

INSPECTION REPORT

HALSTEAD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Halstead, Sevenoaks

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118274

Headteacher: Mrs Brenda Coupe

Lead inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild

Dates of inspection: 22 – 23 September 2003

Inspection number: 256320

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	82
School address:	Otford Lane Halstead Sevenoaks
Postcode:	TN14 7EA
Telephone number:	01959 532224
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Andrew Crighton
Date of previous inspection:	November 2001

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small rural primary school for pupils aged 4 to 11; there are 82 pupils on roll. Nearly all pupils are of white heritage and no pupils speak English as an additional language. Mobility is high, partly because the school takes pupils from a nearby army research base. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average; the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average but the intake is socially mixed. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is highly variable, ranging from some above average entrants to the Reception class and other pupils who join the school other than at the usual age of admission who are working well below the national average; attainment on entry is therefore average overall.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15918	Margaret Julia Goodchild	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs
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24142	Sylvia Argyle	Team inspector	English Humanities Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and improving rapidly; a number of aspects of the school's work are good. Standards are in line with the national average and pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Older pupils are currently achieving well but have yet to overcome some of the effects of previous underachievement. Teaching and learning are now good and the school is led and managed well. It gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are that:

- The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership, and inspires the commitment of all the staff.
- Good teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6, is enabling pupils to make up for previous underachievement; there remain some gaps in knowledge, especially in older pupils' writing skills.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average and computers are used well to support learning in a number of subjects.
- The school does not provide well enough for gifted and talented pupils and higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in Years 1 and 2.
- The good arrangements for care, social and moral development contribute to pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour.
- The school works well in partnership with parents and has very close links with the local community.
- Analysis of assessment information in English, mathematics and science is thorough but assessment systems have yet to be developed in the foundation subjects.

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected, in November 2001, when it was found to have serious weaknesses. It has made good progress in response to most of the key issues from the previous inspection. Although test results fell further in 2002, they increased significantly in 2003. Teaching has improved and is now good and this is leading to an improvement in standards. The school has not yet found a way of ensuring that higher-attaining pupils are challenged sufficiently in Years 1 and 2.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	E	E	E
mathematics	D	E	E*	E*
science	E	E	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.*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The youngest children achieve satisfactorily and are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals¹. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily. Standards for pupils at this early stage in the academic year are average in reading, writing and mathematics, but higher-attaining pupils do not always do as well as they could in mathematics and science. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have underachieved in the past, so although they are achieving well

¹ These are the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception.

now, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement is very good in ICT and standards are above national expectations. The school's Year 6 test results were well below those of schools nationally and those of similar schools in 2002, but results in tests in Years 2 and 6 improved significantly in 2003. Results in mathematics and science in Year 6 were in line with the national average at Level 4, and an above average percentage of pupils gained the higher Level 5 grade in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils' personal qualities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They have positive attitudes and behave well; attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school is providing a good quality education but has yet to overcome all the effects that previous weaknesses have had on standards. Recent test results show that it is making good progress in doing so. **Teaching is now good overall**; it is consistently good and occasionally very good in Years 3 to 6; it is satisfactory and sometimes good in Years 1 and 2 and in the Foundation Stage. Older pupils learn well; the learning of younger pupils is satisfactory. Assessment is thorough in English, mathematics and science and the school undertakes detailed analysis of assessment information. This is increasingly being used to raise standards but not yet to identify and meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils.

A good range of clubs and educational visits enriches a satisfactory curriculum. The school cares for its pupils well and works closely in partnership with parents to enhance pupils' learning. There are very good links with the local community and good links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher inspires other staff and teamwork is strong. Monitoring and self-evaluation have been central to the improvements that have taken place in the school. The governing body provides satisfactory support to the school and has been working to increase its effectiveness.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly positive about the school and appreciative of the improvements they have seen in their children's progress. Pupils are happy, enthusiastic and feel safe in school. They particularly enjoy opportunities for independent learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing in Years 3 to 6 with a particular emphasis on the weaknesses already identified by the school's own analyses.
- Improve learning opportunities for gifted and talented pupils and ensure that higher-attaining pupils receive sufficient challenge, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Develop and implement a system for assessing pupils' work in the foundation subjects.

To meet statutory requirements the school should:

- Ensure that all required information is included in the school prospectus.
- Monitor the implementation of the school's Race Policy and report the findings to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is satisfactory overall and standards are average throughout the school, except in ICT where they are above national expectations. Pupils' achievement in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils are currently achieving well in Years 3 to 6, in response to consistently good teaching. These pupils have underachieved in the past, however, so their achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers and make good progress in some lessons when they receive support from learning support assistants. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and test results have improved significantly, higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged.
- Pupils are currently achieving well in Years 3 to 6, in response to consistently good teaching.
- Year 6 test results in English in 2003 showed that there are not enough pupils gaining Level 4; the school's own analysis has identified some weaknesses in writing in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils achieve very well in ICT and standards are above average.

