kingdom is not expanded systematically enough.
34. The good provision for moral development includes the 'Teddy Rules' that pupils quickly learn to keep. Older pupils understand that the rules are necessary for the school community to live harmoniously. All adults in the school make a big contribution to pupils' awareness of acceptable behaviour and the difference between right and wrong by the example they set in school.
35. The wide and relevant programme of visits and visitors makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and, particularly, social development. The school nurse, road safety officer and members of religious communities make pupils aware of society outside school. Visits to Chichester Cathedral, a manor house run as a Victorian centre, a wetland centre, Worthing beach and other places increase pupils' knowledge of their own and other localities and help them to behave appropriately in unfamiliar situations. The lunchtime nurture group and early morning 'brain gym' group provide additional well-planned support. A school council is planned, and should in future help pupils to develop a sense of citizenship and to begin to understand the practicalities of organising an inclusive, cohesive community.
36. The consistent application of rewards for good behaviour and the very good support for children with behavioural difficulties have a beneficial impact on pupils' social development. This would be further enhanced if pupils had more opportunities to ask questions and to show initiative and responsibility. Children in the Reception class, particularly, are encouraged to make choices about their activities, and this helps them towards independence. Children in a mixed Years 2 and 3 class are becoming more confident about predicting and reasoning because their supportive teacher urges them to 'have a go'. Teaching methods that promote independence could be applied more over the whole school.
37. Provision for personal, social and health education is sound overall. Teachers plan for relevant topics, including hygiene and diet in the health curriculum, and friendship and sharing in the social curriculum. Circle time, in which pupils take turns to speak about issues that are concerning them, is at the heart of the personal, social and health education programme. The programme of visits and visitors introduces pupils to people who have important roles in society, such as a nurse, minister of religion and road safety officer.
38. The school has well-established links with its local community, providing pupils with insights into the work that adults do. A baker from a local superstore showed pupils how to make bread, children have taken part in a dance and drama festival at a nearby school, and speakers from community organisations, for example, the Weald and Downland Museum and Worthing Borough Council, help pupils to understand aspects of history and care for the environment. Through raising money for charity, pupils gain an understanding that there are needy people in the world.
39. The school makes constructive links with other partner institutions. Children aged under five join the school with a wide variety of pre-school experience. The school ensures that children make a welcoming start. Very good relationships exist between the 'family' of schools in the local area. The headteachers and other key members of staff meet regularly to discuss the curriculum and other matters. The school has recently been instrumental in initiating work related to handwriting,



and boys' writing in particular. The school also has a valuable link with the local high school. Year 11 boys visit Bramber regularly to partner pupils for reading. This acts as an important role model for some boys who do not enjoy reading or find it difficult. Information and communication technology is not yet exploited sufficiently to familiarise pupils with life in communities elsewhere in the world, but the equipment in the new computer suite offers the potential for pupils to discover people and places beyond West Sussex.

40. The curriculum for children aged under five follows the recommendations of the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. Although the long-term planning ensures that all elements of the areas of learning are taught, medium- and short-term planning often uses subject headings that relate to older pupils. Provision is very good in the Reception class, especially that offered to the older children during the afternoon sessions, when the part-time children have left. In order to ensure that both groups of children are getting equal access, the needs of the older children will have to be carefully managed as the Reception class becomes full-time and space becomes a premium. The needs of children with special educational needs are met well, and there is early identification of their needs, and good consultation with the special educational needs coordinator.

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

41. Pupils at Bramber are cared for from their earliest experience of the school and for the rest of their time there. By the time they leave Reception, most children achieve the early learning goals for their personal, social and emotional development, having made good progress in this area. Their independence is encouraged so that they are able to tidy up speedily and take on 'helper' duties, such as taking the register to the school office. They help each other to put on aprons and to get dressed. They listen carefully to instructions, and obey the signals to stop promptly. Older children attend assemblies and learn about the 'Teddy Rules' for behaviour. The story of Jesus and the loaves and fishes helps children to understand about sharing, and they know, for instance, that some people will be 'happy' if they decide to follow Jesus' teachings.
42. The provision of freely chosen activities for the under fives is well thought out, although the full range of activities is only available in the part-time Reception class. When children choose from the activities, they use and share equipment well. They invent thoughtful and interesting play. They collaborate to use the puppet theatre to re-enact the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, and bath the babies, sharing shampoo and hairbrushes.
43. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality are outstanding and deservedly successful. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational need is very good. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and for preventing oppressive behaviour are consistently good. The checking of and support for pupils' educational and personal development are sound overall.
44. The successful RAGs (Red, Amber, Green) attendance project in which the school participates has led to a rise of two percentage points in attendance in 2001/02, and to continuing improvement in the autumn term of 2002/03. Parents are discouraged from taking children on holiday in term time. The attendance project officer encourages doctors, dentists and other professionals to refrain from making appointments for children in school time. Pupils arriving at school after 9 a.m. have to use the main entrance because all other doors are locked, and their arrival time is noted in registers. The great majority of pupils arrive punctually. The registers are carefully marked at the appropriate times and are coded so that reasons for absence, and lateness and absence patterns, can be spotted easily.
45. The 'Teddy Rules' that apply throughout the school are simple and sensible. All staff can award points and certificates for helpful and kind behaviour, and pupils' usual willingness to keep the rules helps create a calm, orderly atmosphere. Staff watch for aggression or racism, and have suitable policies to guide their actions.

46. Children are assessed as they enter school and findings are used positively to plan activities for those aged under five. Throughout the rest of the school there are a variety of satisfactory procedures used annually to assess attainment and check pupils' academic progress from year to year. These are then used to set targets for the core subjects of English and mathematics for groups of pupils. However, assessment is not yet used fully to track pupils' progress or to help teachers to plan for the next stages in learning for groups or individual pupils. The school has begun this important development but it is in its early stages. In some subjects, pupils are encouraged to keep records of their skills on 'I can' sheets that involve them successfully in their own learning. On a day-to-day basis, some teachers are skilled at assessing pupils at the end of a lesson to ascertain whether or not the learning intention has been met. Some also record those pupils who have not met the intention and adjust their planning for the next lesson accordingly. However, this is not yet consistent across the school. The school now has a marking policy. This is an improvement since the last inspection, although not all teachers use it consistently yet. Pupils' progress is not promoted by inconsistencies in making regular assessments to inform planning on a daily basis.
47. Teaching for younger children's personal, social and emotional development is good and is supported consistently. All adults provide very good role models and have high expectations of children's conduct. Praise is used very well to reward appropriate behaviour, such as in a lesson in physical development, and this helps children develop their self-esteem. There is a good level of interaction in children's work and play, especially in the part-time class, which helps children to learn how to work with each other. Occasionally, children were less successful at sharing and found it difficult to organise themselves.
48. Staff give pupils much informal support, and show interest in their out-of-school activities. The 'talent assembly' for children to demonstrate their hobbies and skills reflects the staff's concern for children's all-round development. Good efforts are made to introduce pupils to their next schools. The head of Year 4 and the special educational needs co-ordinator at the middle school to which most pupils transfer visit Bramber to meet them, and individual transition programmes are prepared for pupils moving to other schools.
49. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Pupils' individual education plans are well written and contain targets that are realistic and achievable. Targets are reviewed regularly with the class teacher and the pupils' parents. This is done formally at the end of each term, but there is ongoing checking, especially where parents are supporting particular targets. Pupils are consulted on their targets and know there are 'special things' they need to achieve.
50. Results of national and school tests are analysed so that the progress of pupils with English as an additional language can be checked. Staff watch the needs of this very small number of pupils very carefully, and advice and co-operation from parents and experts is sought when appropriate. The school can call on the local authority's ethnic minority support service if they need help with pupils in the early stages of acquiring English.
51. The school has also identified 13 pupils who are gifted and talented, and encourages them to take part in the local education authority's enrichment programme. Experts are brought in when possible: for example, a secondary school science teacher worked with higher-attaining pupils on a beach visit.
52. The school works hard to compensate for the local education authority's abolition of hot school meals by inviting the school nurse to teach pupils about healthy diets. The nurse's lessons are effective in informing children about the sorts of foods that are nutritious, and those that are not. However, young children generally do not purchase the family's food, and the nurse is conscious that in nutrition lessons she may be placing pressure on children whose parents supply poor quality lunches. Take-up of free school meals has slumped since hot meals ceased and, at the time of the inspection, only eight children claimed free packed lunches. These also lack appeal for pupils whose parents or carers are not eligible for free meals: no child bought one during the inspection. Two-thirds of pupils drink the milk that is provided daily to enrich their diets. Bramber

