

INSPECTION REPORT

BORDEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Borden

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118731

Headteacher: Mr Allan Ginman

Lead inspector: Wendy Simmons

Dates of inspection: 15th – 17th March 2004

Inspection number: 255558

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:	Church aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	121
School address:	School Lane Borden Sittingbourne Kent
Postcode:	ME9 8JS
Telephone number:	(01795) 472593
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Woodland
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd - 5 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Borden Primary School is situated in a small rural village close to Sittingbourne. There are 121 pupils registered at this over subscribed school. Pupils attend from several surrounding villages. Overall, pupils' social circumstances are above average. The school has a low percentage of pupils receiving free school meals. The current headteacher was appointed four years ago and until September 2003, taught a class for some of the week. The school does not have a senior teacher. Currently, three out of the five classes have some form of either temporary or part time job sharing teachers, partly due to two permanent staff being on maternity leave; two of these staff are newly qualified. Pupils are mostly taught in mixed aged classes. The school uses the original Victorian building, which is situated in the site of an old quarry, and thus, extension outwards is almost impossible. There is one mobile classroom and the school uses additional adjoining land for sports and nature work. The hall is not equipped or of a suitable size for physical education activities. The hall is not available for school use during the mornings, as it is used by the local playgroup. The number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is higher than average. Almost all pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds; with no pupils learning English as an additional language; a very small number of pupils have a Traveller heritage and the school supports pupils in local authority care. When pupils start the school, in the Reception class, their skills and knowledge are broadly average, but this varies between year groups, with some years showing above average standards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23674	Wendy Simmons	Lead inspector	Science, design and technology (DT), foundation stage and music
9569	Jan Leaning	Lay inspector	
20760	Sheila Roberts	Team inspector	English, art, geography and history.
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) special educational needs, physical education (PE)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Borden Primary School provides a good overall standard of education. Teaching and learning are good. Good leadership and satisfactory management are leading to improving standards and good achievement by Year 6. The school provides good value for money and offers a caring family ethos.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Clear leadership and very good teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6 are resulting in very high standards of work and good achievement by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science
- Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour reflect high quality spiritual, moral and social education, although multicultural education is underdeveloped
- Teaching and learning are good; however, provision for pupils in the Year 2 classes is not equal.
- The school's very restricted accommodation limits some learning opportunities
- The partnership between parents, staff and pupils has a very positive impact on pupils' learning
- Some management procedures are not yet as rigorous as they could be

Good improvement has been made since the school was last inspected. Standards are now higher by Year 6. The school has dealt with all of the issues previously identified for improvement. The very high standards in pupils' attitudes and behaviour have been maintained. Spiritual, moral and social education continues to have significant strengths; however, cultural education is not as well promoted as in 1998. Teaching and learning remain good, with an increase in proportion of very good lessons. Teaching assistants are now very effective and have contributed to the better progress now being made by pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and able pupils. There has been insufficient improvement in ICT. Progress in improving the accommodation for the children in the Reception class has been too slow, although the new library is a good improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is good overall. Current standards in the Reception class are average and children's achievement in this class is satisfactory. Better progress is hampered by the lack of space. By Year 2, standards of work in reading, mathematics, writing and science are average. Pupils achieve well in Year 1. Although their achievement in Year 2 is satisfactory, it is reduced by the lack of rigorous planning to ensure that all pupils do equally well. Achievement is good from there on, in English, mathematics and science, due to the good overall quality of education. In ICT, pupils could be doing much better, as pupils are producing work, which is of a lower than average standard. The hall is too small for high achievement in physical education (PE), although pupils do well in swimming.

The following table shows that in 2002, standards appeared very low in Year 6, but it is important to note that this year group only had 11 pupils, most of whom did well. Overall, the school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with SEN. The school has taken firm and successful action to ensure that able pupils have the opportunity to work on higher Level 5 learning activities, especially in mathematics and science, where the most improvement is evident compared with the 2003 national test results. This is because teachers have improved assessment procedures, their knowledge, planning and challenges for pupils of all abilities. Currently, by Year 6, the overall standard of work seen is above average. Pupils do especially well in reaching very high standards in English, mathematics and science.

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

Key: A* top 5% of schools – A well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E* - in the lowest 5% of schools

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and moral development are very good. Social development is good. Multicultural education is limited. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good overall. The care shown by staff is good and contributes to pupils' personal development. Pupils are very keen to learn and encouraged to think for themselves, and work cooperatively. **The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.** The promotion of literacy, numeracy and science skills is good. They are especially well promoted at the upper end of the school, where lessons are very interesting and challenging. While most pupils benefit from teaching and learning which is at least good overall, the quality of education for pupils in Year 2 is not quite as high. While it is satisfactory, sometimes, the Year 2 pupils in one class do not have the same opportunities as Year 2 pupils in the other mixed age class. Nonetheless, elsewhere in the school, teachers work successfully to provide equal opportunities to all pupils. A significant strength is the very good support given by teaching assistants, who provide good support for SEN and able pupils. Throughout the school, there is not enough regular teaching of ICT and insufficient resources. Links with the community, extra activities and very good support from parents enrich learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall; within this, leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The leadership by subject managers is good. A strong aspect of management is the way that the headteacher, staff and governors have acted firmly to improve standards by Year 6. Weaker aspects include: the monitoring of new teachers, the limited financial costings in the school improvement plan, and the lack of a senior teacher. Governance is satisfactory with compliance to statutory responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils like this caring school, particularly the family ethos. Relationships between pupils, staff, governors and parents are very good. Parents and pupils feel, as do the inspectors, that the pupils' outside toilets are not good enough for the 21st century.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve

- Improve the provision in ICT, so that standards are raised
- Implement tighter management procedures; to ensure that the provision in Year 2 is lifted to the high standard as found elsewhere in the school; appoint a senior teacher and carefully cost improvements on the school's development plan
- Implement, as planned, the improvements to the Foundation Stage accommodation
- Broaden opportunities and resources to support pupils' multicultural learning

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** overall. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Year 2. Elsewhere in the school it is good, reflecting the school's commitment to providing suitable opportunities for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to make good progress. Standards are average by Year 2. By Year 6, there are significant strengths in pupils' achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, where achievement and results are very good. However, due to standards being lower than average in ICT, by Year 6, the overall judgement about standards is judged to be above average overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve very well in English, maths and science by Year 6, where standards, in these subjects, are currently well above average
- There has been good overall improvement in standards since 1998
- Standards and pupils' achievement in ICT are unsatisfactory
- Year 2 pupils do not achieve quite as well as other pupils in the school
- The size of the accommodation impacts on pupils' achievement in PE and for children in the Reception class

Commentary

1. When children first start school, in the Reception class, they show a wide range of abilities and overall their abilities are broadly average. Pupils show better than average personal and social skills. In other areas, knowledge and skills are what would normally be expected for the age of the children. However, each year can be quite different, with some year groups showing higher than average ability.

2. Children make good progress in the Reception class in their basic skills of language, communication and mathematical development. In other aspects of their work, although they achieve at least satisfactorily, the extremely cramped accommodation restricts higher achievement, especially in physical development. By the end of the Reception Year, standards are currently average, with most children reaching the expected early learning goals. Average attainment on entry to Year 1 is characteristic of most years, but in some years, standards are higher than this, due to variation between year groups.