Commentary

1. At the time of the last inspection, standards were described as being 'too low'. In 2002, the school's Year 2 test results were above the national average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. Results were well above those of similar schools in reading, below in writing and above in mathematics. Results in teacher assessments in science placed the school in the top five percent for the number of pupils reaching Level 2 but no pupils gained Level 3, which is the expected result of higher-attaining pupils. Results in 2003 show a marked improvement at Level 2 and Level 3 in reading and writing and at Level 2 in mathematics. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 in mathematics fell slightly and was below the national average. As in 2002, all pupils reached Level 2 in science but none scored Level 3.
2. Year 6 test results fell from being well below the national average in 2001 to the bottom five percent compared with schools nationally and similar schools² in 2002. English results in 2002 were well below average overall, in the bottom five percent at Level 4 and well below average at Level 5. Results in mathematics were in the bottom five percent overall, at Level 4 and Level 5. Results in science in 2002 were well below average at Level 4 and Level 5. These results compare very unfavourably with those of similar schools and suggest poor achievement. The school readily admits that achievement was unsatisfactory as a result of weaknesses in teaching and considerable teacher absence between 2000 and 2002. The very low results are explained partly, however, by the nature of the 2002 year group: a large proportion of pupils who took Year 6 tests that year had special educational needs or other difficulties, and several had joined the school during Years 3 to 6. Only four of the pupils who took Year 6 tests in 2002 had been in the school from Year 3 onwards.
3. Results in 2003 showed a substantial rise in standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6. Results in mathematics and science in 2003 were in line with the national average at Level 4, although results in English at Level 4 were below the national average. This was because pupils did well in reading but the writing scores pulled down overall results: only half

² Similar schools are those whose pupils gained similar results to this school in their Year 2 tests four years previously.

the pupils reached Level 4 in writing. Results at Level 5 were above the national average in English and mathematics and average in science.

4. The trend over time in Year 6 tests results was below the national trend from 1998 to 2002, with a distinct improvement in 2003 reflecting improvements in teaching and the impact of good leadership. The school did not meet its targets in 2002, but exceeded them significantly in 2003. Its 2004 targets provide a high level of challenge. Girls outperformed boys in 2000 to 2003, but there are gender fluctuations within individual subjects from year to year that do not present a clear overall picture. The small number of pupils means that the performance of one boy or girl can have a distinct impact on results by gender.
5. Children in the Foundation Stage are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in most areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. Evidence from the work of children who have just moved up into Year 1 shows that most children reach, and a small number exceed, the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Standards for children who have just entered the Reception class are currently average in the other areas of learning.
6. Lessons and pupils' work in Years 1 to 6 show that standards have risen since the last inspection in response to improvements in teaching. At this early point in the academic year, standards are average in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6, with the exception of ICT where pupils are reaching standards that are above those expected nationally.
7. Children in the Foundation Stage are achieving satisfactorily; in aspects of creative development they have limited opportunities for independent learning, exploration and personal expression. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily and at times, for instance in a history and a science lesson seen, they do well in response to stimulating teaching. Lower and average-attaining pupils achieve better in Years 1 and 2 than higher-attaining pupils, because the latter are not challenged sufficiently in mathematics and science and in some literacy lessons. Higher-attaining pupils tend to do better in English than in mathematics and science partly because they benefit from opportunities to work independently when researching and writing about topics that lead to the production of individual 'books', like those they made after a visit to the seaside.
8. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now achieving consistently well in English, mathematics and science because teaching is good and assessment information is used thoroughly to identify and remedy gaps in learning. Pupils achieve well in most other subjects, except in religious education where their achievement is satisfactory overall and in ICT, where achievement is very good as a result of the good resources and very good teaching. Opportunities to extend and consolidate their learning through the use of ICT in a range of subjects supports pupils' achievement and further extends their ICT skills.
9. Parents are very happy with the progress that their children are making now. They have been aware of a distinct rise in standards since new staff were appointed, following a period when they felt their children were coasting and not developing as much as they would have liked.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils like school and take a full part in the varied range of activities on offer. Pupils consistently behave well in and around the school. Good relationships are nurtured amongst pupils. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for social and moral development is good, and this contributes significantly to pupils' personal development and to their achievement. Provision for spiritual and cultural development, including the promotion of multicultural awareness, is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes towards school.
- Behaviour is good in and around the school.
- The school enables pupils to grow in self-esteem and maturity.
- The school has very effective systems for assuring pupils' regular attendance.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Commentary

10. Pupils throughout the school have good attitudes towards school; they are keen to attend and say that they are happy with their school. Pupils take an active interest in what they are being taught and are keen to show what they can do.
11. Behaviour is good overall, and behaviour in assemblies and in the dining room is very good. No incidents of poor behaviour were observed during the inspection. Pupils move safely and sensibly through the corridors and when they go outside, they do so in an orderly fashion. In the playground, they respond well to routines at the end of playtime, they quickly come to order when it is time to come in. They are polite to each other and to adults and visitors. The calm approach taken by members of staff is reflected in the pupils, including those who have experienced difficulties in the past. Pupils with behavioural difficulties make good progress as a result of appropriate planning to provide consistently for their needs. Adults in the school are very good role models. The school has maintained its record of good behaviour since the last inspection and there were no exclusions in the past year.
12. Pupils are friendly and welcoming, they are encouraged to develop a sense of self-esteem and responsibility for themselves. They are offered good opportunities to carry out duties in and around the school. The good classroom organisation means pupils help those with special educational needs. Pupils demonstrate maturity in their respect for each other's feelings and beliefs. Pupils are aware of the school rules on bullying and respond to them well. Pupils relate well to one another and parents say that pupils get on well together. Parents and pupils did not raise any concerns about bullying; the school keeps a close eye on any minor incidents and deals promptly with any hint of bullying.
13. Attendance is in line with the national average; unauthorised absence is slightly above average. This is attributed to a small minority of parents taking their children on holidays during the school term. The school now has very effective procedures for the early detection of any attendance difficulties and supports pupils and parents in an effort to encourage good attendance and punctuality.
14. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory; provision for moral and social development is good. Assemblies make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. They are of a good standard and are received with great interest by the pupils; they give opportunities for prayer and celebration. Within class, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have particularly good opportunities for reflection. Pupils realise that their opinions and ideas will be taken seriously, discussed and valued. Throughout the school, pupils have a good awareness of their community and understand the importance of their own culture, as well as having a sense of the wider world through donations for others less fortunate than themselves. They have a satisfactory understanding of a range of faiths and beliefs. The school pays a great deal of attention to ensuring pupils understand the difference between right and wrong from an early age, and pupils demonstrate this very well. Through fostering positive relationships between pupils, welcoming a number of visitors into school and taking pupils on trips, the school promotes pupils' social development well.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