has recently joined the 'healthy schools' initiative but it is too early for the scheme to have had a full impact.

53. There is good attention to safety in the school playground, which is zoned for different activities, including conversation, play with construction toys, running games and ball games. The playtime supervisors skilfully encourage co-operative play that develops co-ordination and teamwork. The 'trim trail', an excellent resource for developing pupils' fitness and agility, is supervised appropriately. Three members of staff are fully qualified in first aid. Their services are required less frequently than in the past, because playtime arrangements have been improved to minimise the risks of children colliding with each other at speed without restricting freedom for imaginative play.
54. The chair of governors and the caretaker, who both work extremely hard on behalf of the school, keep a watch for potential health and safety hazards. As yet, governors do not have an organised programme of health, safety and welfare visits beyond an annual check. The cleanliness and high standard of decoration contribute to pupils' welfare and their obvious enjoyment of school.
55. The school's procedures for child protection are good. The head teacher has a holistic approach to children's education and seeks support from professionals such as speech therapists and medical specialists whenever appropriate.
56. Bramber seeks fully to include all pupils in the life and work of the school. Differences in attainment between boys and girls are broadly as found nationally, although the relatively small number of children in each year group means that there can be marked variations from year to year. The single-storey layout of the building means that the school is accessible for pupils with physical disabilities. Pupils with medical conditions such as asthma are well catered for. Staff note the time that any child uses an inhaler to avoid the risk of over use. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve as well as those from white British backgrounds. Staff respect families' religious beliefs and seek to make the curriculum and extra-curricular events accessible to all. Governors are giving active consideration to ways of enhancing the good racial equality policy by linking it with the inclusion and equal opportunities policies.

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

57. Parents have a very high regard for the school and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. The home visits made by two members of staff before pupils start in Reception smooth the transition between home and school. Home-school reading books are used to good effect by parents and teachers to share information about children's reading progress. Many parents give effective support to homework, by helping their children to learn spellings, by assisting with projects such as keeping a food diary for a week, and by enabling children to use computers for word processing and for finding information on the internet. Parent-teacher consultations are well attended, and parents give substantial support to the fund-raising and social events organised by the friends association. A small number of parents help regularly in school, and are well deployed by teachers. Parents and teachers often exchange information informally at the end of the day.
58. A small minority of parents are not happy with the amount of homework given to children, believing this to be either too little or too much, and a few feel that they receive insufficient information about their children's progress. The inspection found that homework generally made a good contribution to children's learning, but agreed that in some cases the written information about progress in children's annual reports could be improved. The quality of report writing varies between classes. The best reports give clear examples of progress in knowledge, skills and understanding, and set specific, attainable targets for the next steps in learning. Reports that are less useful focus on children's attitudes and on the content of the past year's curriculum, and suggest targets that are too broad, such as 'to concentrate on your work and try your best'.
59. The 1997 inspection report recorded that about a fifth of questionnaires returned by parents mentioned dissatisfaction with the extent to which they were encouraged to play an active part in

the life of the school. In 2002, all parents who replied agreed that the school works closely with them, and over half agreed strongly.

60. Fortnightly newsletters keep parents up to date with school news. Information about the school in its prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents is presented attractively and clearly except for the results of standard assessment tasks and tests. These would benefit from amplification to explain what 'levels' mean and why there are blank spaces in the results grid. Written explanations would be of particular help to parents who do not go along to curriculum meetings, which are less well attended than other school events.
61. Liaison with parents of children with special educational needs is very good. They participate in drawing up individual education plans and can meet the special needs co-ordinator on alternate Wednesdays. Parents are made aware of, and sometimes contribute to, the targets set in their children's individual education plans and are invited to help their children to meet them. Parents are involved in the regular review procedure. There are appropriate procedures in place to involve parents of children with statements of educational needs.

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

62. The school is well led and managed by its headteacher, her deputy and key staff. The senior management team has recently been extended to include the teacher responsible for the 'Blue' wing and this has improved communication and the capacity for action. Senior managers have a clear vision of how they intend to develop the school and raise standards. The school's improvement plan is thorough and detailed. This would be improved by linking success criteria wherever possible to the effect that measures are intended to have on raising standards and making those targets measurable. The school's aims are appropriate and useful in giving direction to its efforts. They are well reflected in the way that adults and children work together, the quality of the inside and outside environments, and the improving standards of work and behaviour.
63. All subject co-ordinators contribute an action plan to the overall development plan; many of these would also be improved by the same measures relating to success criteria and targets. The range and amount of work that staff intend to take on is challenging. The headteacher has increasingly devolved management and leadership responsibilities to subject coordinators, and supported this with appropriate training and guidance, often from local authority personnel and trainers.
64. The governing body provides good support and guidance to the school's leadership. They make an informed contribution to deciding priorities and constructing the development plan. Key governors visit the school regularly; they are well informed about what is going on and what is planned to happen. As well as formal visits, several governors work directly with pupils to give valuable help and support. Governors' have a useful committee structure with good leadership throughout. These enable purposeful meetings of the full governing body and contribute significantly in boosting communication. The quality of governors' knowledge and commitment is good, and they attend training to ensure that their knowledge is up to date and relevant. They know what is required of them and fulfil their statutory obligations soundly. Their annual report is actually written by governors rather than, as is often the case, being delegated to senior managers and teaching staff. They play a full part in constructing and checking on the budget, in co-operation with the school's finance officer. Governors recognise that they could improve their stewardship by requiring more measurable outcomes when making budgetary decisions and, subsequently, holding staff to account for how effective spending and improvement strategies have been.
65. Teaching and learning performance is managed well. Targets are set, progress checked on, and successes recognised and celebrated. This extends to support staff as well as teachers. Governors play their required part in setting targets for the headteacher and checking on progress.