3. From Year 1, pupils work mostly in mixed aged classes. This works successfully in older age group classes and for pupils in Year 1; in these classes, pupils achieve well, as work is planned to meet pupils' individual needs, including those with SEN and higher ability learners. The very good support by assistants is often an important factor in why pupils achieve well. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the provision for pupils with SEN and for able pupils from satisfactory to good. Pupils' very positive attitudes and teachers emphasis on widening pupils' speaking skills enables pupils to achieve well as they move through the school.

4. Pupils in Year 2, although achieving satisfactorily, miss the chance to do even better. As a consequence of this, standards are currently average in reading, mathematics, writing and science and not as high as those found between 1998 and 2003, when they rose considerably. In 2003, although test results had fallen to average, this still represented good achievement for Year 2 pupils, as over 40 per cent of pupils had SEN. Currently, this good pattern of achievement has declined to satisfactory. The reasons for this are partly due to this year group not having consistently equal opportunities in the mixed aged classes and further detail of this are expanded on further in this report.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (17.7)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	13.0 (15.3)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	16.6 (16.5)	16.4 (16.5)

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

5. The school has successfully focused on of raising standards by Year 6. Achievement is now good in Years 3 to 6, where improvement in assessment procedures and opportunities for able pupils to do more challenging work, are resulting in more of the pupils working on higher level activities. Standards, in national tests had appeared low between 2000 and 2002 by Year 6. It is important to note that some of these year groups were very small with a high proportion of pupils with SEN. While the school reached average national Level 4 results, higher ability pupils rarely gained the expected Level 5. The school recognised this underachievement and has taken firm action to address this.

6. The school's local authority targets for the 2004 national tests for higher Level 5 results are not challenging enough and do not reflect the school's current assessment information, as these were agreed before the information had been clearly evaluated. They are currently set at 25 per cent in mathematics and 30 per cent in English for 2004. Whereas, the inspection findings and school's assessment information, shows that between 40 and 50 percent of this year group are likely to reach high levels. Achievement for the current Year 6 pupils is good overall, as pupils' very high results, when in Year 2, have been maintained.

7. By Year 6, pupils do especially well in reaching very high standards in English, mathematics and science. The range and quality of written work, shows how assessment is used to modify daily lesson plans, so that pupils build up skills and knowledge progressively. In mathematics, the introduction of regular mental mathematics sessions helps pupils to think, learn and understand how to apply their basic knowledge of numbers in different ways. In science, pupils are doing more investigations for themselves. The school has greatly increased the number of pupils working at higher level skills especially from Years 4 to Year 6. The good support for pupils with SEN (which includes Traveller pupils and those in care), as well as able pupils is a significant factor in why pupils do well and reach high standards overall by Year 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.7 (25.4)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	26.7 (25.4)	27.0 (26.7)
science	27.7 (26.5)	28.8 (28.3)

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

8. Attainment and achievement in ICT has not kept pace with national developments. Thus, currently, standards are lower than average. Throughout the school, in ICT, pupils do not do well enough in aspects of their work because the school is only really just developing the range of resources and teacher expertise. Moreover, there is insufficient teaching time to lift achievement. Many pupils have not developed skills rapidly enough from year to year and this impacts on their achievement by Year 6. Although the school cannot provide suitable opportunities for indoor PE, they try to compensate for this by offering a good range of clubs, including swimming where pupils often reach high standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and moral development are **very good** overall. Spiritual and social development are **good**. Cultural development is **satisfactory**. Pupils attend school regularly and almost all are punctual: attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are confident, very keen to learn and behave very well
- Relationships are very good in the school and reflect the school's caring ethos
- There is a very strong social and moral atmosphere
- Good spiritual provision helps pupils to have high self-esteem
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of different cultures are underdeveloped

Commentary

9. Pupils commented that the school is a very friendly place. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their learning are very good because of the school's very high expectations and commitment to helping pupils to develop this aspect of their education. Pupils settle quickly to their work, listen very carefully and concentrate on their tasks. They are enthusiastic, courteous and polite to each other and to the adults. They are very confident and capable because they arrive with good social skills and the school builds on these successfully. Pupils, especially in Year 6, have responsibilities around the school and care for the younger children. For example, as part of the inspection process Year 6 pupils helped younger ones to complete the pupil questionnaires. Pupils' very good attitudes have a positive influence on learning and achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.5	School data	0.3
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: 2002 /2003

10. Pupils' behaviour is very good; it has a very positive impact on helping pupils to do well at school, as very little teaching and learning time is lost through having to deal with behaviour problems in the class. High standards are supported by the school's strong moral code and a clear and consistently applied behaviour policy. Pupils know the school rules, and want to follow them because the school helps them to understand right and wrong. Moreover, pupils are actively involved in planning and setting the rules for each class. This consultation process is highly valued by pupils, although in other aspects of the school's work there are few formal processes for asking pupils about their views. Pupils appreciate the system of rewards and understand the consequences if they do not behave well. In lessons they listen carefully and are confident when it is their turn to speak. No bullying was observed, and parents and pupils say that teachers generally manage reported incidents promptly and effectively. Pupils work and play very well together and develop good levels of independence. They show respect for the school environment and handle resources with care. Parents are very proud of the way in which the school promotes high standards of behaviour and are keen to work in partnership with the school on this. The table below shows that in the last reporting year there were two short-term exclusions. These were a result of inappropriate fighting of two boys. This was handled effectively and efficiently.

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	110	2	0
Mixed –any other mixed background	2	0	0
Parent/pupils preferred not to say	9	0	0

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

11. The caring Christian ethos and the very good relationships are strengths of the school. Pupils say their teachers are fair and kind and this leads to an atmosphere where they can develop their individual strengths. Spiritual development is promoted especially well through helping pupils to feel good about themselves, so developing high self-esteem. The school regularly celebrates pupils' achievement in weekly merit assemblies. In lessons, teachers and assistants actively find ways to praise pupils. For example, when a pupil with SEN grasped how to make addition sums on the computer, the class were all told and congratulated the pupil. In some lessons, teachers use pop music at the beginning of the lesson and pupils dance set routines, such as the Cha Cha Slide. This is great fun and energises the pupils to focus quickly and enthusiastically on their next task. Assemblies and some lessons offer good opportunities for reflection and a good spiritual element. In a science lesson, pupils became absorbed in their investigation in the wild area, especially when they watched a mother rabbit with her babies.

12. Visits and visitors widen pupils' understanding and tolerance of others. Pupils study a range of cultures and faiths in religious education lessons and assemblies. For example, as evident when pupils sat wide-eyed while listening to the story of St Patrick. However, in other lessons, multicultural education is limited. This represents a decline in the standards reported in 1998, when this aspect of the school's work was found to be well promoted. However, cultural development is well promoted through the study of literature and by such special events as singing carols at Leeds Castle and by participating with other local schools in music festivals.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Pupils are well cared for, so that almost all pupils have equal opportunities and are included in most activities. Teaching and learning are good, but teaching, learning and resources in ICT, and opportunities for Year 2 pupils, are areas for improvement. The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall, but within this; there are good opportunities for pupils to enjoy extra activities and very good links with the community, which enrich pupils' learning. The size of the accommodation limits learning opportunities for younger pupils and for all pupils in their physical education.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from very good teaching and learning opportunities in Years 4, 5 and 6
- Teaching and learning are good overall in English, mathematics and science
- Opportunities for pupils to learn ICT skills are too limited
- In Year 2, pupils do not always have similar opportunities in the mixed classes
- Teaching assistants provided very good support
- There is good teaching in Foundation Stage for basic skills, but the accommodation restricts learning opportunities overall
- Pupils' are keen to learn, showing application to tasks and a strong ability to work independently and collaboratively

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	6	9	8	0	0	0

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

13. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the overall quality of teaching. While it remains good, as noted in 1998, the proportion of very good teaching in Years 4 to 6 has improved. This has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement, progress and standards of work especially in English, mathematics and science. Overall, teaching and learning throughout the school in these subjects has developed from mostly satisfactory to good. The best progress is evident in mathematics and science.