School data	4.8
National data	5.4

School data	0.6
National data	0.5

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 is now providing a good quality of education but the full impact of current practice is not yet evident because teachers are working to overcome the impact of previous weaknesses on pupils' achievement. Good teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6, means that gaps in pupils' knowledge are being filled. Throughout the school, assessment is used very effectively to measure the progress that pupils are making and to identify ways of improving achievement.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, although some good lessons were seen in both classes during the inspection. Teaching is consistently good in Years 3 to 6, with some very good teaching that is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and helping to raise standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and this is having a good effect on standards.
- All teachers display good basic teaching skills and manage pupils' behaviour well.
- A great deal of attention has been given to improving teachers' planning – which is generally good – but work does not always meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils.
- Throughout the school, pupils apply themselves well to the tasks that are set for them and try especially hard when they are given the opportunity to work independently.
- Assessment in English, mathematics and science is good; the school has not yet developed systems for recording how well pupils are doing in the foundation subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	12	4	0	0	0

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

- At the time of the last inspection, teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching has improved a great deal since that time, as a result of the concerted and determined efforts of the headteacher and the appointment of an entirely new teaching staff in the past year. Teachers are working hard in an attempt to overcome previous underachievement, and teaching in Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 is now consistently good and sometimes very good; teaching in other classes is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Both the 2003 National Curriculum test results and inspection findings show that good teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6, is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement and on standards in the school.
- All teachers display a range of good basic skills on which they can easily build and have good relationships with pupils. Pupils say that their teachers are kind, helpful and enable them to understand their work. Teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly and manage pupils' behaviour well. They have very good questioning skills and explain learning objectives to pupils.

Teachers are consistent in their management of pupils' behaviour and this ensures that pupils in all classes have the opportunity to learn in an orderly and harmonious environment. This supports pupils' achievement and the school's efforts to raise standards. Learning support assistants are well informed about their role and make an effective contribution in all lessons. Homework is meaningful, interesting and varied, and effective in moving pupils on in their learning.

19. As this is a small school, each class in Years 1 to 6 necessarily covers a two-year age span. This means that teachers face particular challenges in planning and in deciding how to organise groups of pupils for various activities, because the learning needs of different ages in the class vary. All planning is very detailed because the school has tried to ensure that systems are 'watertight' in order to raise standards and eliminate weak teaching. In Years 3 to 6, thorough planning is leading to well-structured lessons where pupils are grouped appropriately and most receive work that is well matched to their learning needs. The best planning and management of a mixed age class – which spans Levels 1 to 5 – is found in Years 5 and 6, where the teacher is most effective in matching work to the very wide range of prior attainment in the class. Planning is also good in Years 3 and 4, with a strong emphasis on providing activities that are motivating and inspiring to pupils. In these two classes, there is a sophistication in the way planning is translated into lesson activities.
20. Planning in Years 1 and 2 is exceptionally detailed and shows tremendous dedication on the part of the teacher. As a result, it is clear what activities are to be covered in each lesson and what the overarching learning objectives are. An overemphasis on detail in planning has taken place, however, at the expense of standing back and considering what different groups of pupils should learn in each part of the lesson. For example, in English and mathematics, the learning objectives do not always make explicit how the quite different needs of the two separate year groups will be met or pay sufficient attention to ensuring that higher-attaining pupils are challenged. In lessons seen in literacy and numeracy, this led to far too much time being spent on the introduction – which lasted for half an hour in both the lessons – instead of dividing up the time in a way that was best suited to the wide range of prior attainment in the class. These lessons contained many strengths in the way the teacher related to the pupils, in the use of the learning support assistant and in good management of the class, but methods and the timing of activities did not serve the full range of pupils' needs. Although they were set tasks that were appropriately matched to their prior attainment when they moved off to work individually, the introduction in each lesson was pitched more to the needs of the youngest and lowest-attaining pupils and did not extend the older or higher-attaining pupils sufficiently. Scrutiny of pupils' work in mathematics and science shows that higher-attaining pupils are not being challenged as much as they should be. Planning on paper does not need to be nearly as detailed, but greater thought is required in Years 1 and 2 when deciding how to structure lessons in English and mathematics and in planning tasks to challenge higher-attaining pupils in science.
21. Throughout the school, pupils concentrate well, are keen to contribute their ideas and answer questions. They are interested in learning and readily become involved in the tasks that are set for them. Pupils organise their written work well, with the date, title and learning objectives at the beginning of each piece, in response to well-established school routines. Boys and girls work with equal diligence. Older pupils are developing good note-taking skills and pupils of all ages are confident to present their findings to the rest of the class. Pupils are keen to do well and work effectively together. They try hard to solve their own problems, for instance in a Year 3 and 4 English lesson where they used the ICT suite. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 all show real excitement when working with computers and quickly become engrossed in ICT tasks. Pupils' work shows that in Years 1 to 6, they try especially hard when they are given the opportunity to work independently. The practice that is found throughout the school of setting pupils topics to research at home and then getting them to present their findings in individual 'books' provides pupils with very good opportunities for independent learning. They respond with obvious enthusiasm to such opportunities and put in a great deal of effort to present their work imaginatively and attractively.

22. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is good and this is contributing directly to the improvement in standards and to the good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Assessment information in the core subjects is used to identify any underachievement, to pinpoint gaps in pupils' knowledge and to set individual targets that are communicated with pupils so that they know how to improve their work, as well as with parents so that they know how to help their children. The careful analysis of test results ensures that pupils with special educational needs are easily identified and that their progress, alongside that of all pupils, is carefully tracked. A similar use of assessment information to list gifted and talented pupils and to devise strategies to meet their needs has not yet been developed, although teachers are aware of which pupils have the highest prior attainment. Systems for recording how well pupils are doing in the foundation subjects have not yet been developed, because the school has concentrated on raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Introducing a system of assessment for the foundation subjects has been identified as a priority in the current school improvement plan.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory range of curricular opportunities that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and those of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The curriculum meets the needs of all the pupils, except those who are gifted and talented. Opportunities for enrichment, including through activities outside normal lesson time, are good. The accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively and learning resources are satisfactory. High quality displays in all areas of the school promote pupils learning. The school has enough teachers who are well qualified and sufficiently experienced to support the current curriculum and to facilitate continued improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of enrichment activities extends pupils' learning opportunities and contributes to pupils' personal development.
- The school has made good improvement in its arrangements for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school does not provide well enough for gifted and talented pupils so they do not do as well as they could.

Commentary

23. An otherwise satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a range of activities both within and beyond usual timetabled lessons. There is a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. The school is an active member of the Sevenoaks and district primary school sports association and takes part in local activities, such as 'Chance to Dance' at a local theatre, swimming galas and exhibits pupils' work at local venues. Increasing attention is being given to providing pupils with opportunities for active learning. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have been developing a wildlife garden and pond, other pupils have taken part in investigations and multimedia presentations, produced large scale art and design work, and leaflets with a genuine purpose. The oldest pupils in the school have the opportunity to go on a residential trip each year and all pupils go on a range of outings and educational visits.
24. At the time of the last inspection, improving the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs was a key issue. Although it took the school some time to improve its systems, it has made good use of the advice of an experienced special educational needs co-ordinator from another school to bring about necessary developments. Pupils with special educational needs are now effectively supported and the practice of teachers and learning support assistants meeting at the beginning of each week to discuss in detail the progress of individual pupils is a strength. In these meetings, staff consider what strategies might be employed to overcome pupils' individual difficulties. Pupils are better supported because the

learning support assistants perform a monitoring role for the teacher, by feeding back information about how pupils with special educational needs have responded to particular tasks. At the same time, the teacher increases the learning support assistants' knowledge about how to tackle particular difficulties. In lessons seen, pupils with special educational needs were being supported well so that they completed tasks successfully alongside other pupils. The school's emphasis on analysing assessment information and setting targets for all pupils is benefiting pupils with special educational needs and proving helpful in curriculum planning and in identifying the support that they need.

25. The school improvement plan rightly identifies as a priority the need to improve the learning opportunities provided for gifted and talented pupils. At present, this aspect of the school's work is unsatisfactory because of the absence of effective arrangements. The highest-attaining pupils in older classes are given a lot of investigative work to develop their skills and challenge their thinking. Staff know their pupils very well and the headteacher has produced a wealth of assessment data indicating each pupil's prior performance and measuring the progress that pupils have made. Overall provision for gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory because the school has not formally identified these pupils, nor devised a policy setting out how it intends to meet their learning needs. A draft policy statement prepared recently does not provide effective guidance to teachers on how to identify gifted and talented pupils, what strategies they might adopt or the resources available nationally and through the Internet for use in curriculum planning for gifted and talented pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are well cared for and supported. The school provides a tranquil environment in which pupils feel secure. Appropriate attention is given to welfare, health and safety, and pupils receive good support and advice. The monitoring of pupils' achievement and personal development is thorough.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school enables pupils to feel secure and confident.
- The school is an orderly community in which pupils' behaviour is managed very well.
- Child protection systems are good and the school takes good care of pupils welfare.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are very good.
- There is no school council, although pupils' views are sought from time to time.

Commentary

26. The school takes good care of its pupils. Teachers know and respect individual pupils and respond to their needs. Pupils say with confidence that if they had any concerns they would talk to their teacher. Pupils are well supported by the good induction programmes when they join the school and by arrangements to prepare them for transferring to secondary school. By the time pupils are ready to move on, they are confident and self-assured.
27. Very well-established daily routines make an important contribution to the tranquil atmosphere, and the school's procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are highly effective. Pupils, in turn, quickly fit in with expectations, which makes for an orderly and secure environment. Even the youngest children in the school have rapidly adapted to classroom routines this early in the Autumn term, as a result of the well-established systems. Being a small school, each pupil is well known to the staff and teachers soon recognise patterns of behaviour and attendance that might cause concern. Pupils are supervised very well at playtimes.
28. Good child protection procedures are in place and are understood and practised by all staff. The school receives very good support from the local education authority and the headteacher is the nominated child protection officer. Medical arrangements are good. The sharing of information about children with health problems is handled with sensitivity and the teaching staff

are appropriately briefed. There is an accident book and all staff are aware how to log incidents when they occur.

29. Very good procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' academic achievement and personal development are underpinned by a system whereby pupils' achievement is carefully tracked and assessment information analysed. Any pupil who begins to underachieve is quickly targeted. The setting of personal targets is good, as is the monitoring of pupils' personal development. The monitoring of attendance is very good and the education welfare worker works closely with the school.
30. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to accept responsibilities in class and assembly; and because of the school's positive ethos, they volunteer readily and older pupils carry out their duties without being prompted. As yet, there is no school council through which pupils could have a say in the way the school develops; however, there are satisfactory systems for seeking pupils' views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and the information the school provides to parents is of good quality. There are good links with other schools and very good links with the local community; these have a positive effect on standards and enhance pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents show a high level of satisfaction with the school.
- The school works well in partnership with parents and keeps them well informed.
- Links with the local community are very good and those with other schools are good.