They receive useful information about other targets for the continuing professional development of all staff, which enables them to be clear about priorities and activities happening.

66. The school has had a relatively settled staff for about a year. Prior to this, a significant number of maternity leaves and the long-term absence of the previous headteacher made it difficult for the school to move forward. The headteacher and her deputy, who was acting headteacher for lengthy spells when the previous headteacher was absent, have made the appointment, training and support of subject co-ordinators a priority. In such a small school, this necessarily involves all staff and includes a recently qualified teacher who assumed leadership of a subject immediately after her induction year. This has created real drive and purpose in development work, and the capacity of the school to succeed is very good.
67. The special educational needs coordinator is experienced and knowledgeable, and manages support very well. She has an in-depth knowledge of special educational needs and has implemented a number of successful strategies that help these pupils to make good progress. The special educational needs policy has been reviewed in line with the recently revised national code of practice.
68. Teaching assistants receive thorough training and have the opportunity to attend relevant courses. There are good and well-established relationships with outside agencies, such as the learning support service, speech and language service, and the educational psychologists. A member of the governing body takes responsibility for special educational needs.
69. The administrative staff carry out their roles very well, giving efficient and willing help to staff, pupils, parents, governors and other visitors. The maintenance and cleaning of the building and grounds is also well managed and carried out by the caretaker and her staff.
70. Resources for all subjects are adequate and well organised. Some major items like classroom computers and the school library could be much better used, but preparation and use of resources is normally good.
71. The accommodation is very good. The school building is about ten years old and well designed. It is relatively easy to maintain and is well looked after. There is adequate space in class bases and shared areas for a flexible and purposeful curriculum to be offered, and very good use is made of opportunities to display and celebrate pupils' work, and to create a strong focus for learning. The grounds provide adequate space overall but would benefit from extension to provide better-proportioned spaces. They are valued as a resource by staff, governors and parents, and are constantly being developed. A wildlife area with a pond is planned for in the near future.

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

72. In order to continue to raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors recognise in their development plan that they should:
  - (1) ensure that the breadth and balance of provision for teaching and learning geography and religious education is improved through revising planning of the cycle of topics, and seeking ways to increase the time that pupils in Year 3 are taught to bring this into line with the national average;  
[paragraphs 5, 8, 22, 23, 116, 119, 134, 137, 138]
  - (2) use assessment, tracking, reporting and setting targets to better promote learning and raise standards; and,  
[paragraphs 7, 18, 46, 58, 60, 97]
  - (3) plan better for opportunities to:
    - a. develop pupils' multicultural awareness;

b. use and apply numeracy and ICT to support teaching and learning in other subjects.

[paragraphs 24, 33, 95, 99, 101, 106, 125]

In addition, pupils, particularly those in Years 2 and 3, would benefit from increased use of the school's library.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed (including four observations that were too short to be assigned a grade for teaching)

35

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

25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	13	11	1	0	0
Percentage	3	16	42	36	3	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-Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	159
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR-Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	36

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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	21	26	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	18	19
	Girls	24	25	25
	Total	39	43	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (90)	91 (90)	94 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	21
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	40	41	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (90)	87 (87)	98 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
149	1	1
0	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

No ethnic group recorded
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0
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0
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0
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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-Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.1
Average class size	26

#### Education support staff: YR-Y3

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	169.5

#### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	-
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	-
Total number of education support staff	-
Total aggregate hours worked per week	-
Number of pupils per FTE adult	-

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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.

### Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	416 809
Total expenditure	413 154
Expenditure per pupil	2 648
Balance brought forward from previous year	22 611
Balance carried forward to next year	26 266

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	159
Number of questionnaires returned	60

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	38	2	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	48	42	3	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	37	2	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	43	7	0	7
The teaching is good.	67	30	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	47	3	0	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	37	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	60	40	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	80	20	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	32	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	72	2	2	0	7

## **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**

73. Children enter the Reception year at the age of four at the start of the school year in which they are five. They start in September, or at the beginning of the spring or summer terms. Those who will be five during the following term attend full-time; younger children attend morning sessions only. By the summer term, all children attend full-time. Part-time children are placed in one class of solely Reception children and most full-time children are in another class with Year 1 children. Three older children in the part-time class are already five, and join the mixed-age class for the afternoon session. Children come from a variety of pre-school provision, so that not all will have had the same experiences before joining the school.
74. Figures for children's attainment on entry to Reception are not yet available for this year's group. However, on the basis of previous years, their attainment is slightly below the local authority average, especially in social development. From looking at work done on entry in the year 2001-2002, children are broadly in line with expectations in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. From the evidence of this inspection, and bearing in mind that 30 per cent of the Reception children will not be five until the summer term, attainment is broadly in line with that found nationally. There is one child in the part-time Reception class with a statement of special educational need.
75. Children make good progress in all aspects of their development because of the good teaching and good provision for Reception. Support assistants understand the needs of young children, and the child with a statement of special educational needs is very well supported. Although older Reception children are taught with the Year 1 pupils in the morning, they move into the Reception class in the afternoon so that they can use the rich provision there. Work is adapted for them in the mornings, but during these sessions they do not always get the same opportunities as those in the part-time class, especially in their free choice activities. By the time that they leave Reception, most children achieve the early learning goals, and some children exceed them in mathematical development and communication, language and literacy. There are very good structures in place for the introduction of new children and their parents to the school. At this early stage in the term, it is easy to see that the firm emphasis on routine and high expectations of behaviour are already having a positive impact on children and how well they relate to adults and each other. During the short period of the inspection it was possible to see some children making considerable gains in confidence, particularly those with special needs.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

76. Most children will achieve the early learning goals in this area, and children of higher ability are likely to exceed them in writing. They make good progress. Most children are confident to say what they want and to explain to visitors what they are doing. A small number of children lack clear speech. Children listen very carefully to what adults say to them, and most listen to each other when playing together. For example, when re-telling the story of Goldilocks, one child said that the bears 'wanted to throw their breakfast away. They're very naughty.' In their imaginative play, they take on different roles. While some children are content to play side by side with others, many are already setting up imaginative games with each other, for example, discussing farm vehicles, or bathing babies.
77. Children recognise their names and many can already write them. Many children choose to 'write' when they have free choice of activities. One boy spent 15 minutes covering paper with rapid writing patterns, and 'read' each page back. There are daily literacy sessions that link to the week's theme, so that children are introduced to vocabulary that will be used throughout the week in other areas. Children learn to identify and form their letters and practise their handwriting. Over the year, they learn to re-tell familiar stories using pictures and drawings; they make up their

own rhymes, changing the endings of traditional nursery rhymes; they write diaries recording home events; and, they begin to write their own imaginative stories.

