

# INSPECTION REPORT

## CHILHAM, ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chilham

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118665

Headteacher: Mrs Gail Spragg

Lead inspector: Mrs E W D Gill

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 November 2003

Inspection number: 255783

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:	99
School address:	School Hill Chilham Canterbury Kent
Postcode:	CT4 8DE
Telephone number:	01227 730442
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Richard Bartley
Date of previous inspection:	July 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Chilham St. Mary's is a small primary school. It is located in a beautiful historic village that is on the route of the Pilgrims' Way to St Augustine's Shrine in Canterbury. Once a year, pilgrims sleep in the medieval school hall. Only a handful of pupils live in the village and most travel from a number of villages in the area as well as from Ashford and the outskirts of Canterbury. Most pupils are white and of British heritage but there are also a few pupils of European and mixed race families and a few pupils are from Traveller families. The attainment on entry to the school is generally below average, although this varies and the overall attainment on entry of the present reception group of children is well below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (mainly learning difficulties, communication or behavioural difficulties) is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs is average. Since the last inspection the number of pupils on roll has increased, and the school has improved its accommodation by providing a fourth classroom for the children in the Foundation Stage (reception class). The number of pupils who have joined or left the school other than in the first year is high, although the reasons for leaving are due to families moving house or moving back to their country of origin. The number of teachers who have left or joined the school in the last two years is also high but the headteacher and governing body have been very successful in recruiting a stable and effective team. In 2001 the school received the Healthy Schools Award and, in 2002, the Investor in People Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17766	Eira Gill	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, music, Foundation Stage, special educational needs
8991	Pamela Goldsack	Lay inspector	
31029	Peter Thrussell	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, geography, history, physical education, religious education

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

Chilham, St Mary's Primary School is a **good** school where the staff, governors, parents and pupils all work together effectively. Despite a high turnover of teachers, teaching and learning are good and pupils are making better than expected progress. All groups of pupils achieve well. The curriculum is enriched by effective use of the school's location. Leadership and management are good and have maintained standards since the last inspection. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching of music is very effective and contributes to the very good spiritual development of the pupils.
- Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, is very good and results in very good attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- Links with the community are very strong and enhance pupils' learning opportunities significantly.
- Pupils are looked after well and are given good support, and teachers use information about pupils' progress effectively to plan lessons.
- The school needs to focus even more on developing the pupils' spoken vocabulary and language skills.
- The teaching of mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is not as effective as in English and science.
- The evident skills of the teaching assistants and special needs teacher could be used even more effectively by the school in these mixed age classes.

Since the last inspection there has been good improvement and strengths have been maintained. The few key issues from the last inspection, such as recording the progress of the pupils, have been tackled successfully. The governing body now has a more pro-active role in the school, individual governors visit frequently and the brochure meets statutory requirements. The school has been successful in developing and enriching the curriculum further. Pupils' personal qualities in the aspects of spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are now very good. Relationships with parents have also improved and the information they receive from the school gives them a much better idea of how their children are progressing. A fourth classroom has been built as well as adapting part of the building for a computer suite.

### **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	E*	D	D
Mathematics	B	E	D	E
Science	E	E*	C	C

*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.*

*Caution is needed in interpreting data because the numbers of pupils in a year group are smaller than national averages, and results can thus fluctuate from year to year.*

**Achievement is good for all pupils across the school.** Although the school's performance in national tests in 2002 was very low in English and mathematics, this was related to the very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in that particular year group. Results in 2003 show an improvement, although pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as good as in English and science when compared to similar schools, and this is related to weaker teaching in the subject

in Years 3 to 6. Inspectors found that standards in Years 3 to 6 are average in English and science and below average in mathematics. In other subjects, standards are average in information and communication technology (ICT), history and religious education; in music, standards are above average. By the end of the reception year, most children attain below the goals they are expected to reach in the areas of learning, except in their physical development, where they will reach expectations. In Years 1 to 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average although the higher attaining pupils are achieving well. In science, ICT, history, music and religious education standards are average.

Pupils' **personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social development, are very good overall.** Their cultural development is **good.** Pupils' behaviour is very good overall in lessons and around the school and in assemblies, pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils enjoy coming to school, have very good attitudes to learning and enjoy very good relationships with each other and all members of staff. They are very willing to take responsibility and to be part of a community. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school.** In reception, assessment of children's progress is very good and planning is effective. In the Year 1 and 2 class, teaching is consistently good; effective methods, good organisation and a lively style are used to help pupils who are still struggling with basic literacy skills, particularly in speaking and writing, to learn well in lessons. Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 overall although, in mathematics, a few aspects of teaching need improving. In music, teaching is very good. All teachers insist on good behaviour and the use of homework is effective in English and mathematics.

The curriculum is enriched and good levels of care help pupils to feel secure and happy in school. Effective links with parents and very good links with the community and the pre-school have a positive effect on achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher is energetic, purposeful and involves the whole school in providing the best education for the children. Teachers are conscientious in fulfilling their many responsibilities. Governors are effective, work closely with the school and ensure that all legal requirements are very well met.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents' views of the school are very favourable. The pupils' response to the questionnaire showed that they are very happy with all aspects of the school. In discussion, they expressed very positive views about the school, their teachers and lessons.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Provide even more planned and focused opportunities that will increase pupils' spoken vocabulary and develop their skills in spoken language;
- In mathematics, increase the teachers' knowledge and expertise in delivering the subject, particularly in Years 3 to 6;
- When planning lessons, ensure that the teaching assistants' evident skills and educational training are used to support pupils even further in their learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

The achievement of pupils of all abilities and from different backgrounds in the Foundation Stage (reception) and in Years 1 to 6 is good. In Year 2, standards are below average in English and mathematics and average in ICT and religious education. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain average standards in English, science, ICT, history and religious education. In mathematics, standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory. In music, standards are above average and achievement is very good.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make good progress in reception; the quality of teaching and learning is effective and meets their individual needs.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well in Years 1 to 6 owing to good teaching overall.
- Pupils achieve very well in music because of the very good teaching and provision for the subject.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make better than expected progress because they receive valuable support from the experienced assistants.
- Achievement in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is not as good as in English and science.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children enter the reception class with below average attainment overall although this varies. This year, the group's attainment is well below average. Over half of the 15 children will not be five until the summer term. A few have difficulty identifying colours and very few can write their first name. As a result of very good induction procedures as well as effective planning and teaching, the children are beginning to make progress and achievement is good. By the end of reception, the attainment of most children will be below the level expected in the areas of learning of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development; in physical development they are on course to meet expectations.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.4 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	11.8 (13.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.6 (15.0)	16.3 (16.5)

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

2. As a result of the variable ability of different groups of children and the small number of children in each year group, results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 need to be treated with caution. In Year 2, inspectors found that pupils attain below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and the achievement of all pupils is satisfactory. However, the higher attaining pupils achieve well. Pupils attain average standards in science, ICT, history, music and religious education despite their immature language skills that affect the recording of their work. This is good achievement, an improvement from previous years and is due to the consistently effective teaching.