Commentary

31. Parents who attended the meeting before the inspection and completed the parents' questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the school and expressed the belief that they are 'lucky to have such a good small school'. Apart from improving the community's perception of the school as a whole, there is nothing that parents at the meeting would like to see changed. Parents who completed the questionnaire also showed a good level of support for the school.
32. The school has worked hard, with considerable success, to involve parents through a wide range of activities, such as workshops to explain the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Opportunities for parents to view their children's work at school and become involved in their learning are good. There is a variety of after-school clubs run by parents and staff. These provide very good support for pupils. Parents make a valuable contribution to raising pupils' achievement and the involvement of parents from a range of different backgrounds helps pupils to feel more socially included.
33. Parents receive good information about the school and how their children are doing. A regular flow of information about what is being taught keeps parents well informed. Information to parents is well structured and of good quality; copies of this information are available in the foyer for parents to read if they are unsure. A reading record introduced into Years 3 to 6 provides an opportunity for very good dialogue between home and school. Reports to parents are of very good quality. They are detailed and focus well on what pupils know, understand and can do. They give parents a clear idea of how their children are doing across the whole curriculum in considerable depth. By including the identification of areas for development, reports enable parents to contribute to their children's learning. Furthermore, parents have good opportunities to come in to school to discuss their children's reports and to talk to teachers at the beginning and end of the school day.

34. Very good links exist between the local community and the school. The school makes strenuous efforts to be central to the community and many people from the village help within the school or come as visitors. There are good links with the church, which has a direct impact on pupils' learning in history and religious education, and with local businesses. The school not only capitalises very well on the expertise and resources available in its immediate vicinity but is also concerned to contribute in return by taking part in charitable work.
35. Links with other schools are good. The school works closely with the local nursery, helped by its location on the school premises, and this supports the transfer of children into the Reception class. The transfer of information on pupils to partner secondary schools is efficient and timely. There are good curricular links with other schools where practicable; these links enhance learning opportunities for pupils and enable staff to share and extend their expertise.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher and other staff with key co-ordination roles provide good leadership. The school is well managed and runs efficiently. The governing body provides satisfactory support to the school but is still developing other aspects of its role.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is a strong and purposeful leader who has successfully established a cohesive team of staff committed to school improvement.
- A great deal of information, gathered through monitoring and the analysis of performance data, has been used to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards.
- Although governors provide satisfactory support, the role of governors as critical friends to the school is at a fairly early stage of development.
- The school meets most but not quite all statutory requirements.

Commentary

36. The headteacher is a strong and purposeful leader who has successfully inspired the staff to work with her to improve the school. She remained resilient in her efforts to develop the school through a period when it experienced staffing difficulties and test results fell further. The fruits of her labour have only become apparent following the appointment of an effective group of teachers in the past year. The headteacher has been able to form these into a cohesive team of individuals all committed to school improvement, and all self-critical in their attempts to improve the quality of education further. Effective leadership and good subject co-ordination – especially in English, mathematics and ICT – have been key factors in the rise in standards revealed by the 2003 tests and the school is well placed to improve further. At present, it is poised between being a satisfactory or good school and should be able to tip the balance in the direction of becoming a good school without undue difficulty because the necessary systems are in place to bring this about. If anything, staff have become too focused and pressurised by the need to raise standards. The school is likely to improve most by a slight loosening of control and greater reflection on what now needs to be fine-tuned to bring about further improvement.
37. Alongside the strong leadership, good management has been equally important in raising standards, since it has led to a detailed understanding of the school's work. As a result of thorough monitoring, particularly of data, the headteacher has an in-depth knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and is able to use this to identify what action needs to be taken in any given area. She regularly monitors lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' work. The headteacher's analysis of assessment data is particularly thorough, and subject co-ordinators are becoming increasingly involved in this valuable exercise. This is giving teachers precise knowledge that they can use in their lesson planning to make a real difference to pupils' learning.

38. Although the governing body provides satisfactory support, the role of governors as critical friends to the school is still at an early stage of development. The Chair of Governors, invited to take up the position by the local education authority in January 2003, brings experience to the role and fulfils it well, recognising that all decisions must be judged according to the impact they have on pupils' achievement. A number of other governors are new to their role and show enthusiasm but are still learning about what makes for an effective governing body. Appropriate action is being taken to develop the governors' role through the establishment of an action plan and analysis of the governing body's effectiveness. The take-up of governor training is good and link governors have been identified who are to take a particular interest in given subjects. The governing body is beginning to hold the school to account and to develop its monitoring role, but has further to go in this respect to support the staff fully in taking the school forward.
39. Although most statutory requirements are fully met, the school does not provide all the information it should in its prospectus in relation to special educational needs and its arrangements to counter any disability discrimination. It has a race equality policy but has not yet monitored the implementation of the school's policy or reported the findings to parents.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	224410.88
Total expenditure	227155.25
Expenditure per pupil	3245.07

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	15911.20
Balance carried forward to the next	13166.83

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Commentary

40. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. Children are achieving satisfactorily in all areas, although in creative development opportunities provided are too restrictive. Good teaching was seen in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development sessions, and teamwork between the teacher and learning support assistant is good. Medium-term planning appropriately reflects national guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum. The teacher took up post at the beginning of this term and has not yet produced sufficiently detailed daily plans. In most instances, however, lessons in the Reception class provide effective learning opportunities for a range of prior attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development even if the match of work to the needs of different children has not been documented. Good assessment practices mean that the teacher and learning support assistant keep detailed records of children's development in each area of learning and the reports produced for parents at the end of the school year are of very good quality. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, whereas it was described as very good at the last inspection. Some further fine-tuning is now required in order to reflect more accurately national guidance for this age group so that children learn not only through formal sessions that develop their literacy and mathematical skills, but also through independent learning, explorative play and opportunities for personal expression.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children behave very well, relate well with one another and concentrate on the work they are given to do.
- There are too few opportunities for independent learning.

