

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HALLING PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Halling, Rochester

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118326

Headteacher: Ian Stuart

Lead inspector: Rob Crompton

Dates of inspection: May 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> 2004

Inspection number: 256318

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 –11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	263
School address:	Howlsmere Close Halling Rochester Kent ME2 1ER
Telephone number:	01634 240258
Fax number:	01634 241552
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Bob Munro
Date of previous inspection:	26 <sup>th</sup> April 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Halling is a popular, average sized school for 263 children aged four to 11. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Children's standard of attainment on entry to the reception class is below average and the percentage of children known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of children with special educational needs is similar to most schools. Most have behavioural, social and emotional problems or difficulties with speech and communication. One child has a statement of special educational need. In the last two years, a significant number of children left and entered the school between years 5 and 6. After reception, some children in each year group are taught in mixed-age classes.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7230	Rob Crompton	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Music Physical education
13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector	
14509	Philip Mann	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs
30266	Hilma Rask	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Wessex Education Limited  
3 Greenacres  
Puddletown  
Dorchester  
DT2 8GF

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>24</b>

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching is effective and children achieve well in lessons. Good support for children's personal development helps them to develop positive attitudes and to behave well. The school is well managed and governed. It provides good value for money.

#### **The school's main strengths and weaknesses are**

- Children are achieving well because of good teaching and good help from support staff
- Very good provision for children with special educational needs enables them to make good progress
- Very effective systems for assessing and tracking children's progress help teachers to provide work at suitable levels
- Personal development is promoted well throughout the school but in the reception classes there is insufficient emphasis on early literacy and numeracy
- Relationship between adults and children in the reception class are good but there are not enough support staff
- There are some weaknesses in the information provided for parents
- Levels of supervision in the playground mean there are too many opportunities for inappropriate behaviour
- The school does not provide a daily act of corporate worship and the governors' annual report is missing some required information

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Good progress has been made in raising standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in strategic planning by the governors. Some weaknesses remain in the quality of information for parents, and reception teachers still lack sufficient support.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

Achievement overall is **good**. It is satisfactory in the reception classes. Children reach the standards expected in personal, social and emotional development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. They do not make enough progress in communication, language and literacy, however, and standards are below those expected by the end of the reception year. Most reach satisfactory levels in mathematics overall, but progress in early numeracy is not as good as it might be. It was not possible to judge attainment in children's physical and creative development.

In years 1 and 2 children achieve well and reach average standards in mathematics, science and ICT. Although they work hard and make good progress in English, they do not reach average standards by the end of year 2. Standards are good in art and design.

In years 3 to 6 achievement is good. Children in year 6 are reaching average standards in English, science and religious education. They progress well and reach good standards in mathematics, ICT, art and design, design and technology, geography and history.

In the last two years, children have not built sufficiently well on their previous attainment. In English and science progress between year 2 and year 6 was in the lowest five per cent nationally. The picture is not as bad as the table below suggests, however, because the school admitted a number of children with special educational needs in the run up to the end-of-year tests. They made up one-fifth of the year group in 2003, which skewed the results. Progress through years 3 to 6 is back to average levels and improving.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of <b>Year 6</b> , compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	D	E	E*
mathematics	B	D	C	E
Science	C	D	E	E*

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.

Children have good opportunities to practise and develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. **Good** provision for children’s personal development results in good relationships. Children have positive attitudes to school and behave well due to the good provision for moral and social development. Attendance levels are satisfactory.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Teachers deal well with the mixed aged classes by teaching English and mathematics in separate age groups. Teachers are very well supported by classroom assistants. Their very close partnership contributes to the highly effective provision for children with special educational needs. The curriculum is good and children benefit from an interesting and enjoyable variety of experiences. The partnership with parents is satisfactory but more could be done to keep them informed about day-to-day issues and about how their children are getting on. Support and guidance for children are good but supervision in the playground is not close enough.

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides competent leadership and is supported effectively by a strong senior management team. Their efforts are leading to improving standards. Governors have a good understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and support the school well. However, they are not meeting their statutory responsibilities in ensuring that their annual report to parents contains all the required information and that there is a daily act of corporate worship.

### PARENTS’ AND CHILDREN’S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally happy with the school. Some have concerns about the mixed age classes and the quality of information provided. The inspection found that the mixed-age classes are well taught but concerns about information for parents are well founded. Children have positive views and enjoy school.

### IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- give more emphasis to literacy and numeracy in the reception classes
- provide more adult support for children in the reception classes
- Improve the quality of information provided for parents
- improve supervision in the playground

and, to meet statutory requirements, the school should

- ensure that the governors’ annual report for parents includes a comparison of the school’s performance in national curriculum tests with national figures
- provide a daily act of corporate worship

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement in years 1 to 6 is good. It is satisfactory in reception. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are achieving well through years 1 to 6 in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT
- Children in the reception class are not making sufficient progress in communication, language and literacy and, to a lesser extent, in mathematical development

#### Commentary

1. As they start school children's early language and number skills and their general knowledge are below average. Many have poor speech and communication skills. Their personal, social and emotional development, and knowledge and understanding of the world proceed well in the reception classes and most reach the expected levels. Children do not make enough progress in speaking and listening or early reading and writing because not enough is done to help them to systematically improve these skills. Few are on course to achieve the levels generally expected by the end of the year. Children's level of mathematical development is broadly average but, although most children know how to count and have a reasonable knowledge of shape, space and measures, some who are capable of learning early skills in calculating are not being sufficiently challenged. It was not possible to judge the level of children's physical or creative development.
2. In years 1 and 2 children do well and reach average standards in mathematics, science and ICT. Although they make good progress in English, they have a lot of ground to make up and are not reaching average levels in speaking, listening, reading or writing by the end of year 2. Standards have varied considerably in recent years, but the overall trend has been below the national picture. Assessments as children start school show a steady decline in the levels of attainment in each year group, reflecting the changing characteristics of the neighbourhood. Good teaching is making children's learning meaningful, especially through practical activities. Work is well matched to children's capabilities. As a result, whatever their starting points, children are making good progress.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.3 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.0 (14.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.9 (15.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 39 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. In years 3 to 6 children are working hard and making good progress. Standards in English and science are average and children are reaching good standards in mathematics and ICT. Improvement has kept pace with the national trend over the past few years. Children's writing has improved significantly because of the school's efforts and, although boys do not perform as well as girls, significant progress has been made and gender differences are narrowing.



Attainment in science has picked up because weaknesses identified in investigative skills have been successfully overcome.

- The table in part A indicates that the progress made between year 2 and year 6 by last year's class was in the bottom 5 per cent of all schools. The picture was similar in the previous year. This is not the full story. The school's rigorous tracking systems do show some under-achievement but, when the high mobility in these year groups is taken into account, the situation is not so worrying. Nevertheless, the school made every effort to ensure that children were not 'falling through the net'. Teaching in age groups was introduced to off-set the difficulties created by mixed age classes, extra training moved the teaching up a notch and additional support staff were deployed. Assessments show that the current year 6 have built satisfactorily on their attainment in year 2 and the good work going on across the school suggests that this level of progress will be increased.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.1 (26.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.0 (26.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.4 (27.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 32 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- Standards are rising in ICT. They are now above average in year 6 - an improvement since the last inspection. Standards in art and design are good. In all other subjects children's attainment is average.
- Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. They are supported very effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. Children try their best and take a pride in their work.

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

Children's attitudes and behaviour are good. Provision for their personal development is also good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's recent focus on improving behaviour has been successful
- Children benefit from a good range of clubs and extra activities
- Work in literacy and art broadens children's cultural horizons
- Assemblies make little contribution to children's spiritual development

**Commentary**

- Children's attitudes and behaviour are good throughout the school, thanks to the hard work and consistent approach of the staff. In class, teachers and support staff build positive relationships with children and set high standards for their behaviour. Consequently, children want to behave well because they like their teachers and want to please them. Those children who find it hard to control their behaviour are well managed and supported by staff, both inside the classroom and in withdrawal sessions. In the playground, most children show consideration for others and get on well with one another. It is noticeable, though, that boys and girls are choosing outside activities which conform to gender stereotypes – the boys are playing football while the girls are helping to look after younger children. Not enough is being done to try to counter this.

8. There has been a great improvement in the number, range and quality of extra-curricular activities since the last inspection, and this has had a big impact on children's social development. By playing in the school band, for example, or competing in sporting tournaments, the children learn a lot about their own capabilities and about working with other people. Outings to places linked with the curriculum similarly give children the chance to show how they can represent the school, and provide them with unforgettable experiences. Year 6 pupils commented on how they had really enjoyed all the trips the school had organised for them.
9. The good quality of displays around the school shows the effort teachers make to increase children's knowledge and understanding of literature, art and history. Religious education lessons give children a good insight into different faiths, but other cultures are not generally flagged up in the everyday life of the school.
10. Assemblies are not inspiring enough to make a useful contribution to children's all-round personal development. They lack a sense of occasion, particularly as few staff are present. Sometimes assemblies are no more than a storytime or singing practice, and they do not always contain an act of corporate worship. In contrast, some special activities promote children's spiritual development very sensitively. The recent Field of Hope event, for example, involved the whole school community in commemorating loved ones they had lost and planting daffodils in their memory.

