

INSPECTION REPORT

BOLNEY COFE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Haywards Heath

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126007

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Pearce

Lead inspector: Lynn Adair

Dates of inspection: 1st March – 3rd March 2004

Inspection number: 255551

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	111
School address:	Church Lane Bolney Haywards Heath West Sussex
Postcode:	RH17 5QP
Telephone number:	01444 881352
Fax number:	01444 881047
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Helen Cymerman
Date of previous inspection:	30 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bolney CofE Primary is a small rural voluntary controlled school with 111 pupils on roll aged 4 to 11 years. Pupils' social circumstances are generally more advantaged than those found nationally. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well below average. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. A broadly average number of pupils have special educational needs, although the number of pupils with statements of special educational need is below average. The attainment of most pupils on entry is at least equal to that expected of similar aged children, with a small number showing higher standards in their skills.

The school is a member of the Network of Eastern Area Rural Schools (NEARS) which is a group of schools of a similar size and type that work together on a range of learning initiatives involving staff and pupils.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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27960	Jane Reed	Team inspector	Science, religious education, geography, history, design and technology, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bolney CofE Primary is a good school that provides good value for money. When pupils join the reception class, standards are generally better than those expected for their ages. Pupils achieve well and, by Year 6, standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership of the school is good. Parents and pupils feel that the school is doing a good job.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Achievement of pupils is good, so standards of attainment are well above average by Year 6
- Teaching is good overall, with very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. On occasion, in some classes, pupils' inattention is not always dealt with quickly and effectively enough and leads to some time being wasted
- Very good links with other schools, especially through the NEARS¹ learning community, expand pupils' learning experiences very well
- The head teacher has created a strong team spirit among staff and governors so that all are committed to improving provision for pupils
- The school works very closely with parents to ensure that children are very well supported and very well cared for
- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking that limit opportunities for pupils to understand how to improve their work

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, having dealt with all the issues successfully. Teaching and learning have been improved, especially in planning for the range of age and ability in the mixed age classes. This has resulted in improved standards. The school improvement plan is a much more focused tool for improvement. Information and communication technology (ICT) is now well integrated into lessons and other subjects. Assessment is much improved because procedures for assessing and recording pupil progress are more systematic. The effectiveness could be developed further through improved marking.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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. From a generally good starting point in basic skills when they join the school, children in the reception class achieve well in broadening the range and depth of their learning so that they are likely to at least reach the goals expected nationally by the end of the reception year in each area of learning. A large number are likely to exceed these early goals, significantly in their social skills. By Year 2, the above average standards have been maintained, in spite of some disruption to these pupils' learning as a result of earlier changes in staffing, and achievement is satisfactory. By Year 6, pupils, particularly those with higher levels of ability, have achieved well so that standards are well above average and reflect the school's concerted efforts to raise standards. Results in English and mathematics, for example, were in the top 5% of schools nationally. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are provided with effective support.

¹ Network of Eastern Area Rural Schools

Pupils' personal qualities are **good**. Pupils' attitudes to work are mostly good as is their behaviour, although on occasion some pupils in Years 1 to 4 are fidgety and do not listen well. **The school provides good opportunities that develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills.** These have a positive impact on their approach to learning. Attendance is **very good** and pupils arrive at school promptly ready to start work.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is very good because challenging tasks and effective questioning make pupils of all abilities think deeply and learn more. Across the school there are strengths in: careful planning that matches the needs of pupils in mixed aged classes; effective use of resources that excite pupils and make them want to learn more; and effective deployment of teaching assistants who support individuals and groups of pupils effectively so that they make good progress. Good management usually ensures pupils concentrate well and work hard, but sometimes their inattention is not effectively dealt with and leads to wasted time. Assessment is good overall but could be improved further through better quality marking.

The curriculum is well planned and provides a very good range of enrichment activities, particularly through the school's work with other small, rural schools. The school provides very good care and support for its pupils in school and during visits off-site. It has created very good links with parents, who contribute to the progress that their children make through very effective involvement in school as well as at home. Parents have made significant financial contributions to improving the quality of the resources and accommodation, which are good overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has created a successful partnership with all staff and governors that has led to a number of improvements in provision and helped to raise standards. All have a good understanding about what still needs to improve and are firmly committed to raising standards further. Leadership by coordinators is good but the head teacher has recognised the need for developing their roles so that they have more involvement in making sure provision is effective in their areas of responsibility. Governance is good. The governing body is knowledgeable, well organised and plays a good and supportive part in formulating school policies and checking how well the school is doing.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have positive views of the school. The majority of parents are pleased with the efforts of the school in helping their children to make good progress. They have confidence in the head teacher and feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns. Pupils are keen to come to school and willingly share their views. The school council provides good opportunity for this.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- To develop greater consistency in the way teachers deal with pupils' inattention so that it is overcome quickly and effectively
- To improve marking so that it is more informative about future learning

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement of pupils is **good**, an improvement on the satisfactory progress made in the last inspection. From a good starting point on entry, pupils achieve standards that are well above those expected nationally by the age of eleven, again a significant improvement on the broadly average standards identified in the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven
- Pupils achieve well during their time in school, although progress among pupils in Years 1 and 2 has been adversely affected by changes in staffing

Commentary

1. When children join the school in the reception classes, their basic skills are better than those expected of similar aged children. Good teaching, well matched to children's needs and interests, ensures all children learn well and develops the breadth of their skills effectively in each area of learning. This results in good achievement. Attainment in physical skills is broadly as expected for similar aged children, but in other areas of learning most children are on course to reach expected standards by the end of the reception year, with a significant number achieving higher than expected standards, especially in personal and social skills.