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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (23.0)	27.0 (26.8)
mathematics	25.6 (23.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.8 (23.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. It is difficult to compare the school's trend in performance with national trends due to small numbers but, from the data provided, standards of attainment have improved overall in English, mathematics and science in the national tests at the end of Year 6. In science, almost half of the pupils attained above average standards compared to all schools nationally. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the present Year 6 are achieving well in several subjects. Pupils will attain average standards in English, science, ICT, history and religious education and below average in mathematics. In music, pupils will attain above average standards. These standards have been broadly maintained since the last inspection. The school's analysis of pupils' progress shows that the pupils with special educational needs made better than expected progress in the national tests in 2003 due to the effective support they receive from the teaching assistants and specialist teacher.
4. In mathematics, the pupils are unlikely to reach average standards by the end of Year 6. The teaching of mathematics during the inspection and over time is satisfactory. A few of the teachers have recently graduated and have either not received the numeracy training or are in the very early days of putting into practice what they have learned. Although the achievement of pupils in lessons is sound, the lack of training in how to teach the subject is affecting the pace of lessons, and this results in a lack of challenge particularly in the opening sessions.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral and social development is very good, and their cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and other activities.
- Behaviour in lessons and at play is very good and there are no exclusions.
- Behaviour in assemblies is excellent due to outstanding planning and organisation.
- Relationships between pupils are very good and are underpinned by the school's very positive ethos and care for individuals.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive in good time for the start of the day. The youngest children are happy to come into their classroom and leave their parents and carers happily. Pupils' punctuality is good. Their attendance is just below the national figure because a few families take holidays during term despite the school's best efforts to dissuade them. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	5.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

6. Children in the reception classes achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development. Although several of the children lack confidence when responding to questions, they are well integrated into school life and staff understand their individual needs. Children feel safe and comfortable in school. Their behaviour is very good and children are almost too quiet. They enjoy and participate well in the interesting range of learning opportunities their teachers provide.
7. Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and a positive approach to discipline to which pupils respond well. They understand the difference between right and wrong and are involved in making the classroom rules that help them to learn. Pupils' behaviour in assemblies is exemplary because they are given opportunities to contribute meaningfully. The pupils and parents report that bullying is not a problem and if there are any incidents, the headteacher will deal with them very promptly. The pupils are happy to report any problems to an adult and are confident that they will be resolved well. The very small number of problems that occur on the restricted playground (all incidents recorded in the accident book) is another indication of very good behaviour.
8. The pupils want to learn and do their best, regardless of their particular needs or individual background. They listen attentively and enjoy their learning. When lessons are lively and stimulating, pupils respond with real enthusiasm and joy in their work across all areas of the curriculum. Good examples include a Year 3 and 4 science lesson when pupils investigated the permeability of rocks, and a Year 5 and 6 music lesson on rhythmic notation and performance, where pupils' participation in and enjoyment of the tasks were particularly noteworthy.
9. Pupils are helpful to each other and show very caring qualities that they have learned from the headteacher and staff. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents reported that on entering the playground for the first time as new pupils, their children were approached by others to be included in their play. Pupils are very polite and considerate to one another and to visitors. They know the routines well and accept responsibilities such as delivering the registers and organising the hymn books in assemblies. Pupils respond very well to the school's provision and the older pupils, in particular, show maturity and an awareness of the strong community ethos.
10. The school is very successful in its stated aims to promote the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for cultural development is good. This is an improved aspect of the school. Pupils make the most of opportunities to reflect on human values and important issues in assemblies, circle time and during lessons, particularly in music. They display empathy for those in need and actively fundraise for local and national charities. Very good use is made of the parish church for Harvest Festival, Nativity services and the end of year leavers' service. Pupils' awareness of the issues surrounding such events is heightened within the inspiring atmosphere of this historically significant building. Pupils sing joyfully and individuals willingly lead collective worship with their own relevant and thoughtful prayers.

### Example of outstanding practice

**A very significant contribution is made to PSHE and the spiritual and social development of the pupils by the exemplary organisation of assemblies.**

A very significant contribution is made to PSHE and the spiritual and social development. Each day, the pupils are encouraged to contribute and think of a suitable prayer during the assembly; several are always eager to recite their prayer before the final hymn. In addition, once a week, there is a special assembly when a 'magic chair' is used for a specific pupil while other pupils and staff give positive feedback on how well the pupil is achieving in different subjects, or in their personal development. Each week, pupils from one of the four classes show their work and, every day, a number of pupils stand up and tell the school community how they have earned their certificates. On each occasion, the teachers ensure they praise individual pupils. This consistent approach to raising the pupils' self-esteem is having a significant impact on their personal development and, in particular, their confidence. There is a real family feeling on these occasions and the pupils singled out for praise positively glow, especially when they are sitting in the 'magic chair'.

11. Pupils are very well aware of the difference between right and wrong and clearly understand what is expected of them. The leadership of the school encourages the pupils to be responsible for deciding school and class rules and they all understand and accept them as fair. Pupils understand the importance of listening and they are very attentive towards adults and each other. Social development is greatly enhanced by many visits into the community where pupils represent the school well. The school council enables pupils to put forward their ideas about how the school can improve. Currently, school councillors are working with the PTFA regarding improvements to the playground. Pupils behave very responsibly and student councillors and school captains take their roles seriously. Assemblies enable pupils to wholeheartedly join in the celebration of each other's work and best efforts. Parents are pleased with the arrangements to promote pupils' maturity and independence.
12. The school's provision for the pupils' cultural development is good and multi-cultural awareness has improved since the last inspection. The very good links with the community impact on the pupils' achievement in this aspect and they are well aware of the rich historical significance of their village and its surroundings. Pupils understand the religious importance of Canterbury and also the Roman roots of their environs. The very good teaching of music and the pupils' experience in performances enhance their social and cultural development. There are several displays of ethnic and religious diversity and pupils study the world's leading faiths and know they are well represented throughout the country.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. The school provides a good curriculum that is enriched well. Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support are good. There are good links with parents and other schools and very good links with the community.

#### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is good in reception and in Years 1 to 6. Assessment in reception is very good, and in Years 1 to 6, it is good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour, which is very good.
- The teaching of mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is not as effective as in English and science.
- The teaching of music is very good and leads to very good achievement by the end of Year 6.
- The teaching assistants give valuable support but could be used more effectively.
- An even stronger focus is needed in planning to develop the pupils' speaking skills further.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	16	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. The headteacher has worked hard to ensure that, despite the high turnover of teachers, the overall quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. Parents praised the effective teamwork of the staff. Teaching and learning are good overall throughout the school and contribute to pupils' good achievement. In reception, the quality of assessment is very good and results in all pupils being given work that matches their needs. The high proportion of adults to children gives opportunities for quality learning time during the school day. In Years 1 and 2, teaching was never less than good and, in music, teaching was very good. Music lessons are taught in Years 1 to 6 by an exceptionally well qualified class teacher. Lively introductions to all lessons and very good organisation in Years 1 and 2 ensured that pupils were immediately engaged and concentrated on their tasks. The well organised activities in all subjects are mainly practical and suit the pupils' needs admirably; pupils are encouraged to work in pairs and this helps to develop their speaking and listening skills when they give feedback to the rest of the group. This emphasis on practical work and discussion motivates the pupils and they develop very good attitudes to learning. A few of the very young pupils in Year 1, who show immaturity in their language development, have lower levels of concentration than the older and higher attaining pupils. However, their behaviour does not deteriorate and they are well supported by the teaching assistants.
14. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good overall. They are good in English and science and very good in music. In mathematics, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan all their lessons in detail and include an assessment of the pupils' previous learning. The different needs of pupils of all abilities are fully taken into account and the effective use of teaching assistants ensures that the pupils are given good support in lessons. There are occasions, however, when the use of assistants could be even more effective, when they could give more focused support to specific groups of pupils in these mixed age classes. Very good management of behaviour ensures that most pupils are on task and work productively. In mathematics, most lessons observed were not delivered using the recommended numeracy strategies, as teachers have either had only very recent training, or have had no training. A few lessons, particularly in the opening and final sessions, lacked pace and quickfire questioning and resulted in pupils not being challenged to higher levels of thinking. This is in direct contrast to music where the inspiring opening sessions immediately engaged the pupils, who responded very well and worked productively with great enthusiasm.
15. Good improvement has been made in establishing assessment procedures since the last inspection. The school uses the results of national and optional end-of-year testing well to monitor pupils' progress in English and mathematics. They are used to set targets from which teachers plan, and pupils work towards. In science, procedures are not yet fully in place. In all other subjects teachers record how well pupils achieve key learning objectives, and use this information when planning lessons. Lesson plans clearly show that teachers assess pupils' progress and adapt future planning accordingly to the particular needs of pupils. In literacy and numeracy, pupils are set short-term targets, which are written in their books. Many pupils know their targets. However, marking does not always take account of these targets, or of particular learning objectives, when informing pupils how well they have done or what they need to do to improve, except in science in Years 5 and 6, where marking is good. Pupils are expected to take note of the teacher's remarks, for example, to expand on their conclusions.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is good throughout the school. The wide range of visits, visitors, the inclusion of French as an additional subject and the very effective use of the school's unique location, contributes to the rich and varied curriculum. There is a good range of out of school activities and clubs. Good use is made of the limited accommodation and resources are good overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children in reception are provided with a wide and varied range of activities.
- Provision for music has improved since the last inspection and is contributing to very good achievement.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and for those from different backgrounds; their progress is good.
- Very good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE), with very good links to assemblies, contributes to the pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The establishment of the Rural Action Zone is providing good links with other schools and is helping to widen the curriculum.

## Commentary

16. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the curriculum has been developed and enriched significantly and has improved since the last inspection. Due to the turnover of teachers and the knock-on effect on subject managers, the headteacher has worked successfully to provide good planning for the long and medium term for mixed age classes in most subjects. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. The teaching of French is also included and this contributes well to the pupils' cultural development. The school uses national guidance to plan units of work and this usually works well. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned, taking good account of the areas of learning and national guidance. Teachers have adapted the National Literacy Strategy successfully to meet their pupils' needs and their approach to the teaching of writing has led to a greater focus in different subjects. Links are developing between subjects that help to make learning more interesting and relevant and a particularly good example is the local studies unit of work in the summer term that link geography and history.
17. There is a good curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE), and citizenship, and opportunities are identified and used effectively.
18. The headteacher has initiated the setting up of a Rural Action Zone with six other schools and the joint activities linked with different areas of the curriculum have already begun to have an impact on widening the pupils' opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are given work that is well matched to their needs and teaching assistants support them individually and in small groups effectively. The school has a strong commitment to the Early Literacy Strategy and other similar systems designed to improve pupils' literacy skills, and the good progress pupils make helps them to benefit from the whole curriculum.
19. The number of extra-curricular activities provided by the school is good. There are several clubs organised after school or at lunchtime that enhance the curriculum in music and physical education. All pupils are encouraged and included in clubs and the attendance is very good. Almost one third of the pupils in school are in the choir, for example. In addition, the many visits and visitors that are included widen the range of experience of the pupils as well as the residential visit that takes place each year. Very good use is made of the locality and the community to enhance learning in different subjects. Parents indicated their satisfaction for the number of extra-curricular activities provided for their children.

20. The school makes good use of its limited accommodation, drawing on local sports facilities for physical education. The recent, imaginative modification of an air-raid shelter provides good accommodation for the reception class both inside and outside, and the new computer suite has improved the provision for ICT significantly. The resources available for teaching the pupils in all subjects of the curriculum are good overall.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is good. The involvement of the pupils in the school's work and development is good. There is good provision for seeking their views and acting upon them.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The systems to ensure health and safety are effective and followed consistently.
- Pupils have very good relationships with the adults in the school.
- Pupils have good access to effective, well-informed support, advice and guidance.
- Arrangements for the induction of the reception and new pupils are very good.

### **Commentary**

21. Regular risk assessments of the site are carried out by the headteacher and governing body. They are acutely aware of the limitations this historic building presents to those who are responsible for its upkeep and this is very evident in the minutes of the governors' meetings. The systems in place to ensure pupils' health and safety throughout the day are effective and followed consistently. These have improved since the last inspection. Child protection arrangements are good and members of staff are regularly updated about procedures in this aspect of care. Pupils are well supervised as they move around the different buildings of the site to meet together for assemblies or for their lunch. The school promotes healthy living through a comprehensive programme of personal and social education. During the day and at lunchtime, trained members of staff care sympathetically for pupils who require first aid or prescribed medication. The school has close links with outside support agencies and professionals are called upon as necessary.
22. Staff know pupils very well and give good support, advice and guidance based on thorough monitoring of pupils' academic and personal achievements. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Induction arrangements are very good. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with each other and all members of staff. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and, in discussion, a high percentage of pupils confirmed that they feel very confident to go a specific adult in the school if they have a concern. Pupils are aware of their personal targets in English and mathematics and refer to them regularly. This small, close-knit community provides a nurturing environment for all pupils. Displays highlight pupils' own work and assemblies celebrate their best efforts or help pupils to get to know each other even better.
23. The very good arrangements for the induction of new pupils begin during the summer term before entry. Meetings with parents and visits ensure that each pupil is well known and familiar with the surroundings when they begin school. The new pre-school playgroup that was initiated by the headteacher has direct links with the school, although these have not yet had time to impact on standards. Pupils who join the school at different times of the year are made to feel welcome by the whole community and team up with another pupil to initiate new friendships. The school council is an effective forum for pupils to put forward their ideas about improving the school. At their suggestion, special curricular days in ICT and design and technology were organised to reward the pupils for accumulating class stamps for good behaviour.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and other schools are good. Links with the community are very good and links with other schools are good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has been pro-active in setting up a Rural Action Zone and this collaboration with other schools is having an impact on the achievement of pupils.
- Parents are provided with very good information about school life and how well their children are doing.
- Very good procedures are in place to deal with any concerns or complaints.
- The school has very good links with the pre-school group.

