

INSPECTION REPORT

ALDINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ashford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118365

Headteacher: Mrs. E Shears-Warren

Lead inspector: Marianne Harris

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd October 2003

Inspection number: 255312

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	136
School address:	Roman Road Aldington Ashford
Postcode:	TN25 7EE
Telephone number:	01233 720247
Fax number:	01233 720445
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. G. Boulden
Date of previous inspection:	27 th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Aldington Primary is a smaller than average village school with 127 pupils. Children come from a generally average, mainly white British, background, and there are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average, and the proportion who have special educational needs is below average. When they enter school children have skills and knowledge that are average. Many of the pupils do not start their school life in the school and transfer from other schools at various stages of their education.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23288	Marianne Harris	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, science, information and communication technology, physical education
19653	Libby Dickson	Lay inspector	
20760	Sheila Roberts	Team inspector	English, geography, history, religious education, English as an additional language
27225	Anna Sketchley	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, design technology, music, special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Aldington Primary is a good school that provides good value for money. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average and all pupils achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. The school is about to embark upon a significant building project that will modernise all of the facilities. The leadership of the school is very good and parents and pupils are confident that the school is doing a good job.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is very well led and this results in a positive atmosphere, where everyone is valued.
- Standards are above average in most subjects, although the standard of spelling is not high enough.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, and all pupils achieve well. Teaching is very good in science. However, there is too much dependence on printed worksheets in some subjects, and this limits the opportunities the pupils have to write.
- The school takes very good care of the children.
- Much is done to enrich the learning opportunities for all pupils. This results in children who have very positive attitudes to learning and behave well.

Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection, and all issues have been tackled successfully. Curriculum planning is now good and standards in information and communication technology and religious education have improved. Subject co-ordinators play a key role in the leadership of the school, working effectively as a team. The issue regarding the accommodation is about to be dealt with as the new buildings begin to take shape.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	C	B
mathematics	A	C	C	C
science	C	A	A*	A*

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is good overall. When they join the school, children have the skills and knowledge that are expected for children aged five. Most reach the goals expected for children at the end of the reception year, and about a third, last year, exceeded them. Children make good progress and achieve well.

The numbers of pupils who take the national tests each year are small, and this makes comparisons, year on year, and with similar schools, unreliable. However, by the end of Year 2 pupils reach standards, overall, that are above average, and they achieve well.

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in the work seen during the inspection, and this represents good achievement. Many of the pupils do not start their school life in Aldington, and those who enter part way through the junior classes settle quickly and achieve well. However, the standard of spelling across the school is not high enough. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively. They make good progress and also achieve well.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Their attitudes are **very good**, behaviour is **good**, and attendance is similar to the national picture. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and this has a positive impact on their attitudes to learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Curriculum is very good overall and is enriched with many activities outside of lessons.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very high expectations of all the pupils in their class. They plan interesting lessons and pupils enjoy learning. Lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils work hard, contributing enthusiastically in lessons. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs so that they can make good progress. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted well in other subjects, although there is an over-dependence on printed worksheets, in some subjects, and this limits the opportunities that pupils have to write.

The curriculum is very good overall. It is effectively enriched with extra activities. A recent initiative, where pupils from different local schools join together for a range of activities, is a particularly strong feature. The school has developed strong links with parents, and this has contributed to the above average standards that pupils' achieve. Resources are good in many subjects and this supports teaching and learning effectively. The accommodation is, currently, not ideal, but the new building works will put this right and the school will have very modern premises.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher and governors have focussed on raising standards in the school, and despite changes in leadership in the recent past, have been very successful. Key staff play a vital role in leading subjects, and this team approach has contributed to pupils' good achievement. Governors are very supportive of the school and do a good job.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very supportive of the school and think it is doing a good job. Pupils enjoy coming to school and know the routines and expectations. Parents feel that the school is approachable and will sort out any problems they have.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Improve the standards of spelling.
- Reduce the dependence on printed worksheets.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils reach standards that are **above average** in English and mathematics, and **well above average** in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising across the school.
- All pupils achieve well.
- Standards in spelling are not high enough.

Commentary

1. When children join the school in the reception class they have average skills and knowledge. These skills are developed systematically and all pupils make good progress, so that by the time they reach Year 2, pupils have reached above average standards overall. This represents good achievement. All pupils have work that is well matched to their abilities and all achieve well.