2. By the time pupils reach Year 2, standards in work seen are still generally above average. This reflects satisfactory achievement from the end of the reception year. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 have experienced significant disruption during their time in school as a result of staffing problems and this affected national assessment results in 2003. Although some variation year on year may be as a result of the small number in each cohort, there is also some variation between subjects. Last year, for example, while writing standards showed improvement due a large proportion attaining above average standards, reading, maths and science standards fell due to fewer pupils attaining the higher standards. Results in writing were better than similar types of schools, and in reading were broadly the same, but were well below those of similar schools in mathematics. However, more consistent expectations in teaching and learning since last September has created more even and satisfactory progress among pupils since that time. Sometimes though achievement is reduced in lessons because of time wasted in dealing with inattention. Judging from current standards, some pupils are unlikely to achieve the very challenging targets set for them for this year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7(17)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.1(15.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.4(17.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Good teaching with some very good features in Years 5 and 6, has helped to drive standards up effectively in Years 3 to 6. Although there has been some variation in national test results year by year due to the small number in each year group, results are much better than those seen at the last inspection. In 2003, results were well above the national average in science and in the top 5% of schools nationally in English and mathematics. Standards seen during the inspection show that the school's efforts in improving provision are helping pupils to achieve well. For example, the school teaches specific groups of older pupils according to their age in English and mathematics so that work is effectively matched to their needs. This helps to boost their achievement further and looks

set to enable current Year 6 pupils to achieve once again the very challenging targets set for them and for a good number to achieve the higher level 5 in national tests.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30(27.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	30(27.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.5(29.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Pupils reach standards that are in line with those expected among seven and eleven year olds in ICT, and achievement is generally satisfactory. A good improvement since the last inspection is the better use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. In physical education, standards are satisfactory overall, with satisfactory achievement in Years 1 and 2 and some good achievement noted in dance skills among older pupils. Pupils achieve well in religious education, maintaining the good standards observed during the previous inspection. In history, standards are good by Year 6 and pupils achieve well, an improvement since the last inspection. In art, significant improvement has taken place in increasing teachers' skills so that achievement is good with some very high standards attained by Year 6.

5. Additional support ensures that pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Pupils are well supported by teaching assistants deployed to aid their learning. In addition, specific sessions with the special needs teacher boost their achievement further. Pupils of higher ability are challenged effectively through work planned to extend their learning. This helps them to achieve well. No significant variation was noted between the achievement of boys and girls in lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good** attitudes to their work and school. Attendance levels and punctuality are **very good**. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for promoting good attendance are very good and result in very good attendance levels
- Pupils enjoy coming to school
- Pupils behave well around the school and at lunchtime but in some lessons, pupils are easily distracted and become inattentive
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well

Commentary

6. Pupils are keen to come to this school. They arrive punctually in the morning ready to start work. Attendance levels are much higher than those of other schools nationally, which is an improvement since the last inspection. This is because the school promotes attendance well and are effectively supported by parents who ensure their children attend school.

7. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. In classrooms most concentrate well and try their best. Children in the reception year have very good attitudes to learning. This is reflected in the way they choose activities and work happily and productively for long lengths of time. However, in some lessons in Years 1 to 4, pupils do not settle quickly enough or listen to the teacher well enough. This inattention wastes time and has a negative effect on their learning. In Years 5 and 6, very good habits have once more been secured and pupils' level of concentration and application are very good.

8. The school develops pupils' personal skills effectively and has maintained the good quality of provision since the last inspection. Their self-esteem is promoted well. One way in which this is demonstrated is through the weekly 'celebration' assembly. Pupils' achievements both in school and at other times are applauded. These include their academic and social efforts in class, and certificates for sport, dance and in other fields out of school time. 'Pupils of the week' are then identified on a prominently displayed notice board so that all can appreciate their efforts.

9. The school spells out its expectations for behaviour and its approach to bullying clearly in the school brochure. Parents play a strong role in supporting the school's stance. This means that pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. They discuss moral issues in lessons, such as how to manage anger to best effect. Pupils behave well around the school and at playtimes, an improvement on the satisfactory standards observed in the previous inspection. Lunchtimes are pleasant and orderly. In the playground pupils happily use the good range of games and equipment provided for them. As a result playtimes are relaxed and friendly.

10. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop socially. The school council, for example, enables pupils from each class listen to those of other pupils and express representative opinions at meetings. Older pupils are keen to help younger ones to master skills in skipping and traditional games, such as 'cat's cradle. Pupils are courteous and friendly to visitors and those given responsibilities around the school do so with confidence. Relationships are good in the school. The school's youngest pupils show a high level of cooperation when sharing resources and taking turns, for example in the role-play area or when using the computer.

11. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum and most pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. Pupils throughout the school are helped to learn about the local area effectively through their studies, which include a focus on what life was like in the past. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, have simulated an archaeological dig to examine artefacts, and children in the reception class have talked to an elderly resident who was a former teacher at the school. In other lessons, such as art and religious education, pupils are able to study a range of cultures and beliefs and are helped to express their ideas well in pictorial and written form.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Exclusions – There have been no exclusions in the last school year.

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**, with very effective teaching in Years 5 and 6. Assessment is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Highly effective features in teaching in Years 5 and 6 lead to very good achievement
- Good planning, involving the good deployment of teaching assistants, matches work and support effectively to the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities
- Teachers usually manage pupils' behaviour effectively so that pupils concentrate well, although their inattention is sometimes not dealt with quickly enough
- Some very effective use of different resources makes learning exciting for pupils
- Pupils' progress is assessed more systematically than in the last inspection, but marking could be improved further

Commentary

12. The good teaching is an improvement since the previous inspection and helps pupils to learn well. Work is planned much more carefully across the school to match the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities, an issue in the last inspection that has been successfully addressed. This has contributed to the current high standards at the end of Year 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	12	4	0	0	0

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

13. Lessons are well organised. Teaching assistants are well deployed and play an important role in supporting pupils, particularly those with lower ability and specific learning needs. They ensure that these pupils are included in all activities in the classroom and give individual and group support directly related to pupils' needs. The assistants have a positive impact on guiding them in activities and offer unobtrusive but effective support. In addition, a teacher with expertise in working with pupils with special needs ensures language skills are well taught, for example Year 4 pupils' vocabulary was well developed when looking at daffodils. As a result, pupils with special needs learn well and make good progress.

14. Teaching assistants are also used effectively to support other groups of pupils. For example, they support pupils using computers in the ICT suite, which underpins their learning in lessons in other subjects. In mathematics, pupils in Year 1 and 2 were helped by an assistant to find missing numbers, and in Years 5 and 6 pupils were helped to understand more about scales used for weighing. In the reception class, the teaching assistant was instrumental in making a story come alive for pupils by appearing dressed as a fairy godmother to tell part of the story of Cinderella. Children were enthralled and totally absorbed as a result.

15. Some effective use is made of resources that make pupils more interested and excited about their learning and helps them to learn in different ways. In the reception class, for example, good use is made of the local area and previous teachers at the school so that children gain a good level of understanding about their environment and life in the past through first hand experiences. In a Year 1 and 2 science lesson, pupils were enthused when learning about forces using their bicycles as a primary resource. In Years 3 and 4, pupils used artefacts from an archaeological 'dig' to carefully consider archaeological finds in history. On occasion, the quality of resources used is not so

effective. For example, small print was used for class sessions for pupils in the reception and Year 1 and 2, and pupils found difficulty in seeing the text. Too much work is based on worksheets and this does not help pupils to set work out for themselves. Worksheets are not always dated to show when work was completed to act as a record of pupils' progress.