14. In English, mathematics and science, staff are planning learning opportunities so that pupils of all abilities are given work, which meets their wide-ranging capabilities. In order to achieve this, teachers make very effective use of assessment information to group pupils and monitor how they are getting on. In other subjects, assessment procedures are not as well developed, as these have not been priorities for the school. Pupils are given clear targets to work towards to help them to improve, as evident in both the way teachers mark pupils' work, which is of a high standard and in the way pupils refer to their individual target cards, which are very prominent in lessons. Teachers spend time in lessons to evaluate pupils' work and thinking. As a consequence of this, pupils have a good amount of individual attention, which helps them to understand how and what to improve. In both mathematics and science, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, solve problems and investigate things as individuals and collaboratively in groups.

15. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for Year 2 pupils overall, as they are achieving satisfactorily. However, compared with the higher quality provision in the rest of the school, this is an area for development. Pupils who are in Year 2 are split between two mixed age classes. While careful attention has been given to put the most able Year 2 pupils with Year 3 pupils, there has not

been enough support for this year group overall. Currently this is the year group where two newly qualified staff share one of the classes. There is not enough time allocated to planning work together, so that pupils have similar opportunities. In other classes equal opportunities are good, especially relating to the support for pupils of both lower and higher ability. The Year 1 teacher is overseeing the Year 2 preparation for the nation tests, but has very limited time to work directly with Year 2 pupils.

16. Throughout the school, teaching assistants are used very well to support pupils' learning, so that they acquire new knowledge and skills quickly and effectively. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well supported, both in class and in small groups that have lessons outside the classroom for specific teaching. Assistants know the targets in pupils' individual education plans and they plan with the class teachers to make the most effective use of their time. Sometimes, they work with very able pupils, particularly in mathematics. In Year 1 and 2, assistants teach Year 2 pupils more than the class teacher; while this is often works well, it means that pupils in Year 1 have more of the teacher's time than pupils in Year 2, which is a weakness.

17. Pupils' use the available ICT resources well by working in pairs; helping each other to overcome difficulties, which aids their learning, but too little time is allocated for the teaching and learning of ICT skills and assessment procedures are not sufficiently developed to pinpoint which levels of skills the pupils are already working at. As a consequence of this, it makes it difficult for teachers to plan new and challenging work for pupils.

18. The teaching and learning of basic skills is a high priority in the Reception class and work is well planned. Teachers and assistants have to spend much time getting apparatus out, as there is not enough space to have special set out learning areas both inside and outside. This impacts on the children's opportunities to make decisions about their activities and resources; the accommodation hampers better learning, while teaching is good overall.

19. Teaching and learning are especially successful in Year 4 to 6, as teaching is very energetic, lively and interesting. Teachers have very high expectations and almost all of the lessons seen were of a very high standard.

One excellent lesson was seen in Years 5 and 6 when pupils used suspense in their writing in the *Mystery of the Waterhole*.

Complex English skills were taught very effectively while allowing the pupils to develop their imaginative and creative skills, which had a very positive impact on their spiritual development. Pupils had already written their ideas about the plot together and had decided on the different characteristics of Spike and Bubba. These ideas were displayed on the wall and added to by pupils, as further ideas emerged. Individual thinking and learning, as well as group ideas, were encouraged. Pupils had already written sections of the story in their books, which the teacher had marked to develop clarity, use of adjectives, metaphors and similes. In the lesson, the next stage of their work involved re-drafting their ideas, so that they used more atmospheric vocabulary. Pupils were absorbed by finding new words in the thesaurus and by exploring the power of empty words and short sentences. The teacher circulated around the room, evaluating pupils' work in a very positive way, often sharing good ideas with the class, which motivated the others to try harder. This really helped pupils to use better time connectives to link sentences and to introduce powerful verbs. At the end of this session, the teacher turned off the lights and the pupils huddled in the corner of the class; they read their stories aloud, using their voices and the vocabulary to send a shiver down the spine, such as: "Suddenly, his eye began to glow like a fox in the night, while a firm hand shoved him back as quick as a flash from a shooting star. Clanking footsteps began to vibrate on the ladder as Bubba felt his feet slip on the slime". This work showed excellent achievement and learning, as skills built up progressively over several lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. It is adequately planned and provides **good** opportunities for pupils' learning to be enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities. The accommodation and resources are **unsatisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Literacy, numeracy and science are taught well at the top of the school and make a good contribution to the standards reached by the time pupils leave
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- The links with the local secondary school are good and the curriculum is enriched with good extra-curricular activities and links with parents
- The accommodation for the Foundation stage and PE is unsatisfactory
- There are insufficient resources for ICT and multicultural education

Commentary

20. The curriculum for literacy, numeracy and science has had a positive effect upon standards, particularly at the top of the school. Because there has been a focus on the identification of what needs to be developed in the curriculum, the school has correctly recognised among other things, the need to improve skills in mental mathematics and practical investigations in science. These are designed to challenge all pupils, particularly those who are more able. Since 1998, the school has made significant improvement in the curriculum.

21. In most cases the work is well planned for the different ages and abilities in the school. However, there are some issues in the planning for the Year 2 pupils in the two mixed aged classes. Currently, there is insufficient joint planning and monitoring of what is being taught on a weekly basis to ensure that all Year 2 pupils have equal opportunities in all subjects. Where the pupils are organized by ability in mathematics, this works well, but in other subjects some pupils are doing activities, which are not covered by the pupils in the other class. Added to this, changes in teachers during the week (job-share) limits continuity, as staff do not have any formal time to plan together.

22. Throughout the school, planning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their difficulties are identified early in their school life and teachers produce detailed individual plans to support their various needs. This is why they make such consistently good progress. The school has a good number of qualified learning support assistants. They help pupils with special educational needs well and work with the teachers to ensure that pupils are included in all lessons. They also support pupils in Years 3 and 6 with particular talents in mathematics. This new initiative has proved successful in raising the standards of the more able pupils and it is planned to extend this to pupils in other classes.

23. There are good links with the local secondary school to promote French and a parent takes an after school French club. Year 6 pupils start to learn French. Students work with groups of pupils introducing them to simple phrases and basic vocabulary. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have swimming lessons at various times throughout the year, which explains why nearly all pupils are competent swimmers by the time they leave.

24. The curriculum is enriched by a good variety of extra-curricular activities, which are run by all teachers and some parents. These include singing, recorders, dance, and football clubs for pupils of all ages and French and netball for the older pupils. The good links with local football and cricket clubs provide expert coaching in skills and strategies. Enthusiastic and skilled parents run many of the additional activities. Residential visits for pupils in Years 6 enrich many areas of the curriculum and promote their confidence, independence and social skills.