2. The number of pupils who take the national tests each year is relatively small and fluctuation in test results is to be expected. However, in recent years test results have risen for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. In work seen pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reach standards in English that are now above those expected, except in spelling where standards are too low. In mathematics all pupils achieve well and, in work seen, pupils reach above average standards. This is the result of good teaching and very good leadership that has been very focussed on driving up standards and ensuring pupils' progress is tracked effectively so that they all achieve well. Standards in science are well above average and have risen significantly over the past few years. This is very good achievement for all pupils.

3. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science pupils reach standards that are in line with those expected and achieve satisfactorily. In religious education and music, standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs are well supported and more able pupils have work that is appropriate and challenging so that they make good progress. Pupils who join the school part way through their education are included well in the life of the school and make good progress, so that they, too, achieve well. Pupils who are more able have extension work and activities that ensure they are challenged appropriately and are enthusiastic about learning.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.5(16.0)	16(15.8)
writing	16.1(14.9)	14.8(14.4)
mathematics	18.1(16.9)	16.5(16.5)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average points score in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.2(27)	27(27)
mathematics	27 (27)	27(26.6)
science	30.6 (29.8)	28.8(28.3)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. This results in **very good** attitudes and **good** behaviour. Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths

- The school monitors attendance well to ensure pupils attend regularly.
- Pupils are well motivated and take an active part in lessons and the life of the school.
- Pupils relate very well to one another and to staff.

Commentary

4. Pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn. Most pupils attend regularly and arrive on time. The school monitors attendance carefully and is quick to follow up any unexplained absences. As a result, unauthorised absence is much lower than the national average. If pupils do arrive late, it is usually because of traffic hold-ups. School begins on time and little time is wasted throughout the school day.

5. In lessons pupils concentrate well and take a lively interest in their work. This is often as a result of good or very good teaching, and interesting lessons. Pupils are keen to answer questions and are confident in offering their own ideas and suggestions. They work well together, as shown in a Year 5 and 6 science lesson where pupils worked well in small groups then reported their findings to the whole class in a mature and sensible way. Pupils' very good attitudes help them to learn effectively and make good progress.

6. Pupils' very good moral development is founded on the teachers' high expectations for their behaviour and the very good role models that all staff provide. School and class rules are discussed with pupils at the beginning of the year and they are important foundations for the development of pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Most pupils behave well in and around the school. In classrooms, teachers encourage pupils with smiles and praise. Pupils, in turn, respond well and diligently follow any instructions they are given. Occasionally some pupils become restless, but usually it only needs a quiet reminder from a teacher to bring them back into line. A small number of pupils have behaviour problems, but they are generally managed well by staff and do not disrupt lessons. In the playground pupils show no signs of unacceptable behaviour and play together well. There were no exclusions last year. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Pupils like and trust their teachers and are confident in asking for help if they need it. All members of the school community are valued; pupils are aware of this fact and they react accordingly. They are very well mannered and polite towards staff, visitors and each other. Pupils, interviewed during the inspection, were unanimous in their view that all pupils at the school get on well together; one pupil said *we share things with other people, we're not greedy*.

7. Pupils grow in confidence and maturity as a result of the school's very good provision for their social development. The school's values and high expectations of pupils help them develop consideration, and respect for themselves and others. In lessons they are encouraged to work and think independently and to make choices in their activities. The majority want to contribute to the life of the school community. They are involved in the daily routines of the school, and responsibilities increase as they get older. They carry out tasks for their teachers and their monitor duties, conscientiously. The school council provides good opportunities for personal development. Representatives of each class are becoming mature, confident and responsible. They meet regularly, considering items such as the school logo, playtime activities and charity fundraising. Pupils in Year 6 are given a wide range of responsibilities which they undertake enthusiastically. They run clubs for younger pupils at lunchtime, for which they have to complete a 'risk assessment' form. They also research and select a charity for the school to support, and help to organise fundraising activities. Older pupils take pride in their roles as 'playground friends' and 'buddies', helping to care for their younger friends.

8. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are good. Younger pupils showed sympathy and understanding when they considered the feelings of other people and reflected on the qualities that make a 'good friend', and Year 5 and 6 pupils took a mature and sensitive approach to their teacher's searching questions on the meaning of 'neighbour' in the story of the Good Samaritan. The school promotes pupils' awareness of other cultures through topics and displays, and theme weeks such as last year's 'cultural diversity' week.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.0
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.2
National data:	0.5

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other background
Parent/pupil preferred not to say
Information not obtained

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
114	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
6	0	0
2	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good and helps pupils know what to do to improve their work.