### Commentary

24. The school is well regarded by its parents and the partnership with them is good. Parents reported at the pre-inspection meeting that the headteacher's response to any problem they experience is immediate and caring. Both the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are informative and fully meet requirements. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when the brochure did not meet statutory requirements. Pupils' end-of-year reports are very well written and provide clear information about how well pupils are achieving in each subject. High quality, regular newsletters from the headteacher help keep parents fully informed about school activities. Parents are informed about the curriculum their children will be studying and extra information, such as how mathematics will be taught in a particular year, is also distributed. Parents reported that they found this booklet particularly helpful. All parents sign the home school partnership agreement. The quality of information provided for parents has improved since the last inspection. A number of parents and members of the community volunteer to help in school on a regular basis; they provide valuable help with reading, gardening and in the library. The 'Friends of Chilham' support the school through fundraising and social events.
25. There is good provision for seeking the opinions of parents. Parents' views are actively sought during consultation evenings and through occasional surveys. Reading diaries are a very useful means of communication between the teachers and parents. The school has consulted parents about its concern regarding the difficulties about parking of cars outside the school in the very narrow road but, so far, the results of its survey regarding a 'walking bus' are inconclusive.
26. The school's links with the community are very good and have been maintained since the last inspection. The wide range of visitors to the school and the range of activities extend pupils' learning very well. School assemblies are led regularly by the vicar and these links are made secure by frequent visits to the historic church and castle to extend religious education and art. The village and school buildings are important resources and are studied in geography and history. The school choir performs at local schools, homes for the elderly and concerts in the county. The headteacher is keenly aware that this small, rural school needs to be pro-active in extending activities for its pupils. With that in mind, she founded the Rural Action Zone. This initiative has widened the pupils' learning opportunities when they take part in projects such as days when all Year 6 pupils get together and work through a variety of activities. This has already had an impact on pupils' personal development when they work collaboratively with pupils from other rural schools. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefited from participating in a 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds' two-day event in partnership with the other member schools earlier this term. As part of their English curriculum, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 collaborate with the local radio station and report on school events each week.
27. A significant amount of the funding necessary to construct the new computer suite came from parents, governors, staff and the community. When not in use by pupils this attractive, new

facility is used by members of the community enrolled on computer courses. The established links with ten secondary schools provide a good transition for Year 6 pupils although the number of schools involved with transfer is very time consuming for the headteacher at this time of year, when parents are electing for places for their children.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. In this small school, all staff are key leaders and most are good managers of their many subject responsibilities. The management and governance of the school is good. The headteacher, supported by members of the governing body, has been successful in guiding the school through a difficult period of staffing changes.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has developed very good relationships with all members of the school community and local community.
- The management of special educational needs is good and results in pupils achieving well.
- The management of music is very good.
- The management of the Foundation Stage is good.
- The school has been very successful in ensuring there is very good inclusive practice in all aspects of its work.

### **Commentary**

28. The headteacher is energetic and tireless in her pursuit of high standards and stability of teaching staff. She is the lynchpin of the school, is a good role model and endeavours to include all the teaching staff in most management decisions. The headteacher's vision for the school is based on creating an effective team of teachers and assistants as well as continuing the very good relationships with the governing body, the pupils, their parents and members of the local community. The new teachers have been inducted well by the school and have already shown an ability to manage most of their subjects effectively. The management of music provision by the headteacher is very good and results in a high proportion of pupils who can play a range of instruments well and sing joyfully. The management of the Foundation Stage is good and the children are making good progress in well resourced accommodation. The headteacher has played a leading role in putting into place an effective and enriched curriculum to meet the demands of mixed age classes and to use the unique historic locality well. The headteacher and all staff have been successful in creating a learning environment where pupils from different backgrounds and abilities can succeed and achieve well.
29. The management of provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good. Owing to the very good links with the pre-school and outside agencies, individual needs are identified early and the pupils are tracked carefully to ensure they are progressing appropriately. Professionals from other agencies are invited into the school to focus thoroughly on the pupils' needs. The school has a very strong commitment to ensure that all are fully included in all lessons and activities while having their particular needs met. Parents indicated their complete trust in the provision for their children.
30. Strategic planning is good and focuses on achievable but challenging targets that are linked well with the performance management strategy and continuing professional development of staff. The plan identifies success criteria that strive to improve standards while linking well with the budget. Individual action plans for the core subjects as well as special educational needs have had an impact on raising achievement but the weaknesses identified by the inspection team in mathematics had not been identified as priorities for improvement. Monitoring of pupils' results in the end-of-year tests and teachers' planning are good and, as a result, weaknesses in the pupils' outcomes have been followed up and identified in future planning. Teaching has been monitored in most subjects and any weaknesses identified are fed back to the teachers.



31. In order to improve the delivery of the curriculum, lunchtime has been shortened in Years 3 to 6 to fit in an additional lesson after break in the mornings. This decision has improved the achievement of pupils particularly in the foundation subjects. The headteacher and governors have ensured that continuity of teaching has been as smooth as possible by employing qualified teachers already working in school as teaching assistants or specialist special educational needs teachers.
32. Financial management and administration of the school are good. The priorities in the school improvement plan guide the setting of the budget, which is carefully monitored throughout the year. The administrative officer has efficient systems for financial control and keeps the headteacher and governors informed from month to month. As a result, the curriculum is well resourced. The school applied for government funding to match their own funding to provide the ICT suite. These factors have had a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	260,896	Balance from previous year	24,262
Total expenditure	271,794	Balance carried forward to the next	13,364
Expenditure per pupil	2,691		

33. Although the expenditure per pupil is high compared to national averages, this is normal in a small school. In addition, the school is in a conservation area with several buildings that are listed and need constant attention. Any alterations or improvements are expensive because they must meet the necessary requirements for keeping the building in line with the conservation area. The high balance from the previous year is explained by the necessity to reserve funds to pay for the expensive ICT suite.
34. The governing body is an efficient and knowledgeable group. The effective work of the committees interacts very well with the school's development cycle, so that both are influential. Governors make difficult decisions when necessary, such as considering factors that will affect the school's budget, for example, the effect of providing the expensive ICT suite against completing payments for the new building. The minutes show that there are good links between the headteacher's initiatives, the committees and the main governing body meetings. The governing body ensures the school meets its statutory responsibilities very well and has clear aims and policies. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Its performance management policy operates effectively. All governors understand their role and any specific responsibilities. Through visiting the school frequently, governors give helpful support and have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

35. Provision in the Foundation Stage (reception year) is **good**. No judgements were made in the last inspection and, therefore, no comparisons can be made. Children's attainment on entry is variable and this year's intake has entered with well below average attainment. There are 15 children in the group and, during the inspection week, several were absent due to a virulent bug. The reception is well staffed with a full-time assistant who is very well qualified and, during the inspection, a student teacher was also present every day. In addition, a volunteer also helped out for some sessions. The accommodation for the reception class is good and was newly built in 2002. This is the second year the children have been in a classroom on their own rather than with the pupils in Years 1 and 2. Although the outside environment is small, it is sufficient for the number of children and is well resourced.
36. Teachers' planning is thorough, is very helpful and gives fine detail about the varying activities organised for each day. Very good assessment is made of the children's progress as they are involved in their activities and, for example, the teaching assistant often uses a digital camera to record progress.
37. Provision is well led by the experienced Foundation Stage manager who ensures that the accommodation is well resourced and used effectively. The curriculum, both indoors and outdoors, provides an appropriately wide range of activities that are matched to the children's needs. All adults manage the children well and give good care and support and very good relationships are evident.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good induction procedures ensure that the children settle quickly into school routines.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those from different backgrounds.