25. The accommodation is very cramped and work is hampered by the lack of space in the school hall and outdoor play area for teaching physical education, which impact on pupils' achievement in gymnastics and ball games in particular. Children in the Reception class follow a broad curriculum; however, there is insufficient space for the children to choose activities for themselves, such as outside play, creative activities and large construction puzzles and making activities. Although the staff are diligent in planning time for a range of activities during the week, the limitations of the accommodation prevent the children from experiencing some activities often enough. Moreover, if the weather is poor this further limits the curriculum, as the children miss their allocated time in the playground, which is shared with the whole school and the local playgroup. This is far from ideal and narrows the range of learning opportunities, especially in physical development. Staff do their very best with what they have and show a strong commitment to the needs of the children. There are comprehensive plans in place to extend the accommodation.

26. Resources in several subjects are too limited to ensure that pupils are able to enjoy a rich curriculum. While the school has worked successfully to develop the range and quality of resources for English and mathematics, ICT is limited in the range of work produced partly because of the restraints of the accommodation but also because of there being insufficient computers and software for pupils to develop their skills. The school has few resources that help pupils to appreciate different cultures, especially through art, music and history. Since 1998, the school has been successful in improving the library, which is well used and encourages pupils' independent learning. This improvement has had a positive effect on pupils' achievement in reading, as pupils are highly motivated to read the attractive new books.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **good** arrangements for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils and this is embedded in the school's Christian ethos. Staff know pupils well and provide **good** personal support. Pupils' achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are carefully monitored. The school seeks and pupils' views **satisfactorily** in an informal way.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very positive about their experience in school and parents are confident that their children are cared for very well overall
- It is not currently sufficiently clear who is responsible for care when the headteacher is off site
- Pupils are well supported in English, mathematics and science, whatever their ability
- The school has good arrangements for helping pupils to settle into school
- Pupils and parents note that the school does not have suitable toilet facilities

Commentary

27. Pupils are supervised very well throughout the day and this makes a significant contribution to their safety as well as encouraging strong relationships between pupils and their teachers. Pupils' health, safety and welfare are carefully monitored and pupils who are hurt or unwell in school receive very good care. Pupils praise their teachers and the help and guidance, which they are given, as it effectively supports them in their learning. In discussion and on questionnaires they say that they know the staff well, are confident in approaching them, and know that they will be listened to. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted more rigorous risk assessment procedures; staff take risk assessment seriously.

28. The arrangements for child protection were found to be very good at the time of the last inspection. They are currently satisfactory with a clear policy: the head teacher is the responsible person, however, procedures for delegating responsibility when he is off site are not clearly laid down. Overall, the standards of care are good, with good attention to first aid. The school has very good liaison with parents and other groups, such as social services.

29. Class teachers know their pupils well and offer good advice, support and guidance in relation to their personal development. They are alert to pupils' learning needs and do their best to support them. The school makes every effort to see that each pupil has suitable support to improve and appropriate outside agencies are involved where necessary. Pupils have individual target cards and they are beginning to be involved in discussions about their academic achievement, including agreeing targets to guide the next steps in their learning. Although systems are in place to track pupils' academic progress as they move through the school, these work best from Year 3 to Year 6. Currently, the assessment information, which is collected earlier in the school from Reception to Year 2, is not used as rigorously to give a whole school picture of pupils' progress from the start to the end of pupils' time at the school.

30. Care for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well supported, both in class and in small groups that have lessons outside the classroom for specific teaching. Some are withdrawn from some lessons for this supported learning. Although the school tries to ensure that pupils do not miss out on what the rest of the class is learning, in some cases they do miss parts of other lessons particularly in the afternoons. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Learning support assistants know the targets in pupils' individual education plans and they plan with the class teachers to make the most effective use of their time. Higher ability pupils are especially well supported in mathematics and English, where their achievement and progress are carefully assessed and challenging targets are set for pupils to improve. Staff have worked hard to ensure that pupils of all abilities are supported.

31. Parents are confident that the school helps and cares for their children very well. They are pleased with the good procedures for introducing pupils to the school (many come from the on site playgroup). They say that the transfer to secondary school is carefully managed and works well. Teachers from the main partnership school come regularly to take classes, accompanied by pupils and this makes a good link for the pupils moving on.

32. At the parents' meeting they asked the inspection team to look at the toilet provision for pupils and to check road safety arrangements, as the school is situated on a busy lane, (50 per cent of pupil questionnaires, also noted that they would like the toilets to be inside, warmer and with less spiders!). The findings of this show that the headteacher and governors are involved in ongoing discussion with the local authority about how to increase signs and warning to traffic about the school, which is on a bend in the road. The school adopts rigorous crossing procedures, when pupils cross the road to work in the field during school time. For example, pupils wore yellow jackets and three adults took positions on the road as traffic spotters while pupils crossed safely. The toilet facilities are generally poor and there is a lack of necessary hygiene aids for older girls; facilities are not up to standard for the twenty first century. The head teacher and governors have already identified the need to update the toilet facilities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents who appreciate the regular and effective communication and the school's welcoming approach. Links with the community are **very good** and links with other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all parents are very appreciative of the school; they like the caring ethos and feel welcome
- Parents are very involved in school life and place a high level of trust in the school
- Very good links with the community support and extend the work of the school
- Parents receive good information in user friendly language
- Parents are not always clear about what their child needs to do to improve
- There is no curriculum statement for the Foundation Stage in the prospectus

Commentary

33. The school has maintained the very high standards reported on at the time of the last inspection in 1998. Many parents make a positive decision to send their children to the school because they are happy, behave well and make good progress. They say that the teaching is good, the staff expect hard work and treat their children fairly, and that children are encouraged to become mature and responsible. Parents also feel that the school is well led and managed and that they are welcome. The questionnaires identify the school's many strengths.

34. Most parents are actively involved in the school and in their children's learning: they help in the library, with swimming and on visits; they are valued and are used well. For example, one mother designed a special quiz for science week. They attend meetings, assemblies and join the school for Christmas and other Festivals in the local Church. They subscribe to the home /school contract and are happy with the homework policy. They give very good support to the 'Friends' of Borden School'; funds raised are used to enrich learning opportunities. The school deals sympathetically and appropriately with any concerns which parents raise.

35. Links with the local community are very good; there are many joint initiatives with the local Church and curate. Local people help as volunteer readers, which help pupils to consolidate their reading skills in a fun way. The school is part of an informal small 'cluster group' of schools and also of a wider partnership with small schools in the area and these provide opportunities for the sharing of information and expertise. For example, special needs teachers work together to share ideas and there are numerous inter schools sports activities. Pupils attend a sports centre and have enjoyed such activities as curling. The playgroup uses the school premises on a daily basis, which helps the children to become familiar with the school.

36. The school provides good information, with regular newsletters, curriculum information and meetings - it is similar to that found in most schools. The governors' annual report to parents and school prospectus are detailed and informative and contain the required information, although there is no specific statement about the provision and curriculum for the Foundation Stage. However, parents do receive good information when they visit the school for the induction days, as staff give a useful account of what happens and why this is important.