Main strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs so that they can achieve well.
- Planning is good and ensures that skills and knowledge are systematically taught.
- Assessment is good and lets pupils know what they are aiming for and how they can improve.

Commentary

9. Teaching across the school is good and work is matched very well to pupils' abilities so that all can be fully included in lessons and achieve well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this results in well-prepared, interesting lessons that involve all pupils. This leads to lessons where pupils are engrossed in their learning and work well together to produce good work. Teachers are currently working in challenging circumstances with temporary buildings have ensured that this has not been a barrier to learning.

10. Teaching assistants work very well with pupils with special educational needs so that they can make good progress in lessons and achieve well. They know the pupils well and support them very effectively in class. Teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations of pupils, and pupils respond positively to this by working hard and concentrating in lessons. Homework is used well to reinforce learning from lessons and pupils agree that it is fair and consistent.

11. Planning is thorough and careful so that skills are systematically taught and pupils make good progress. Pupils are encouraged to be fully involved in lessons and many bring in work from home to contribute to work in school. This careful planning, and the high expectations that teachers have, results in pupils being eager to learn and become increasingly independent.

12. Assessment is good and pupils are involved in some of the marking of their work. This means that they understand what they are meant to learn, and usually know how to improve their work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	10	3	1	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good** overall. It is well planned and enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities. Staffing and resources are well matched to the curriculum. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, but being improved by a major building programme.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The curriculum is well planned to ensure pupils, whatever their needs, are fully included in learning.
- Problem solving is a timetabled weekly activity for the whole school.
- Extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum very well.
- Provision for pupils’ personal, social and health education is good.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory, but is soon to be improved.

Commentary

13. The curriculum is well planned, meets national curriculum requirements and is relevant to the pupils’ needs. A very good feature of curriculum planning is the weekly problem solving activity. This is designed to challenge all pupils, particularly those who are more able. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well so that they are included in all lessons. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. There is a very clear policy with good arrangements for sex education and attention to the misuse of drugs and alcohol. A very good inter-schools conference was used by the school to enhance the curriculum very well for pupils in Years 5 and 6, particularly for personal, social and health education. Pupils were very enthusiastic during the activities provided, and spoke at length about it when they returned to school. They were able to participate in activities that the school cannot normally offer, and these included yoga and leadership skills training, as well as drama and music workshops.

14. The curriculum is enhanced by a good variety of visits and visitors, and links with other schools, such as the French school, with which the pupils correspond via email. Older pupils take part in a residential visit and pupils visit the seaside where they learn about safety in water. A good variety of clubs is available which include art, dance, sports and French clubs. The school participates in a consortium music festival and inter-school sports.

15. The school has an appropriate number of qualified teachers and support staff, who are well trained and effectively deployed. The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory as it is so scattered, and pupils have to move about between temporary classrooms. However, it is used well to ensure full delivery of the national curriculum, and is soon to improve dramatically with the building works. The grounds are large and attractive, with a very good wildlife pond area, which provides a valuable contribution to resources for the national curriculum, particularly science.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **very good** care of pupils. They feel safe and have good induction procedures to ensure they settle into school.

Main strengths

- Staff are consistent in their care, guidance and support of pupils.
- Good induction procedures help pupils settle into school.
- Pupils' views are valued, and they have a voice in the running of the school.

Commentary

16. The school goes to great lengths to care for and guide its pupils. Staff know pupils well and respond to their individual needs. Pupils appreciate the help given by teachers and are happy to seek advice about problems from members of staff. As a result there are very high levels of trust between pupils and all the adults who work in the school. Child protection procedures are thorough and clear. All members of staff receive regular training, and written guidelines are set out in the staff handbook. Health and safety is given a high priority. The headteacher and governors make regular inspections of the school buildings and site, and any concerns are followed up. Fire drills are held each term, and equipment is tested regularly. Awareness of healthy living is promoted well by the school. Pupils learn about the types of food which are good for their health.

17. Parents appreciate the good routines that have been established to help pupils settle into school life. The Foundation Stage leader makes home visits and visits the local playgroups so that when a child comes to school their needs are fully understood. This and an 'induction afternoon' for parents and their children enable pupils to make a secure start at school. When they join the reception class they are paired with a Year 6 'buddy' who looks after them for their first term. The school helps all pupils to achieve well because it tracks pupils' progress carefully and provides them with well-targeted support. Each pupil has individual targets to develop their skills in numeracy and literacy. The school takes great care to acknowledge pupils' efforts and achievements. Pupils value the weekly 'celebration assembly' where their successes, both in and out of school, are recognised and rewarded, and 'Stars of the Week' are chosen.

