

INSPECTION REPORT

FIVE ASHES Cof E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mayfield

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114526

Headteacher: Paul Wickens

Lead inspector: Mr Declan McCarthy

Dates of inspection: 7 – 8 June 2004

Inspection number: 256131

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	48
School address:	Mayfield East Sussex
Postcode:	TN20 6HY
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Penny Kemp
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a small rural school in the village of Five Ashes, near Mayfield. There are 54 pupils on roll, including two part-time and four full-time children in the Reception Year. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls with ages from four to eleven. Pupils come from mixed backgrounds and they arrive in school with average levels of attainment. The pupils are all White British and there are no pupils from any other backgrounds nor any with English as an additional language. There are no travellers or refugees. The intake varies continually from year to year because the school is very small. Currently, the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs (SEN) is also below average. Pupil mobility is above average. The school received the School's Achievement Award in 2001 in recognition of its work and is involved in a number of partnership initiatives including: the North Wealdon Schools Sports Partnership for sports and Heathfield Community College for the arts. The school successfully achieved the Artsmark Silver Award during the inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8-11
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11-15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15-16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	18-26
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective and improving school. The headteacher provides good leadership and has developed a strong community ethos where all pupils feel valued and are included in all aspects of the curriculum. Standards are broadly in line with the national average and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The good provision for pupils' personal development and care have ensured that pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and there are good extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are that:

- The welcoming and friendly ethos of the school has resulted in good inclusion of all pupils, and is reflected in high levels of parental and pupil satisfaction.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because good support is provided for their learning.
- Standards are broadly in line with the national average and pupils' achievements are satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Teachers' expectations are not always consistently high enough, particularly in Year 6, because assessment information is not always used effectively enough to move learning forward.
- Physical development in the reception year lacks opportunities for children to balance and climb, to be adventurous and to explore.
- Very good links with parents, other schools and the community enhance pupils' learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good because the school provides good quality care and promotes their personal development well.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported well by key staff, resulting in strong teamwork and shared commitment to improvement.
- Governors provide good support for the school and challenge its work effectively

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The key issues identified then have been addressed well. Leadership and management are now good overall. There have been good improvements in the curriculum, particularly in the use of information and communication technology (ICT), accommodation, resources and opportunities for enriching pupils' learning. The school received the School's Achievement Award in 2001 and very recently gained the Artsmark Silver Award. There has been good improvement in links with parents, other schools and the community.

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	A	E	C
mathematics	A	C	E*	E
science	B	E	E*	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
N.B. Caution is needed in interpreting this data as pupil numbers are small. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. In 2003, standards in the national tests for eleven-year-olds were well below the national average in English but in line with those of similar schools. In mathematics and science, Year 6 national results were very low compared to the national average and well below those of similar schools. However, there were only 12 pupils in Year 6 in 2003 with a

very high proportion of pupils (60 per cent) identified with special educational needs and few higher-attaining pupils. Hence the low results in the national tests. Pupils currently in Years 3 to 6 are reaching average standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Standards by Year 2 are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Children's achievements in the Reception class are satisfactory overall. They achieve well in personal, social, and emotional development but their achievements in physical development are limited by inadequate outdoor learning experiences. In all other areas of learning their achievement is satisfactory. Given their short time in school and their young age, children are unlikely to meet the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good, resulting in their good attitudes and behaviour. Attendance and punctuality are also good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Overall, **teaching is satisfactory** throughout the school and as a result pupils' learning is satisfactory. In most lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was good and pupils' achievements were good. However, occasionally, expectations for learning are not consistently high enough, particularly in Year 6. The use of assessment to check and record pupils' progress and set individual targets for pupils is good.

The curriculum is satisfactory and makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school provides a good range of clubs and activities outside the normal school day. The quality of care is good. Collaboration and partnership with parents and links with other schools and the community are very good, enhancing pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Leadership of the headteacher is good and leadership of key staff is good. Management is also good and the work of the governing body is good. Governors are supportive, challenge the work of the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents view the school very positively and support its work strongly. Pupils respect staff and take great pride in their school. They believe that lessons are interesting and teachers help them when they get stuck with their work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards and teachers' expectations for learning, particularly in Year 6.
- Raise the profile of independent and outdoor learning for children in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in the Foundation Stage are broadly average for children's ages. Standards in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 are broadly average for pupils' ages. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Nursery and Reception achieve well in personal social and emotional development in response to good teaching.
- Limitations of the outdoor play area in the reception class limit children's achievements in physical development.
- Standards are broadly in line with the national average.
- Some weaknesses in teaching in Years 5 and 6 have contributed to lower standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in lessons and work well towards their individual education plan targets.

Commentary

1. Children in Reception enter the school with skills that are broadly in line with those usually found at this age. By the end of the Reception Year their attainment rises in personal, social and emotional development. Children's achievements are satisfactory in most areas of learning and they achieve well in their personal, social, emotional development because there is often good teaching and support, particularly for those children with special educational needs. A restricted outdoor play area in the reception class limits the children's physical development.
2. The table below shows a dip in the Year 2 national test results in 2003 compared to the 2002 results. This occurred because a high proportion of pupils (25 per cent) in this group were identified with special educational needs and there were few higher-attaining pupils in this group. Despite these limitations, national data show that standards are broadly in line with the national trend over the last five years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.8 (19.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13 (15.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.3 (19.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. Care should be taken when interpreting these results as the year group is small. Each pupil represents more than 8 percentage points.

3. Inspection findings confirm that standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with the levels expected at this age and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory in reading, writing and mathematics because most teachers set high expectations for learning, and match work closely to the different needs and abilities of all pupils.
4. The school failed to meet its targets at Level 4 for 2003 because these were set before other pupils with lower attainment levels entered the school. However, it exceeded its statutory targets for 2003 for Level 5 in both mathematics and English because the higher-attaining pupils remained in school. The school is on course to meet its more challenging targets in

2004, subject to a stable pupil population. The schools' own detailed analysis of performance data, confirmed in its self-evaluation, shows pupils' achievements to be satisfactory overall.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.0 (29.3)	26.8 (27)
mathematics	23.2 (27)	26.8 (26.7)
science	24.5(27)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. Care should be taken when interpreting these results as the Year group is small. Each pupil represents more than 8 percentage points.