37. Pupils' annual reports are clear and satisfactory overall, but there is inconsistency in the guidance on what pupils need to do to improve. Some teachers do this well, but others do not make this clear enough. Parents of children with special educational needs are informed about their children's progress towards the targets laid out in the individual education plans. Parents of children of higher ability know how the school is supporting them, but other parents are very unclear about how this works and they would like a clearer explanation of this.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. Leadership by the headteacher is satisfactory and with subject managers, leadership is **good**. Management is satisfactory overall. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and subject leaders work closely showing good overall leadership, which plays an important part in raising standards in mathematics, English and science
- The Headteacher, staff and governors are committed to raising standards
- Governors are very supportive and understand the strengths of the school, but their role in monitoring and promoting best value are underdeveloped
- Monitoring, deployment and support of staff is not always as effective as they should be
- The school's improvement plan does not contain specific costings for projects

Commentary

38. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is committed to raising standards, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This aim is shared by the subject managers and has led to significant improvement in standards at the top end of the school. The headteacher, governors, and staff share a commitment to ensuring the school is a very caring environment where pupils feel secure and develop self-esteem. Together, they have created an improving school, where standards are carefully evaluated and action taken to enable most pupils to learn effectively. Pupils with SEN and those of higher ability feel valued and supported to achieve well. Parents feel the school is well led and managed.

39. Governors are fully involved in the daily life of the school. They are clear about the school's strengths and most areas of weakness and are beginning to observe lessons, although this is generally underdeveloped. It is best for SEN, where a governor spent time with pupils and staff and then reported the findings at a formal meeting. Governors fulfil their statutory duties conscientiously and offer strong support to the headteacher. Governors have increased their part in steering the direction of the work and improvement of the school since the last inspection, although many are quite new to their role. They work with the headteacher and staff when preparing the school's development plan. This clearly and accurately identifies useful areas for future development linked to English, mathematics, science and the accommodation, although the plans for the development of ICT are weaker. The development plan, while satisfactory, lacks a view beyond the current year.

40. The governors and headteacher are becoming clearer about the importance of ensuring that the school has a broad approach to giving best value. They are most successful at evaluating the school's results from Year 2 to Year 6, but are less clear about how to use the information about standards and progress from pupils' point of entry to the school. The headteacher and governors are beginning to formally seek the views of parents and pupils in planning for the future of the school, but overall, this aspect is underdeveloped.

41. Management is satisfactory overall, but not quite as strong as leadership. The headteacher and subject managers observe teachers in their classes. Performance management is in place for all teachers and this is having an impact on how staff training is organised. There are plans to widen this to include learning support assistants in the future.

42. The school has faced several significant staff difficulties, which have been a barrier to management and further improvement at the lower end of the school. Currently, Years 1 and 4 are the only classes with a permanent and full time teacher. There is currently no 'senior teacher' identified to carry responsibility in the absence of the headteacher. There are no formal induction procedures for new staff or clear mentoring and support for newly qualified teachers, of which the school has two in Year 2. This weakness is a factor in why the provision for Year 2 pupils is not always equal and why Year 2 pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils.

43. All staff work hard and often have several areas of the curriculum responsibility. All managers lead their subjects effectively, and are well aware of the need to constantly monitor and raise standards and to track pupils' progress and assess their learning needs. The needs of pupils of higher ability and those of pupils with SEN are ably managed and provided for. All teachers and their assistants work hard as teams in the classroom to ensure that the individual education plans are met. Management of SEN is good. The office staff provide good support to the efficient running of the school on a daily basis; they are especially welcoming to visitors, which enhances the family ethos.

44. Finances are managed satisfactorily overall. The school had a high carry forward in the budget in the last financial year, which was planned to enable the teaching time of the headteacher to be reduced in this financial year. It also, reflects the fact that there is no responsibility allowances for a senior teacher and that the school will shortly be building new accommodation for the Reception class. The long-term financial plan shows that the governors plan to set a budget, which makes use of all additional funding, while leaving a small and adequate contingency for unexpected expenses. While the improvement plan is satisfactory overall, it lacks details about the likely cost of individual projects. This weakness makes it difficult for governors to be clear about how much budget can be used for particular projects and how to evaluate the effectiveness of spending decisions. For example, the school has not targeted spending on ICT. Spending is not compared with that of similar schools and the governors do not have a clear statement about how to ensure best value.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	382,605.12
Total expenditure	356,609.92
Expenditure per pupil	2681.28

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	24,912.21
Balance carried forward to the next year	25,995.20

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

45. There are good induction arrangements for introducing children to school and this means that they are happy and quickly get used to their daily routines. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is average, overall, but variable from year to year. Children achieve satisfactorily overall. They do best in the basic skills of language, communication and mathematical development. Currently, an average proportion of children are on track to achieve the recommended six areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1; a few are working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum, in language and mathematical skills.

46. Since the last inspection, progress in improving provision has been too slow. Currently, the person responsible for this age group is on maternity leave. Leadership and management are provided to a satisfactory standard overall. While provision is satisfactory overall, as found in 1998, plans to improve the accommodation have not been acted on quickly enough. However, this has recently gathered speed. At the time of the inspection, architects and builders were on site making plans for the new extension, which is to be finished this summer. Staff are working very hard to enable children to have the required curriculum by moving furniture and resources to give the children most of the learning opportunities that are expected for this age. The space is inadequate for large numbers of children. Currently there are 13 children, but this has been higher in past years and will be rising significantly in September 2004. It is the smallest space ever seen by this inspection team for Foundation Stage children to work in. Staff have done their very best with what they have available. Displays are very attractive and resources are carefully stored away. However, access to these is often very difficult.

47. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good. Lessons are well-planned and detailed records of children's individual development and progress are kept and used well to plan future lessons. These records are also used to identify children who need extra help or those of higher ability. Staff work hard to include a wide range of activities for the children, but this necessitates much forward planning, careful organisation and good weather! The constraints of the accommodation limit learning opportunities to satisfactory. Without good weather, they are unable to spill out into the playground with essential activities, such as construction toys, the playhouse and sand and water activities. It is important to note, that this outside area is also shared with the rest of the school and the on-site playgroup.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strength and weakness

- Relationships and the attitudes and behaviour of the children are very good
- There are limited opportunities for the children to make decision for themselves

Commentary

48. Standards are currently above average, reflecting children's ability when starting school and the steady development of new skills. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. Children grow in confidence and feel secure in the class. They show good concentration and understand about sharing and taking turns. Adults sensitively join in games and plan activities, which enable the children to develop skills of cooperation. Opportunities for the children to think and make decisions for themselves and show their initiative are sometimes limited by the activities and resources, which the children are able to access. Relationships between children and adult staff are very good and all adults provide very positive examples and clear rules; this results in children being attentive and very well behaved. Almost all children are on course to meet the nationally expected standards in this area of learning by Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strength

- Children achieve well due to their keenness to learn and the emphasis on basic skills

Commentary

49. Almost all children are on course to meet the nationally expected standards in this area of learning by Year 1. Children make good progress in developing new skills in speaking, listening, reading and basic writing due to good teaching and learning. Children are very enthusiastic and work hard, showing very good concentration. Good teaching makes effective use of literacy activities. For example, in one lesson, the teacher read the story 'Giant Sandwich' and the children worked hard to find rhyming words as well as working out new words by making predictions using the picture clues and by combining letters to sound out words. Children act out stories, which improves their speaking skills, as seen when they held onto a special magical stone to invent their own version of Sleeping Beauty. They write regularly and are already learning simple joined handwriting skills, although opportunities to make their own little books are limited. Children confidently chat about their lives. Speaking skills are encouraged by all staff, as the children really benefit from being only 13 in the class.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strength