16. In Years 5 and 6, the teacher employs very effective methods that set a high level of challenge for all pupils. For example, in a mathematics session the teacher used both an overhead projector and data projector to explain work on different scales for weighing objects. Very effective questioning targeted towards children of different ability made all pupils think more deeply, explain their thoughts and extend their learning particularly well. In a very good art lesson, pupils were taught to think with a high level of creativity and to explore and experiment with a range of media and materials to inform their final pieces.

17. Teachers and their assistants usually manage pupils' behaviour well and keep them on task. In the reception class, for example, when children are choosing their own activities, the teacher is alert to any child who begins to 'wander' and quickly ensures that they are productively engaged. At times in some classes, pupils become inattentive and teachers do not always address this effectively enough. Consequently, time is wasted and not all intentions planned for lessons are achieved.

18. Assessment is good and pupil progress is recorded in a systematic way, an improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils are involved through knowledge of group targets so that they have some idea of what they are expected to learn. The assessment of pupils with specific learning needs is good. However, marking is more inconsistent in quality. Some good practice exists in helping pupils identify strengths and weaknesses in their work and what they need to do next, but more frequently it is not constructive enough.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** and there is a **very good** range of additional activities for pupils. Levels of staffing and resources are **good**. Recent developments to the accommodation now make it **good** overall, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is planned well and this ensures that learning for pupils of all abilities is well designed
- Very good additional learning experiences are planned that enrich the curriculum very well
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- Overall the accommodation is good although some classrooms are small for large numbers of pupils
- The provision for personal, social and health education is good

Commentary

19. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. There is a clear structure to planning, and it is much more precise about how the needs of pupils of different ages and levels of attainment will be met. This avoids repetition in pupils' learning, ensures there are no omissions as they move from year to year and has helped pupils to make better progress since the previous inspection. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the programme for religious education is developed using the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In addition, planning for pupils in the reception class has been improved. It now provides a more appropriate curriculum in line with national recommendations for pupils of this age and relevant experiences in each area of learning, making use of both indoor and outdoor facilities. Good use is made of national frameworks for planning work in literacy and numeracy. Plans also show opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in most other subjects of the curriculum. In ICT, this is an improvement on the last inspection.

20. The curriculum has been developed effectively to focus on the needs of different groups of pupils. This ensures work is matched appropriately in mixed aged classes. In addition to effectively adapting work in planning for different levels of attainment, teaching groups are formed so that older pupils are taught alongside others of the same ages. This enables pupils' achievements to be 'boosted', as these sessions provide an even more effective match of work. Some more able pupils take part in a local authority programme specifically designed for these pupils. Pupils with special educational needs have their needs identified early. These are well catered for through a programme of in-class support and individual and group sessions outside of the classroom enabling the pupils to access the full curriculum and help them make good progress. Individual learning plans are written with clear targets identified for improvement.

21. The school provides pupils with very good opportunities to take part in additional activities and clubs after school. These include a range of sports including netball and football, as well as textiles and gardening clubs. These make a very good contribution to the development of their physical and creative skills. A very well planned programme of visits in the immediate locality as well as other places of interest also add to the enrichment of the curriculum and keep pupils interested and motivated to learn. There are residential visits for older pupils, which help to promote their personal development very well.

22. There is good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. A clear policy has been developed, supported by a systematic programme, which outlines the principles for sex and relationship education, including the misuse of drugs and alcohol. Pupils are very enthusiastic about personal, social and health education and older pupils can identify how it links with other subjects.

23. Good links with local playgroups and secondary schools ensure the smooth transition of pupils into school and to their next stage of education.

24. The school is well resourced. The school's accommodation has been improved since the previous inspection by providing a hall and additional rooms for small group work and an ICT suite. However, the computer suite is still quite small and it is not possible to accommodate a full class of pupils. In addition, the hall and classrooms for older pupils are small for the number and size of pupils creating some barriers to learning. For example, during lessons pupils often have to move to enable them to see the whiteboard and in the hall movement is constrained in some physical education sessions. The reception class, on the other hand, is spacious and effectively resourced to engage children in their learning. Good quality equipment and facilities have been created outdoors. These areas are well maintained and provide the pupils with a good range of options for outdoor play. This increases opportunities to develop their physical and social skills. There is a good range of resources to support learning, which are well organised and easily accessible. The library area is small but has a satisfactory range of books, enabling pupils to carry out independent research using the texts and the computers in that area. The school has a good balance of experience among its teaching staff and their assistants. In addition to the class teachers, the school has invested in specialist teachers to teach music and dance. The latter was seen to be having a positive impact on developing pupils' skills.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **very good** care of its pupils. Systems for monitoring their progress and providing support and guidance are **good**. The school seeks and values pupil's views **effectively**.

Main strengths

- Staff know all pupils very well in this small school
- Very thorough child protection and health and safety procedures are in place
- The school council is well organised and represents pupils well
- Good induction procedures ensure a smooth start to school

Commentary

25. The care, guidance and support of pupils have much improved since the last inspection, where it was judged satisfactory. Staff have a very caring approach and look after pupils very well. This ensures pupils' welfare and their general well-being both in school and when making visits off-site. For example, the reception class teacher managed a visit to the local church very effectively, making sure all children were supervised well so that they were able to make the most of their visit. Comprehensive arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of all in the school are implemented with very good support from the premises committee of the governing body. This strong focus on keeping children safe and secure is much appreciated by parents.

26. Pupils know who to see if hurt or feeling unwell and welcome the care they receive from staff. Almost all children surveyed prior to the inspection felt that they knew of an adult who they could go to if they were worried about anything, and all spoken to during the inspection identified at least one adult in whom they would confide. The headteacher has ensured that very thorough procedures are now in place for dealing with child protection issues and that staff are trained and aware of the necessary steps to follow should an issue arise. Close links have been established and maintaining with outside support agencies to work with pupils with specific needs who may require additional support.

27. The school has good systems for assessing and recording pupils' overall personal and academic progress. This enables staff to monitor pupils' development as they progress through the school, set realistic targets and provide any necessary support. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support, and their targets for learning are informed by regular assessment of their difficulties. The special needs manager meets regularly with teaching assistants to ensure that pupils are being given relevant support. The induction arrangements for pupils who join the school in reception class and at different times of the year are good. Meetings are arranged with both parents and pupils so that both quickly become familiar with school routines and settle quickly.