78. Reception children enjoy looking at books. They are keen to talk about the stories with an adult and higher attaining children can retell the events in sequence, using the illustrations to help. They take books home regularly to read with their parents, and there is a very good partnership between parents and their teachers.
79. Teaching of this aspect is good. Teachers and support staff interact very effectively in children's work and play, and stimulate children to develop their ideas and vocabulary. From the work done during the previous year, it is clear that there is a structured approach to teaching children to write. There is a consistent approach to teaching letter sounds and the formation of letters. The teachers are usually careful to give children time to think through their ideas, and to help them to respond in full sentences. The teacher in the mixed age class plans for the Reception children to have different follow-up activities during the literacy session, although when there is no adult to supervise, the children sometimes lose track of what they are meant to do.

### **Mathematical development**

80. On the basis of work seen from the previous year, by the end of the Foundation Stage, average and higher ability children are likely to exceed the early learning goals. Children have many good opportunities to develop mathematically. They use water and sand to develop a sense of weight and capacity; one child estimates that the larger bucket of sand will be heavier than the others. Many of the older children are already able to count to ten. They can recognise coins and use them for buying and selling in simple amounts in the class shop.
81. Teaching is good, and teachers provide good opportunities for mathematical development. There is an adapted numeracy session most days that is well planned so that children are clear about what they are to learn. The teachers use number songs successfully to help make the children's mathematical learning fun. The early morning registration is used as an opportunity for counting and for learning the sequence of the days and months.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

82. The teachers provide the children with good practical experience, so that they will achieve the early learning goals in this area. The good provision helps children build up the language to talk about the world around them. In the week of the inspection, children were learning about bread and the baker. They are interested in what food he makes, and that he works at night. They show good observational skills in examining rolls and identifying the different features: 'mine's the same, it's brown and has black and white seeds' or 'mine's round and has a hole - it hasn't got seeds'. They enjoy investigating the rolls, smelling them and discussing the shapes. The child with a statement of special educational needs opts to join in the activity, uses a magnifying glass to observe and says that 'you put a hot-dog in there.' Children know how to use the computer mouse to click on icons and are beginning to learn how to use the paint programme to make pictures.
83. Teaching in this area is good. Teachers are careful to introduce topics that are relevant to the children and to help them to develop the vocabulary to talk about them. From looking at work done during the previous year, children have good opportunities to explore the school grounds. They plant and observe the growth of beans and sunflowers. They make maps of the route to the *Three Bear's* house and make story maps of the story of the *Three Little Pigs*, illustrating the building materials. They think about the differences in the seaside in the past and present. There are some visits organised, such as to the chalk pit garden, where children explore the trees and plants.

### **Physical development**

84. Most children are likely to meet the early learning goals in this area. They learn how to use pencils, pens and paintbrushes, and to cut and stick and join. Most children have good hand control skills.
85. Children enjoy being in the outdoor playground where they can run and climb, balance and slide. They use the wheeled vehicles with a good awareness of space, taking care not to bump into each other. In an excellent lesson in the school hall, children showed that they could follow instructions, and moved imaginatively. The effort they put into the lesson showed their enjoyment, and they tried hard to think of ways of running and walking using different steps and changing direction. Children were confident to show others what they have done.
86. Teaching in this lesson was excellent and provided outstanding opportunities for children to develop physically, as well as learning how to behave in physical development lessons. This was achieved through the teacher's use of praise to reward appropriate behaviour, which then acted as model for others. This is a strong feature of teaching. It is used by all adults so that children learn to handle equipment carefully and are confident to play imaginatively.

### **Creative development**

87. There is good provision for this aspect so that it is likely that most children will achieve the early learning goals. Children were seen experimenting with colour and mixing their own paints. They knew how to clean the brush before changing colours, and to wipe the brush on a sponge to prevent the paint running so that they could paint adjacent blocks of a different colour. They use drawings and paintings to illustrate their own stories, using black felt-tip pens very effectively. They use the computer to create pictures using the paint programme.
88. They enjoy the opportunities they are given for imaginative play, and are making full use of a new puppet theatre and puppets. They set up imaginative games using a play farm, a role-play shop, and dolls and soft toys. They especially enjoy re-enacting the story of *Goldilocks* with the three class bears. Children enjoy singing, are tuneful, and accompany songs with actions. They are beginning to identify the rhythms in music and can clap and tap in time. They use simple percussion instruments well.
89. Teaching is mainly good because of the good range of equipment and activities and the regular opportunities for music, especially when a pianist accompanies the lessons. In one of the lessons seen, there were not enough opportunities for the children to explore the musical instruments.

### **ENGLISH**

90. Since the last inspection, results of national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 have improved. In 2002, results for reading and writing were in line with those expected nationally. The percentage of higher-attaining pupils exceeded the national average in both reading and writing. It is the same when these results are compared with schools in similar social circumstances. Pupils continue to make sound progress in Year 3 and standards are what is expected nationally.
91. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their listening skills in both English and other subjects and, as a result, pupils make good progress. Most teachers insist on pupils listening carefully and they do so attentively when being given instructions about tasks. Good listening skills are also emphasised at school assemblies and by being an integral part of the school's behaviour code. Pupils listen well to each other when talking about each other's work and when reading together. They are articulate but there is less opportunity for them to practise speaking through explaining and discussing. Teachers sometimes inhibit speaking when asking questions that only require a short answer, often 'yes' or 'no'. However, the ends of lessons are often used well to practise both speaking and listening skills. At the end of a lesson using the book *The Little Red Hen*, pupils were asked to concentrate on the middle of the story and to recall and

explain the happenings and the characters. The improvement of speaking skills has been identified as in need of attention in the school development plan.