Commentary

41. Children are learning that good behaviour is a fundamental requirement in the classroom and are quickly grasping school routines. Their behaviour is very good because this aspect of their development is continually promoted and expectations are high. They are learning to put up their hands and pay attention to adults and to one another. Their behaviour in the dining hall is particularly good: they sit quietly and wait for their food without any fuss. They have quickly come to trust the adults who work with them and it is obvious that they feel secure. Children relate well to one another, play happily together, and there is no evidence of any unkindness between children. They have been quick to settle in, aided by effective induction procedures and by the fact that many previously attended the nursery, which shares the same premises. Almost all children concentrate on the tasks that have been set for them and try to succeed. Girls tend to be more focused than boys when engaging in optional activities; a minority of boys sometimes tend to flit between activities.
42. The environment in the Foundation Stage classroom is tightly controlled. This is having the positive effects described above, but there are limited opportunities for children to work independently and to make decisions for themselves. When optional activities are provided, children choose from activities in which their own decision-making and opportunities for improvisation are quite limited. The school has rightly identified the need to develop the outside

area so that children have improved access to outdoor activities and this would go some way to widening the scope of activities available to them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to develop their listening skills and already follow instructions well.
- There are some good interactions between the learning support assistant and individual children; opportunities for more imaginative play could be improved to foster language development.
- The use of joined script in labels around the classroom and on children's work does not support a clear understanding of letter formation.
- Children show interest in books and handle them with respect; parents have good opportunities to share books with their children.

Commentary

43. Children's listening skills are being developed well. Even at this early stage in the academic year, they listen well to stories and pay careful attention to detail. As a result, they are able to answer questions about what happened in a story and in doing so, it is evident that some have taken in a lot of detail.
44. When small groups of children work with the learning support assistant, she engages in conversations with children that develop their vocabulary, and give them an opportunity to express their likes and dislikes and to talk about their experiences. Many children are able to explain what they are doing and are confident in communicating with one another. They are able to negotiate when making decisions about what they should do when they work together. Limited opportunities for children to engage in independent activities, where their own choice and imagination dictates the focus, places some restriction on the development of language. Activities – and the way they develop – are overly controlled and, so, children do not improvise in their play in a way that could lead to acquiring new language as a result of discovery and exploration.
45. The work of last year's Foundation Stage children shows that by the time they leave Reception, most children reach the Early Learning Goals and higher-attaining children exceed national expectations. All children understand that print is used to convey meaning and are able to write or suggest a comment to accompany their drawings. Higher-attaining children describe what is happening in their drawing with one or two sentences that include some correct use of capital letters and full stops. Lower-attaining children show some confusion in the formation of letters. The practice of adults labelling children's work and displays around the room using a joined script and even giving children the challenge of overwriting joined script is working against children's clear understanding of letter formation.
46. Children are making good progress in learning letter sounds and some already have a clear awareness of the letter and sound at the beginning of common words. The teacher's expectations are high in this area and this is enabling children to make rapid progress with their early reading skills. They show interest in books and handle them with respect; parents have good opportunities to share books with their children through the system for taking books home.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Commentary

47. Observation of one mathematical development session and conversation with a small number of children shows that provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**. Children's are likely to reach, and in some cases exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. Having recently begun in the Foundation Stage, some children can already count beyond ten and others are making satisfactory progress in counting. Children understand how to sequence, they are beginning to know how to order objects into sets and the use of games and worksheets is developing a range of mathematical skills. Planning for mathematical development shows that teachers' expectations are high and the range of activities closely reflects national guidance for the Foundation Stage.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Commentary

48. No sessions focusing on knowledge and understanding of the world were seen during the inspection. Discussion with the Foundation Stage co-ordinator, scrutiny of planning, resources around the classroom and in the school grounds, and information about the opportunities that are afforded for children to go on trips and outings show that provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**. They are therefore likely to meet the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Commentary

49. No sessions focusing on physical development were seen but children were observed at play and during a short session when a group moved to the outdoor area. Children show average skills when playing on wheeled toys, running, balancing and moving to music. They have good opportunities to take part in clubs and activities outside lesson time to develop their physical skills and responded well to the opportunity to dance as part of the Tongan cultural event during the inspection. The physical control shown by many children when using pencils and paintbrushes, controlling the mouse on the computer or manipulating construction toys is already good at this early point in the academic year. Provision in physical development is **satisfactory** and children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to learn songs, which are incorporated appropriately into literacy and numeracy sessions.
- The opportunity for children to express their own ideas through art activities and to work expressively are too restricted.

Commentary

50. Children are learning a range of songs within literacy and numeracy sessions, which support their learning in these areas. Most children join in with well-known songs and many enjoy copying the teacher's movements when enacting a song. They show a satisfactory awareness of music when given the opportunity to dance.
51. The artistic activity within a creative development session seen provided no opportunities for children to make choices in the materials and techniques they used or in the outcome of artistic activities. In this sense, the session was unsatisfactory and the outcome – whereby every child produced an almost identical teddy bear picture by sticking pre-cut hessian shapes into a pre-drawn bear outline – provided no opportunities for creative development. Work on display shows some other examples where children have produced almost identical images. This is unsatisfactory practice. Children have opportunities to paint, where there is no adult-determined starting point, but painting is not well organised within an imaginative context to ensure they children gain the most they could from the experience. Children in the previous Reception year produced some lively drawings, however, to illustrate written work. Planning for creative development is better than current practice in this area and staff describe instances where children have produced imaginative products in the past. Photographs confirm that overall provision is satisfactory, although other evidence was limited at the time of the inspection. There is a need for staff development to ensure children acquire a range of artistic skills and to improve opportunities for them to express their own ideas in a much freer atmosphere of creativity.
52. There are some opportunities for imaginative role-play, but lack of space and insufficient adult promotion of this aspect of children's play means that they are making limited use of the dressing-up area. They do not have free access to a range of resources that would promote this aspect of their development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory and improving but standards of writing need to be improved in Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching is good; teachers are enthusiastic, committed and work as a team.
- Co-ordination of English is very good; careful planning and monitoring is identifying areas for development, ensuring progress as pupils move through the school and improving standards.
- The infant and junior libraries have inadequate resources for pupils' independent learning.