28. Pupils have positive views about the school. They understand that the school has high expectations of them to work hard and feel that they are well supported by teachers who listen to them and treat them fairly. The school council is well established and successfully empowers them, promoting their independence and confidence. Members of the council meet regularly to discuss suggestions and concerns raised by other pupils and take pride in having their say on the running of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and with other schools have improved since the last inspection and are now **very good**. **Good** links with the local community have been maintained.

Main strengths

- Parents are happy with the school and make a significant contribution to its work and the support provided for their children
- Good information is provided for parents
- Very good links with local schools extend learning opportunities for pupils

Commentary

29. Parents are happy with the education and care their children receive at the school. The school enjoys the confidence of its parents in all areas of school life and links with parents are very good. Parents support the school very well by working with pupils in classrooms, helping on visits and supporting homework activities. The Parent Teacher Association is very active. Many fundraising and social events are organised and these are very well attended by both parents and the local community. Significant funds have been raised that have helped to provide a range of extra resources for the school, including much needed computer equipment, as well as contributing towards the cost of the recently built new hall.

30. Parents receive good information on general matters through regular newsletters and in the school brochure. Specific meetings have been held to increase parents' understanding of the curriculum in mathematics, so that they can help their children more effectively at home. Open afternoons are held each term so that parents have the opportunity to look at their children's work and talk to teachers about where they might help further. Annual written reports have improved since the last inspection and now give more detailed information on work pupils have covered, the progress they have made and where they need to improve. The school listens carefully to parents and responds positively to any concerns, for example those raised in annual questionnaires. In addition, parents feel that they are able to approach the school informally at any time to talk about their children.

31. The school plays an important part in the life of its local village and has good links with the local community. This supports pupils' attainment and personal development well as they take part in local events, such as the annual Village Day. The community, in turn, is very supportive to the school's fundraising events. Good use of the local area is made for visits, and members of the local community welcome children, for example when reception aged children visited the local post office and the local church.

32. Very good links have been established with other small schools through a local network of rural schools (NEARS). Through this learning community, pupils are able to visit other schools, host pupils from other schools and extend their learning with other staff and pupils. The head teachers, teaching and administrative staff are able to share their expertise and good practice in a range of areas. This has a very positive affect on pupils' achievement across the whole curriculum through extended learning opportunities, such as problem solving, story telling and circus skills. Good links also exist with the local secondary school ensuring the smooth transition of pupils into Year 7.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** and the school day runs smoothly. The governance of the school is **good**. The team of headteacher, key staff and governors leads the school **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision and high aspirations for the school, which have been translated into good improvement
- Good systems have been set up for leading and managing the school's work, which have contributed to high standards
- The role of staff, other than the headteacher, in monitoring the work of the school is not strong enough in some areas of responsibility

Commentary

33. Leadership of the school is effective. The headteacher provides a strong sense of direction and very clear vision for the school. This has resulted in a significant and positive change in the way the school works. Academic standards and achievement have improved significantly since the previous inspection. The headteacher has addressed underperformance of some staff and provision has improved. Current staff work well as a team, and fully share the headteacher's commitment to improvement. The school cares very well for its pupils and has a good ethos. Management roles are appropriately shared for a small school, although the headteacher has a significant workload in terms of subject responsibility. Several subjects are led well including the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, as well as some areas of responsibility such as special needs.

34. Management is good overall. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning well but now recognises the need to strengthen all subject leaders' roles in this area for staff to make a more significant contribution to school evaluation. The provision for special educational needs is managed well. The headteacher has accurately identified the school's major strengths and weaknesses, and has successfully led developments since her appointment. The school's effectiveness has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Good systems have been set up, which have had a good impact on the curriculum and the standards attained. The school improvement plan indicates clearly what needs to be done and who is responsible. There are strong and clear connections between performance management and whole school development. The criteria for evaluating the success of the improvements are focused sharply on raising standards and achievement for all pupils. There is good challenge for higher-attaining pupils and good support to ensure that the work meets the needs of lower-attaining pupils.

35. The governors ensure that the school fulfils its legal duties and that appropriate policies are in place. The relationship between governors and staff is good. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and are very supportive of its development. They have responded well, for example, in overcoming recent staffing difficulties. They meet regularly and receive good information from the headteacher and through well-focused visits on which they base their decisions.

36. The administration is effective. It ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the school and enables teachers to get on with their main task of teaching. It provides the headteacher and governors with the information they need to ensure that finances are kept in good order and spending is easily determined. The school budget is managed efficiently.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	335,962
Total expenditure	293,023
Expenditure per pupil	2,639

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	27,601
Balance carried forward to the next	42,939

37. The high surplus has resulted from money set aside for building works and subsequently not being required. Other capital projects have returned it to appropriate levels. The last audit report noted appropriate systems were in place and operating effectively.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the reception classes is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well, particularly in developing their personal and social skills
- Teaching is good in making learning exciting and enjoyable for children
- The teacher and teaching assistant work effectively together to support children
- Children's progress is recorded carefully, although opportunities are sometimes missed to assess children's contributions in class discussions as another measure of their achievement

Commentary

38. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the good teaching and learning. From a good starting point, children achieve well to deepen and broaden their understanding in each area of learning effectively. Almost all are likely to reach the expectations expressed in goals they are expected to meet by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. A large number are likely to achieve beyond what is expected of them at this stage of their learning. This demonstrates good standards overall compared with children of similar ages in most areas of learning, with physical skills being broadly the same and personal and social skills being higher than most reception children. Children's good achievement demonstrates an improvement since the last inspection. This is as a result of better teaching. Children make much better use of the outdoor area. The area is now a stimulating environment with a good range of resources to help children to become very involved in their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strength

- Staff use very good strategies to enable children to choose activities for themselves, ensure they concentrate well and that all children are productively engaged

Commentary

39. Children make very good progress in developing their skills because the very good teaching of these permeates much of the curriculum. Children confidently leave their carers in the morning and are keen to explore the range of engaging activities prepared by the teacher. They consider what they want to do and are helped by use of an activities board that supports their choices. The teacher maintains a very good overview of all children to ensure that they are productively engaged in learning. Children are building very positive relationships with adults and willingly share resources with others, for example when playing in the role-play area, sharing equipment in the writing area and taking turns using computers. They sustain their concentration on chosen activities for significant periods of time and consequently learn well. Children are very well behaved. This is because adults consistently reinforce school rules and routines. They use prompt cards to effectively promote good habits such as 'good sitting' and 'good listening'.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths

- Key skills are taught well so that children achieve well in gaining early communication skills
- Stories are read to children very expressively, and brought to life by teaching assistants dressed in role so that children become engrossed in story lines

Commentary

40. Teaching is good. A strong focus is placed on encouraging children to listen carefully, talk about their work and helping each child to form questions. As a result children talk clearly to visitors about their school and ask pertinent questions during visits, for example to a local church. Children are encouraged to enjoy books by sharing them together. On one occasion the shared book had quite small print which reduced the opportunity to read aloud together. However, this was more than compensated for when the teaching assistant helped children to understand the storyline of Cinderella very effectively by entering part way through the story dressed in the role of the Fairy Godmother to tell the story. The children were absolutely enthralled and sat open mouthed and with rapt attention as the story unfolded. Activities are well planned to enable children to learn and match letters and sounds in words. This was demonstrated particularly well in an activity when children constructed a class letter. All children are encouraged to write independently and for a range of purposes, such as writing what they think is in a 'mystery parcel' intended for a nursery rhyme character. More able children spell simple words accurately and are beginning to write extended pieces. They use good vocabulary, for example to describe a monster. Lower attainers are helped to trace letters, copy words and make good attempts at their own words.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strength and weakness

- Good teaching methods are used to aid children's accuracy in their oral number work
- Children, particularly those of higher ability, do not have enough opportunities to reinforce learning through more regular recording

Commentary

41. Good teaching methods provide children with a good range of opportunities to develop their mathematical understanding well. They help children to count aloud accurately and recognise numbers. For example, in one class lesson, children dressed as postmen tapped aloud the numbers displayed on the backs of different children and 'delivered' a matching number of letters. All children counted aloud together accurately to ten. Higher attaining children have a good recognition of much larger numbers. Children are beginning to understand the concept of addition and subtraction. Activities are well-planned and well-organised. For example, while the teaching assistant was deployed well to support the children as they worked outside to deliver post to different numbered addresses, the teacher supported groups effectively indoors. These children were helped to gain a good understanding of heavier and lighter through comparing weights on a balance scale with a good level of precision. In their recorded work, children do not always write numbers accurately and higher attainers, in particular, do not have enough practice to record their findings in mathematical work.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher plans a good range of experiences to enable children to explore and understand their environment
- Visits are well organised and well managed to assure children's safety off site
- Sometimes paper resources are not well produced to enable children to compare effectively

Commentary

42. Teaching is effective because people and places in the locality are used effectively and activities are well planned to widen children's knowledge and understanding of their local area. This helps them to achieve well in this area of learning. For example, children questioned an elderly neighbour carefully about her time as a teacher at the school. They learnt a great deal about school life then and now and compared the two effectively. However, follow up work could have used better quality reproduction to enable the children to compare pictures of the school over the years more successfully. Children have also 'walked' the village and have made detailed maps of the locality noting their likes and dislikes, such as where rubbish has collected. They have visited the post office and used the experience to recreate very life like scenarios in the well-resourced role-play area set up as a working post office. This reinforces effectively their understanding of the world around them. They have made good quality models of playground equipment based on a visit, and have developed a good understanding of special places through a visit to the local church.

Physical development

Not enough evidence was seen to make an overall judgement on provision in physical development.

Commentary

43. Children have opportunities to develop their physical skills on a regular basis and on a larger scale outdoors. Sound skills were observed in children's use of large equipment outdoors, for example when pedalling their trikes around the area to 'deliver' mail. They made good use of the space and were aware of other children to safely steer around them. Children also showed sound finer control of small equipment and tools in a range of activities, for example when writing and drawing, cutting out shapes, joining small construction material and threading pasta to make necklaces.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths

- The learning environment indoors and outdoors is set up effectively to inspire children and encourage imaginative play
- Children are helped effectively to explore different media to experiment with colour, shape and texture

Commentary

44. Standards are better than most children of this age because they are provided with a good range of opportunities for creative work. They have produced some good quality animal masks that they have used in an assembly to perform to the rest of the school. Skills are taught well, for example, when moulding clay and making imprints, children are encouraged to discuss texture and the quality of work produced. This evaluation gives them a good understanding of how they can improve their designs and consequently the final products are effective. Role-play areas are particularly well designed to help children enter into role, such as a shopkeeper in the post office, delivery people or customers. The teaching assistant is effectively deployed to work with children in role without being over intrusive and dominating play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach very good standards by the age of eleven
- Good teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 ensure pupils achieve well, but some inattention by pupils in Years 1 and 2 affects learning
- There is good use of literacy skills across the curriculum
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The coordinator has a very clear view of strengths and areas for development

Commentary

45. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and the above average standards at the end of the reception year have been maintained. This is in spite of turbulence in staffing. The pace of learning becomes more rapid in Years 3 to 6 and pupils achieve well. By the age of eleven standards are in all aspects of the subject. This shows a significant improvement since the previous inspection when they were judged to be average by the time pupils left the school.

46. There has been a real drive to extend the attainment of higher attainers in both reading and writing and to bring other pupils up to the national average through greater challenge and higher expectations. Results in 2003 national tests for eleven year olds reflect the school's efforts in this respect. The very high standards seen in end of Year 6 were in the top 5% of schools nationally and were much better than those of schools in similar contexts. Results in Year 2 were very good in writing because more pupils attained the higher than expected level 3. They were good in reading although fewer pupils attained higher levels in reading than in writing, which is the reverse of the national picture. The school has set itself very challenging targets this year. Pupils are on course to achieve these in Year 6, but not in Year 2.

47. Teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good features in Years 5 and 6. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Older pupils achieve well in developing their speaking and listening skills because of the good discussion opportunities they are given and so standards are high. Teachers manage lessons well and generally insist on good behaviour. This encourages pupils to listen carefully to each other and contribute well in small group discussions. As a result, pupils enjoy their work and are usually attentive and concentrate well on their tasks. In Years 1 and 2, some pupils are inattentive and the teacher does not always address this quickly enough. As a result, some pupils do not listen well to each other or the teacher and often speak over each other in their efforts to be heard in whole class work. This affects the progress they make and disturbs others.