#### **Commentary**

38. Children are very well prepared for school, and have a clear induction programme that includes visits during the whole year before they enter the school. Every Wednesday afternoon, throughout the year, parents bring their pre-school children into the reception class for a story. There is a very good ratio of adults to children and this is having an effect on the improvement in confidence the children are showing. Several of the children entered with poor social skills and needed encouragement to play and explore the inside and outside learning environments. Half of the children will not have their fifth birthdays until the summer term. A few children are still very quiet and need encouragement to talk about what they are doing. Most children now play together in pairs or groups but there are still those who play on their own or who have difficulty talking about what they are doing. When getting dressed and undressed for physical activities, several children had difficulty knowing the best way to take their clothes off. They were very slow and a few seemed to forget what it was they were supposed to be doing. Teaching and learning are good in this area of learning. By the end of reception, the attainment of most children will be below the level expected in this area of learning. Nevertheless, their achievement is good.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching and learning of language and communication skills are evident.
- Good resources are used effectively to push learning forward.

### **Commentary**

39. Teaching and learning in this area of learning are good and, although the attainment of most children will be below the level expected by the end of the reception year, their achievement is good as they are making evident progress from their attainment on entry. Almost half of the children have been identified as having learning problems, and very few could attempt to write their first name when they started school. However, through constant encouragement and very focused teaching, a few children now attempt to copy and write down the initial letter of simple words. One or two have a go at writing simple words with the support of an adult. Most children now recognise their names because they are expected to find their own named chair at the beginning of each session. In the lesson observed, two children could remember the ending of the familiar story the teacher was using as a basis for several activities. Children were expected to jump up and shout 'popcorn' when the teacher voiced the initial letter of the animal on the card they were holding. Several children were confused and only one child threw herself into the spirit of the game by shouting 'popcorn' enthusiastically even when she was wrong. Others are still very shy and lack confidence in their own ability. The adults use everyday routines well to improve the children's speaking skills, for example, at snack time, individual children take turns in handing around the plate of fruit and are encouraged to ask other children what they would like in whole sentences. However, most need constant encouragement and tend to answer questions with one word or a very simple phrase, and a few are reluctant to speak.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good resources appeal to the children and are easily accessible.
- The good methods of teaching numeracy skills help the children to make good progress.
- Good use of computer programs develops counting skills.

### **Commentary**

40. The children, on entry to school, had a very short attention span and none of them could count. As a result of good teaching and learning, the children can now sit for several minutes and one or two have learned to recognise and count numbers more than ten. The children learn to move small objects to one side while they count them carefully. One child counted up to eight objects accurately without touching them. A few children used a numeracy program on the computer but several could not match five dots on a domino to the numeral. The well equipped pretend café gives the children opportunities to use the till and count out plastic money. Good planning in this session ensured that all the children were able to become involved in numeracy activities. Children are well supported by adults when they model numbers using plasticine and playdough, or draw them in sand. A few pupils are still unsure of the names of a circle and triangle although one or two can describe the properties of a square fairly accurately.

Achievement is good although the attainment of most children will be below the level expected in this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The effective use of the computer suite is enabling the children to make better than expected progress.
- The very good resources for construction are contributing to the children's good progress in building model palaces and other buildings.

### **Commentary**

41. Teaching and learning are good in this area of learning and promote good achievement. The story 'Dear Zoo' is used well to further learning. Several of the children know most of the names of the animals in the book and are learning to name them from photographs. The children have brought in photographs of themselves as babies and are beginning to learn how they change over the years. The use of the good variety of construction toys shows that several are beginning to be purposeful rather than just playing randomly and this is good progress. The lesson in the computer suite focused on mouse control and was well planned. The children were encouraged to colour in parts of 'Elmer' by clicking on the 'fill' tool and then on their preferred colour. All the pupils managed to do this although, when questioned, it was evident that several only knew the primary colours and did not know 'grey' or 'brown'. Neither do they have the language skills to differentiate between light and dark colours. However, their mouse control is more developed than their language skills and most can follow instructions to fill in the patches on Elmer. Children are likely to attain the expected ICT goals by the end of reception but attainment overall will be below the level expected in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children have good opportunities every week to learn how to swim.
- The outside environment, although small, is equipped well with big toys to further the pupils' balancing and directional skills.
- The hall is too small for most physical education activities.

### **Commentary**

42. The dance lesson in the hall was well taught using appropriate music to help the children to pretend to be the animals from the 'Dear Zoo' book. Good opportunities were used to further the children's language development and a few children did not understand the verb 'creep' or the instruction, 'make a small shape'. Most children enjoyed the lesson and joined in, and one boy particularly enjoyed making quiet roaring sounds and moving his head slowly like a lion. Although most of the children had a go at striding like an elephant or moving like a tortoise, they lack imagination and a sense of fun and enjoyment. In the outside environment, the bikes and big toys are used well by the boys, in particular. They can balance well and avoid obstacles safely as well as bringing imagination into their activities. The children are taken every week to the nearby sports hall and learn to swim. Teaching and learning are good and leads to good

achievement. Most children will meet the expected goals in this area of learning by the end of reception.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good resources have been organised to encourage imaginative play.
- During imaginative play the adults occasionally dominate rather than intervene sensitively.

### **Commentary**

43. Teaching and learning are good in this area of learning and children are achieving well. Percussion instruments are used effectively to encourage the children to beat the syllables of their names or to say a sentence that has been rehearsed before. A few children can beat a simple rhythm. Most can sing a simple nursery rhyme. When exploring materials, the children need an adult to help them to mix colours or to make pictures out of scraps of paper and cloth. When drawing or painting, the children have limited skills. Most can only make random marks or draw spider people. Several are still learning to hold a pencil or paintbrush in the correct style. One or two are still not sure which hand to use. In their imaginative play, the children are beginning to make good progress from a slow beginning. Nevertheless, a few children are still reluctant to take the initiative or show confidence when selecting activities. Children, with adult assistance, enjoyed making a cave out of a cardboard box using all sorts of materials to decorate the outside of the cave. They drew pictures to 'hang' on the inside walls. One boy took this a stage further and made a cave in the sand and added a secret door. He was delighted with his cave and was glad to tell another boy who stopped by on his bike to chat about it. The adults intervene appropriately and, for example, pretend to be a mechanic when one of the bikes developed a flat tyre. Sometimes, the adults tend to dominate the very small number of children rather than intervene sensitively and allow the children to take the lead. The attainment of most children will be below the level expected in this area of learning by the end of reception.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is well led and this results in good achievement by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to support their children's reading and this good support has an impact on the pupils' good achievement.
- There are good opportunities to use literacy skills in other subjects.
- Even more opportunities need to be planned to further improve the pupils' speaking skills.