18. The school values pupils' views, gauging them through surveys and through a very effective School Council. The Council has recently been involved in making decisions about play arrangements during the forthcoming building works, and in finding out pupils' views on sport in the school. Council members consult their classmates and report back about what has been discussed. Pupils regard the school council as an important channel for them to voice any concerns they have and provide ideas for the school's development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has made **good** links with parents and the local community and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Main strengths

- The school works very effectively to involve parents and encourage their support for their children's learning.
- The school makes good links with other schools to improve the curriculum.
- Good links with the local community benefit the pupils in several ways.

Commentary

19. The school encourages parents to take an active part in school life and in their children's learning. The majority of parents help their child learn at home and make a good contribution towards their education by listening to them read or ensuring homework is completed. The parent, teachers and friends association is very active in organising social and fund-raising events which raise considerable sums for the benefit of the school. Parents also help in the school by listening to reading or helping with clubs or school productions. Parents willingly respond to any requests for help from the school, for example many parents staff and governors help out at the school's annual 'Fix It' day, where they repair and refurbish parts of the school buildings and grounds. Parents are consulted on relevant matters and their views taken into account. For example, the school regularly invites parents' comments on aspects of the school improvement plan. The headteacher is on duty most days in the playground, so that if any parents have any concerns they can be dealt with promptly.

20. Parents receive good information from the school. The prospectus and governors annual report are well presented and helpful. Newsletters keep parents up to date about forthcoming events and everyday routines. Annual reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory overall. Most contain detailed comments about pupils' achievements and progress, together with helpful targets for the next steps in pupils' learning. In some, however, the targets are not specific enough to bring about improvement, for example 'to continue to work carefully and with concentration to fulfil his potential'. Termly parents' evenings ensure that parents are well informed about their children's development. These and other school events are well attended by parents. To make these sessions more of a relaxed and informal occasion, the school organises a book fair which parents can look round while waiting to see their child's teacher.

21. Links with the community are good. The school is an integral part of the village, which helps pupils develop a sense of belonging to a community. Pupils have been involved in the establishment of an environmental area in the village, and many village residents support school events. Staff and pupils contribute articles to the local parish magazine and the school holds its Easter service at the village church. The school is currently working closely with the parish council in a bid to make Broadband accessible to the village. The village hall is regularly used as a venue for other school events and services, and pupils are able to make use of facilities at the nearby business park. Through its membership of the Rural Action Zone, the school received joint sponsorship with another local school for a technology project. Pupils can take part in cycling proficiency tests at the school, and the dentist and school nurse speak to pupils regularly. The school recently won a county award for designing the dipping platform in its pond.

22. The school has good links with other schools through its membership of the local primary schools consortia. Pupils take part in sporting fixtures with other schools, and recently Year 6 pupils took part in a very successful venture, when they were able to meet other pupils at a special event, designed to promote their personal development and teamwork skills. Close links with a nearby special school have resulted in some pupils from the special school attending sessions at Aldington. Pupils transfer to a number of secondary schools, so it has been difficult for the school to establish close links with these. However, pupils are well prepared for moving on to secondary education as they attend 'taster days' and induction sessions.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall.

The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher who has created an effective team. The governors are very knowledgeable about the school and support the headteacher well in her commitment to raising standards.

Main strengths

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and a comprehensive action plan for bringing this about.
- The governors play a full part in this vision. As well as being supportive, they act as a critical friend and are not afraid to challenge professional matters.
- There are very good systems which ensure the school identifies the correct priorities for its improvement.
- The whole staff led by the headteacher, make an effective team who manage the school well and are ambitious for it to excel in all areas of its work.
- The new system for checking how well pupils' are performing is used effectively to help raise achievement.

Commentary

23. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and is fully committed to raising standards in all aspects of the school's life, especially in the core subjects of English and mathematics. This vision and commitment is particularly well articulated through a very comprehensive action plan for improvement. It was tailor made for the school by the headteacher and is an effective tool which supports all developments including staff training. There are very good links established between the plan and the finances needed to sustain improvement. Priorities have been established by a rigorous process which has involved the headteacher and the whole school community in carefully examining each area of school life before planning any actions.