### Exclusions

11. In the last year there have been two exclusions, one permanent and one temporary.

#### Ethnic background of pupils

#### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	257	1	1

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

### Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and the curriculum are both good. There is rich provision of extra-curricular activities. The school provides good support and guidance for children and satisfactory levels of care. Links with parents and the community are satisfactory.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is good in years 1 to 6 and satisfactory in reception. Assessment is very good and used very effectively.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers set challenging work which interests children
- Good teaching in core subjects means children achieve well
- Learning assistants are a boon, providing very good support for teachers and children
- Teachers mark work well and keep a close eye on children's progress
- The good skills that reception teachers have are off-set by the way the provision is organised

## Commentary

12. A strong feature of many lessons is the way teachers stimulate children's interest. In English this often involves drama, in mathematics the posing of problems and in science a strong emphasis on practical work. Coupled with this, teachers' good underlying knowledge enables them to ask pertinent questions which draw on children's existing knowledge and understanding. Teachers are not fazed by children's questions and can usually iron out any misconceptions. Where there are mixed age classes, subject specialists teach much of the work in English, mathematics and science in single year groups. This works well. For example, children in years 5 and 6 benefit from staff expertise in English, mathematics, science and geography. Children are keen; they handle resources appropriately and are developing good levels of independence.
13. The school benefits from a particularly well-qualified and experienced team of support assistants. They work in close partnership with teachers, often enabling the class to be split into two for some parts of a lesson. They are especially effective in supporting small groups within or outside the classroom. Not only are support staff very well informed about what is to be covered, they provide detailed feedback for teachers, which contributes to class assessment records. Children who find it difficult to concentrate in class respond more positively in a smaller group and their learning improves.
14. The level of detail in teachers' records enables them to set work with an element of challenge for children of different abilities. As well as gathering information 'on the hoof' in lessons and making notes, teachers mark work very carefully, pointing out what children have achieved and suggesting the next step. In the older classes children are encouraged to write their own comments and this leads to a very productive dialogue. It is clear from their comments that many children are developing a very mature attitude to learning. They are not simply leaving everything to their teachers but actively helping themselves.
15. The teachers and support assistant in the reception classes are good practitioners. They establish very good relationships with children; they are skilled at teaching class groups and interacting with individual children. However, the quality of teaching and learning is constrained by aspects of the current organisation. When children are taught in class groups and directed to specific activities they achieve more in the time available than when they choose what to do. Although there are positive benefits from encouraging children's independence, with the best will in the world, staff are hard pushed to ensure that the range of play activities moves their learning forward. More adults are needed for this system to be successful. Children are not learning early language and mathematical skills as quickly as they could. A more structured approach to teaching literacy and numeracy is planned for the last few weeks of term and the whole system is to be reviewed towards the end of the school year. Given the present level of staffing, the effectiveness of the current approach needs to be reviewed urgently.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	4	15	9	0	0	0

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



## The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **good**. Good opportunities are provided to extend learning outside of lessons. Accommodation is very good and resources for learning are good.

- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs
  - The curriculum is enriched through visits and a good range of extra-curricular clubs
  - Planning takes account of the needs of children in mixed age classes
  - The curriculum in reception requires further emphasis on early literacy and numeracy skills
  - Library provision is now satisfactory although the use of this area needs to be monitored
16. Early recognition of special educational needs is a priority in the school. Teachers plan work with care, modifying resources to take account of children's preferred learning style. For example, worksheets have less text and more visual information and often include lists of words to help children in their writing. Teaching assistants are very effectively deployed and provide very good support for children who need extra help. Children with special educational needs have a higher proportion of time on the computerised mathematics scheme and this is paying off. Albeit in small steps, children's mathematical skills are steadily improving.
17. The curriculum is better than at the time of the last inspection. Children benefit from the good range of clubs and extra activities provided. These include Korfbal (similar to netball and basket ball) and athletics, drama, French and computer clubs. Children's learning is enriched by special whole school focus weeks such as the recent art project linked to the National Portrait Gallery. Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential weekend at an activity centre.
18. Staff work hard to ensure that the needs of children in mixed year group classes are met. This is achieved by the design of two-year rolling programmes in some subjects to avoid repetition, and through careful identification of key skills to be learned in each subject area.
19. The curriculum provided for the youngest children in the school fosters personal, social and emotional development well but fuller opportunities are needed for them to develop early literacy and numeracy skills. Unfavourable staffing levels limit opportunities for individual support.
20. Library provision is now satisfactory and parents help greatly by running it. However, the school needs to review the current use of this area as a teaching space in order to ensure that children have enough opportunities to use the library for personal study and research.

## Care, guidance and support

Attention to children's care and welfare is satisfactory. Support and guidance are good. Involvement of children in the work of the school is satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between adults and children are good
- Supervision and organisation in the playground are not adequate
- School and class councils are a good new initiative

## Commentary

21. Staff are very caring towards the children in their charge. Those children with particular medical or behavioural needs are especially well looked after. In the reception class, good induction procedures mean that children settle quickly and feel at home in their new surroundings. All staff treat children well, and children say they would find it easy to talk to a member of staff if they had a problem in class or in the playground. They are confident that staff take their worries seriously and try to sort them out.