- Children achieve well due to good teaching and their very positive attitudes

Commentary

50. The quality of teaching and learning is good, showing a strong emphasis on helping the children to really understand how to count accurately and how to count on and back using many different games. The children work hard and show perseverance, particularly when starting to do simple addition and subtraction activities using the die. They have good knowledge of shapes and explore measuring, although the outside space cannot be used to best advantage to spontaneously explore mathematical ideas in the environment. Nonetheless, adults place a strong emphasis on widening the children's knowledge and use of mathematical vocabulary. Mathematical activities are carefully planned to challenge pupils, so that skills quickly build up, assessment systems aid this process. Most children count to 10 confidently and solve simple counting problems with help, such as 4 and 3 make 7. Nearly all children are likely to meet the required standards in this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1. A few will be working on the National Curriculum at level 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. It was not possible to gain sufficient information about children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** to make a judgement about teaching, learning and overall provision, although standards and achievement are satisfactory. Planning shows that children have the opportunity to learn about nature, by exploring the local environment, but in general, the outdoor and indoor areas are so cramped, that it is difficult to do many of the usual activities easily, such as through spontaneous exploration and by making large models and constructions. Children's awareness of different cultural traditions is developed satisfactorily. For example, they made cards for Chinese New Year and know about some of the teachings of Jesus. Also, the children enjoyed dressing up in saris, although there are few multicultural books and resources. Basic computer skills are developing satisfactorily.

Physical development

Provision for physical development is unsatisfactory.

Mains strength and weakness

- Teaching is satisfactory, but the limited space and opportunities to develop skills limits their learning opportunities and achievement

Commentary

52. Observations of one outdoor activity session showed that the children are developing average skills, but better achievement is hampered by limited opportunities to practise skills on a daily basis. However, when they do go out, they enjoy a good range of activities, such as the climbing area and numerous agility activities, which are carefully planned by the staff, such as, an obstacle course, which helped the children to develop jumping, stretching and balancing skills. Children are provided with a suitable range of experiences to help develop their finer manipulative skills, as seen when children concentrated on careful cutting, sticking and colouring to make paper plate masks. Teaching is satisfactory, but the accommodation really restricts learning opportunities. As the playgroup uses the hall, it is almost impossible for the children to have access to a larger space when the weather is bad.

Creative development

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths

- Teachers work hard to provide a range of activities under very difficult circumstances
- Children really enjoy these activities and show very good attitudes

Commentary

53. Most children are reaching average standards in their creative development due to the efforts of the staff to make the best of the resources and conditions that they are working under. Without larger accommodation, it is not possible to have a set up painting and creative area, where children can select resources for themselves. Thus, staff organise this for the pupils, which limits children's ability to think and plan for themselves. Nonetheless, children do widen their creativity as seen when exploring the textures of blobs of paint as they merged into each other on the paper. Here, children were delighted with the special, effect one saying "look, I've made a gorgeous mountain". Children enjoy playing in the outside playhouse, which has been carefully decorated to inspire the children to play imaginatively. Achievement and learning are satisfactory, due to the limitations of the accommodation, but teaching is good and enhances the children's spiritual and social skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well by Year 6, due to very good teaching and learning from Years 4 to 6
- Lack of joint planning and teaching for Year 2 pupils in different mixed age classes, results in unequal opportunities and prevents them from making better progress
- Speaking and listening skills are very well developed throughout the school
- Teachers' marking is good and there is good ongoing assessment
- Literacy skills are used well to support learning in other subjects
- Links with ICT are underdeveloped

Commentary

54. Standards by Year 2 are currently average overall. This represents satisfactory overall achievement and progress for pupils from Year 1 to year 2. Standards are currently well above average by Year 6, showing very good achievement as they move through the school.

55. Standards in national tests for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated in the recent past. This has mostly been due to significant differences in the ability ranges in the groups taking the tests. The school, has a higher than average proportion of pupils with SEN, who achieve equally as well as other pupils. In 2003, standards were above average by Year 6, currently they are well above average. This improvement is due to the development of writing skills, with more pupils reaching Level 5 than in past years. Added to this, this group of pupils has always been of high ability, as reflected in results when they took the Year 2 national tests.

56. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall; it is very good in Years 4 to 6. The school has had a major focus on improving the teaching of literacy since the last inspection. As a consequence the introduction of target setting, tracking of pupils' progress and very good support for pupils with special educational needs, teaching and learning are of a high standard.

57. Work seen during the inspection shows that older pupils achieve very well. This group also did very well when they were younger, from their Year 2 results in 2000. However, there have been changes in the organisation of pupils at the lower end of the school, which is currently resulting in steady progress and achievement, rather than consistently good progress.

58. Pupils throughout the school speak confidently and express themselves clearly. They listen attentively, both to their teachers and to each other. Good opportunities to develop these skills are provided through paired discussions, and role play, as in a Year 6 lesson where one pupil took on the role of Spike, a main character from the class text, and the rest of the class asked him open ended questions about his feelings, attitudes and reasons for his actions in the story. Pupils read well. They read aloud with confidence and good expression. Pupils use the Dewey reference system confidently when researching topics. Presentation of written work is neat and displays of younger pupils' work show some good examples of poetry, such as the Rain poems and springtime. Older pupils write well thought out and balanced arguments on themes such as pocket money for children, and whether the tobacco industry should be banned from advertising directed at young people. Work such as this, plays an important part in widening pupils' personal and social knowledge. These are good opportunities to further develop skills of all pupils, but particularly to extend those of higher ability.

59. Teachers and pupils share very good relationships and are enthusiastic about their work. Where teaching is very good, teachers have high expectations of the pupils, and plan their lessons well, with an appropriate variety of strategies to ensure very 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. They have good opportunities for redrafting and improving written work. Working in groups, Year 6 pupils wrote some very good descriptions to portray mystery and menace in their work on 'The Watertower'. However, in the younger mixed age classes, planning and direct teaching are insufficiently focused on the needs of Year 2 pupils; while standards are average, pupils are stronger overall in reading than writing. 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.

60. The subject is well led, with careful target setting, monitoring and tracking of progress leading to an improvement in standards by the end of Year 6. However, at the lower end of the school, there is insufficient monitoring of each year group to ensure equal opportunities for all and an improvement in standards for Year 2. There is an attractive library, which is well used by pupils. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in standards overall.

Literacy across the curriculum

61. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted well in other subjects. In history pupils discussed the differences between the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times and used inventories to examine the sort of food they ate. In geography they produced posters and wrote letters as part of their re-cycling awareness study. Literacy effectively supports pupils' spiritual, cultural, personal and social education. The sample of work seen showed only limited opportunities for pupils to use ICT skills to support their learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is overall **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good and standards of work are much higher than average by Year 6
- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- Planning for Year 2 is inconsistent to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities
- The arrangements for teaching pupils in similar ability groups for mental mathematics are helping to raise standards
- Pupils are keen to learn and do well in lessons
- Pupils' individual needs are catered for well and learning support assistants make good contributions

Commentary

62. Pupils achieve very well and by the end of Year 6 attain standards that are well above the expected levels. In 2003, standards were average by Year 6; currently they are well above average. This improvement is due to this group being very able overall and also because of the effect of the mental mathematical challenges and opportunities for pupils to solve problem using a range of different skills. More pupils are now reaching Level 5 than in past years. Teachers' methods and strategies are effective in stimulating pupils and inspiring them to enjoy their learning. The significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some classes are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants. Boys and girls respond and achieve equally well.