5. As pupils move through the school they consolidate their prior achievements. Standards vary from year to year because each Year 6 group of pupils varies considerably in attainment levels. For example, results in national tests were much better in 2002 than in 2003 because there were more higher-attaining pupils and fewer pupils identified with special educational needs. The 2003 results show a sharp dip in the school's performance in the Year 6 national tests because a very high proportion of pupils (60 per cent) were identified with special educational needs. Furthermore, a high proportion (25 per cent) had been in school for less than two years before taking the tests and these pupils entered with below-average prior attainment so that by Year 6 standards were in line with those of similar schools for English but well below for mathematics and science. Standards were well below the national average for English and very low for mathematics and science. Given the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the high level of mobility among the pupils, overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils do slightly better in English because there is a good emphasis on the development of literacy, particularly through extended curriculum opportunities such as the Writers' Day and through drama. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall because teaching and learning are satisfactory. Where teaching is good, as seen in most lessons during the inspection, pupils achieve well. Additional learning programmes, such as booster classes, for those pupils who are borderline in expected National Curriculum levels, promote pupils' learning and achievement.
6. Through its own analysis of test results, the school has identified some weaknesses in teaching in Years 5 and 6, which have contributed to lower standards. These relate mainly to expectations, which aren't always high enough. The school has begun to address these with effective strategies for improving teaching and learning and raising standards, but they have yet to be fully embedded in consistent practice.
7. It was not possible to observe enough lessons in ICT and religious education to make secure judgements on standards. However, the co-ordinator's 2003 report to governors indicates that the trend over the past three years shows that standards in ICT are broadly in line with national expectations, although the school's data-analysis for the year 2002 to 2003 shows that attainment fell below national expectations in the use of spreadsheets for Year 6 and in questions and answers for Year 2. In a religious education lesson, pupils were achieving well and standards were broadly in line with national expectations.
8. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in lessons and consequently their achievement is good. Support focuses on developing literacy skills so that, as they move up the school, pupils systematically build on their achievements. The school makes good use of the information from its analysis of assessment data, in order to target support precisely, year on year, where it is most needed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils are happy at school. Attendance has recently improved and is good. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Provision made for personal development, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, results in good growth in self confidence, personal values and relationships.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are happy at school, enjoy learning, behave well and work hard.
- Positive personal qualities and self-confidence develop progressively through the years.
- There has been a good improvement in attendance over the last year.
- Immature behaviour in a very few Year 6 boys is dealt with promptly but sometimes repeated.
- Preparation for living in a multi-cultural community is given less emphasis than other aspects of personal development.

Commentary

9. Pupils like school and want to attend. An attendance level below the national average last year was as a result of illness, which had a disproportionate impact because of the size of the school. Attendance for the current school year is above the national average. Pupils arrive on time, enabling the school day to get off to a prompt start. Parents support good attendance and punctuality very well. They ensure that the school is suitably informed about absence. Unexplained absence is followed up promptly on the same morning. Registration procedures are effective and provide an accurate record.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.7
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.

10. Pupils enjoy their lessons and invariably work conscientiously. The large majority want to learn, try hard and apply themselves suitable to individual or group work. Behaviour is almost always good and, on occasions, exemplary. Although the immature behaviour of a very small number of Year 6 boys occasionally wastes a disproportionate amount of their teacher's time in lessons it is managed well. The same pupils are responsible for the small amount of unkindness shown to others, particularly in the playground. This is dealt with promptly, but pupils are not always confident of the long-term effectiveness of action taken. There was one fixed term exclusion last year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
48	1	0

11. Pupils enjoy and participate well in the activities provided outside lessons. They develop high levels of mutual respect, both with their teachers and each other. They usually play and socialise happily together. Pupils value, and are motivated by, the awards received for good work and contributions they make to the school community.

12. Overall, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They develop a good understanding of other faiths during religious education. Assemblies reinforce Christian values and are linked effectively to pupils' daily experiences. Understanding of other cultures is promoted well in some subjects, for example geography and music. Rather less attention is given to preparing pupils for living and working in a multi-cultural society. Older pupils have a high commitment to supporting younger pupils through the 'buddy' system. They show empathy and concern for others' feelings and willingly do what they can to help. They have a very good understanding about what is right and wrong. They know, understand and usually abide by school rules. Personal effectiveness grows progressively as pupils move through the years and result in them articulating views and opinions with confidence. They develop a very good understanding of their local community, how it works and their place within it. Children in the Reception Year settle in smoothly to their routines and become increasingly confident and secure. They are achieving well in personal, social and emotional development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. A sound curriculum, with good opportunities for enrichment and very good inclusion of all pupils, promotes learning for all groups of pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Assessment is good overall. Pupils are well cared for and there are very good links with parents, the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Much good teaching was seen during the inspection and this is now having a positive effect on pupils' learning and helping to raise standards. Although assessment is good, information is not always used by teachers to move learning forward.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is mostly good, but there are some weaknesses in teaching of Year 5 and 6 pupils resulting in satisfactory teaching overall.
- Although there were high expectations for learning in most lessons seen, teachers do not always use assessment information fully enough to extend pupils' learning.
- Lively lessons and good team work with support staff ensure good learning.
- Teachers maintain very good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well, resulting in pupils' good behaviour and good relationships.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	10	4	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has improved slightly since the previous inspection as a result of the systematic monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. In lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons seen. At the time of the previous inspection six percent of lessons seen were unsatisfactory. However, some weaknesses in teaching, particularly in setting matching tasks to pupils' abilities, have been identified in Years 5 and 6, which have in part contributed to the unsatisfactory achievement of some higher-attaining pupils. The headteacher has implemented effective strategies, with good support of governors and the Local Education Authority, to remedy this situation, and they are beginning to have a positive impact. As a

result, although these weaknesses were apparent in pupils' work and in a few lessons seen, there has been some improvement. For example in a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, where teaching was good, work was closely matched to abilities and good opportunities were provided to extend the learning of higher-attaining pupils.