22. Some children and parents, however, have expressed concerns about bullying at the school. At break and at lunchtime, levels of adult supervision in the playground are too low, and this means that there would be opportunities for inappropriate behaviour to pass unnoticed. In addition to this, the playground area is not organised so that different activities can take place in different areas. As a result, boys playing football dominate almost all the space available, and girls are left around the edges to chat or play their games.
23. School and class councils have just been established this year, but already they are playing an important part in the life of the school. Children have wholeheartedly welcomed the chance to have their say, and are full of sensible ideas for improvement.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships between the school and parents are good
- Information for parents has not improved enough since the last inspection

### **Commentary**

24. Parents are happy with the school and pleased with what it offers their children. They uphold the school's ethos and do what they can to make sure their children get the most from their education. Parents get on well with the headteacher and staff. In particular, parents of year 6 children feel that the school has been very supportive in helping them try to find suitable secondary school places. However, it is difficult for parents to have informal everyday contact with their children's teachers, as only the parents of reception children are allowed onto the site at the beginning and end of the day.
25. There are concerns amongst parents about the gaps in communication from the school. This has come to light through the school's recent self-evaluation process and the school knows it has to tackle this. There has been some improvement since the last inspection. The prospectus now fully meets requirements, and the governors now hold an annual meeting for parents and publish a report for them. However, this does not contain all the information it should. The targets for eleven-year-olds and the national comparisons for the standard assessment tests (SATs) results are missing which means that parents do not get a realistic idea of how well the school is performing. Newsletters to parents, though friendly in tone, are brief and infrequent. Curriculum information is contained only in the prospectus, and there are no termly updates from teachers on what their class will be covering and how parents can help. There is no consistent whole school policy on homework, so parents do not know what to expect.
26. Year-end reports are satisfactory overall. However, they do not give parents a clear picture of how well their children are doing for their age, and they do not always give helpful guidance on how children can do better. Targets for improvement are sometimes too vague to be useful, or are written in jargon instead of plain English.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is well led and effectively managed. Governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher, governors and senior staff have a clear idea of strengths and areas for development

- Senior staff effectively manage the curriculum and classroom support
- Strategic financial planning has enabled prudent use of funding
- Governors question school policy and are effective in their support
- Statutory requirements are not fully met

## Commentary

27. The school is competently led by the headteacher. A dedicated sense of purpose, the development of a broad curriculum and effective delegation underlie his effective management. He successfully promotes a team approach to improvement, drawing on the strengths of the senior managers.
28. The school development plan clearly sets out the long-term plans for the school and work is checked effectively to identify areas for development. Subject leaders check children's work and support colleagues well by observing lessons and providing feedback and suggestions for improvement. Very good assessment procedures provide information from which children's performance is predicted and close attention paid to their progress.
29. This is an inclusive school where all children are valued. There is a professional determination to meet children's individual needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the provision very well and is a very good role model for teachers. Along with a well-trained and dedicated team of teaching assistants, she ensures that children with special educational needs are supported very well throughout school and are making good progress.
30. The governing body has a clear understanding of its responsibilities, a good idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear view about how the school needs to develop. Governors keep an eye on what is happening in school through regular class visits. They have overseen improvements since the last inspection but other issues, such as the quality of information for parents, have not been given sufficient attention. The school has made good use of additional funds to provide extra resources and enhance the working environment for adults and children. The headteacher provides clear financial details for the governors and best value with any large expenditure is obtained through prudent decisions made by the finance committee. Two statutory requirements are not met. There are some omissions in the governors' annual report to parents and, during the inspection week, the school did not provide a daily act of corporate worship.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	661615
Total expenditure	654540
Expenditure per child	2556

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	49662
Balance carried forward to the next	56737

## **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**.

31. Two teachers and one support assistant work together well. Relationships between adults and children are very good and children enjoy each part of the day. Staff are skilful in motivating children and keep copious records of each individual's achievements. At the beginning of this year a new approach was introduced. This is proving successful in some respects but not in others. For part of the day, children are encouraged to make choices from a wide range of activities and then to discuss what they have done with the teacher. The system is known as 'plan - do - review'. Younger children especially are benefitting from the opportunities this provides to develop their confidence in interacting with one another and in speaking and listening. Staff work effectively during these periods, extending children's vocabulary and promoting new ideas. However, there are not enough adults to ensure that all children benefit from such interaction.
32. Each day includes a 'focus session' where the teacher introduces a topic and then children do follow-up work in small groups. These periods are well structured and offer a suitable level of challenge. This degree of challenge is not carried over to the activities that children choose themselves. The overall organisation does not include enough opportunities for children to build on their early language skills. Letter sounds are taught systematically and there is an increasing emphasis on helping children to apply such skills to reading new words. Although children are taught writing patterns and individual letters, they are not sufficiently encouraged to try writing independently. Similarly, more confident children have too few opportunities to successfully build on their early counting skills and to explore other aspects of number.
33. The organisation is due to be reviewed shortly and staff are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach. They are rightly considering introducing more structured lessons to ensure that children achieve better language and number skills by the end of the reception year.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Daily contact with parents helps staff to provide good support for each individual child
- Daily routines help children to develop independence and to mix well with their classmates