24. Governance of the school is good. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and they fulfil their statutory duties well, playing a full part in shaping the direction and vision for the school. In the past they have had to make difficult decisions but have always risen to the challenge of taking the school forward. By being regular visitors and conscientiously attending meetings and committees they have forged good relationships with the headteacher and staff. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are not afraid to challenge judgements and initiatives where and when necessary. They have a very intimate knowledge of the school's finances and are fully involved in budgetary matters, including those affecting the new building plans. They are keen for standards to remain high and to guard against complacency.

25. The management of the school is very effective. The headteacher and senior staff have worked hard to build an effective team. Despite having to make many changes, including those to do with responsibilities for subject areas, the staff of this small school present as a coherent whole, all pulling together for the good of the pupils and the school itself. All managers lead their subjects effectively, and are well aware of the need to constantly monitor and raise standards and to track pupil progress and assess their learning needs. There are recent but successfully established systems in place for this in all subjects. The new tracker for English and mathematics is ensuring that all teachers know what pupils are achieving and what they need to do next to make good progress. The special educational needs of some pupils are ably managed. All teachers and their assistants work hard as teams in the classroom to ensure that the focused individual education plans are met.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	£280,503
Total expenditure	£278,139
Expenditure per pupil	£2,045

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous 2001/2	£26,165
Balance carried forward to 2003/4	£28,529

The high carry forward is due to prudent management by the governing body. The money will be used to equip the new building when it is completed.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the reception class is **good** overall. Children make good progress during their first year in school and, by the time they enter Year 1, most will reach the expected goals for children's learning, and about a third will exceed them. This represents good achievement as children come into school with average skills and knowledge. Teaching and learning are good, the staff work well together and plan effectively. This results in confident children who settle happily into school routines.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clear induction procedures mean that children are happy to come to school.
- Children are encouraged to choose activities for themselves.
- Behaviour is generally good, except when a small minority of children become unsettled.

Commentary

26. Before the children start in the reception year they have the opportunity to visit the school and the teaching staff make sure they are welcomed. This means that when they begin school children know their surroundings and settle quickly and happily to school routines. Teachers encourage the children to choose their own activities and this results in becoming increasingly independent and working together well. Children are happy to take turns and respect the needs of others. Behaviour is generally good, although the behaviour of a small minority can sometimes disrupt the learning of others. This is usually well managed and there are clear strategies for dealing with incidents.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths

- Speaking and listening skills are taught well.
- Children become confident readers and writers.

Commentary

27. Teaching in communication, language and literacy is good and children learn to speak clearly and usually listen attentively to what is being said. They respond appropriately during group discussions and talk sensibly to each other during play activities. Children learn the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet and this helps them begin to write simple words correctly. Most of the children can write their names and are beginning to read simple words confidently. There are many opportunities for children to act out their own experiences and make up stories during role-play activities, and children enjoy dressing up as their favourite characters.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths

- Children learn to count correctly.
- There are many opportunities for children to explore mathematical ideas.

Commentary

28. Every opportunity is taken to encourage the children to count confidently and correctly. As a result, children learn to add and subtract using everyday situations, such as how many children are in the class and how many are away. Using well-planned activities, the children explore mathematical ideas, such as bigger and smaller, and become confident when using mathematical language. When playing in the sand and water the children learn about capacity and can compare how much different containers hold.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths

- Children's understanding of their growing world is enriched by visitors into the school.
- The outside area is used well to promote this area of learning.

Commentary

29. There are many planned activities so that children have an increasing understanding of their growing world and the local environment. Visitors into school enhance the learning. When the dentist visited with lots of interesting props and stories the children were very interested in learning about looking after their teeth and sharing their ideas with the rest of the class. The outside area is used very well so that the children can explore the weather, especially the hailstones that fell during the inspection, and discuss what they see growing. There are good opportunities for the children to practise their designing skills and many make thoughtful models from recycled materials. Children also become confident when using the computer and can control the mouse well, using a variety of appropriate programs.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths

- Children learn to use a variety of tools safely.
- The outside area is used well to encourage large muscle development.

Commentary

30. Through well-planned activities the children learn to use scissors safely and with increasing control, and learn to hold pens and pencils correctly. When using the large hall in the main school building, the children learn to move to music and make up their own dances. The outside area is very well used so that the children have many opportunities to run and play, using a variety of toys to help them develop co-ordination skills appropriately.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths

- Activities are well planned and cover all aspects of creative development.
- Children are very interested and enjoy the activities.