Commentary

53. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection. In 2002, the school's Year 2 test results were above the national average and above similar schools in reading but below average and below similar schools in writing. Results in 2003 show a marked improvement at Level 2 and Level 3 in reading and writing: nine out of ten pupils reached the expected level in both reading and writing, four out of ten at a higher level. In Year 6 tests, results in 2002 were well below average overall, in the bottom five percent at Level 4 and well below average at Level 5. Results in 2003 showed a substantial rise in standards, although results in English at Level 4 were below the national average of the previous year. This was because although pupils did well in reading – seven out of eight pupils reached the expected level in reading, three at a

higher level – the writing scores pulled down overall results. Only half the pupils reached Level 4 in writing, indicating that this is still a weakness. Girls did better than boys, as they do nationally, though with small numbers in the school, this is not always the case. The trend over the last five years shows a decline from 1998 to 2001 but a significant improvement in 2003.

54. Standards seen during the inspection were close to the national average. Very much improved subject co-ordination and higher expectations from the headteacher and new staff have seen the steady fall in standards reversed. There are clear indications that pupils' achievement in both reading and writing is improving and it is at least satisfactory. Speaking and listening skills are good and teachers find many opportunities for pupils to speak in informal and prepared activities. All pupils have the opportunity to talk and present their ideas in class circle time. They are well behaved and show good attitudes as they learn to listen carefully and to respect to each other's contributions. They show confidence in a wide range of whole-class discussions and activities. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed logical thought as well as good homework preparation in their explanation of a chair design. They learned, and were encouraged to use, correct technical vocabulary, aided by the professional designer who had come into school to help.
55. Standards in reading are average and steadily improving. The school places a strong emphasis on letter sounds and blends and pupils in all years are now using these well to work out unfamiliar words for themselves. In their well kept, personalised reading records, to which parents make a good contribution, pupils in all years are beginning to express their opinions about their favourite authors. Pupils work well through reading schemes when younger and enjoy choosing their own reading books as they get older. Many in Year 6 buy books and this is encouraged in the annual Reading Week with a day of fun, dressing up as characters from books. Both infant and junior libraries have improved since the last inspection. Money raised in a sponsored walk by parents and pupils has helped to buy more books. Pleasant furnishings were bought with money donated by a local firm. However, the book stock and cataloguing is still insufficient to meet the needs of pupils' independent work.
56. Writing is still the key area for development. Although standards of handwriting are good and practised regularly, a close look at pupils' work confirms there are many gaps to be filled and some insecure learning that needs revisiting. Teachers have adopted new strategies to improve writing. Drafting is a practised routine for all pupils to refine and improve their writing. Pupils learn to write in styles to suit different audiences, paying particular attention to accuracy and the language used. Pupils in Year 2 have written short accounts of 'Seaside Holidays in the Past', dividing their work into chapters. The advertisements of pupils in Years 3 and 4 show very good computer skills and language well chosen to sell their imaginary products. 'Ashamed of your car...forgotten its colour?' were the persuasive phrases chosen by one pupil to advertise his car wash service. Higher-attaining boys in Year 6 produce work of a high standard in the form of poetry, play scripts and narratives. In a challenging exercise analysing the opening paragraphs of a number of stories, they showed good collaboration and thought in identifying common and different stylistic features. Lower-attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, find writing difficult. Grammatical skills are often unsatisfactory and spelling is weak.
57. The quality of teaching is now good and this is a significant improvement. Teachers, all new since the last inspection, have high levels of commitment and are working well as a team. They plan carefully to help pupils of different abilities, though this is often difficult given the very wide range of age and prior attainment in each class. Lessons have clear objectives and their pace is appropriate. Through good marking and very good tracking, teachers help pupils consolidate their learning and make progress. Assessment procedures have improved considerably, though pupils are not yet entirely clear about their individual targets and levels. Pupils with special educational needs benefit when they receive support from the learning support assistants and parent volunteers.

58. The school is fully aware of its shortcomings in English. The co-ordinator, working with the headteacher, is providing very good leadership. Together, they have taken significant steps to improve teaching and create a positive learning environment. By monitoring teaching and moderating assessments of pupils' work, they have highlighted strengths and areas to be developed. The analysis of test data and other assessment information has given the school valuable information about gaps in pupils' learning in writing. As a result, the school is now well placed to improve the quality of writing and build on the satisfactory standards achieved in reading.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. Literacy provision across the curriculum is satisfactory. Writing tasks and reading in other subjects across the curriculum have yet to be planned in detail. However, improvements in English teaching and learning are having a positive impact in other subjects. Pupils are transferring the skills they have learned in English to other subjects, notably in researching for information, organising it and recording it neatly. There are already some good examples of work in other subjects where pupils have extended and consolidated their literacy skills, most notably in the production of attractive and imaginative 'books' in history in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4, based on their independent research. This is some of the most exciting work that has been produced within the school and pupils are very proud of what they have achieved.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen since the last inspection and are now broadly average, with particular improvement in Years 3 to 6.
- In Years 1 and 2, there are insufficient opportunities for high-attaining pupils to fulfil their potential.
- Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6, enabling pupils to achieve well and make up for some previous underachievement.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good, leading to rapid development.