### **Commentary**

34. Each day starts with 'meet and greet' when parents bring their children into the classroom. This enables them to have a brief word with staff and often involves children showing their parents what they have been doing. Staff gain valuable information about children's social development, their attitudes to school and day-to-day issues. As a result, they can respond sensitively to individual circumstances and promote specific aspects of children's social and emotional development.
35. From the start, children have a lot of say about what they do during the day. The teaching is good as staff encourage them to make sensible decisions and help them to develop good attitudes. They learn to behave well when not under the direct eye of an adult. Older children sustain concentration when engaged in a task and are increasingly able to share equipment and to co-operate, for example, when building with blocks. They happily put things away themselves. Children lose concentration when an activity is not challenging enough or when adults are not immediately on hand to help and encourage them. Apart from those children whose social



development is significantly immature, most are on course to reach the level of development expected by the end of the reception year.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

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

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

- Lack of emphasis on the teaching of reading and writing means that children are not achieving well enough
- Teachers plan good opportunities for the development of children's speaking and listening skills

#### **Commentary**

36. Each week children are introduced to a new letter sound. Frequent practice in saying the sound, scribing the letter in the air, together with associated hand and body movements helps them to learn. Adults frequently read books to children and help them to develop a love of stories but reading activities are not high on the agenda. For example, when children choose their own activities few choose to read. Early writing skills are taught effectively through 'write dance' where children learn the patterns used in joined script. However, not enough time is spent in helping them to build up their writing skills systematically. This lack of structure means that children are not making the headway they should. This is a weakness in the otherwise satisfactory teaching.
37. Before embarking on their chosen activities children discuss them with the teachers and support assistant in small groups. Afterwards they meet again to review what they have done. These discussions provide daily opportunities for them to practise speaking formally, to listen to others and to take turns in speaking. They are generally effective but, in order for children to gain more from the discussions, more emphasis needs to be given to what they have learned from the activities rather than simply on what they have done. By the end of the reception year most children are speaking and listening at the expected levels but their overall attainment in language and literacy is below that expected.

### **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

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

- Counting skills are taught well but not sufficiently built on to deepen children's understanding of number
- A good range of activities helps to develop children's understanding of shape and size

#### **Commentary**

38. The teaching is satisfactory. Staff regularly show children how mathematics occurs in everyday events like birthdays and registrations. Children count the number present and calculate in their heads how many children are absent. They use number lines, counters, dice and matching games to learn how numbers are ordered for counting. Each day, they are asked to spot the mistakes on a 1 to 10 number line and they delight in pointing them out. Most can identify one more or one less than numbers between 1 and 10. That said, some children, particularly in the older class, are capable of learning more. They learn numbers from 10 to 20 but there is little evidence of children using pencil and paper in mathematics or of them beginning to explore addition and subtraction.

39. During independent activities, resources such as sand and water trays, building blocks and construction kits support children's understanding of shape. Adults encourage the use of vocabulary such as *smaller* and *tallest*, and suggest suitable tasks such as building progressively bigger sand castles. Because there are so many activities going on at the same time and only three adults available to interact with the children, such valuable conversations are spread thinly. As a result, some children who are capable of more are not sufficiently challenged. Although most children are on course to reach the levels expected in mathematical development by the end of reception, expectations should be higher.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of interesting activities expands children's experiences
- Teachers make good use of computers

### **Commentary**

40. Although it was not possible to judge children's level of attainment in this area, teachers' planning shows a systematic approach. For example, recent work was centred on plants. Children looked at various fruits and discussed where they were grown. They found Africa on a globe and discussed the weather and how this affected where different fruits grow. They looked closely at seeds and were introduced to the parts of a plant. A 'garden centre' was set up and children tended potted plants and pretended to water the flowers on sale. During the inspection, children looked carefully at tadpoles in an aquarium, recording their stages of development into frogs. They completed diagrammatic life cycles. Such activities develop early scientific skills of observation and recording and provide a good basis for subsequent work.