92. Reading is in line with the national average for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and Year 3 pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Lower-attaining pupils benefit from extra help in reading from skilled learning support assistants and they practise on a daily basis in school. The school is aware of boys in particular who under perform. Year 11 boys from the local high school present a good role model for reading by attending the school regularly to read with pupils. The school has noticed that some boys prefer non-fiction texts and this is being encouraged through extra appropriate resources. The school teaches letter sounds well and pupils use these to build unknown words. They employ a variety of other strategies when tackling an unknown text. Most pupils read fluently with expression and correct themselves when they make mistakes. They can guess what might happen next and talk about characters. They know technical terms, such as 'author', 'title' and 'illustrator'. Although many pupils do not visit a local library outside of school, some use the school library. Some express a preference for a particular author or have a favourite book. They understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and most can explain how to use the contents, index and glossary pages of an information book.
93. The school is very well resourced for books. There is a wide range of reading schemes as well as a very good choice of 'real' books. Reading resources are well organised and the colour coded system guides pupils in their choice of book, helping them to select an appropriate text. Most pupils read regularly at home, and written notes and records about reading between home and school are exceptionally well kept. Parents play a very important part in the development of reading skills. The school places great importance on pupils becoming fluent readers and this is helping to raise standards consistently. However, the attractive and well-resourced school library is under used although some pupils visit it when school begins to change their reading books. Currently it is timetabled for use during the school day but no classes were seen using it during the week of the inspection. There is no consistent approach for the development of library skills. Older pupils do not fully understand the Dewey system. This prevents them from making full use of the library for reference purposes. This was noted at the last inspection and has yet to be addressed.
94. Attainment in writing overall is in line with national standards for Year 2 pupils and those in Year 3. The percentage of pupils attaining a higher standard of writing exceeds the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
95. The range of writing is very good and extends across the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to write factual reports, scientific explanations, opinions, evaluations and instructions, as well as stories and poems. During a poetry week, pupils experienced meeting a poet and writing a wide variety of poetry including acrostics, calligrams, group poems and poetry using repeats. They are introduced to many different starting points for writing including outings, feelings and topics from other subjects. Poems about *Candles* based on pupils' work in the topic *Colour, Light and Electricity* provided a good starting point for some very imaginative work. Story writing includes using traditional stories as models for retelling, rewriting and telling the story from a character's point of view. An example of this is the work on *This is the House that Jack Built* that became *This is the House that We Built*. Some drafting of work is encouraged, sometimes using computer word processing skills, but this is not a consistent practice. Most pupils spell high frequency words correctly and, because letter sounds are well taught, they have a plausible go at longer or unfamiliar words. Teachers extend vocabulary well, especially through poetry writing. Punctuation skills are emphasised and all pupils use full stops and capital letters. Some older pupils understand the use of speech and exclamation marks. By Year 3, most pupils' handwriting is fluent and legible although not always joined and consistent in size. Overall, written work is neatly presented, well organised, dated and titled.
96. The quality of teaching overall is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and has contributed to the rise in standards. The National Literacy Strategy is very well embedded into the English curriculum and makes a good contribution to other subjects. Good teaching is

characterised by thorough planning, clear learning intentions, good subject knowledge and clear explanations of tasks. Teachers model and demonstrate tasks especially well. In a good lesson where pupils were being taught about writing poetry the teacher shared *Spaghetti, Spaghetti* with pupils. She used it as a model for pupils' own writing, demonstrating the task clearly by asking them to write as a class before completing individual work. Pupils were in no doubt as to what was required. Tasks set for group time are usually challenging although occasionally the pace of the lesson slows down and pupils are less focused. Teachers sometimes forget to remind pupils of the time they have left to complete a task. Some lapses in the management of pupils' behaviour, when teachers do not insist that all pupils are quiet and listen to instructions, make it difficult for other pupils to pay full attention. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in all lessons and learning support assistants are highly trained and effectively used. Teachers organise their own time well during lessons, often targeting a group to help. Resources are very appropriate and always well prepared. However, too little use of computers and other ICT to support teaching and learning was seen in lessons, work or teachers' planning. Pupils enjoy lessons, are enthusiastic and concentrate well. Generally their behaviour and attitudes are good.

97. Despite the co-ordinator being new in post, the subject is well managed and overseen, and future plans have clear priorities. The school is using the local authority's method for the assessment of pupils' progress and attainment satisfactorily. However, marking is weak. It does not follow school policy, nor does it help pupils to know what they need to do next to improve.

## **MATHEMATICS**

98. Standards are above those expected nationally and those found in similar schools in national tests for seven-year-olds. Results in national tests in 2002 show 94 per cent attaining the national expectation, including 47 per cent attaining higher than expectations. This is well above average when compared nationally. From scrutiny of the work of eight-year-olds, observation of what they do in lessons and discussion with them, pupils still attain higher than is found nationally and in similar schools when they leave the school at the end of Year 3. A higher proportion of older pupils exceeds expectations than is found nationally. When these pupils entered the school, most were meeting or just below expectations so good progress is made throughout the school.
99. In a lesson, Year 1 pupils worked out missing numbers or operations in written examples. Lower-attaining pupils used small cubes to add together two numbers. Higher-attaining pupils worked out mentally whether their calculation involved addition or subtraction. In Year 2, most pupils can double numbers less than ten but few can halve numbers with the answer being less than ten. Lower-attaining pupils match objects to a 10 cm ruler and record their findings ('the same as', 'less than', 'more than') pictorially. Higher-attaining pupils measure their height and hand span in centimetres. They convert longer measures to metres and centimetres. In a class with both Years 2 and 3, older pupils are quicker and more accurate in their measurement and conversions. Others in Year 3 count together in 5s and 10s up to and back from 200 and 120 respectively; many lower- and average-attaining pupils rely heavily on higher attainers to take the lead. Most pupils can use clock faces to help them tell the time to within five minutes. About half the class are comfortable with times to and from the hour; many of the others need intensive help from the class teacher and a classroom assistant to succeed in this. Scrutiny of pupils' books confirms that they cover all aspects of mathematics during daily mathematics lessons. All pupils enjoyed and benefited from a whole-school mathematics day focusing on shape. There is limited evidence of mathematics being used to support learning in other subjects; almost all examples are of graphs. Little was seen of pupils using computers to develop their mathematical learning during the inspection or in the samples of work scrutinised.
100. Overall, teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and plan effectively to cover the curriculum and match work to pupils' needs. Pace and challenge were lacking in some lessons, for instance where pupils were given individual calculations to work on. These were matched in their level of difficulty to pupils' needs but only one was given to each child, with nothing available to those who completed their task well within the given time. The last



part of lessons, where teachers check on and consolidate pupils' learning, were often not used as productively as they might be. Few pupils were given notice that they were to participate and time was limited. However, teachers and classroom assistants prepare well and work hard to ensure that all pupils get as much from lessons as they can. Teachers have high but realistic expectations in most lessons, and ensure that they gain and keep pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Any distracting behaviour is dealt with firmly and effectively. Pupils make a good effort in lessons and are keen to participate and complete what is asked of them. Good planning and support benefits pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. They are helped to make good progress.

101. An enthusiastic and experienced teacher has led the subject for a year, who has ensured that she has attended a variety of courses and meetings to improve her knowledge and understanding. These have included a visit to a 'beacon' school and to a leading mathematics teacher in action. The subject benefits from a recent policy, due for review in 2003, and from good attention to ensuring that the National Numeracy Strategy is well understood and integrated into the school curriculum. This provides a solid foundation for planning, and teaching is also supported by the use of a core commercial scheme. However, there are few identified opportunities to develop pupils' awareness through study and appreciation of the contribution of other cultures to mathematics. This scheme also provides guidance and materials for teachers to check on how well pupils are learning. From this and from analysis of results in national tests, teachers set down targets for pupils' learning and these are shared well with pupils and parents to ensure their effectiveness in raising standards. The subject is suitably resourced. Teaching, learning and standards have all improved well since the school was last inspected.