48. Work in all years is well planned to match pupils' needs effectively in the mixed age classes and as a result they achieve well in reading and writing. Some pupils are organised in different groupings in Years 5 and 6 that matches their needs even more effectively. For example, there was a very good 'booster' lesson, where Year 6 pupils identified the features of a range of writing and practised writing for different purposes. Two skilled teaching assistants supported them very well. In a very good poetry lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils were enthused by the lively style of the teacher. She made learning exciting and made good use of the laptop projector to illustrate Wordsworth's poem 'Daffodils'. As a result, pupils were fully involved and were enabled to show good knowledge of similes, alliteration, imagery, syllables and rhyming couplets and used the terms quite naturally. They produced some good quality work of which they were justly proud. By Year 6, pupils are confident and enthusiastic readers and enjoy reading a range of reading material by different authors. Pupils develop their reading skills well during opportunities to read to an adult individually in school. This includes a number of parents who provide good support in school and at home.

49. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from the specialist teacher and teaching assistants and make good progress against their literacy targets in their individual education plans. There is good support through a good range of initiatives, which are skilfully planned and delivered. For example, the school gives support through a parallel literacy hour once a fortnight for pupils with long term specific literacy needs. They are taught very well and reach average standards for their ages.

50. The subject is very well led and managed by the headteacher. She checks planning, pupils' work and lessons thoroughly and has identified areas for development as a result, which have raised standards, particularly in writing. Work is checked against national levels to ensure the school maintains and improves its standards, and information from tests and assessments is used well to set long-term individual targets. Records show pupils make good progress and achieve well over their time in the school. Some good practice is demonstrated in marking pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2 to identify what pupils have achieved and where improvement might be made in the shorter term. Practice is more variable across the rest of the school.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum

51. There are good opportunities to develop literacy across the curriculum, with some very good features in Years 5 and 6. Good opportunities to develop speaking and listening through discussion are evident in most subjects. Pupils extend their technical vocabulary well, for example in mathematics, science, art and ICT, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Subject links provide real opportunities to develop skills and enrich their language. There are good examples of extended writing in history. For example, in Years 3 and 4, history work is based on 'Escape from Pompeii'. This emphasis on quality text leads to exciting writing as pupils describe "*rivers of scarlet red lava ... raining fireworks...red liquid flowed down the crusty side of the angry volcano...bombs of pumice raining down.*"

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 6 achieve very high standards in mathematics, reflecting those seen in national test results
- Teaching is good with some very good features in Years 5 and 6, although pupils' inattention is not always managed effectively in Years 1 and 2
- Assessment is good overall, but marking is variable in quality

Commentary

52. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they have achieved well and attain standards that are well above average. This reflects the outcomes of national tests where, in 2003, results were in the top 5% of schools nationally. They compared very well with schools in similar circumstances because a large proportion attained higher than expected standards for eleven year olds. This is because the quality of teaching is never less than good in Years 3 to 6, with some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 that helps pupils to learn well in lessons and progress effectively over time. The work is challenging for pupils of all abilities. Teachers are effective at targeting pupils of different abilities with well-pitched questions that make them think more deeply and help them to check understanding effectively. Mental skills are well taught and applied well to solve and explain problems. Opportunities for problem solving engage and interest pupils and they employ number skills at a high level. For example in Year 6, pupils have worked out the area of the playground using long multiplication of decimals as part of their computations. Lessons are well organised as seen when some very effective use was made of ICT in Years 5 and 6 to explain the gradations on different types of weighing scales. This was then developed effectively to enable pupils to use the programme for themselves in the ICT suite some support of a teaching assistant to ensure that they knew what to do.

53. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were broadly in line with national averages. These had fallen significantly over previous years' results because fewer pupils attained higher than average standards. Results were well below those of similar types of schools. This was partly due to changes in teachers that these pupils had experienced during their time in school. It was also due to the small number of pupils in each year group. Standards of work in the current Year 2 are above average. This reflects satisfactory achievement since they left the reception class. Standards are better than those suggested in last year's national tests because there has been more stability in staffing which has helped pupils make more steady progress since the start of the year. For example, teaching in Years 1 and 2 has some good features to help pupils increase their knowledge of number, measures and shape. Work is well planned and adapted for pupils of different abilities so that pupils of higher ability are challenged well. As a result they order numbers with three digits successfully. Pupils of lower ability still need quite a bit of adult support to order smaller numbers. At times, good strategies are not implemented successfully because pupils' inattention is not addressed quickly or effectively enough. For example, a good opportunity for pupils to guess numbers 'posted' on each other's backs was not managed well enough. Pupils often gave up and looked at answers rather than asking the questions they needed to ask of each other to guess the number.

54. Across the school, teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils, particularly those of lower ability and with special educational needs, by guiding them in their learning. They give just the right amount of support to help pupils arrive at the answers for themselves. All pupils' progress is assessed and recorded at regular intervals using a range of tests and teacher assessments. This informs whole year group as well as smaller ability group targets and which most pupils are aware of. Pupils' skills in communicating their understanding of mathematics is very good in Years 5 and 6, but in other years is sometimes limited by reliance on worksheets. In addition, the worksheets are not always well organised, dated and annotated to show what pupils have achieved and when, in order to provide an effective form of assessment. Some good marking was seen in some work in Years 1 and 2, which identified the context for learning, such as levels of support given, as well as an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, but this is not a consistently effective feature in other years.

55. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good. Good leadership of the subject has helped to improve standards since the last inspection. Test results have been analysed carefully, a good quality portfolio of work developed to aid more accurate assessment, and identification of more challenging targets for individuals and groups of pupils. This has promoted higher achievement. Management is satisfactory. The coordinator has yet to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons to gain a better understanding of where strengths and further areas to develop are required.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Mathematics is used well in other areas of the curriculum. Links with the ICT curriculum are particularly effective, especially in Years 5 and 6. Data handling was an area requiring improvement in Years 3 to 6 and this has been effectively addressed. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have produced some very good work to display results in graphical form on temperature in science, and in spreadsheet work to calculate the costs of different forms of transport. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have used databases well to represent colour preferences and sort musical instruments. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have used ICT effectively to represent patterns.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, results in national tests are well above average and pupils have achieved well
- Pupils are given good first hand opportunities to investigate
- Pupils' over-excitement is not always dealt with well enough leading to time being wasted
- Leadership and management of the subject is good

Commentary

57. Results in national tests for eleven year olds have improved steadily year by year and in 2003 were well above the national average, comparing well with similar types of schools. A large proportion of pupils achieved the higher than expected level 5. This is a good improvement from the previous inspection. Standards of work seen during the inspection reflect these high standards, demonstrating good achievement in their knowledge and understanding of different scientific concepts as well as their investigative skills. Standards in Year 2 are above average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory despite the lack of continuity to the teaching during Years 1 and 2. Teacher assessments in 2003 suggested that no pupils attained the higher level 3. This was not the case during this inspection where a larger number of pupils than expected showed good levels of understanding about the concept of forces.