14. In most lessons seen, high expectations for pupils' learning were strong features of teaching throughout the school. In these lessons, teachers used question and answer sessions to challenge pupils' thinking so that pupils' learning was extended. Parents and pupils recognised good teaching both in discussion and in their questionnaires. Pupils believe that teachers expect them to work hard and do their best. However, in almost a third of all lessons, expectations were not quite high enough for higher-attaining pupils because they were given the same tasks to complete as average-attaining pupils. In all lessons seen, clear learning objectives were set for pupils and planning was good. However, pupils are often given the same tasks to complete despite their different attainment levels and marking is not helpful enough in extending pupils' learning.
15. Lessons are always lively, so that pupils remain focused on their learning, concentrate and try hard. Good teamwork with support assistants, parent and volunteer helpers in lessons ensures that most pupils, particularly those with special educational needs achieve well. For example, support assistants focus strongly on developing subject vocabulary and they provide clear instructions with encouragement in lessons so that pupils with special educational needs have a clear understanding of meaning and what they need to do in completing set tasks. Support staff also modify tasks to pupils' individual special educational needs. As a result, these pupils achieve well.
16. Teachers maintain good relationships with pupils and behaviour is managed well. As a result, pupils respect staff, follow instructions carefully, show good relationships towards others and behave well in their lessons. All pupils feel confident in their learning.
17. There has been satisfactory overall improvement in assessment since the previous inspection. A particular strength of assessment identified then was the assessment of pupils against the learning intentions in weekly planning. This aspect has been maintained and further developed with the use of plenary sessions in lessons to inform pupils of their achievements. There has been good improvement in the assessment of children in the Foundation Stage with the further use of baseline assessments to move their learning forward. At the last inspection, assessment systems were good in English, mathematics, science and ICT but were not well developed in other subjects and teachers did not use assessment information effectively to track pupils' progress or in planning the next stage of learning. Assessment is now well developed across the curriculum and is mostly used to track pupils' progress. However, teachers do not always use the information to move pupils' learning forward. Challenging targets are now set for all pupils in literacy and numeracy and the school makes very good use of assessment data to set school priorities for development and challenging targets for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs have well thought out targets on their individual education plans to accelerate their learning and as a result they make good progress towards them. In their responses to their questionnaires, most pupils believe that teachers help them when they are stuck and show them how to improve their work. Pupils' achievements are systematically recorded over time and most teachers make good use of this information to plan the next stage of pupils' learning, modifying sequences of lessons so that there is a close match between teaching and the various needs of different groups of pupils. However, this was not always evident in pupils' work.

The curriculum

A sound curriculum provides good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation for pupils in the foundation stage is satisfactory and good for the rest of the school. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of enrichment activities is good and open to all pupils.
- Good use is made of national and local initiatives to extend curricular provision.
- The small outdoor play area narrows opportunities to extend pupils' physical development.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Accommodation has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good.

Commentary

18. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. It meets all statutory requirements, including provision for religious education, and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively. The curriculum is well planned and subjects are now generally led and managed well with policies and schemes of work based on the latest national guidance. There is a well-conceived programme for personal, social and health education which includes drugs awareness and sex and relationships education. Parents are well informed about the provision in this area. A wide range of experiences outside the teaching day is open to all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and fosters enthusiasm for learning. A range of clubs for pupils of all ages includes dance, computers, choir, art and crafts and sports activities. The school makes full use of available funding and expertise to promote sports and the arts. Varied visits are made by all classes. These include visits to a local observatory and science centre and to the local church. Visitors include drama groups, African music and dance workshops as well as regular curriculum contributions from local clergy, other schools and local services such as the fire service. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy a residential visit which promotes their independence and social development.
19. The school has good links with the Mayfield Festival and the Dexter Memorial Fund to ensure that pupils participate in a wide range of music, art and drama based activities. For example, Years 5 and 6 took part in an evening performance, as part of the Mayfield Festival. The school's work in the arts and drama is nationally recognised through the recent achievement of the Artsmark Silver Award. The school's strong partnership links also enrich pupils' learning. For example, the arts are promoted through links with Heathfield Community College and sporting activities through the North Wealdon Schools Sports Partnership.
20. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is restricted by a small playground that lacks a canopy during inclement weather. Activities to promote physical development are restricted, although children in the Reception Year have direct access to the playground for sporting activities.
21. The curriculum ensures good access for pupils with special educational needs. They have clearly thought out individual educational plans and benefit from good support for their learning in lessons. Further intensive support outside the classroom is also available from the special educational needs co-ordinator for those with more specific needs with precise targets set to challenge their learning. The effective use of committed and well-informed support staff is a key factor ensuring good achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
22. The school has adequate staffing provision. Teachers are appropriately qualified and possess a range of skills and expertise that meet curricular requirements. Teachers are well supported by suitably qualified and trained, teaching assistants. Teamwork is strong between teachers

and assistants. Accommodation and resources are good and have improved since the last inspection. There is now a purpose-built group teaching area, an indoor play area for pupils in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2, a disabled toilet and medical room, a secure outdoor play area and an upgraded library. These are all well resourced and well used. Resources are particularly good for information and communication technology, the library, mathematics, physical education, art and music.

Care, guidance and support

There are good arrangements to secure the health, welfare, and safety of pupils. They receive good support and advice. Arrangements to involve pupils in the school's work and development are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know pupils very well and have positive relationships that enable them to respond promptly to individual needs.
- Well planned support and guidance help pupils grow in confidence.
- Pupils know their views are valued and are ready to be consulted more widely.