## SCIENCE

102. Standards in science are above expectations for pupils aged seven and remain so when they leave the school at the age of eight. According to teachers' assessments, only one child each year has failed to attain the expected standard in 2000, 2001 and 2002. In 2002, 98 per cent of pupils, a very high proportion, reached the national expectation. This included the 27 per cent of pupils who exceeded the expected level, which compares well nationally.
103. Little science was timetabled during the inspection so evidence is drawn from scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display, and from discussion with pupils and the subject leader as well as what was seen in lessons. Science is taught as part of the school's programme of cross-curricular themes, many of which have a strong link to the subject. Careful thought has gone into planning what links well with the themes and how the subject is to be developed throughout the school.
104. When studying water, pupils in Year 1 investigate objects that float or sink. They learn that salt can be dissolved in water and reclaimed by evaporation. When studying bread, pupils learn about the effects of heat and cold on substances, and that some processes are reversible and some are not. In their current study, pupils make careful observations of cereals such as wheat and barley, and of different types of bread made from these cereals. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 investigate motion in a rocking horse while studying *The Victorians*: this topic is one that has relatively little scientific content. In their current study, pupils learn about the importance of the skeleton and the names of some important bones. They also learn about what comprises a healthy diet. Pupils also study sources of light. These include the sun, which pupils know shouldn't be looked at. Pupils also make and study a shadow clock. They investigate light filtered through coloured gels and mixing colours through spinning a disc. They light a bulb by making a simple electrical circuit. These pupils also benefited from a visit from a mobile planetarium.
105. Although little direct teaching of science was seen, there is evidence of good teaching in the planning of activities and investigations. Pupils learn scientific terms and carry out thoughtful experiments based on good guidance from adults. Pupils make good progress in developing their scientific knowledge and understanding; this can also be ascribed to good teaching. Classroom environments also show good attention to providing interactive and informative displays to support

teaching of the subject. Pupils clearly enjoy science and work thoughtfully and with good effort. Their work is well recorded, whether in writing or graphically, and whether using commercial worksheets or being responsible for laying out work themselves. Those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language work alongside others in the class and sometimes benefit from adult support. They make good progress.

106. The subject co-ordinator has been in post only since the beginning of the autumn term, although she 'shadowed' the role with more experienced colleagues last term. A local authority advisory teacher has given further support. The co-ordinator was involved in reviewing the subject policy last term and will oversee its ratification by governors. There is good planning to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met, and the school places appropriately strong emphasis on its pupils learning from direct experience. However, there is too little reference to multicultural aspects of science and there is little evidence of planned use of ICT to support pupils' learning. Resources in the school are satisfactory and good use is made of the school grounds and visitors such as the school nurse and a baker from a local supermarket. Pupils also enjoy a special day devoted to a scientific topic: the next is planned to focus on the school grounds. This supports a key feature of the school's current development plan to which the coordinator has contributed. Standards in the subject have been maintained in Years 1 and 2, and improved in Year 3 since the last inspection.

## ART AND DESIGN

107. Pupils achieve standards above those expected for their age. These high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities and ages make good progress in art through a wide range of work and support. The school continues to follow a skills-based approach and pupils are taught the importance of careful observation from an early age. Pattern, line and shade are central themes. There is a predominance of drawing but painting and three-dimensional work are given due regard, creating many good opportunities for pupils to practise a variety of skills.
108. Pupils' learning benefits considerably from tasks using first-hand experiences. These are successfully planned and implemented through very good links that exist between art and other curriculum areas. Sketchbooks, introduced in Year 1, show carefully observed drawings of wheat linked to work on bread, the study of the vein structure on a leaf and a study of shells from the beach in the topic on *Water*. These initial skills are built on progressively. An example of this is evident in Year 3 where pupils demonstrate the ability to use shading in observational drawings of drinks cans in their topic on *Rubbish*. Brush stroke and colour mixing techniques are equally well taught. A visit to Hightown Gardens for a topic on *Growing* provides excellent opportunities to study the structure of flowers and to collect colour shades. Pupils study Monet and Van Gogh, learning a subtle use of colour in their very good paintings of poppies. Year 1 pupils use a mixed media of pastels and colour wash successfully to provide a series of striking paintings telling the story of creation. Year 2 and 3 pupils use the work of William Morris as a model when studying *The Victorians*. They begin to experience pattern repeats by make printing blocks from which they make effective material wall hangings and very attractive covers for their topic books. Pupils continue to make good use of sketchbooks throughout Years 2 and 3 for practice, design and collecting ideas.
109. Work in three dimensions is well represented through pupils' work in clay, collage and sewing. Much of this work has strong links with design and technology. After visiting the Weald and Downland Museum for their topic on *Buildings*, pupils learn how to sculpt houses from one piece of clay. They make thumb pots for plants and learn how to join clay when making tiles.
110. As only two art lessons were seen during the inspection it is not possible to make a judgement about standards of teaching based on direct observation. However, based on scrutiny of pupils' work and from talking to them, standards of teaching are deemed to be good. Work is enhanced significantly by being beautifully presented and well displayed. The quality of finished artwork and

the absence of uncompleted tasks shows that pupils have a good attitude towards work. They were observed sharing equipment well and helping each other.

111. The subject is well managed and resources are very good. Staff have received valuable training in observational drawing. A full action plan exists to ensure consistent monitoring in order to continue to promote good standards. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for assessing their work and recording their growing skills by using statements of what they can do. A portfolio of work exists, which is matched to levels of the National Curriculum and is useful for judging standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. All pupils make good progress and their attainment at the end of Years 2 and 3 is above that expected for their ages. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
113. Pupils experience a good range of design and technology opportunities, many linked to learning in other subjects, particularly art. Further evidence of these good links and the wide range of opportunities was found in the record of a very successful technology day. Some pupils made a model of the school using clay, collage and recycled materials while others made three-dimensional cards, geoboards for use in mathematics, musical instruments, glove and stick puppets, and biscuits in food technology. In Year 1, pupils design and make a vehicle to move up a ramp using simple mechanisms, wheels, joints and axles. They study existing seed packets in their topic on *Growing* to consider how these are made. They examine joining techniques and evaluate the finished product. In Years 2 and 3 these skills are built on when they make and evaluate a machine to use on a building site in connection with their *Buildings* topic. There is evidence of good planning using real glasses as a model when making sunglasses while studying *Colour, Light and Electricity*. Pupils reach high standards when they recognise and adjust the plan to enable to glasses to fit correctly.
114. During the inspection three lessons were seen which included teaching of design and technology skills. Through seeing these lessons, talking to pupils and scrutinising their work it is possible to judge the teaching of this subject as good. During a lesson where pupils designed a skeleton picture in conjunction with their *Body* topic, good teaching was characterised by providing a very good range of materials and encouraging pupils to make decisions about what they would use. The teacher constantly emphasised and recapped on the skills needed to carry out certain tasks. Careful questioning helped pupils to look carefully at their plan when choosing what to use. Towards the end of the lesson pupils were asked to stop and assess how they felt that they had progressed so far. Pupils were very quiet and concentrated very hard throughout the lesson. They were willing to help each other, share resources and tidy up well. Overall their attitude to their work was very good.
115. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. Planning, displays, a portfolio of work and discussions with staff and children help her to monitor and evaluate standards. She has sought support and advice from the advisory service to help her with the varying expertise across the staff. This has helped to raise standards. Special needs pupils are fully supported when lacking co-ordination by being paired with a more able pupil. Resources are very good, accessible and kept in an orderly fashion. Pupils are successfully involved in their learning through 'I can' skills check sheets.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

116. Standards in geography are below those expected of pupils at the age of seven years and by the age of eight. They are also below those found in the previous inspection. There is a limited amount of recorded work to look at. From scrutiny of this and discussions with pupils, progress in the subject is unsatisfactory. Only one geography lesson was seen during the inspection, so it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching. Pupils with special

educational needs and those with English as an additional language make the same progress as other pupils.