58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. In the best lessons, pupils carry out practical tasks carefully and this helps them learn well as they extend their level of understanding by gathering evidence through first hand observation. Teachers ask pupils well-targeted questions that make them think more carefully. This helps pupils of all abilities learn well. For example, this approach assists the higher-attaining pupils who relish the challenges to solve problems. This was evident in a Years 3 and 4 lesson where pupils were investigating the change of the state of materials from solids to liquids when heated. After clear explanation of what was expected, pupils were asked to consider what they thought might happen and in what order. Through good discussion, the teacher helped them to consider whether the test was fair by distinguishing the different variables involved. This encouraged them to conduct the subsequent investigation carefully and gain greater accuracy in their results. In a separate session for a small number of Year 4 pupils of lower ability, pupils studied the main parts of a daffodil first hand as a prelude to writing a poem in a literacy session. The pupils were enthused by this work, which generated a wide range of vocabulary and helped them understand the key features of plants and their names.

59. In Years 1 and 2, bicycles and scooters were used effectively to give the pupils the chance to experience forces first hand. They learnt that force was needed to speed things up by using pedals, and to slow down by using their brakes. In this way they quickly acquired an understanding of friction. Sometimes in science, pupils become over-excited by activities and this leads to high noise levels, which take some time for teachers to control. This wastes time and learning slows down as a result. From samples of work from all years, it is evident that teachers rely too much on worksheets that do not encourage pupils to record and present work more independently, particularly for investigations. Work is not always dated or marked effectively to act as a good record of their progress.

60. Leadership and management of science are good. The subject coordinator, who is also the headteacher, monitors science well through evaluating teachers' planning, analysing pupils' work and observing lessons. Supportive feedback is given which leads to improvements. Year 6 test results have been analysed well to indicate what pupils know and do not know. The staff are now using the results from this analysis to improve their teaching. Overall, there has been a good improvement in the provision for science since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' use of ICT to support learning in other subjects has shown good improvement since the last inspection
- Facilities have improved since the last inspection, although the ICT suite is quite small

Commentary

61. From the one lesson seen, from looking at previous work and talking to staff and pupils, it is evident that standards are in line with national expectations at both Years 2 and 6 and achievement is satisfactory. The work that has been collected to exemplify standards shows all aspects of the curriculum are covered at appropriate levels for pupils' ages.

62. As only one lesson was seen during the inspection it is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching and learning in ICT. However, in the one lesson seen in Year 5 and 6, teaching and learning was good. The teacher, who is also the coordinator for ICT, showed good subject knowledge when skilfully introducing pupils to models to show how information could be represented graphically. Good use was made of a digital projector to demonstrate features of the program and this kept pupils attentive. As a result they all remembered what they had been taught, evident as they practised in groups what they had learned about presenting data. In groups, pupils were well supported in the suite by a teaching assistant, and were able to consolidate their learning through additional practice.

63. Leadership and management of the subject is good. There is a policy for safe use of the Internet and the school has its own website. This was designed and is maintained by Year 6 pupils. Resources have been improved since the last inspection in terms of hardware and software, for example to support controlling movements of different types of equipment and to enable equipment to sense changes, such as temperature and movement. A small suite has been developed where groups of children can be accommodated to learn together, but is too small for whole class use. Teachers compensate for this by making good use of teaching assistants to support these groups on worthwhile activities to develop ICT skills as well as support learning in other subjects. Each classroom has its own computers to support learning in lessons, and the ratio of modern computers to pupils is broadly average. Opportunities are well planned to enable pupils to have regular access to these machines.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. There is sound use of computers in other subjects and this is developing well. Use of CD Rom and the internet are well used for research in history and geography topics. Pupils use digital thermometers effectively to sense and display changing temperatures on screen. They draw pictures, selecting from a tool menu different colours and patterns to create imaginative pictures. Pictures and text enhance work in a number of subjects. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection, when it was felt that ICT was not used sufficiently in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

65. No lessons were observed in **geography** and insufficient evidence was gathered to make judgements about provision or standards of work.

66. During the inspection there were no lessons seen in **religious education** and it is not possible to make a secure judgement on provision overall. However, from evidence in planning, looking at pupils' past work and by talking to the pupils, standards are good and their achievement is at least satisfactory – a similar picture to the last inspection. Work is often related to project work such as Ancient Greece and this makes learning interesting. Older pupils discuss enthusiastically what they have learned. They are interested in, and have very good knowledge and understanding of

Christianity and other world religions such as Islam and Buddhism. They are able to remember previous work and the knowledge they gained in projects, such as one about signs and symbols. They know that water, for example, is a symbol for new life in the baptism ceremony. There are good links with other subjects, including literacy and ICT, when pupils research facts to support their work using books and the Internet. The subject is well led and managed by the head teacher. Planning is structured well to cater for different ages and levels of attainment in the mixed age classes and is suitably derived from the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths

- Standards in the subject are good
- Teachers use a wide range of resources and artefacts effectively to assist pupils in their learning
- Skills in other subjects are used imaginatively to improve pupils' understanding

Commentary

67. During the inspection only two lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6. Inspectors looked at a full range of pupils' work, wall displays and teachers' planning documents and talked with staff and pupils. This evidence showed that there has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards are now above those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievement is good. There are good opportunities for using and applying literacy and numeracy skills during history lessons. For example, pupils in different years use mathematical skills well to gather and tally information and record key findings. ICT is used well to research information further using the Internet and CD Roms.

68. Teaching and learning is good overall. In one lesson seen in Years 3 and 4 the quality was good, and in the other in Years 5 and 6 it was very good. A variety of good quality objects and books were used to stimulate pupils' imagination and assist them in their learning. As a result, their response was enthusiastic. In Years 3 and 4, for example, by the end of the lesson pupils were able to make relevant statements about archaeology and were using historical vocabulary such as 'finds', 'artefacts' and 'investigations' correctly. The activity provided pupils with good examples of first hand evidence because the resources used had been excavated as part of an actual archaeological dig. As a result, they clearly understood the need to base statements on evidence. In Years 5 and 6, the teacher used an interactive whiteboard to project an image from the Internet that illustrated the 2004 Olympic website. This stimulated very lively discussion among pupils about modern day Olympics. This initial discussion was built on very well to make comparisons with the ancient Olympics. The teacher effectively facilitated pupils to generate a number of key questions that then formed the basis of more independent research. A strong focus was placed on encouraging the pupils to consider the types of evidence that might be available today to inform their research. Pupils approached the task diligently and their concentrated and cooperative efforts helped them to make very good gains in their learning. Teaching assistants in both sessions provided good support for less able pupils and this ensured they were fully included in the learning.