Commentary

23. The school has maintained the good standards of care, welfare, health and safety seen at the time of the last inspection. In this small school staff know individual pupils very well indeed and respond rapidly where there is cause for concern. The high levels of mutual respect between staff and pupils ensure that problems are shared when necessary. Pupils are very well supervised at all times and the school is conscientious in its work to minimise hazards to safety. Regular risk assessments are carried out and these procedures have recently been extended to ensure they apply to all future visits off the school premises. Arrangements to deal with first aid emergencies are effective. There are suitable procedures to deal with child protection issues and all staff have been trained so that they know what to do in the event of concern. Maintenance programmes ensure that equipment and appliances are regularly inspected for safety.
24. Effective relationships with pre-school groups and well-planned induction ensure that children get off to a good start at the school. Arrangements to identify and provide for their needs are thorough. The personal, health and social education programme is planned well to meet requirements for health and relationships guidance. Pupils' academic and personal development is monitored well, enabling teachers to track progress and provide well-targeted support. Suitable guidance is given at the time of transfer to secondary education to support informed choices.
25. Pupils' views are sought and valued through the school council. They are confident of being listened to. They feel they have had success in improvements seen to pupils' lavatories and hope to run their own tuck shop. Pupils show high levels of responsibility and are now ready to become involved in consultation about a wider range of issues that affect school life.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The close working partnership between the school and parents makes a very good contribution to how well pupils learn. Very good involvement with the community has a positive impact on the quality of learning experiences provided. There are very good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are valued and contributing partners in their children's learning.
- Parents feel welcome and value the easy access they have to teachers.
- Very good links with other local schools result in a wide range of benefits.
- Personal development and learning are enriched by strong community involvement.

Commentary

26. The school has sustained the very effective links it had with parents at the time of the last inspection. Parents are very confident of their welcome in school and think highly of staff. They know their views are valued and that teachers are readily available to discuss concerns. Communication about routines and expectations is very effective. Events organised by the school for them to find out about what children are learning and how to help are attended well. There are effective opportunities to discuss their children's progress and targets for improvement at parents' meetings. Annual progress reports provide very good information about what children can do, but do not always evaluate sufficiently relative strengths and weaknesses or lead to well focused targets. Parents provide very good support in the classroom, with the playhouse and plants in the playground and in running some of the extra-curricular opportunities provided after school. Parents have good opportunities to become involved in reviews of their children's special educational needs and nearly all parents do so.
27. The school works very well with other local schools across a broad spectrum of activities. Joint training opportunities considerably extend opportunities for professional development. Subject leaders plan together resulting in a valuable subject-focused week for pupils each year. Extra-curricular activities are considerably extended through links with other schools, for example African dance and an 'Able Writers day.' Similarly, the local secondary school hosts extra-curricular sport and dance activities for pupils in Year 5 and 6. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are raised through being involved in cross-school musical and sporting festivals and competitions. The numbers needed for a residential stay for Year 6 at an activities centre is made possible by linking with other schools and enables pupils to bond with other children moving on to secondary education. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are included in these activities. Arrangements for induction into Year 7 and the suitable transfer of academic records ensure that interruptions to learning are minimised as pupils move to the next stage of their education.
28. The school is an integral part of its community. Both learning and personal development are considerably enriched through a wide range of visits and visitors to the school. Pupils are successfully encouraged to be full and participating members of the community, for example through entries in produce and craft competitions at local shows. They are aware of the local needs of their community, choose the charities they support and develop an effective awareness of the meaning of being a good citizen. Understanding of the wider world community is developing well through links with schools in France and Tobago.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, the senior management team and subject co-ordinators provide good leadership. The school is well managed and school governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good leadership of the headteacher has led to strong teamwork and a shared drive among staff for improvement.
- Subject co-ordinators have developed their subjects well and fulfil their roles effectively.
- Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses; they provide good support and challenge the work of the school.

Commentary

29. The purposeful and effective leadership of the headteacher has ensured good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in leadership and management. At that time, subject co-ordinators were not involved in monitoring their subjects and apart from English, mathematics and science, there were no curriculum policies in place for other subjects. This is no longer the case. The headteacher has inspired and motivated his staff to work closely as a team so that there is now a shared commitment among all staff to raising standards, to ensure good inclusion of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and to effect further improvement. Therefore the school is now in a strong position to improve further.
30. Subject co-ordinators have provided good leadership and management of their subjects, which they have effectively developed through well thought out development priorities for further improvement linked to the priorities within the school development plan. They ensure that pupils' progress is tracked and they monitor teaching and learning. Furthermore, subject co-ordinators review standards and provision within their subject with governors each year and use the outcomes to develop their subjects further.
31. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and management, establishing good support arrangements in lessons for pupils with learning difficulties. She monitors the work of support assistants closely, providing effective support
32. The governing body has a good knowledge of the school, through regular visits. Governors work closely with staff in reviewing provision within subjects and they support the work of the school well. Governors also fulfil their strategic role well, in challenging the work of the school and becoming fully involved in the development of priorities for school improvement. As a result, development planning is good.
33. Management is also good and the school operates efficiently and effectively on a day-to-day basis. Performance management is good and has been effective in identifying weaknesses in teaching and bringing about some improvements. The analysis of performance data is well established and used effectively to set realistic and challenging targets for standards and also to determine further priorities for school improvement. The budget is well managed and the school receives good support from the finance officer, who produces regular budget statements for the finance committee of the governing body to scrutinise. The school makes full use of its resources and constantly seeks to achieve best value in its spending decisions. Barriers to learning are identified and strategies to reduce them are effective.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	231937
Total expenditure	242499
Expenditure per pupil	4042

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	21267
Balance carried forward to the next	10705

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are settled and enjoy coming to school.
- Separate teaching sessions ensure appropriately active learning for these children.
- It is not clear enough what children might learn from independent and outdoor activities.
- Physical development lacks opportunities for children to balance and climb, to be adventurous and explore.