41. Children regularly work on computers both in the computer suite and in the classrooms. They confidently handle the mouse to select items and move them about on screen. Tasks are usually related to current work, for example, children produced pictures of flowers using a painting programme employing a good range of on-screen tools, such as the 'spray can'. They confidently program a floor robot to move forwards, tapping in commands in the correct sequence. The teaching is good in this area of learning.

### **Physical and creative development**

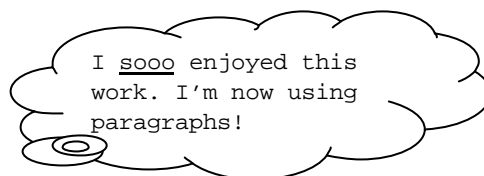
42. It was not possible to evaluate overall provision, the quality of teaching or achievement in these areas of learning but planning indicates that children have adequate opportunities to take part in physical and creative activities. The outdoor area has a soft surface and recently has been partly covered allowing all-weather use. It is equipped with a good range of pedalled vehicles and plans are in hand to provide climbing apparatus. The hall is used weekly for physical activities. Children frequently use pencils, pens, crayons and scissors and they make models from everyday materials. Such activities provide good opportunities for them to develop the manipulative skills which many lack as they start school. Role-play areas stimulate the creative use of language as children 'search for animals in the jungle' or 'serve customers in the garden centre'. They have frequent opportunities to explore colour, texture and shape through painting and modelling, and are beginning to build a repertoire of songs.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

- Very careful assessment helps teachers to pitch work at the right level
  - The drive to improve writing standards and to engage the interest of boys is successful
  - Drama is used well
  - Well-trained teaching assistants provide very good support, particularly for children with special educational needs
  - Children present work with care
43. Children achieve well. From a low starting point as they enter year 1, children are making good progress but standards are still below average by the end of year 2. Only two-thirds of the children are on course to reach the expected standards and very few are likely to exceed them. Children increasingly tackle new words with confidence because letter sounds are well taught. Through a good range of tasks, written work is also improving. However, there is much ground to catch up. Children are continuing to achieve well in years 3 to 6 and are reaching average standards. By year 6 most read at the expected levels. Children adopt a suitable writing style for different purposes, such as a newspaper article or a persuasive argument. Handwriting is well formed and children take care in presenting their work. About a quarter of the children in year 6 are achieving above average standards in reading and writing, reading a wide range of books and producing very lively stories and poems. Children's skills in speaking and listening are broadly as expected but opportunities for them to extend such skills are limited. Overall standards in English are improving as a result of consistently good teaching which motivates children to try hard.
44. The subject is well led and staff work well as a team with a constant drive to raise standards. For example, through detailed analysis of performance over time, the school identified a particular need to raise standards in boys' writing. A range of good strategies has started to engage boys and generate enthusiasm and interest. Very good use of drama brings challenge to writing tasks, such as planning a murder mystery story in years 5 and 6, or acting out the characters in a story about *Mr Wolf* to generate ideas about a range of different story endings in year 2.
45. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good features. Very good use of questioning extends children's thinking skills and teachers seize opportunities to elaborate on the meaning of new vocabulary. Very good assessment procedures allow teachers to carefully adapt work to meet the different learning needs of children in each class. Marking is helpful and positive. It identifies what children have done well and what they need to do to improve. Children are successfully encouraged to reflect on and evaluate their own work in 'thought bubbles', as in this typical example.



46. Classroom assistants take a full part in lessons to provide additional support for learning and especially for children with special educational needs. They are well trained to lead intensive small group sessions. Staff encourage high standards of presentation and children take evident pride in their written work. Neat, joined handwriting is taught regularly and children frequently draft and edit their work.

## Literacy across the curriculum

47. Good links are made with other subjects such as history, science and ICT. Children undertake writing and research tasks which help them to develop a range of styles. They learn to write persuasively, present different points of view and to write factual accounts. Using computers, they learn how to edit work, mix text and pictures and to use automatic functions such as spellcheckers. There is room for such activities to be extended into other subjects.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership and good teaching help children to progress well and enjoy mathematics
- Careful analysis of results allows teachers to support weaker areas of the curriculum
- The use of ICT provides very good support for learning basic skills
- Children who find learning difficult receive very good support from teaching assistants and the more able are well challenged.

### Commentary

48. Children in year 2 are making good progress and attaining average standards. Children can put numbers from 1 to 100 in the correct sequence, they know about odd and even numbers and carry out simple addition. Their confidence in using large numbers is steadily increasing and they can identify the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. By the end of year 6, attainment is above average. Children have good knowledge of number, for example, they can round decimal fractions to the nearest hundredth. They use their knowledge of mathematics well when looking for patterns and sequences or investigating how shapes transform when their co-ordinates are changed. Children have a good grasp of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Teachers' good grasp of the subject enables them to question children effectively which helps them to share and explain their mathematical thinking. Resources are used effectively to illustrate and clarify numeracy processes, especially during the introductory part of the lesson. All children are using a computerised scheme as part of a personalised learning system. This enables them to consolidate basic mathematics skills in an enjoyable way and is having a good impact on their learning.