63. Standards in Year 2 vary from year to year according to the numbers of pupils with SEN. In the current Year 2, pupils were working at the level expected for their age and overall, their achievement is satisfactory. Planning by individual teachers is good but there is insufficient joint planning to ensure that all Year 2 pupils have the same opportunities.

64. Pupils in Years 4, 5, and 6 achieve very well. Throughout the school mental mathematics sessions are well organized and especially successful in Years 4 to 6. In these sessions, pupils are grouped according to their ability and work with a very skilled subject manager and other very knowledgeable staff. This enables the most able to be given challenging work and the less able to be fully involved by working in small groups. Standards in Year 6 are well above those expected because of the significant number of pupils working confidently at the higher Level 5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to set targets and are helped to overcome any learning difficulties as a result of the good support they receive in lessons.

65. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The main strengths of all teachers is the lesson planning. Tasks are well matched to the needs of the pupils within each class and lessons are well prepared with the necessary resources. Pupils respond well to the direct teaching of mental calculations and basic mathematical skills, including solving problems. They are encouraged to choose their preferred method of working and share and explain their reasoning. The good pace and lively teaching motivate the pupils and they respond well by working hard. Teaching is particularly good in Year 6, where pupils enjoy the systematic progressively demanding work and, as a result, they are keen to learn and contribute their ideas. Marking is very good with constructive comments; mistakes are corrected and praise is used appropriately. However, there is little evidence that the pupils respond to this good marking by doing corrections.

66. The subject is well led and managed. Through the good assessment, pupils' needs are identified and additional support given to groups of pupils including the most able. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Satisfactory opportunities are planned to use mathematics as part of the work in information and communication technology. Pupils enjoy this method of working and are keen to talk about what they have learned. Mathematics is used in other subjects; for example, they use graphs and tables to record temperatures in geography.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high by Year 6 and pupils of all abilities achieve well
- Teaching and learning are good overall
- The planning for Year 2 is not as rigorous as for other years
- Links with numeracy and literacy are good
- Good leadership by co-ordinator is a significant factor in why the school has made good improvement since 1998
- The use of ICT to support the pupils' learning is not fully developed

Commentary

68. Standards are average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. This shows significant improvement in the standards noted for older pupils since the last inspection, although they are not quite as high in Year 2. Standards are currently much higher than those of the 2003 national tests. This is because of the high general ability of the pupils in the current Year 6 class, but more importantly, because the school has worked to improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Years 4 to 6. In the past, few pupils reached really high Level 5 standards in their work, but this has improved rapidly, due to better planning and opportunities for pupils to work on scientific investigations for themselves. Achievement is good overall and very good in Years 4 to 6. It is good in Year 1 and satisfactory in Year 2 for the reasons noted below.

69. Overall, teaching and learning are good, which reflects the development of the curriculum and assessment procedures. Very good teaching and learning, in Years 4 to 6, enable pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to quickly grasp new and complex ideas, which lead to good achievement for the wide range of abilities in the classes. Throughout the school, pupils make effective use of literacy and numeracy skills to support their learning, although links with ICT are underdeveloped. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective use of resources, as seen when pupils in Year 1 explored the habitats of creatures in the wild area, using magnifying apparatus. On returning to their class they used the library and CD ROMS to widen their understanding, for example, about foxes.

70. In Years 4 to 6, very good teaching empowers pupils to think for themselves and conduct many experiments. The marking of their work and the lessons seen, really focus pupils' attention on explaining how and why things happen. For example, they confidently organised their resources to find out if and why electricity flows through different materials. From this, Year 4 and 5 pupils talked about the effectiveness of different conductors and insulator. In Year 6, pupils regularly design their own experiments. For example, about how electricity affects magnets and how air has weight. They know that it is sometimes important to repeat experiments to ensure a fair test.

71. Pupils of all ages show a keen interest in science; they quickly learn and understand new things and apply themselves to their work, often showing very good independent and collaborate working. Sometimes, the work in their books, although accurate, is messy. For example, often pupils do not draw lines carefully when making a table or chart. Learning is enriched by visits, including a residential trip to Norfolk and presentations by the life bus, the Astrodome and a visiting theatre company.

72. Overall, there has been much work to widen curriculum opportunities so that pupils from Year 3 onwards have build up skills and experiences from year to year. While Year 2 pupils reach average standards the planning and support given to this group does not focus enough on how to give all pupils similar opportunities. For example, some Year 2 pupils worked on habitats, while other Year 2 pupils in the other class followed rigid instructions about how to make an experiment to explore how light, water and air impact on the growth of cress seeds.

73. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual development. The curriculum includes work on being healthy, including drugs awareness. In one lesson, in the wild area pupils were excited to find 2 dead rabbits and numerous chicken feathers. This resulted in much sensitivity and useful discussion about, life, death and survival.

74. There are good links between science, mathematics and design and technology, as evident in pupils' designs and making of motorised toys, which required much problem solving, measuring and investigation into circuits. Pupils have measured the variation in shoe sizes and hand spans according to the age and height. For this they drew charts and graphs.

75. The leadership and management of the subject are both good. Firm action has been taken to deal with the weaknesses noted in 1998. Furthermore, there has been improvement in developing better links with literacy, and by widening opportunities to do practical investigations and use more complex scientific language.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall provision is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is not enough direct teaching of ICT and this lowers pupils' achievement
- The accommodation creates difficulties for teachers to teach specific skills to large groups of pupils
- The number of computers in each class means that each pupil has only limited time to develop skills
- Skilled teaching assistants give good support to pupils
- Pupils are keen to learn new skills and work very well independently

Commentary

76. Standards of attainment are below national expectations by the end of Year 6. Pupils are currently working with limited software and only two computers in most classes. Even with the additional three laptops, they are not able to cover the recommended areas of study and achievement is unsatisfactory overall. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use a computer to analyse, evaluate and interpret data. Equipment for sensing and control is not available for pupils to use as part of their work. They are more competent in aspects of communicating information through word processing and by Year 6 have limited experience of spreadsheets, entering data into databases and using the digital camera.

77. Overall achievement is unsatisfactory as learning and progress are too patchy from year to year. This is mostly because there is insufficient teaching of new skills as set lessons within the weekly timetable, with is resulting in unsatisfactory learning overall. By the end of Year 2, a few pupils use the mouse well to select from an on-screen menu, to 'drag and drop' screen icons and to instruct things to happen on the screen. They can select colour and fill when creating pictures and change the colour, size and font of text. By the end of Year 6, pupils can use the Internet to search for data to support work in other subjects. However, they do not send or reply to e-mails. Although many have the facilities to do this at home, this is not developed at school. Pupils' books and folders show that they use ICT in word-processing and for graphics.