Commentary

34. For most of the week, children in the Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed age class alongside Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. For three mornings, a dedicated reception teacher teaches them in a small adjoining room. A teaching assistant effectively supports the class throughout the day. Four of the six children in the Foundation Stage attend full time. Attainment on entry to the school is in line with what is to be expected nationally. Children achieve satisfactorily overall. In personal, social and emotional development they do well. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in mathematical development, and in aspects seen of knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, and creative development. In communication, language and literacy, standards are appropriate. However, because these children are young, mainly summer born, they may not fully reach all aspects of the set goals by the end of the Reception Year.
35. Standards cannot be compared with those reported during the last inspection in 1998, when they were found to be good, because of changes in early years provision. Since that time, the curriculum has been revised and extended to meet the needs of a wider age range – from three to the end of the reception year. Effective planning, as during the last inspection, ensures that it is clear what the reception children are expected to learn from adult led tasks. Teaching areas are well organised to optimise the available space. The learning possibilities of the independent activities, however, are less clear. Staff do not join children enough at their chosen play to develop and extend ideas, including in the garden, an area already identified by the school for development. Learning outdoors is not yet embedded securely enough within the Foundation Stage curriculum. The competent and experienced co-ordinator has a secure view of the future development of the Foundation Stage and a keenness to improve further. Good teamwork ensures the smooth running of the Foundation Stage and its links into Year 1. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. Although teaching strengths, such as planning and the sounds and letters programme, have been maintained well, overall, teaching is now satisfactory because the profile given to independent and outdoor learning is not high enough.
36. Provision for **personal, social and emotional development** is good. Strengths of the teaching lie in the area of personal, social and emotional development. The school's generous provision of a part-time teacher just for reception children is effective in enabling them to feel settled and secure, comfortable in school and ready for learning. In the mixed-age class and reception group, teachers and teaching assistants are warm and welcoming, and encourage the children in a positive and kindly way. They set clear guidelines for behaviour, with gentle reminders, for example about good manners at snack time, so that the children know what is expected and behave sensibly. Children are kind and helpful with each other, mix appropriately with the older ones and move about the teaching areas with confidence.

37. Other teaching strengths occur in **communication, language and literacy**. Teachers pay particular attention to the teaching of sounds and letters, a strength maintained well since the last inspection, and to extending children's vocabulary. Lively and expressive story reading fosters children's enjoyment of books effectively. Staff speak clearly and encourage the children to use their growing knowledge to build up simple words in early reading and writing activities and games. The reception teacher works closely with the children at the Foundation Stage, as when encouraging correct letter formation or devising simple sentences. As a result, most children approach new words with confidence. Staff encourage children's talk appropriately so that even the youngest are confident to talk before the group or whole class, albeit shyly. However, questions are not always phrased carefully enough so that children reply in an extended way.
38. Teachers' secure understanding of the active way that young children learn results in an appropriately practical curriculum which promotes their **mathematical development**. It meets the needs of the reception children both within the mixed age class and in the small separate group. For example, by comparing their different heights and building equivalent towers from interlocking bricks, the children learnt about 'tall', 'taller' and 'tallest'. Number rhymes, simple games and daily routines such as registration, reinforce counting skills and introduce the beginnings of computation. On occasion, however, adult led activities are over long so that children are sitting for extended periods.
39. In **knowledge and understanding of the world**, teachers provide appropriate activities such as the germination and growth of different sorts of beans to encourage careful observational skills. They provide materials for children to make things such as fire engines from plastic construction kits, or houses from card, fabric and boxes, for example.
40. In **physical development**, teachers provide appropriate opportunities for children to exercise and develop hand and finger muscles through a variety of equipment such as pencils and crayons, scissors and interlocking shapes. Although teachers use the school playground to good effect, overall, opportunities for children to exploit energetic physical skills, such as climbing and balancing, or to be adventurous and explore, are limited. The small newly established outdoor play area is used mainly to support other areas of learning. It lacks a canopy for use in inclement weather.
41. Provision for **creative development** is good overall. Teachers make suitable links across the curriculum to reinforce and extend children's learning and experience. For example, creative development activities such as observational paintings of bluebells and symmetrical painted butterflies support learning in knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical development. Other activities link learning in school with visits beyond the classroom. For example, the role-play area, currently set up as part of a garden centre, reflects a recent visit. Opportunities are lost, however, to join children in their imaginative play to extend and develop ideas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough.
- Pupils progress well in Years 1, 3 and 4 in response to challenging work.
- Across the school, pupils are developing a clear and fluent cursive handwriting style.

Commentary

42. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6, in all aspects of English, meet national expectations, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. In national testing in 2003, a higher than average proportion of pupils in Year 2 gained the higher Level 3. Overall scores for both year groups, however, were low in comparison with all schools nationally and also with those in similar circumstances, because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, especially in Year 6. Results vary from year to year as is to be expected when year groups are very small. It is evident that year groups vary also. Girls do better than boys, as nationally. Pupils with special educational needs do well. Intensive, good quality small group and individual teaching, and tasks matched well to their abilities enable their learning to move forward at a good pace.
43. Speaking and listening meets national expectations. Pupils across the school speak with confidence before the class or within a group, sometimes in an extended way, and particularly when encouraged by probing questions. Pupils generally listen attentively to each other except when behaviour guidelines are unclear, as on occasion with pupils in Years 5 and 6. Reflecting a school priority, teachers usefully identify speaking and listening tasks, such as preparing a Theme Park presentation. They explain clearly key vocabulary such as 'spoilt', 'promise' and 'famous'.
44. Reading in Year 2 is satisfactory and at least satisfactory in Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 read accurately and with understanding. In Year 6, they read fluently and express preferences for authors and styles of writing. Some read with good expression and are self-confessed avid readers. Through regular visits, pupils across the school know how the library works. Older pupils in particular clearly know how to locate books and extract information with confidence.
45. Writing is in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 2 write in sentences that are generally accurately punctuated. Common words are correctly spelt and new ones are plausible. They are clearly making effective use of their knowledge of sounds and letters. Pupils in Year 6 are aware of how to use connectives in extended sentences. Some vary sentence length or use dramatic words for effect. Storylines are generally interesting and on occasions lively, although rarely extended. Evocative poems make good use of structure, rhythm and rhyme, especially when worked on with a partner. The range of pupils' writing, including letters, book reviews and notes as well as poems, stories and accounts, shows an improvement since the last inspection. Handwriting is generally legible and in a clear and fluent cursive style, reflecting a recent school priority and also the findings of the last inspection. Information and communication technology skills effectively reinforce and develop writing skills, for example by word processing of poems and rhymes.
46. The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning includes specific teaching points for each lesson, an improvement since the last inspection, and suitably takes account of pupils' differing ages and abilities. However, levels of challenge are inconsistent and teachers' expectations not always high enough, especially in Year 6. Assessment systems, although rigorous, do not inform teaching consistently well. Where expectations for what pupils can achieve are high and demanding work is set, as in Years 3 and 4, they do well, working hard to devise creditable alternative nursery rhymes, for example. Pupils in Year 6 are not always challenged well enough and their work reflects a more mundane attitude. Some are easily distracted so that they do not give of their best. An undercurrent of irrelevant chatter sometimes prevails.
47. A strength of the teaching is the high level of classroom assistance so that groups are almost always supported by an adult to help develop ideas and move learning on. In the Year 1/2 class regular structured parental and voluntary help with reading is effective in raising standards, particularly of the Year 1 pupils who are keen to achieve as well as their Year 2 counterparts. In writing too they are 'nipping at the heels' of the older pupils, as they are challenged to spell demanding words, for example. Teachers use English lessons appropriately to link learning in