### **Commentary**

44. Due to the small size of year groups, standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 can fluctuate year by year. A more accurate measure of the school's success is the good progress that pupils make throughout the school, which is now being carefully monitored. This is an improvement since the last inspection when assessment of pupils' work was a key issue. In the current Year 2, most pupils' achievement is satisfactory, leading to below average standards

overall although the higher attaining pupils are achieving well. Poor speaking skills and vocabulary affect the progress made by some pupils in reading and writing and, although the pupils' listening skills are better than their speaking skills, the teachers skilfully repeat questions or to phrase them in a different way in order to ensure that the pupils understand. In the current Year 6 group of pupils, standards are broadly average for all aspects of English, and pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from different backgrounds, achieve well. As the pupils progress through the school into Years 5 and 6, their language development improves due to the good opportunities given by most teachers. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

45. In Year 2, lower attaining readers do not recognise familiar words. Although sounds are being taught, they often make a guess at simple words rather than sound them out, despite being taught these methods systematically. The written work of several pupils shows only a limited use of simple words and phrases even when supported well, although the higher attainers are writing in whole sentences and use punctuation appropriately. In Year 6, higher attaining pupils talk with interest about what they are reading. They express a preference for authors and the type of books they like. Their stories are written in considerable detail and give lively descriptions of different characters and their parts in stories. Pupils' writing develops well in Years 5 and 6 and is often set out in paragraphs and with effective use of punctuation. The school has focused on better achievement in spelling and handwriting, and this has been effective in improving the pupils' work as they move through the school.
46. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. In an example of very good teaching observed in the Years 5 and 6 class, pupils achieved well in their spoken language and vocabulary. The teacher's very effective use of resources had an impact on how the pupils empathised with the characters in a South African story. Very challenging questions involved all the pupils and helped to develop an understanding of apartheid and its effect on the lives of families. The very careful, continuous probing questions resulted in pupils developing their vocabulary well for writing. Relationships within the class were very good and this resulted in very good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning.
47. Lesson plans show that all teachers assess the pupils' previous learning in the particular unit of work, and its implications for future learning are carefully considered. Planning also takes account of the full range of ability within classes, providing appropriate challenge for higher attaining pupils as well as for those who find learning more difficult. Teaching assistants and the specialist teacher give good support in lessons to lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs and from different backgrounds. However, their role could be even more effective in these mixed age classes. Teachers are challenged to meet the needs of the wide age range and varied ability of the pupils, particularly in the opening or final sessions of lessons when the assistants could focus on a specific group. Good provision is made for homework by the school and it provides opportunities for independent learning. In addition, homework reinforces classroom learning as well as giving opportunities for parents to make comments in the home/school contact books. Parents are supportive with their children's homework and this is another factor contributing to the pupils' good achievement by the end of Year 6. Marking is conscientious but not all teachers make references to the pupils' individual targets or inform the pupils what they need to do to improve.
48. The subject is well co-ordinated. The teachers work well as a team, helping to ensure that planned developments take place and are evaluated. They have also recognised the need to provide further opportunities to develop pupils' language skills and spoken vocabulary. Monitoring of the pupils' progress is good and there is very good evidence of the school tracking individual pupils' work throughout the school. Where sufficient progress is not being made, the school quickly identifies weaknesses and provides good support from the teaching assistants and the specialist teacher. Good achievement has been maintained since the last inspection despite several changes in teaching staff. The subject manager and the headteacher observe

lessons and give feedback to the teachers to ensure consistency in delivering the subject as well as ensuring that standards are improving.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

49. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects. In the Years 1 and 2 class, the pupils are given opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in circle time when they all sit in a circle and have discussions about their experiences. There are good links with writing in science although only three out of the 14 Year 2 pupils could record their work in written form adequately. However, the other pupils had a go at writing and drew diagrams to support their findings. The pupils' speaking skills are developed well in history in Years 5 and 6 using opportunities for role-play. The pupils' writing, particularly the Year 5 and 6 class, is developed well in science, history, geography, local studies and when working with the local radio station. In a physical education lesson, pupils followed the instructions well for games that they had devised in a literacy lesson. Non-fiction texts are often used in literacy lessons, establishing relevant and purposeful links with other subjects.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good and the higher attaining pupils are making good progress.
- There are not enough resources to support the opening sessions of lessons.

#### **Commentary**

50. Standards in mathematics are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the achievement of all pupils is satisfactory. These findings are reflected in the results of the national tests in 2003 for the Year 6 group. The Year 2 pupils did better and attained average results in the end-of-year national tests and their achievement was good. This was because more than a third of the pupils attained the higher levels in mathematics. However, when there are very small groups of pupils in each year group, this data needs to be treated with caution. Each pupil, for example, in both year groups is equivalent to approximately eight percentage points. Nevertheless, in Year 6, these results are not as good as those in English and science.
51. Although the standards of the present Year 2 pupils are not likely to reach national averages by the end of the year, the small group of higher attaining pupils will attain higher levels and their achievement is good. The scrutiny of work from last year shows a good coverage of the curriculum with pupils learning to present their work carefully. Teachers plan work that is well suited to the wide range of abilities. Most tasks are based on worksheets but are matched well. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2. The opening session in the lesson observed was understandably slow because this was the first time the pupils were using digit cards up to 10 and they found them difficult to manipulate in a confined space. The Year 2 pupils showed good understanding of how many tens there are in 27. Good methods and resources were used to develop the pupils' understanding of how to partition a number into tens and ones. Several pupils were able to work on their own and understood the concept well. The lower attaining pupils needed almost one-to-one help with their number work and were given good support by the teacher and assistant. Several of the Year 1 pupils have difficulty in naming numbers from ten to 20.
52. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6 and this reflects a decline in standards since the last inspection. This matches the results of the 2003 tests when the number of pupils attaining the expected level was below average. The dip in attainment in 2002 was due to the

profile of that particular group of pupils, which was well below average. In discussion with the higher attaining Year 6 pupils, their answers to number and shape problems showed that their numeracy skills are not secure, for example, only half the group have a good understanding of the seven times table. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. Although the teachers have established good classroom routines and very good behaviour and attitudes to learning, the methods they use to teach mathematics do not always reflect the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. In opening sessions, for example, teachers do not use quickfire, differentiated questioning strategies or digit cards and whiteboards to speed up the response of the pupils. Expectations were not high enough when Years 3 and 4 pupils chanted their two times table while moving about the classroom to their groups. The teaching assistant and student teacher supported pupils well in the main activity when pupils were working out money problems.

53. The opening session in the Year 5 and 6 class showed that several Year 6 pupils have a hazy knowledge of converting 93 centimetres, for example, to a metre using decimal notation. Nevertheless, using the counting stick effectively to guide the pupils, the teacher persevered using good questioning skills and pupils made good progress in learning how to round off numbers. All the pupils worked hard and collaborated well with the task of ordering items of packaged food from the heaviest to the lightest using their estimation skills. Good resources were used and the actual weights written on the packages had been pasted over. This was a good activity for the wide range of ability in the class although the final session was not challenging enough for the higher attainers when results were collated. The very well qualified teaching assistant was used well to support the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs during the main part of the lesson. However, the assistant could have been used even more effectively at the beginning or end of the lesson with, for example, the older, higher attaining pupils.
54. The management of mathematics is satisfactory and teachers need to be included on numeracy training sessions or helped to consolidate their recent training. Although resources are satisfactory and meet the demands of the curriculum generally, there are not enough whiteboards and digit cards to enable all the pupils in the school to make good progress in mathematics.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

55. The development of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. There is little evidence of pupils using mathematics in ICT, for example, but in science, the use of numeracy is good with pupils drawing their own graphs, charts and diagrams in most lessons.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well.
- There are good links with numeracy and literacy in the subject that, in particular, improve the pupils' skills in the data handling aspect of mathematics.
- There is good coverage of the curriculum.
- Pupils are not challenged to discuss or to record why they have made a particular prediction or conclusion.