Commentary

31. The children enjoy all of the creative activities that are offered. They become absorbed in painting and model making and play very well together when dressing up and making up their own stories. They sing enthusiastically and respond to music appropriately, making up their own dances and movements. When cutting and sticking the children make good models and can use the equipment safely. They are proud of their achievements and share these with their friends.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Overall provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising throughout the school, and pupils achieve well.
- The development of literacy skills are planned for and used well in other subjects.
- Speaking and listening skills are well developed.
- The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- Weaknesses in spelling impede the quality of writing.

Commentary

32. Standards in national tests for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 are rising. At the end of Year 2 they are above those expected nationally and at Year 6 they are in line. This is due to good teaching, the introduction of target setting and tracking of pupils' progress, to ensure that they are doing as well as they can. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards are above average throughout the school and pupils achieve well. Pupils speak confidently and express themselves clearly. They listen attentively, both to their teachers and to each other. Opportunities to develop these skills include role-play, as in a Year 6 lesson, where groups prepared and acted the roles of news reporters interviewing conference delegates, based on a conference the class had attended the previous day. They asked open-ended questions, answered them clearly, justifying their reasons, and then critically evaluated each other's performance. Pupils read very well. They read aloud confidently and with good expression. Presentation of written work is neat and pupils write imaginatively, using a wide vocabulary. However, spelling, particularly in basic spelling rules, is weak and impedes the otherwise good quality of writing. The school has already identified this and are taking steps to tackle the weakness. This applies to all abilities, including more able pupils.

33. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils, and plan their lessons well, with an appropriate variety of strategies to ensure good achievement by all pupils, including those with special educational needs. They review previously learnt work by asking searching questions, which pupils answer thoughtfully, and set group and individual tasks, which extend the learning of pupils of all abilities. Working enthusiastically in groups, Year 4 pupils wrote very good scene scripts, changing the poem of 'The Pied Piper' into a play. They used adverbs well in their script directions. Teachers mark work regularly and offer good advice for improvement. Targets are set for each pupil, which means that pupils know what they are aiming for.

34. The subject is well led. Careful target setting, monitoring and tracking of progress has led to the improvement in standards. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Literacy across the curriculum

35. Pupils literacy skills are promoted well across in other subjects. In history pupils imagined themselves to be Tudor sailors and wrote relevant letters home from 'The Golden Hind'. In mathematics, they based their data collection on the prevalence of vowels in the names of their group members.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall. However, there is an over reliance on worksheets in the teaching of younger pupils.
- The teaching of mental strategies is a particular strength but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their own ideas to solve problems.
- Good use is made of information about pupils' progress to set targets for future learning.
- Pupils are involved in assessing their own understanding, but there are too few indications in the marking of pupils' work, to show them how they can improve on a daily basis.

Commentary

36. Standards in mathematics are above national expectation and similar to those at the last inspection. National test results for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, and work seen during the inspection show that all pupils achieve well throughout their time at the school. Although standards in test results for pupils in Year 6 are average, work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. Small fluctuations in test results are due to the relatively small number of pupils who take the test, and the performance of one or two pupils can affect the overall results of the school.

37. Teaching is good overall with some very good lessons seen during the inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established, and the time given to mathematics each day means that pupils' learning is systematically built upon. Mental number work is particularly well taught. This all helps their good rate of progress and is an improvement since the last inspection. In a lesson seen, for example, younger pupils responded very well to the games that the teacher played with them when learning to count in twos and fives. Pupils were required to concentrate very hard because the teacher used her hands to add and take away groups of five. All pupils were fully engaged as they watched the teacher and gave the answer using their own hands. Older pupils' ability to use their mental knowledge was very well tested and demonstrated in a lesson about fractions. It supported their learning well and enabled them to work out complex problems. The level of challenge was appropriate and tasks consistently met the needs of all pupils. It demanded that they worked and tried hard and resulted in a high output of good quality. However, when looking at pupils' prior work, there were very few examples of using mathematics to solve problems and in the younger years there is a heavy reliance on worksheets. This leads to insufficient opportunities for them to try out different approaches and to practise their own strategies.

38. Comprehensive procedures exist for tracking and assessing pupils' progress. These lead to targets which are shared with pupils and which guide planning and teaching. A good system is in place for pupils to reflect on how well they have understood a lesson and to ask for further help if they need it. However, although marking is conscientious, it is not consistently used to demonstrate to pupils how they can improve.

39. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The school has already identified the need to improve some of the points made above. The staff has received considerable training and are skilled at teaching the Numeracy Strategy. Good links have been made with parents to assist in developing mathematics at home as well as at school. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

40. Some opportunities are created by teachers for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects. Pupils use their number skills when constructing spreadsheets in information and communication technology. They practise measuring carefully and accurately in science and design and technology. They accurately read and record temperatures when gauging the affect upon liquids placed in different parts of a room.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths

- Standards across the school are well above average and pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good and work is well matched to pupils' varying ability.
- The subject is very well led and this has contributed to the high standards.

Commentary

41. Standards in national tests, in work seen, and in teacher assessments are well above average. Over the recent past standards have risen rapidly and all pupils achieve very well. These high standards are a result of the well-planned opportunities pupils have to explore all aspects of science, and investigation skills are taught very well. This results in pupils being able to pose questions and then find answers using appropriate scientific knowledge. For example, pupils wondered whether pupils in Year 6 had longer arms than those in Year 4. They devised a fair test, carried it out and drew conclusions from their findings. In the work seen, pupils are careful when recording their findings and these positive attitudes to their work contributes to the high standards. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills very well so that they can record accurately and explain clearly the work they are doing.

42. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and insist on pupils using correct scientific language. Pupils respond very well and are interested in their activities. They work together very effectively, producing correct work and discussing their findings in a mature manner. Teachers assess what the pupils know very well, so that work is very well matched to individual abilities. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class and make very good progress. Planning is systematic and ensures that the skills that pupils need to know are taught well and that all pupils can participate fully in each lesson.

43. The subject is very well led, and this has contributed to the high standards. Test data is carefully analysed so that any gaps in learning are addressed and any area of weakness is tackled. This is very effective. Pupils have targets in science and these are based on careful marking in books. Pupils are also involved in marking so that they know what they have to learn next and how they can improve their work. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection as standards have risen considerably.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very interested in their work and assess what they know and understand effectively.
- Accommodation is not ideal but will improve with the new building.

Commentary

44. Pupils across the school reach standards in information and communication technology that are in line with those expected, and all pupils achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 2 pupils are confident when using computers and use a wide range of appropriate programs accurately. By the end of Year 6 pupils have experienced all aspects of information and communication technology and can talk confidently about their work.

45. There were no information and communication technology lessons seen during the inspection as the building work that is due to start has meant that the information and communication technology suite has had to be used as a classroom and this has cut down the number of lessons available. However, small groups of pupils are taken to use the available computers and their learning is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and they are fully included in all sessions. Work is well planned so that skills are systematically taught and pupils' knowledge is appropriately developed.

46. The subject is satisfactorily led. It is a credit to the school that lessons have continued during this time, when building works has severely hampered the accessibility of the computers. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and any gaps in knowledge or skills are addressed effectively. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

47. The skills pupils learn in information and communication technology sessions are used well in other subjects. Pupils use the internet for research and this helps their work in religious education, for example, where pupils have found out about the Salvation Army. Much work in English is word processed and this adds to the good presentation skills shown in books.

HUMANITIES

During the inspection there were no geography lessons seen. On the evidence of past work and talking to pupils, provision in geography is satisfactory. As only one history lesson was seen it is not possible to make a secure judgement on standards and teaching. However, in the one lesson seen, teaching and pupils' achievement were very good, and literacy skills were well promoted both by role-play and writing.

Religious education

Overall provision for Religious Education is **good**.

Main strengths

- Pupils achieve well in religious education and reach standards that are above those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and similarities of world religions.
- Teaching is good and pupils respond well to religious education.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

48. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand that there are many different religions in the world and that there are similarities between them. They have a sound knowledge of aspects of Christianity and the associated signs and symbols. They know that baptism is the initiation ceremony for belonging to the Christian community, and that water is a symbol of new life. In Year 3 they know many of the stories and beliefs important in Judaism. They understand the role of the Torah in Judaism. By the end of Year 6 pupils know that Islam is another world religion rooted, like Christianity and Judaism, in the Bible, and know about many of its customs and beliefs.

49. In lessons seen, teachers planned their lessons very well to extend the pupils knowledge and understanding. They reviewed previous work by effective questioning and set tasks, which developed pupils' understanding of religious beliefs. A good example of this was seen in Year 6 when they discussed the full implications of The Good Samaritan story. They showed a very clear understanding of the word 'neighbour' as understood by Christians. Pupils respond very well in religious education lessons and show very positive attitudes to the subject.

50. The subject is well led and managed. All aspects of the Locally Agreed Syllabus are planned well and taught throughout the school. Targets are set and achievement is assessed. There are good links with other subjects especially English, and information technology, so that Year 3 pupils are confident in using skills in these subjects to record their descriptions of the 'Torah'. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There is not enough evidence to judge provision on physical education, design and technology and art and design as too few lessons were seen. No lessons were seen in physical education, but all pupils in Year 6 report that they can swim at least the recommended 25 metres.