other subjects such as geography in the work on theme parks, finding directions and reading maps, for example. Sometimes they use information and communication technology effectively, as when displaying a variety of alternative nursery rhymes on an overhead projector. Teachers work hard to enhance work in English beyond the school, as in drama presentations and Able Writers' days. It is to the school's credit that work in drama is nationally recognised through the recent Artsmark (Silver) Award.

48. English is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a secure view of the future development of the subject through careful analysis and the good consultation opportunities afforded by a small school. Her good knowledge of individual pupils' abilities as they progress through the school informs realistic target setting. The national literacy strategy, introduced since the last inspection underpins the subject's satisfactory improvement, especially in planning and assessment.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. Pupils' literacy skills suitably enhance learning across the curriculum, for example, as they write accounts in history, experiments in science, and project plans in design and technology. In personal and social education they practise persuasive language, as in Years 5 and 6 when discussing issues about smoking. In mathematics and science, they learn specific technical vocabulary.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards were low in the 2003 national tests because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 and the very high proportion in Year 6.
- Pupils with different levels of attainment are often set the same tasks, which limits expectations.
- The majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good.
- The subject co-ordinator is developing the subject well.

Commentary

50. In the 2003 national tests, standards in Year 2 were well below the national average and when compared to similar schools. In Year 6 standards were very low, nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Although this represents a significant dip in attainment since the last inspection, pupils' achievements are satisfactory because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 and the very high proportion of these pupils in Year 6. Furthermore, 25 per cent of Year 6 pupils were less than two years in the school before taking the tests and these were lower-attaining pupils. Although the school failed to meet its targets for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4, it met them for the proportion reaching Level 5. The main reason for this was that three pupils left Year 6 who were at Level 4 and three pupils, who were at Level 3, joined Year 6 after the targets were set. Test results vary greatly from year to year because year groups vary and they are very small. There are slight fluctuations in boys' and girls' performance from year to year and no overall conclusions can be drawn. Pupils with special educational are achieving well because they receive good support in lessons and individual intensive support so that their work is always challenging and moves their learning forward.
51. By Year 2, most pupils know number bonds to 20 and identify coins to the value of 20 pence. They recognise common flat and solid shapes and identify these shapes in everyday objects. Higher-attaining pupils tell the time to half past the hour and are beginning to estimate answers in problem solving activities. Lower attainers show confidence in adding numbers and counting

in twos to ten. By Year 6, pupils multiply and divide confidently, they convert decimals into fractions and percentages, they know the properties of flat and solid shapes and record data using bar charts and line graphs. Higher attainers interpret data accurately from graphs and lower attainers construct bar graphs accurately from results. All pupils increase their skills of mental mathematics as they move through the school. However, weaknesses in understanding mathematical language, particularly in pupils with special educational needs, limits their capacity to solve word problems accurately, which restricts achievement. Pupils' work also shows that higher attainers are not always sufficiently extended in their learning because they are given the same work as average and lower-attaining pupils. Expectations for learning are therefore not always high enough, particularly in Years 5 and 6. However, during this inspection Years 5 and 6 pupils were achieving well in a lesson because they had different tasks matched to their abilities.

52. Teaching was at least satisfactory and mostly good in lessons seen, resulting in good learning and good achievement. Expectations were usually high as work was carefully matched to pupils' different abilities. Lessons were also taught at a brisk pace and teachers made good use made of resources, using the three-part structure of the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. Teachers maintain very good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well. As a result, pupils are well behaved and show respect for teachers, following instructions and trying hard to better their performance. However, pupils' work shows that the quality of teaching overall is only satisfactory, resulting in satisfactory learning and achievement, because work is not always matched to different levels of attainment, which results in challenging work for most pupils, including those with special educational needs, but work that is too easy for higher attainers. Teachers' marking of pupils work, although consistent, does not move learning on sufficiently as pupils are seldom given guidance on how to further improve their work. There was also very little evidence of the use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
53. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management and has good subject knowledge. She has reviewed and re-written the mathematics policy, and she has monitored teaching and learning through observation of lessons in all Year groups and the analysis of pupils' work. Medium-term plans are also monitored each term and specific targets for pupils are written on the backs of their books and include a space for pupils' and parents' comments. The outcomes of monitoring have led to good recent improvements in teaching and learning and a sharp focus on developing priorities for further improvements, which include more work on the development of problem solving and greater use of ICT. The co-ordinator carries out detailed analysis of test results at the end of the year and shares the findings with staff. This information is then used to further inform priorities for development and for setting numeracy targets each year. More challenging targets have been set for 2004, but the school's ability to meet them will largely depend on pupil mobility. This represents good improvement in leadership and management of the subject since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. There are satisfactory opportunities for promoting mathematics within other subjects. For example, in science, pupils use standard measures in their investigations, and record data accurately. In geography, pupils use co-ordinates in map reading and in design and technology they use measurements at the design and construction stages.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The results of the national tests in 2003 showed very low standards in science in Year 6, where most pupils were identified as having special education needs.

- There is now a good emphasis on scientific investigations so that the key issue identified at the last inspection has been fully addressed.
- Visits to scientific places of interest enhance pupils' learning and achievement.
- Good leadership and management by the co-ordinator have resulted in good improvements in provision.