69. Leadership of the subject is good. Different approaches to the curriculum are being considered to make history more relevant and interesting, and the school is establishing procedures to ensure that skills and knowledge are being consistently and effectively taught throughout the school. Management is sound. The subject leader has taken steps to look at samples of pupils' work from across the school, but the role in terms of monitoring and evaluating learning in lessons is not yet taking place often enough to identify where the most important areas for development are required.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. No lessons were observed in **design and technology** to make judgements about provision or standards of work.

71. No lessons were observed in **music** to draw a firm conclusion about overall provision or pupils' attainment and achievement. Some evidence from a singing assembly indicated that standards in singing across the school are satisfactory. Pupils sang with reasonable harmony and attention to pitch, keeping in time to a speedy taped accompaniment. Sound attempts were made to sing in two parts.

Art and design

The provision in this subject is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very high creative standards in work by Year 6
- Teaching is effective in developing ideas using different techniques
- Pupils' sketchbooks are not annotated with consistent effectiveness to provide a good record of progress

Commentary

72. Standards in Year 2 are above those expected of pupils of similar ages, and by Year 6 standards are very good. In addition to the lesson seen, displays and pupils' work in sketchbooks show that achievement is good in developing different art skills and techniques and in using a range of materials and different media. In Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils have used patterns gathered from rubbings and observational drawings to make effective press prints. They have used colour well to produce African scenes and patterns. Some notable work was seen in individual clay tablets and a large tableau of the local church. Pupils have also worked in three dimensions to produce good quality models of local village houses. By Years 3 and 4, clay work has developed effectively. Country scenes showing a good level of detail have been created. Pupils in these years have also experimented to produce their own high quality interpretations of weather symbols in abstract form. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are helped by very effective teaching to become adept at developing ideas from a simple source. For example, they have visited the coast and made very good observational sketches of shells. These have been developed into highly effective mixed media abstracts after experimenting with different materials.

73. In the lesson observed in Year 5 and 6, the quality of teaching was very good. Highly effective organisation enabled pupils to experience and practise different techniques as part of a series of lessons to develop an artefact based on the idea of Medusa, the Gorgon. The teacher deployed adults very effectively so that pupils could include the use of ICT as an alternative medium for developing their designs for a Gorgon's head. A grandparent effectively supervised a group moulding the plaster base for their model heads. The teacher, meanwhile, helped pupils to explore, understand and interpret different techniques, such as plaiting, appliqué, wadding and cording using textiles, as well as a range of different colour effects on material. Because the activities were stimulating and interesting, pupils were totally engrossed in all the activities, concentrating well to master a technique, supporting each other when experiencing difficulties with sewing and commenting on each other's efforts in a positive yet evaluative way. Pupils were creatively challenged by regular interaction with the teacher who questioned their choices and developed ideas effectively.

74. Because of the improved teaching techniques since the last inspection, standards have improved significantly. This represents a very good improvement since the last inspection. A teacher new to the school has recently taken on leadership and management of the subject. This is sound overall and information is starting to be collected on how standards might be improved further. One such area where practice is still variable, for example, is in teachers' use of sketchbooks. All teachers use sketchbooks effectively to enable pupils to experiment with different techniques. Older

pupils are beginning to evaluate their own efforts in the sketchbooks and some contain helpful comments by the teacher on where they could improve further. However, this is not a consistent feature and at present the use of sketchbooks as an effective record of pupils' progress in art skills is reduced.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new school hall gives greater opportunities for indoor activities, although is still small for physical activity by large numbers of pupils
- There is good teaching and learning in dance
- The school offers a good range of extra curricular sporting activities

Commentary

75. The recently completed school hall offers improved facilities for dance and gymnastics, although its size is somewhat restrictive for large classes of older pupils. In the three lessons seen teaching and learning were good overall. In Years 1 and 2 there was sound teaching of gymnastics. The teacher encouraged pupils to travel in different ways using pushes and pulls which linked with their work in science. She gave appropriate opportunities for pupils to demonstrate and make evaluations but some time was wasted because pupils' behaviour was not managed well enough. This affected the opportunity to develop skills further in paired activities.

76. The teaching of dance by a specialist dance teacher was good in Years 3 and 4, and very good in Years 5 and 6. The teacher was very skilled in planning progression in learning and pupils achieved well in developing basic dance patterns and techniques, such as planning and carrying out simple steps and routines. She taught with great enthusiasm and the pupils were well motivated and enthusiastic. They enjoyed the lessons and made good progress as a result. The Rock 'n Roll session for the older pupils was a real "hit". She managed the lessons well and pupils behaved very well so that they made very good use of the time available. They listened very carefully to instructions and carried them out sensibly and safely.

77. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum is planned well using national guidelines. Swimming takes place in the juniors and most pupils reach the national expectation to swim 25 metres. For a small school there are good opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of sporting activities and teams. Teachers, parents and coaches provide for football, netball, hockey, athletics, cross-country and tennis. Pupils have opportunities to represent the school against other rural schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal and social education

Provision in personal and social education is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assemblies are well planned to explore different themes related to pupils' personal and social experiences
- Drama is used well for pupils to explore their emotions
- Learning is sometimes adversely affected by the inattention of pupils

Commentary

78. Themes for assemblies are well planned to focus on a particular theme over the course of a week. This enables pupils across the school to explore issues, such as relationships, together. In one such assembly, the head teacher used a puppet effectively to explore what close and extended

relationships in a family consisted of. Pupils responded well to some of the queries raised by the puppet about the complexities of family structures, and were enabled to illustrate their knowledge and understanding clearly. The head teacher used children from the same families to demonstrate more complex links of extended families. This helped pupils to visualise and understand such relationships more easily.

79. Specific lessons are also well planned to enable pupils to share their thoughts and feelings. These 'circle time' sessions have specific rules so that all pupils are given a chance to speak. In the one lesson seen in Years 3 and 4 that was specifically focused on coping with anger, achievement was satisfactory. Drama was used effectively to enable pupils to explore negative statements illustrating anger. For example, pupils in role spoke of 'its not fair' and 'my brother gets more than I do' miming angry shouting. Some sensitive comments were made by pupils for how such anger might be dealt with, for example by 'going for a walk' to reduce tension. However, learning was adversely affected during the session by the inattention and whispering by a small number of pupils while the teacher was talking. This wasted time during the session so that not all the intentions were covered in the time allowed.

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	2
Attitudes	3
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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