### **Commentary**

56. Standards in science in both Years 2 and 6 are average and pupils' achievement is good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. This good achievement is reflected in the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, when almost half of the pupils attained



above average standards compared to all schools nationally and when compared to similar schools.

57. The effectiveness of teaching is a key factor in maintaining good achievement. An analysis of pupils' work showed that pupils are taught all aspects of the subject as they progress through the school with work set at levels aimed at promoting high standards. Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of their bodies, the need for exercise and the importance of their different senses. They are also able to name parts of plants and what they need to grow well. Pupils know what friction is and have experimented with objects to discover on which surfaces objects slide the most easily. They have experimented with magnets and found out which magnets push and which pull.
58. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. In the lesson observed in the Year 1 and 2 class, very good methods were used to teach the pupils the difference between 'push' and 'pull' forces. The teacher concentrated on the language involved and used methods that ensured that the pupils had to think very clearly about the difference between push and pull. They had found this difficult in the previous lesson. By the end of the lesson, the pupils were able to report back on their findings and most understood the concepts. Very good resources ensured that all pupils, working in pairs, were able to handle many small and large objects, such as a baby's buggy and toy cars, and discuss which could be pushed, which could be pulled and which could be both pushed and pulled. They thoroughly enjoyed the activities as they were given a clipboard and behaved like true scientists. However, the weak writing skills of all but the higher attaining pupils were highlighted in this lesson when several pupils could only draw the objects as a true record of their investigation.
59. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good. The scrutiny of the work of the last Year 6 group of pupils showed good coverage of science with a lively approach to teaching and good links to writing. Throughout the year the pupils were encouraged to draw effective diagrams, tables and graphs that link well to mathematics. The pupils showed a good understanding of gravity and other forces, sources of light and their bodies and nutrition. In the lesson observed, good methods were used for the Year 3 and 4 class to increase the pupils' understanding of rocks. The pupils were immediately engaged in the task of comparing their rocks and finding out which were more permeable than others. They used their prior knowledge of what materials the local houses are made of to help them make predictions. Again, there was evidence of good use of literacy skills with pupils listing the properties of the rocks using opposites, such as rough and smooth, shiny and dull. From the scrutiny of work of pupils in Years 3 to 6 it is evident that they understand the concept of a fair test and they make predictions and conclusions although they are not challenged to explain further why they have made their prediction and how they came to a correct conclusion.
60. Management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator has undertaken thorough research into the best ways of assessing science with the help of the local authority. However, as yet, no firm conclusion has been made but it is evident from the teachers' daily planning that pupils are assessed well on a day-to-day basis and teachers know what they need to learn next. Although planning is good for individual lessons, the medium term planning needs to show more detail, for example, how the oldest and higher attaining pupils will be challenged to help teachers adapt the national scheme to the needs of the pupils. Marking in science is good, particularly in the Years 5 and 6 class, when pupils are expected and given time to respond to the teacher's comments about, for example, expanding a conclusion. The manager has not yet monitored classroom practice but has sampled the pupils' work and the notes show further development of the subject to maintain good standards. The school uses the national scheme to deliver science but this has not been adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of specific groups of pupils. There are good links with literacy and numeracy as the pupils always include labelled diagrams, graphs and charts as they write up their investigations in detail.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The recently opened computer suite offers good facilities for the development of the subject.

### **Commentary**

61. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Two lessons were observed in the new computer suite. The suite has only recently opened and provides very good facilities for developing whole class and group teaching. The potential for improving pupils' ICT skills is very good. The school has encouraged members of the community to use the suite during the school day and this is contributing to the already very good links with the community that have existed for several years.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. The pupils have had the opportunity to visit the suite only four or five times and, as yet, the teachers have not yet fully adapted to the demands of teaching the subject to the whole class. There is no technician to support the teachers and, as is often the case with newly installed ICT suites, the whole set-up is unfamiliar and aspects of the technology do not always work as expected. In the lessons observed, mixed ability pairing of the pupils provided a short-term solution to organisation and support. The organisation did not, however, fully provide appropriate challenge and support for the older and higher attaining pupils.
63. The co-ordination of ICT is satisfactory. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines, and helps to ensure that all aspects of the subject are taught throughout the school. There are good assessment procedures in place but they have not yet had an impact on meeting the needs of different groups of pupils when they are taught in the computer suite.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

64. Satisfactory use is made of ICT to support learning in other subjects. This is, however, a developing area for the school and is likely to improve. Pupils use the Internet for research, for example, when finding out about ancient Egypt. Virtual visits are made to different places of worship in religious education. Data handling is used to display and compare results in science and to show the results of a survey on biscuits in design and technology. Good use is made of the digital camera by teachers throughout the school, both to record the pupils' progress and also to take photographs of pupils to use in displays.

## **HUMANITIES**

History and religious education were inspected in full and are reported below. **Geography** was sampled as no lessons were seen.

The time allocated to geography throughout the year is sufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning documents and a scrutiny of pupils' work show that, by the end of Year 6, pupils' geographical knowledge and skills of enquiry are at least satisfactory and their achievement is good. It is clear that the links with history, when studying the local area in the summer term, help to make work in this subject interesting and relevant. By the end of Year 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and is restricted by their weak language and literacy skills.

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 to 6.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The locality provides a very valuable and well-used resource.

### Commentary

65. Standards of attainment are average in history by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the achievement of all pupils is good. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is good and shows that teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Teachers' planning is good and effective methods are used to help pupils make good progress in lessons. The pupils in a Years 3 and 4 lesson were able to recall many facts they had previously learned about Roman history. This was the first time the pupils had discussed how important evidence is in understanding how people lived a long time ago. Good methods ensured that the pupils were constantly challenged to apply their previous knowledge to photographic evidence to identify Roman buildings and most could answer the question, 'How do we know?'
66. Good teaching methods in a Years 5 and 6 lesson were used to raise pupils' awareness that the accuracy of first hand writing of historical events varies and needs to be treated with caution. The pupils responded well and their learning moved forward in this area of historical enquiry and knowledge. The imaginative organisation of a drama session engaged pupils' interest in the account of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, and provided good opportunities to develop the pupils' speaking and vocabulary skills. They responded well and acted out the story enthusiastically. Pupils used their learning to make decisions about the authenticity of 'The Curse of the Pharaoh's'. Relationships are very good, resulting in very good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. In the final session of lessons, teachers could develop their questioning skills further to draw out from the pupils what they had learned, rather than giving them the answers.
67. The subject is well led and managed. Teachers work well together as a team, discussing any developments in the subject. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines, and assessment is now made against key learning objectives and this is an improvement from the last inspection. Resources are good and well used by the teachers. Very good use is made of the local area, which abounds in history.

### Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Years 2 and 6 are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning in the subject is good throughout the school.
- Pupils have a good range of learning opportunities.
- Pupils' learning is broadened through the very effective assemblies and visits to the village church.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- RE contributes very significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Commentary

68. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 is good. Very good opportunities for developing speaking and listening were given to the pupils in the Year 1 and 2 class as they acted out, in groups, the story of 'The

Good Samaritan'. Good organisation of the groups succeeded in the older pupils giving the younger ones support and encouragement in their different roles. Good questioning at the end of the drama productions showed that the pupils had grasped the message in the parable and know that being a good neighbour and being kind are important attributes.

69. Very good resources were used in the Years 5 and 6 class lesson to enable pupils to focus on religious artefacts, such as a crucifix, candlestick, prayer book and rosary, while debating in groups how they might help people to pray. The teacher's very clear planning enabled good opportunities for speaking and listening for the pupils to develop their religious vocabulary, and to allow them to think more deeply about an aspect of religion that means different things to different people. Only a few pupils were able to understand the symbolism of the artefacts. Teachers in both lessons took good care to link what is being taught to pupils' own experiences in order to further understanding.
70. The subject is well co-ordinated. The curriculum has recently been fully reviewed, and a new policy and scheme of work is written. The scheme takes full account of all of the major world religions studied. Units of work from the national guidelines have been incorporated in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Good assessment procedures are linked to the scheme of work and strong links with the local church are used to support learning. The use of ICT to visit virtual sites of other religious buildings is being developed. The subject contributes very well to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
71. The headteacher organises assemblies and ensures that the acts of worship link very significantly to the RE curriculum and contribute to good achievement.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

Music was inspected in full and is reported below. Only one lesson was observed in both art and physical education (PE) and these two subjects were sampled. No lessons were observed in design and technology and there was insufficient evidence to make any judgements.

72. A scrutiny of art displayed around the school and a trawl of the planning for art shows that the time allocated to art meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is a fairly narrow range of work on display covering the use of pencil and crayon to draw portraits in Years 3 and 4. The Year 1 and 2 pupils had worked effectively to produce colour wheels showing how they had lightened their original colour by adding white. The work completed by the pupils in Year 6 last year shows an appropriate range of media, such as pastels to draw still life pictures and paint in the style of Picasso. The work of the present group of Years 3 to 6 pupils shows immaturity, particularly in their use of pencils to draw still life pictures and figure work.
73. The time allocated to PE is sufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The management of PE is good. The policy has recently been reviewed and a new scheme of work has been introduced in readiness for the school's application for the Activemark. Assessment procedures are good and linked with the scheme of work. Staff have received training in teaching gymnastics through the 'Tops' scheme, and training in other aspects will follow. The school hall is too small to be used for any sporting activity and good use is made the local sports' facilities and accommodation to provide for swimming, games, gymnastics and dance. Visiting specialists provide good opportunities for older pupils to learn skills in athletics, and games, such as cricket, tag rugby and netball. Provision for swimming is good. The children in the reception class swim all year and other year groups have swimming lessons each week for a whole term. By the end of the summer term, approximately 70 per cent of the Year 2 pupils could swim 25 metres.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching inspires the pupils to work very hard to improve standards.
- Very good achievement by all pupils by the end of Year 6.
- Very good opportunities for pupils to learn music in activities after school or at lunchtime.
- Music contributes very significantly to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

## Commentary

74. Pupils attain average standards in music by the end of Year 2 and their achievement is good. The pupils showed good listening skills in the opening session and most could clap short and long sounds. The teacher's very good methods of improving the musical knowledge of the pupils included physical participation and this exactly suited the needs of the pupils in the Year 1 and 2 class. They loved moving about the hall using their long or short strides to indicate the length of the beats. Pupils could describe how the teacher was making the tambourine sound louder or softer. Very good opportunities were given in the lesson for the pupils to move forward in their knowledge of vocabulary. A good example was, 'The sound is going from louder to lower' rather than softer. A few pupils were confused with long and short sounds and offered, 'loud and quiet'. The teacher used good repetition of simple musical vocabulary to enhance learning. All pupils behaved very well and showed great excitement when choosing their percussion instruments but calmed down immediately when the teacher used a familiar signal for quiet. By the end of the lesson, most pupils had composed a short rhythm.
75. It is likely that by the end of the school year standards will be above average due to the newly introduced, very good provision for teaching the curriculum, and achievement will be very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning in the opening session of the Year 5 and 6 lesson was excellent. The pupils were immediately engaged and inspired by how quickly the teacher involved them in making music. Her use of finger clicks to beat the rhythm and her insistence that pupils watch her eyes for signals while she is playing her own instrument, results in pupils constantly watching and listening. Pupils were encouraged to voice the rhythmic pattern to begin with while the teacher combined their pattern with a composition on the saxophone. The pupils used small whiteboards to compose new rhythms and worked very well in pairs or threes. Very good methods of teaching moved the lesson along quickly; the pupils' achievement was very good and pupils used their high pitched, untuned percussion instruments well to compose new rhythms to accompany the tune played by the saxophone. Finally, the whole class processed around the hall led by the teacher playing her instrument. Most pupils were able to move rhythmically as in a medieval procession and a few showed very good movement and enjoyment. They will perform this composition in the St Nicholas Day Parade in Canterbury.
76. Management of the subject is very good. Music is taught in Years 1 to 6 by a newly appointed, class teacher who is a highly qualified musician. The headteacher plays a strong role in the development of music in the school and, has, for example, developed well the performance of the pupils in the choir who practise at lunchtimes. Several pupils belong to the recorder club, are able to read musical notation and make good progress. Almost a third of the pupils in the school are in the choir and the quality of their singing is above average. The pupils were practising 'Silent Night' to sing for their parents and members of the community at Christmas. They sing beautifully in two parts and perform very well without accompaniment. Both the headteacher and music teacher coach and conduct the choir. In addition, several pupils have instrumental lessons taught by visiting teachers. Music makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development by ensuring that the pupils are aware of the power of music to take the listener out of the commonplace. Socially, the pupils develop very well by working together to create compositions and, culturally, by singing and playing music from different traditions.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

77. Personal, social and health education and citizenship were sampled, as not enough lessons were seen to support an overall teaching and learning judgement. Good planning is in place for PSHE, which is both linked to other subjects and taught in its own right. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good methods were used to encourage pupils to listen to each other and to improve their contribution to circle time. In pairs, pupils discussed what activities they had been involved with at the weekend and reported back to the class. Although most pupils showed good listening skills, several found reporting back difficult as they had forgotten what their partner had told them.
78. The school sees pupils' personal development as important and addresses it in several subjects. The outcomes of the school's approach are clearly seen in the very good attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development of the pupils. Examples were seen in several lessons during the inspection when pupils' health and safety were highlighted as well as values and other qualities. Assemblies make a very good contribution to PSHE; they are organised exceptionally well and are very consistent. Planning is good and each class produces a yearly plan to identify the topics covered in lessons. Sex education and education about drugs are addressed at the appropriate stage. Work in this area helps pupils develop awareness of a healthy lifestyle, to gain confidence and learn how to interact with others. The school's very good links with the community enable pupils to interact with it in several ways and begin to develop their knowledge of citizenship.

## **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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).*