Commentary

55. Standards reached by pupils in Year 6 were very low compared with the national average and in comparison with similar schools, because a very high proportion of pupils were identified with special educational needs, there were few higher-attaining pupils and 25 percent of pupils, who were lower attainers joined the school in Year 6. In the year 2 National Curriculum Teacher Assessments, pupils performed well below the national average because a high proportion of them were also identified with special educational needs. The capabilities of year groups vary considerably from year to year because of the small number of pupils in the school. Boys do slightly better than girls in science but the school's own analysis of results over the last three years shows that approximately a third of these girls had been in the school for less than two years. Despite poor results overall in the 2003 science tests, inspection findings show that pupils' achievements throughout the school are satisfactory, which is also confirmed by the school's own analysis of results. However, not enough pupils are achieving the higher levels in the national tests because expectations are not always challenging enough for higher-attaining pupils. Some weaknesses in teaching in Years 5 and 6, which have partly contributed to lower standards, have been identified by the school and addressed through effective strategies. There are now better opportunities for pupils to learn from scientific investigations throughout the school and this has led to broadly average attainment in this aspect of science. This is satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, when attainment in practical investigative science was below average nationally. Most pupils, particularly those with special educational needs are achieving well because their work is challenging and pupils with special educational needs receive good support for learning in lessons.
56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although in lessons seen teaching was good. Teachers now place a good emphasis on the development of scientific enquiry through practical investigations, whereas during the last inspection this aspect of science teaching and learning was unsatisfactory. Each pupil records their practical work in a science investigations book, which was not in use at the time of the last inspection. Pupils develop a sound understanding of fair testing; they make accurate predictions and then test them out scientifically through careful observation, recording their results and drawing appropriate conclusions. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 investigated plant growth and predicted that the seeds would need water to germinate and sunlight and nutrients from the soil to thrive. They conducted their experiment under various conditions and then recorded their results with labelled diagrams and in their writing, drawing accurate conclusions about the growth of plants from seeds. Teachers make appropriate use of ICT to promote teaching and learning; for example, pupils use the digital microscope. They also researched the planets on the internet. Teachers also maintain very good relationship with pupils and this leads to very good attitudes and behaviour of most pupils. However, not all teachers use assessment information effectively enough to promote learning, for example by matching tasks more closely to the different capabilities of pupils.
57. There are good opportunities to extend all pupils' learning through science educational visits to Wakehurst Place and Herstmonceux Observatory and Science Centre. For example, at the Herstmonceux Observatory pupils develop a greater understanding of the solar systems and how telescopes work. The school also works closely with the local community college to exchange ideas on extending the learning of higher-attaining pupils in science.
58. The subject co-ordinator is providing good leadership and management, reviewing the subject with a named governor each year and monitoring teaching, learning and pupils' achievements effectively through lesson observation and looking at pupils' work. Planning has improved since

the last inspection with opportunities for using of ICT to support teaching and learning now included. The co-ordinator makes good use of assessment information to set further priorities for development which rightly include setting science targets for pupils, upgrading resources and increasing monitoring, particularly for the benefit of Year 6 pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall as a result of good leadership and management.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

59. It was not possible to observe any lessons in information and communication technology due to the timetable constraints. Therefore it is not possible to make secure judgements on teaching, learning or pupils' achievements.
60. The co-ordinator's 2003 report to governors indicates that the trend over the past three years shows that standards are broadly in line with national expectations, although the school's data analysis for the year 2002 to 2003 shows that attainment fell below national expectations in the use of spreadsheets for Year 6 and in questions and answers for Year 2. However, these have already been targeted with resources allocated for further improvement.
61. Curriculum planning is good, representing good improvement since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. It is now based on the nationally recognised scheme and the medium terms plans are monitored termly by the co-ordinator. Opportunities for the use of ICT within subjects is identified in medium term planning. All software has been updated so that each class has the correct software to deliver the ICT curriculum.
62. Resources have improved very well since the last inspection. Each class has at least two computers and the ratio of computers to pupils is above the national requirement. Staff have received good training which has raised their confidence and levels of expertise in specific areas, for example in the use of the digital projector and educational websites. Most computers are networked allowing staff access to a range of school information such as pupil data.
63. There is strong evidence from display and pupils' work showing the sound use of ICT to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects across the curriculum. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when the use of ICT was unsatisfactory. In English, pupils word process their written work using a variety of fonts and styles to enhance meaning, for example in writing a curriculum vitae, poetry and stories such as 'My First Day At School'. In mathematics, pupils learn to input data and derive formulae using the computer and in science, pupils use the internet to research information on the planets, producing slides and printing these off for display. In art, pupils use paint programs to create different effects in the style of artists such as Mondrian. In history, pupils have used multi-media presentations, importing sound, graphics, pictures and clipart to produce attractive slide shows of famous Victorians.
64. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management and this has led to good improvement in ICT provision and pupils' achievements since the last inspection. Training opportunities are provided for staff and provision is closely monitored. The co-ordinator also produces an annual report on developments in the subject for the full governing body, having first reviewed provision with the named governor for ICT. Priorities for developing the subject are based on outcomes of monitoring. A portfolio for pupils' work in ICT has been developed, a new computerised assessment system is being trialled and the co-ordinator has rightly identified further staff training as the main priority for development.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history were sampled and therefore no judgements were made on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievements. One lesson was seen in religious education due to timetable constraints. It is therefore not possible to report on the subject in full.

Geography and history

65. Judgements for **geography** and **history** are based on work sampling. No lessons were seen. Indications are that standards in these subjects meet national expectations, as at the time of the last inspection. Subject guidelines are now in place, an improvement since the last inspection. History resources for both teachers and pupils are improved.
66. Teachers use learning in other subjects to enhance work in both geography and history. Both subjects provide useful opportunities for pupils to practise developing literacy skills. For example, in history pupils in Years 1 and 2 write newspaper articles about the Great Fire of London and in geography, in Years 3 and 4, they write accounts of Henry VIII's wives. In history, pupils in Years 1 and 2 use art and design skills to make a model of Pudding Lane, on fire, as well as drawing pictures of the Great Fire. Information and communication technology skills effectively reinforce and extend learning. In Years 5 and 6, pupils research Victorian topics such as 'Travelling by bicycle' and 'Famous Victorians', and prepare PowerPoint presentations. In Years 1 and 2, they plot routes across the sea to a lighthouse. Interesting visitors, and visits beyond the village, including residential, further broaden and enliven the work in these subjects.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development.
- The locally agreed syllabus is followed well.