No design and technology lessons were seen during the inspection but examples of pupils' prior work shows that the design process is well established. Pupils are encouraged to carry out appropriate research before beginning their design. They plan and select materials and evaluate their finished product suggesting possible improvements. Skills are effectively built upon through a carefully thought out curriculum. Younger pupils begin by making moving pictures, and puppets. By the time they reach Year 6 they have experienced food technology when making several different kinds of bread as well as making slippers and shelters. Very good links are made with other subjects, particularly art and science.

It was not possible to see any art lessons during the inspection but samples of pupils' previous work indicates that skills are sequentially established and carefully practised although the use of sketchbooks is not yet fully developed. Pupils use a range of materials and approaches. The work of famous artists such as Hockney, Gauguin and Van Gogh make a significant contribution to pupils' artistic and cultural development. There are good links with other subjects, for example, when younger pupils make a fruit salad they use pastels and paint for observational drawings of a variety of fruits. Pupils are also encouraged to evaluate their work.

Music

The provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths

- Teaching is good overall and teachers use a wide variety of musical activities to stimulate an interest in, and understanding of music.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play a variety of musical instruments.
- Music makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Commentary

51. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. National expectations are fully met in all aspects of the subject and therefore all pupils achieve well throughout the school. Results from musical examinations indicate that pupils who play a musical instrument make particularly good progress. Even very young pupils can maintain a beat, use symbols to represent sounds and suggest ways to improve their work. All pupils sing tunefully in assembly.

52. Three lessons were observed during the inspection, pupils were heard singing in assembly, photographs from school productions were seen and discussions were held with pupils. From all this evidence the quality of teaching is judged as good overall and sometimes very good. One very good lesson with young pupils was packed with exciting opportunities to listen, appraise, compose and perform. Pupils are enthusiastic about music and sing well. They are keen to participate in the school productions.

53. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Well -organised musical tuition allows pupils to learn the trumpet, violin, viola, cello, guitar, trumpet and keyboard. A number of pupils benefit from learning to play the recorder in small groups and all pupils are involved in school productions especially at festival times and at the end of the school year. These offer valuable opportunities for them to perform. The scheme of work introduced since the last inspection, and the music listened to and discussed in assemblies makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils listen to ethnic, instrumental and choral music as well as jazz and pop and are invited to research them frequently. Visiting musicians are effectively used to introduce pupils to a variety of instruments. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision for personal, social and health education is **good**.

Main strengths

- Discussion times help pupils understand issues which concern them.
- Older pupils' understanding is enhanced by participation in the Consortium's 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds' conference.

Commentary

54. The school has relevant policies in place to ensure that Years 5 and 6 pupils learn about growing up and how their bodies will change. Pupils are encouraged to talk about issues openly and confidently.

55. Lessons are planned to develop pupils' awareness of the feelings and needs of others. In one lesson seen, the teacher used puppets successfully to encourage younger pupils to empathise and be aware of the hurt caused by rejection, when others say, 'You can't play with us'.

56. Older pupils participated in a very good consortium conference, where they learnt principles of healthy eating, techniques to cope with stress or worry, and how to improve their emotional well-being. Pupils had the opportunity to discuss the issues and dangers of drugs, smoking and addiction. Experts visit the school during the year to give pupils further opportunities to discuss these areas. The social educational aspect of this conference was very good, as it gave the pupils the opportunity to meet and work in groups with pupils from a variety of schools.

Cameo of outstanding practice

The school is small and is in an area where access to amenities and funding is challenging. The pupils' curriculum and experience of the wider world is enriched by excellent links with other small rural schools who have formed themselves into a "Rural Action Zone." Finding is sought from a wide variety of sources and this has enabled the group to join together and provide excellent curriculum opportunities that would otherwise be denied pupils in small schools. Through very good use of a local high school, pupils have access to activities including leadership skills training, drama, music and yoga. Each year group has their own conference and mix together very well in small groups. This has a significant impact on their social development and results in transfer to secondary education being smooth as pupils have already met at these conferences. Pupils are very enthusiastic about this initiative and eagerly anticipate their next opportunity to join with other schools. These events are very well planned and organised and the school has a clear five- year action plan for continuing this opportunity. This includes linking with schools in the group and with their partner French school through video conferencing.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