117. In discussion, a small group of pupils from Year 3 could identify the countries of the British Isles, but some insisted that the United States and Germany were also part of them. They knew the names of some European countries, relying on their experience of holidays abroad to Spain, Portugal and France. They knew that Worthing is in the county of Sussex, but not that it is in West Sussex. They could not say whether the town was in the north or south and did not know which direction east or west was. They could remember very little of what they had studied in geography, except that they remembered drawing a landscape.
118. Younger pupils make satisfactory progress. They make a map of the school grounds and a plan of the school that they label successfully. In the one lesson seen, pupils in Year 1 walked around the school environment and identified some of the features and landmarks. Pupils record weather symbols and use this information well to make a weather diary. They understand the climatic features of the Arctic and the desert and use this knowledge well in their science topic to think about what conditions are best for plant growth. They know, for example, 'the plants will die in the cold' of the Arctic. They visit a local chalk pit garden and sketch the plants, but do not record any connections between these and the geographical features of the garden. There is some evidence that they have thought about the impact of lack of water on people in other countries.
119. However, the subject is not developed effectively for older pupils so that their progress is unsatisfactory. It is taught as part of cross-curricular topics. For example, the topic on water, which includes a visit to Pulborough Brooks, has a mainly science base and the limited work on rivers is not backed up by the opportunity for more detailed investigation and fieldwork. Some good opportunities are provided through the National Literacy Strategy topics, such as poetry based on the effects of pollution and the impact of humans on the environment, but these examples are not linked sufficiently to geographical skills and understanding. Because the subject does not have a specific focus and is not taught systematically, there is an unsatisfactory record of what pupils, particularly those in Years 2 and 3, have learnt. It is insufficient for them, their teachers and parents to look back on to see how their knowledge in the subject has developed.
120. The subject co-ordinator has begun the review of the organisation and planning of the subject that is identified as an area for improvement in the current school development plan. The subject is taught over the same two-year programme as history and religious education. The scheme of work is based on a school-produced scheme that ensures that all elements of the National Curriculum for geography are covered. There has been no recent monitoring of the teaching and learning in the subject, although this is now identified as a target in the school development plan. Resources are satisfactory, but visits are not used well enough to help pupils get a deeper understanding of the subject.

## **HISTORY**

121. Standards in history are broadly as expected for pupils aged seven and for the eight-year-olds; this is similar to that found in the previous inspection. It was not possible to see any history lessons during the inspection, but evidence from looking at pupils' work and a discussion with pupils indicates that progress is satisfactory. There is good evidence from looking at work done the previous year on *The Victorians* that pupils' learning is good when the subject is covered systematically and studied in detail. Younger pupils learn about the passing of time and begin to sequence events, and older pupils learn to look at evidence to find out about life in the past. However, pupils have a more limited knowledge of different historical periods and of history of the wider world. Pupils with special educational needs are given support to achieve as well as they can and pupils with English as an additional language do as well as other pupils.
122. Most of the history taught is linked to topics and supported by visits. Younger pupils use the school environment to learn about how it has changed over time. They learn about changes in themselves as they get older, and use photographs and drawings to record the sequence of

aging. They keep a home diary to record the events they participate in over school holiday periods, such as Christmas and Easter. Older pupils visit the Weald and Downland Museum to look at buildings and participate in construction workshops. They make good close observational drawings and have some understanding of the way the houses were built. In discussion, pupils knew that the Tudors were before the Victorians.

123. The visit to Preston Manor stimulates good work showing that pupils have a very good understanding of Victorian life. In discussion pupils remembered their visit and one knew that the Victorian period ended in 1901, although others were not so sure and thought it could be up to 400 years ago. Topic folders are well presented records of what they have discovered about, for example, the life of servants in Victorian times or the differences in toys used then and now. There are lively and imaginative accounts of the life of Florence Nightingale. The topic is very well linked to other subjects, such as science when pupils learn how to make butter by shaking milk; design and technology skills are used to produce an embroidered name sampler; and, maths skills are used when pupils produce a graph to show whether their classmates prefer traditional lemonade or fizzy lemonade. There is satisfactory evidence of pupils in Year 3 being challenged, so that written accounts provide more information and are of greater length than those for Year 2 pupils. In discussion, Year 3 pupils explained how they had been detectives to find out what kind of person had left behind a selection of belongings; this showed well that they could ask questions of and interpret information.
124. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The scheme of work, which is supported by national guidance, is being reviewed and re-written. The subject is linked well to other subjects, although ICT is under-used. A topic with a mainly historical focus is taught only once in each school year, and this lasts for a term. This hinders the systematic development of the subject and is reflected in the pupils' lack of real understanding of when different historical events took place. This organisation is being reviewed. The newly-appointed coordinator has not yet had time to observe teaching and learning in the subject, but is able to look at planning and pupils' work. She has good knowledge of the subject and is keen to see it develop. There are sufficient resources that are supplemented by library loans. Visits support the subject well.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

125. At the last inspection standards in ICT for all pupils were just in line with national expectations. This standard has been maintained for pupils in Years 1 to 3. During the inspection there were occasional opportunities to watch small groups of pupils using the new computer suite but very little use was made of computers in the classrooms during lessons. Despite a well-planned curriculum and great improvements in resources, pupils currently spend too little time using ICT. Satisfactory links have been made with some subjects but there are missed opportunities for ICT to support learning in all subjects.
126. Pupils' work indicates that they cover the main strands of ICT. They word process, control a floor robot, handle data and draw pictures using graphics programs. Year 1 pupils explain what they are doing when programming the robot and use a paint program to record the growing of seeds in science. They can use data handling to produce a traffic survey and graphs of types of flowers. Through these activities they develop mouse control and keyboard skills. Evidence showed that special needs pupils were well supported by ICT on their visit to Preston Manor. Years 1 and 2 use a range of techniques and tools to draw portraits. In Years 2 and 3 pupils build on skills already acquired, and in their topic on *Rubbish* they use ICT for organising and classifying information. Those in the Book Worm Club word process their poems and add borders, and those in the computer club change font style, size and colour, as well as selecting from clipart, inserting it into a word processing program, changing its size and adding a sentence. During the mathematics day, pupils explored pattern and there is considerable evidence of word processing and the use of a digital camera.
127. Work seen, discussions with pupils and some small group work suggests that teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes better. In a very good lesson using the projector linked to a

laptop pupils could identify the cursor and some icons. Very good technical vocabulary was used meaningfully. The teacher checked pupils' understanding by good questioning and excellent use was made of pupils to demonstrate their understanding of the symbols used to add colour. Pupils were fully engaged in the lesson and confident when interacting with the screen. They responded well, being focused, attentive and interested. Learning support assistants are used successfully to teach pupils in the suite. They are well trained and knowledgeable.

128. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and capable; ICT is a priority in the current school development plan. New and detailed curriculum planning is in place for the autumn term that makes techniques and software very explicit. There are specific outcomes to assist teachers in delivering pupils' full ICT entitlement. Assessment sheets are being produced which are aligned to National Curriculum levels and pupils keep a record of their own achievements. Although there have been high levels of staff change in the past, competence and confidence is growing and the co-ordinator has time to allow her to improve her awareness of standards in the subject in the school.

## MUSIC

129. The standard of singing is good throughout Years 1 to 3. All pupils benefit from a weekly visit by a pianist, who is given good support by teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils sing well. They are tuneful and keep good time. Many songs are accompanied by actions: these are well modelled by the adults and help pupils' rhythm and emphasis on key words and phrases. All pupils in Year 3 learn to play the recorder, using their own instruments and tuition books provided by the school. This is led by the subject coordinator and again well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. Although early in the term, most pupils already had satisfactory technique in their handling and playing of the instrument. Most know the values of basic notes and repeat patterns of these notes from their books or a demonstration stave. They also successfully copied phrases demonstrated by the teacher or other pupils. Pupils clearly enjoy these sessions and, although enthusiastic, maintain adequate discipline.
130. The subject is well led by an experienced teacher who is a musician and an enthusiast for the subject. There is a long-term plan for teaching and learning based on a nationally recommended scheme with some links to the school's cycle of topics, to festivals such as Harvest and Christmas, and to performance opportunities in the spring and summer. Gifted and talented pupils are recommended for inclusion in local authority schemes, such as African drumming. The school has acquired a range of multicultural resources, including recorded music and instruments, and resources are good, particularly the provision of a recorder to all pupils in Year 3. However, there is no use of ICT for composition and other aspects that support teaching and learning. Overall, the school has maintained the favourable judgements made during the last inspection.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. These involved the teaching and learning of games skills outdoors and standards were as would be expected for pupils of this age. Pupils in Year 1 use a range of equipment - including soft footballs, rugby balls, quoits, frisbees, and bats and small balls - with reasonable control and awareness of others when warming up. They understand why they need to begin activities gently. Most have good enough control to throw and catch a medium-sized ball in order to play a game based on *pig-in-the-middle*, but a significant minority do not and waste a lot of time retrieving their ball. In Year 2, most pupils kick and trap a soft football with accuracy and control. They develop their skill by passing to their partner in different positions. Further observation of pupils using small games equipment at playtimes confirms that their skills are as would be expected for their age.
132. Both lessons were taught satisfactorily. One teacher communicated better what the lesson was about and what she was expecting to see, but both demonstrated and supported the required

skills so that pupils had an understanding of what they were supposed to be developing and practising. Additional adults also gave good support in helping get pupils and equipment ready, and managing the end of the lesson. One was involved well in coaching during the lesson. Teachers' subject knowledge was sound and they had realistic expectations. Behaviour was well managed in the spaces available, and the lessons ran with a good balance of encouragement and time to practise. Both during and at the end of lessons, pupils were brought together to watch and discuss how skills were moving on, and these opportunities were well used to move pupils' learning forward. Pupils enjoyed their lessons and most worked hard and with perseverance to improve. A small number did not pay full attention and failed to keep their equipment still when asked. Particular attention was paid in one class to a number of pupils identified as having special need to improve their physical skills. They made clear progress during the lessons. Teachers used their voices and whistles well to call activities to a halt in order to move learning forward and ensure pupils' safety.

133. The subject is well led by an experienced and well-trained teacher who is keen to develop pupils' understanding and physical skills. A useful policy and scheme of work give a firm foundation to teaching and learning. The subject also benefits from activities that take place in extra-curricular clubs. Resources are satisfactory and well organised; pupils have a good range of equipment for use at playtimes, including a 'trim trail' of large fixed exercise structures. The indoor accommodation is suitable but space outdoors does not include a suitable grassed area and the hard play area is long and narrow, making control difficult. The subject has developed satisfactorily since the last inspection.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for pupils at the age of seven and for the eight-year-olds. There is a limited amount of recorded work. From this work and discussions with pupils, progress in the subject is unsatisfactory by the time pupils are seven years old and for those who are eight. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class, so it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make the same progress as the other pupils.
135. Discussion with a small group of Year 3 pupils showed their lack of a real understanding of Christianity and other religions. They knew that the Bible was very special and that the Old Testament was about God and the New Testament about Jesus. They thought that being a Christian might be something to do with being christened, and asked whether all people can be christened and if you were a Christian only after the event. They could remember only two Bible stories that they had studied: about Noah's Ark and Jesus 'and a storm'. They could not provide an explanation of what a 'religion' is. They have only a hazy understanding of other religions: that Hindus and Jews don't believe in God or Jesus, and that there is another religion, something beginning with 'M'. One pupil thought that there were pupils in the school who believed in that religion, but they could not identify any of the religious practices. One pupil thought that everyone who lives in England should believe in God.
136. The school bases much of the study of the humanities on visits made to local places of interest, and on special days. In visits, such as to Chichester Cathedral, there is a focus on Christianity, so that pupils colour and label drawings of church artefacts, and re-enact the story of St Richard. While some pupils write accounts that show an understanding of the story, the majority of written work is limited to short descriptive accounts. Pupils were not being encouraged to reflect on the meaning behind what they had learnt about the history of the cathedral and its place in Christianity. In discussion, pupils thought that the cathedral was bigger because more people lived in Chichester, and one knew that Chichester was a city because it had a cathedral. From the evidence in pupils' work and from discussions, pupils have an unsatisfactory knowledge of other religions. In the one lesson seen, pupils gained a satisfactory understanding of the Biblical parable of the loaves and fishes, which related well to their class topic on bread. They drew the events and start to sequence the story, but the teacher missed the opportunity to really probe the children's understanding of its meaning. They were not introduced to the idea of miracles.
137. The school follows the West Sussex agreed syllabus and links this to national guidelines for the teaching of religious education. The scheme of work runs over two years. The organisation of the scheme means that the planning for religious education is linked to topics, so that, for example, the stained glass windows at the cathedral are linked to a topic on *Colour, Light and Electricity*, and the story of Noah's Ark to a topic on *Water*. Topics come round every two years and are taught in discrete termly blocks. It is this topic approach that is at the heart of pupils' lack of knowledge. There is no regular, systematic teaching of the subject, and from evidence in pupils' books, the impact of visits and visitors, while stimulating at the time, is not used satisfactorily to build on pupils' knowledge and understanding. This is the same situation as found in the previous inspection, where progress was judged to be slow.
138. The subject leader has updated the scheme of work and ensured that there are sufficient books and artefacts. The scheme will be revised following the launch of a revised locally agreed syllabus. However, there are the same weaknesses in the scheme as found in the previous inspection.