Commentary

67. In the one lesson seen in religious education, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were learning about Shabbat in their work on Judaism. They were achieving well and relating this to their everyday lives. Teachers follow the East Sussex Agreed Syllabus for religious education which focuses on Christianity and other world religions. By Year 2, pupils gain knowledge and insight into the Jewish/Christian story of Creation, the sacred texts of the Bible and Torah and the commandments that God gave to Moses. By Year 6, pupils learn about Islam, the main beliefs of Muslims and the Five Pillars of Wisdom. They learn about celebrations and ceremonies and explore the main ideas of the Qur'an. In their study of Christianity, Years 5 and 6 pupils learn about the Eucharist and its significance, the important Christian festivals of Easter and Pentecost and some of the healings and miracles of Jesus. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development through the study of the major world religions and applying what they have learned to their everyday lives living as members of a Christian school community.
68. Religious education is well led and managed by the co-ordinator who monitors medium term planning every term. Teachers' weekly plans are also scrutinised and outcomes used to establish priorities for development. There are very good links with the local church to enhance pupils' learning. However the co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to further pupils' experiences of different non-Christian faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled.

69. Indications are that standards in **art and design** across the school securely meet national expectations, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve at least satisfactorily. Pupils study the work of other artists, for example producing patterns in the style of William Morris and

making collages of 'The Snail' by Mondrian. They use an appropriate range of media including pastels, paint, charcoal and ink. As at the time of the last inspection, good quality three-dimensional work is still in evidence as in the lively wire sporting figures, full of movement, carefully planned and made by pupils in Years 5 and 6. Sketchbooks provide a useful record of pupils' developing skills, including shading, smudging and observational drawing as well as experimenting with different techniques such as Cubism and Pointillism. Information and communication technology enhances learning in this subject effectively, for example in Years 1 and 2 when devising colourful geometric patterns. Pupils' art and design skills support learning in other subjects, for example the careful drawing of melting ice cubes in science in Years 1 and 2. The subject is enriched by a well attended after-school art club, run by a specialist teacher. The recent Artsmark (Silver) Award recognises the wide breadth of work in the subject and the good standards achieved by some pupils.

70. In **design and technology** evidence suggests that standards meet national expectations across the school. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be unsatisfactory in Year 6. Subject guidelines are now in place and a useful checklist of basic skills outlines expectations for learning in the subject as pupils progress through the school. The work is better planned so that pupils build on what has gone before in a more coherent way.
71. Good provision for **music** was seen in the recorder club, where pupils performed well and in an assembly, where pupils' singing skills were well developed. Pupils played the recorder enthusiastically, concentrating on the rhythm and playing the notes 'a' and 'b' with increasing accuracy through focused practice. When singing, pupils concentrated on the words of the hymns and sung with confidence and in tune. The school makes good use of the East Sussex 'Music for All' scheme, together with nationally recommended guidelines in planning music across the school. Pupils have good attitudes to music and have benefited greatly from the involvement with the Dexter Memorial Fund, a local trust to promote music. This has helped to raise the profile of music in the school and provides very good opportunities for enriching pupils' learning, through for example, the Japanese drummer workshop. The school has recently upgraded its stock of musical instruments and purchased 'Music Express' as an aid to planning. Music lessons take place in the classroom or the hall and a music trolley is used so that instruments can be moved between classes. However, there is insufficient space to store the trolley and instruments. Pupils also benefit from flute and violin tuition provided by the visiting specialist music teacher. The school is also involved in an Anglo-French music project in conjunction with the Mayfield festival, which junior pupils will be participating in later this term.
72. In a Year 1 **physical education** lesson seen, pupils developed accurate skills of sending, rolling and retrieving a ball. They performed well together as part of a team. The teacher ensured that activities were well structured so pupils were actively engaged throughout the lesson, paying particular attention to warming up activities before exercise. Pupils showed good initiative in helping to lay out markers during the lessons and putting them away at the end. In a Years 3 and 4 cricket lesson, pupils developed good skills of bowling, striking and fielding. The teacher organised the lesson well and emphasised safety in throwing the ball. The teacher provided good demonstration of striking the ball with a bat and ensured the lesson moved at a rapid pace enabling pupils to practise and improve their team skills quickly. Teacher assessments indicate that most pupils' attainments are broadly average across year groups. Planning is well developed. The school uses the East Sussex scheme together with 'Top Play' and 'Top Sport'. Pupils enjoy physical education and participate confidently in activities. They work well in teams or with a partner, selecting and using resources sensibly. Staff make good use of the playground and field to deliver all aspects of physical education. They also utilise the facilities at Heathfield Community College for those aspects of gymnastics where high apparatus is needed and pupils use the indoor swimming pool facilities at Mayfield Convent each week. There are good opportunities for extending pupils learning through, for example, participation in the 'Cliff Richard Tennis Trail' and pupils' ongoing participation in the North Wealdon Schools Sports Project (NWSSP). A parent who is also a qualified dance teacher provides an infant dance club for the youngest pupils. The school's participation in the

NWSSP has led to additional opportunities for older pupils to attend a wide range of after-school sports activities at Heathfield Community College.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was sampled.

73. In part of a personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson seen, pupils considered reasons for taking medicines and discussed reasons why people take alcohol and smoke cigarettes. Assessment records show that pupils' attainment is broadly in line with expectations for their ages. The subject is well planned with links made the National Curriculum citizenship programme and the subject is timetabled weekly with a planned programme of visits and visitors. The subject permeates through the life of the school so that pupils achieve well in their personal development. For example, 'Golden Rules' set high expectations for pupils' conduct and promote good relationships, and understanding and respect for the feelings and values of others. There are clear guidelines for combating racism and dealing with unacceptable behaviour. The playground 'buddy' system further promotes good relationships and encourages pupils to become responsible citizens. Pupils are also involved in decision-making and school improvements through the School Council. The friendly and welcoming ethos of the school, based on Christian values of love and kindness, also develops pupils' personal qualities of care and consideration towards others well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
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	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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