78. During the inspection, computers were used appropriately in a small number of lessons, for example through research in science and to support numeracy. Where computers were used, pupils were working independently from instructions or helped by learning support assistants. However, no specific ICT lessons were observed, as they were not on the timetable during the inspection. Pupils demonstrate a very keen interest in the subject and have a very good capacity to work independently. This enables pupils to use their IT skills in a range of subjects. Pupils show very good concentration and an ability to persevere and overcome difficulties by helping each other.

79. The headteacher has just taken on the role of subject manager and has identified the areas for improvement. One of the main reasons that work in some aspects of ICT has not been covered is lack of space and resources. The technician from the secondary school comes into the school once a week and works with pupils and helps teachers, which is a good initiative. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been too slow, which is unsatisfactory and reflects insufficiently rigorous leadership to raise standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. The school makes satisfactory use of information communication technology across the curriculum. For example, in English pupils use their word processing skills to write stories and factual articles and in mathematics they practise their addition and subtraction skills through a number of interesting programs. The school is just exploring how to use the microscope linked to the computer in science, and in art and design, programs are used to produce patterns and pictures. There is insufficient software to support music.

HUMANITIES

81. During the inspection no geography lessons were planned or seen and it was only possible to see one history lesson. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils and looked at past work. There is insufficient evidence to judge provision, standards and teaching and learning.

82. In the one **history** lesson seen in the mixed Year 4 and 5 class, teaching and pupils' achievement were very good because the lesson was made very interesting. Pupils used different inventories to find out about the contrasting lives of a rich Yeomen and poor widow in Tudor times. The curriculum plan and sample of work seen, shows that some Year 2 and 3 activities are not always suitably planned to match to the level of understanding of the pupils. For example, they have evaluated and listed the political reasons behind the divorce of Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII, which is very difficult for Year 2 pupils to grasp. The best teaching and learning is rooted in the use of artefacts and other quality resources; overall, these are in short supply to support pupils' understanding of past cultures.

83. **Religious education** was not part of this inspection as the school is church aided.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. The main focus areas for the inspection were English, mathematics, science and ICT. Thus creative aspects did not receive as much inspection time and this is why the quality of teaching and learning and provision overall are not judged in each subject. One music lesson was seen and the singing club. Two PE lessons were observed. In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their work and held discussions with teachers and sampled pupils' work. No art or design and technology lessons were seen.

85. In **art**, inspectors looked at wall displays and pupils' books. These showed that pupils learn about a few artists such as van Gogh and Sergeant and they have drawn cartoon pictures in the style of Moulton. Evidence from the displays and work seen indicate that there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' artistic skills and widen links with their cultural development.

86. Limited information was gathered on **design and technology**. However, from displays, discussion with pupils and evaluation of samples of work, pupils have a good idea about how to plan, design and make items using a range of materials. Much of the work seen in Years 4 to 6 was of an above average standard. Overall, the work indicates good achievement in designing and making skills by Year 6. Little work from other years was evident. Pupils, in Years 4, 5 and 6, clearly have opportunities to think about things in an individual and creative way. For example, in the mixed Year 4 and 5 class, pupils designed and made their own small chairs, which are well finished and highly creative. Pupils confidently talked about how they had made them; what changes they made; what problems they faced and how they resolved them. Furthermore, they were also keen to explain how different fabrics, such as velvet, caused problems. The work in pupils' books shows that teachers carefully mark their designs, so that pupils are encouraged to develop their ideas and give explanations for things. When making secret boxes in Year 6, pupils explained why they had chosen certain materials and fabrics to give a tortoise shell effect. Links with science are well established, including younger pupils exploring texture, taste and the smell of tortilla, pitta, Rye and naan breads, when making sandwiches. Activities make a positive contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, including how to design and make a temporary shelter for an outside school event. The subject manager is holding the post on a temporary basis. There is a clear action plan, but monitoring of teaching, to see how pupils are learning and links with ICT are underdeveloped.

87. The school is working steadily to widen **music** opportunities with the use of a visiting musical presentation company. There is a good range of clubs for all ages including singing and recorder. Pupils enjoy performing at the church and in festivals and a Welsh brass band trio visited the school. The policy for music does not give information about how music can enrich pupils' cultural education. Moreover, the school is only just beginning to develop resources to support the multicultural aspect of the curriculum. Links with ICT are very limited. If pupils are especially

talented, they work with other pupils at another local school, where specialist teachers have the skills to help these pupils to achieve their potential. Additionally, pupils have the opportunity to learn the piano. There are no formal assessment procedures in place for music, so teachers do not know what skills pupils have and how much progress they are making from year to year. The school follows a scheme of work, which helps pupils to develop skills and knowledge. Singing, including hymns such as 'All in an Easter Garden', were sung tunefully and enrich pupils' spiritual awareness.

88. Only one lesson was seen in **PE**. Pupils practising hockey skills made satisfactory progress despite the very limited space in which they had to work, however, the teacher had good skills and with better facilities the pupils may have made even better progress. The school suffers from poor facilities for physical education and these restrict the further development of their skills. Pupils do well in swimming and nearly all achieve the required standard by the time they leave. The school's records show that many achieve good standards in a variety of swimming skills. Parents play a very valuable part in helping with swimming lessons. The good range of activities after school includes football, which is open to all pupils, netball and cricket for the older pupils. The good links with local football and cricket clubs provide expert coaching in skills and strategies. Older pupils experience outdoor adventurous activities on their residential visits.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

89. Although only one lesson was seen, discussions with the pupils and evaluation of work, suggests that the school has maintained **good** opportunities for personal, social and health development since the last inspection. The school's prospectus clearly identifies personal and social education as important. It is interwoven within the teaching of different subjects, such as science, physical education and English and is supported by moral and spiritual experiences.

90. In the one lesson seen, Year 6 pupils discussed occasions when making the right decision was important. The well directed lesson gave the pupils a good opportunity to develop an insight into people's feelings. Pupils talked at length about how to face difficult decisions, such as changing schools. Here, very good links with literacy enabled pupils to analyse a commercially published letter written by a disenchanted pupil, who was unhappy at her new school. The pupils contrasted their positive and negative views about the way the girl felt and then, they responded by writing replies to express their ideas about how to deal with anxiety and become more positive. This good lesson enabled pupils to explore their emotions.

91. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to work and support each other. Pupils are involved in successful fund raising for the local hospice and other national charities and this improves their understanding of those who are less fortunate. The school plans to widen the scope for pupils to be involved in decision-making about the school's improvement.

92. The success of the school's personal, social and health education programme is reflected in the very good attitudes and relationships evident in the school. Children's personal development is carefully monitored in the Foundation Stage, where many informal notes help adults to form a big picture of the progress that individuals make during the term. Overall, pupils follow a scheme of work and have regular lessons in PHSE, which includes work on drug awareness and sex education. One of the best features of social education is the way in which pupils grow in confidence to speak publicly. In Years 4 and 5 there is a rolling programme called the 'Three Minute Talk'. Children volunteer to plan and give a talk to the class on a theme of their choice. This is very popular and has covered such things as coal mining, teddy bears and archery. All most all pupils have taken part and this has given some pupils immense confidence to read extracts at church, including reading poems at a grandmother's funeral.

93. The school has created a small and attractive kitchen area with great support from parents. This is being used well to widen pupils' knowledge about healthy food and balanced diets. For example, many had little idea about how to make a healthy sandwich before doing this at school.

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	4
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	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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