49. The subject is well managed. Children who find learning difficult are given good support through a variety of additional learning opportunities and teaching assistants are well trained to provide valuable support. There is a mathematics club for the older pupils and this provides challenge for the higher achieving pupils and extends their learning. The school uses information from test results well to identify gaps in children's knowledge and understanding. They re-visit weak areas or change tack in order to give children a chance to catch up. In response to very helpful marking, children frequently write comments about how well they have understood new ideas. This helps teachers to determine whether to cover the ground again or to move on. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and the school has made good progress in the use of ICT to support learning in the subject.

## Numeracy across the curriculum

50. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop numeracy skills. In science, their measuring skills are called upon. The use of scales and distance measurement in geography enable children to use and extend their numeracy skills. Work in design and technology provides plenty of practice for them to apply their measuring skills in order to refine their complicated constructions.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- An emphasis on practical work helps children's understanding of scientific ideas
- Teachers can explain things clearly because they know the subject well
- There are good links with language, mathematics and ICT

### Commentary

51. Good leadership and management have helped to raise achievement. Careful analysis of assessment information enabled the co-ordinator to spot gaps in children's knowledge. As a result, more attention is now given to investigative work and is paying off. This was exemplified during an excellent lesson taught by the co-ordinator, when children in years 3 and 4 were thoroughly absorbed separating mixtures using sieves, magnets, colanders and water. In a very good year 6 lesson, eight extremely well chosen practical activities helped children to revise a whole range of previous work. They closely observed and carefully recorded the results of experiments. They had a good understanding of forces – for example, how the shape of the bow affects the speed of a toy boat. It was clear that children understood that light travels in straight lines as they directed a beam of light through a series of mirrors set at different angles. Very effective support from classroom assistants helps such practical work to run smoothly. For example, the year 2 class was split into two when investigating how materials changed when heated. This allowed experiments to be carried out safely, with all children involved. Children understood that some changes are reversible and others not. Although attainment is not as high as at the last inspection, very good teaching is helping children to achieve well through the school. Following a recent dip, standards in year 2 and year 6 are now average and improving.
52. A strong feature of the teaching is the skilful use of questioning. This draws on children's existing knowledge and understanding and helps them to move forward. Because they are confident in science, teachers are able to pose tricky questions and to sustain a good level of challenge during explanations and discussions. They mark work well, suggesting improvements and prompting further thought and enquiry. In response, children often add their own comments, showing a mature approach to learning.
53. Teachers introduce the correct scientific vocabulary and successfully encourage children to use it during lessons and in their written work. Children are taught how to write-up investigations in an appropriately technical style and learn how to use bullet points and charts to record their findings. They take a pride in their work and present it well. Mathematical skills are drawn on when children accurately measure time with stopwatches and carefully read scales when weighing and measuring. Graphs are used frequently and children learn how to use them to predict relationships – for example, the correlation between the weight of objects in air and their weight when submerged in water. Computers, including Internet research, play a strong part in children's learning. They use sensors to log changes in temperature, light and sound, and employ a computer microscope to examine minute objects, such as the leg of a bee.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for Information and communication technology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good management has led to improved resources

- ICT is used well in other subjects
- Assessment is not yet established

### **Commentary**

54. Driven by good leadership and management, standards in ICT have improved since the previous inspection. By year 2, children develop satisfactory skills and are becoming independent users of ICT. Confidently using the computer mouse to select on-screen tools, they use a painting program to explore the work of Matisse and produce their own pictures in the same style. Children have satisfactory word-processing skills and a reasonable grasp of early graph work, such as creating bar charts showing the range and frequency of eye colours in their class. Standards in year 6 are above average. Children work well independently and achieve well. They are skilled at finding information on the Internet and incorporating text and pictures from this source into computer presentations. Children used a good range of techniques to produce lively 'newspaper' accounts of World War 2.
55. There has been good improvement in both hardware and software since the previous inspection and, with good teaching throughout the school, children learn effectively. The whole school makes use of a computerised mathematics scheme which allows children to work individually at their own pace and level. As well as enhancing mathematics skills, this enables children to develop good working skills at the computers. Good use is made of the computer microscope in science. Digital cameras and scanners record school activities and provide illustrations for mock-up newspapers.
56. Teachers have developed good knowledge and understanding of how ICT can be used in all subjects. There are good examples of the use of databases throughout the school, providing very good links with mathematics. Year 6 pupils were developing multimedia presentations on a variety of countries where information had been obtained from the Internet. The use of ICT to support literacy is strong. Teachers use resources effectively and with confidence. The teaching assistants took part in the recent national training scheme and they provide valuable additional support during lessons.
57. The school is aware that more systematic assessment is needed in order to plan challenging activities that match children's needs more closely. Plans are in hand to address this.

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

58. Teachers use ICT well to support learning in other subjects. Particularly good use of computers is made in design and technology, where children control the movement of their toy fairground rides using sensors and switches. In science, children log changes in temperature and light using sensors and they use a computer microscope to produce enlarged images on screen – for example, the fine detail of a leaf.

### **HUMANITIES**

59. No lessons were seen in history because it is taught in alternate blocks with geography. It was therefore not possible to evaluate provision or to judge children's achievement. One lesson was observed in geography and children's work in history and geography was scrutinised.
60. Standards in **geography** are above those expected in geography in year 2 and year 6. In the year 6 lesson, children were using Ordnance Survey maps to learn about physical features, scale and four-figure map references. Having been introduced to the key and how to calculate distances, they were given a work sheet with a variety of tasks. These included the calculation of distances by using a length of cotton and the identification of physical features from a given map reference. They made good progress and demonstrated good mapping skills. Analysis of a sample of children's work from all classes indicates that children have a wide range of opportunities to study **history**. They reach the expected standards by year 2 and exceed them by year 6.



## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Valuable classroom experiences help children to learn about major world faiths
- First hand experience, through visits and visitors, is limited

### Commentary

61. Practical activities feature in many lessons. For example, children in years 1 and 2 learn about the Jewish celebration of Shabbat through preparing a special meal together with their teacher. As part of their study of Christianity children make a visit to the local church to investigate special features specific to the Christian faith, such as the font and the cross. Children in years 5 and 6 enjoy acting out a range of creation stories from a number of different religious and cultural traditions and in their written accounts start to show sensitive respect for different viewpoints and beliefs.
62. Although the school has established good links with the local church there are insufficient links with other world religions, through for example, visitors to school, Internet links with children in other schools, or visits to a range of places of worship.
63. The scrutiny of children's work shows that they are making steady progress and reaching the standards expected. No judgement on the quality of teaching was possible because only one lesson was seen, but planning indicates that all aspects of the subject are taught systematically through the school.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

64. It was not possible to fully evaluate provision in art and design, design and technology, music or physical education.
65. Work in children's books and on display showed that standards are good in **art and design**, an improvement since the last inspection. Children are enthusiastic and make good progress. Year 1 and 2 children undertake lively observational drawings showing an increasing awareness of line, texture and form, and year 6 pupils make beautiful and carefully crafted clay models of animals, richly decorated in the style of aboriginal art. Children undertake a varied range of art activities, including three-dimensional work, computer generated images and critical appreciation of the work of other artists from a range of cultural traditions. Displays and sketchbooks are of good quality.
66. Learning was enlivened through whole school participation in a recent event organised in collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery. Children studied a painting by Canaletto, and undertook a wide range of art activities linked to this during a recent art week. They spoke enthusiastically about this event and photographic evidence revealed lively art work.
67. Children progress well in **design and technology** and reach average standards by year 2. They continue to make good progress and, although standards are broadly as expected by year 6, children's construction skills have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Recent work on fairground models was taken to an advanced level with very good links with science and computer programming. Children's planning for such projects is detailed, but there is scope to develop fuller critical evaluation and modification of initial planning in recorded work. Children are keen to discuss their work, and enjoy a good range of activities through the school.



For example, year 2 learn how to make and test joins and to construct puppets, and children in year 3 enthusiastically design and make strong paper bags for holding potatoes.

68. It was not possible to judge standards in **music**. Children's singing during an assembly and a hymn practice varied in quality. When they were conducted well during hymn practice they sang tunefully and expressively, but left to their own devices in the assembly there was little enthusiasm and some inappropriate shouting. The school offers a good range of instrumental tuition and those involved in learning brass and woodwind instruments are keen to learn.
69. No lessons were seen in **physical education**. Children enjoy a good range of games and sports, Korfball being particularly popular with both boys and girls. The take-up of extra-curricular sporting activities is good and children take part in competitive tournaments with local schools.

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

70. It was not possible to judge overall provision as only one session was seen. The school does not teach personal, social and health education as a timetabled subject but relies on staff to cover these areas through other subjects or to make time for it as needed. This makes it difficult for the school to know which topics staff are covering and in what depth. The lesson seen was very good. From a simple starting point - a picture book entitled 'A Life Like Mine' - the teacher provoked a wide-ranging discussion on current affairs and global issues amongst an infant class. The newly formed school and class councils make a good contribution to children's understanding of citizenship and are proving to be a good forum for debate on areas for improvement in the school. Due attention is paid to drug and sex education.

## 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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Children's achievement	3
<b>Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well children learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for children	3
How well the school seeks and acts on children's views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
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).*