Commentary

60. National Curriculum test results were well below average at the last inspection, whereas standards are now broadly average. In 2002, test results at the end of Year 2 improved significantly and were above average when compared with schools nationally and similar schools. Results in Year 2 tests in 2003 were in line with the national average for the previous year for the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2, but the number reaching Level 3 was below average. This shows a fall in standards from 2002 to 2003, but an overall upward trend from 2001. Test results at the end of Year 6 were well below average at the last inspection and in 2002 results placed the school in the bottom five per cent compared with schools nationally and those whose pupils had achieved similar results to this school in Year 2. By 2003, standards had risen significantly and test results improved so that they were above the national results for the previous year, with what is likely to be above average performance at Level 5³. Evidence of work seen during the inspection reflects the standards evident in 2003 test results.
61. The work seen in Years 1 and 2 shows satisfactory achievement for average and lower-attaining pupils but higher-attaining pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to fulfil their potential. Work seen in Years 3 to 6 shows that pupils of all abilities are achieving well as a result of being challenged appropriately. Throughout the school, pupils with special

³ Official national comparative figures have not yet been issued for the 2003 tests.

educational needs are given good support and achieve well. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls or of pupils of ethnic minority heritage.

62. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In the one lesson seen, planning was extremely detailed and pupils were managed well. Pupils showed enthusiasm as a result of their good relationships with the teacher and were eager to answer questions. The introduction – which focused on mental mathematics – was much too long, however, and lacked pace. Emphasis was given to asking questions that could be understood by the younger pupils and insufficient attention was given to providing challenge for higher-attaining pupils and those in Year 2. These pupils did, however, have work matched to their prior attainment when they moved on to individual tasks but spending half an hour on the whole-class introduction meant that they had limited time to work at the correct level. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 also shows that higher-attaining pupils are not being set work that is sufficiently challenging, and so they are not doing as well as they could.
63. The teaching observed in Years 3 to 6 coped well with the tricky problem of having two year groups in the same class, with the consequent wide range of ability. Features of the good lessons in these classes included good pace and high expectations. For example, the teacher in the Year 5 and 6 class expected younger and lower-attaining pupils to find the multiples of numbers displayed in the introduction, whilst higher-attaining pupils also had to identify the square and prime numbers. All teachers model mathematical language very well and maintain a pleasant industrious atmosphere. Good assessment practice was seen in all lessons, with pupils being asked to explain at the end of the sessions what they had learned. Marking is thorough in pupils' books and test results are analysed in great detail to set individual targets and adjust the curriculum to cover areas where there are weaknesses. At present, this system is working better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2, because teachers of older pupils are using the assessment information more effectively in planning their lessons.
64. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator works hard to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are covered and that all staff have a shared approach. Results of a range of tests are analysed thoroughly and focus groups have been introduced recently to provide extra support to targeted groups and individuals. The subject co-ordinator has only been in the position for a short period of time and the improvement in the subject during this period has been impressive. Good progress has been made since the last inspection with an improvement in standards, teaching, assessment and the coverage of the curriculum. The school is well placed to maintain this improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and adapted appropriately to support effective learning. There is good use of numeracy, and other aspects of mathematics, in a range of curriculum areas. For example, work on the Egyptians in history includes a section on Egyptian numbering. Data collection in science includes mathematical calculations and a variety of graphs, as do the results of questionnaires into favourite books and authors in literacy work. There are also good links with art and some attractive displays, for example of translations, rotations and symmetry.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved so that they are now in line with the national average in Year 6.
- Higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not achieving to their full potential.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6.

- Assessment is good throughout the school.
- The curriculum is enriched by environmental studies on school premises and on residential visits.
- The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, especially in Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

66. Standards reached by pupils in Year 6 have improved, as revealed by the very good improvement in the most recent National Curriculum test results. In national tests in 2002, Year 6 results were in the bottom five per cent both nationally and in comparison with similar schools, with fewer than half the pupils reaching expected levels. Unvalidated results show that in the 2003 tests, standards were in line with the previous year's national average and those of similar schools, having risen substantially at Level 4 and Level 5. Inspection findings show that pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now working broadly in line with the national average and achieving well. Work seen in Years 3 to 6 shows a very thorough coverage of the whole science curriculum, with opportunities for pupils to develop scientific thinking by the setting of regular enquiry challenges. Analysis of recent tests shows that the current Year 6 pupils are well on line to achieve results at least as good as last year. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving to their potential and there are no significant differences between the achievement of girls and boys.
67. Average and lower-attaining pupils are achieving satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, but higher-attaining pupils are not doing as well as they should. For the past two years, all pupils have reached Level 2 in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 but none have reached Level 3, which is the standard expected for above-average pupils. These standards are reflected in the work seen in pupils' books. In Years 1 and 2, there is good coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum for this age group but little evidence of the kind of extension activities necessary to help higher-attaining pupils achieve what they might in the subject.
68. Teaching and learning are good, especially in Years 3 to 6. A feature of all teaching is the consistent structure given to experimental work. Pupils write down what their question is, what they will change and keep the same, what they will measure, how they will investigate and what they will predict. Two lessons in science took place during the inspection, in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4. Teaching was good in both lessons. The very thoroughly planned lesson in Years 1 and 2 was well structured with different tasks for pupils of different ages. A feature of the lesson in Years 3 and 4 was the time given to help pupils assess whether they had learned what was intended. This good practice is seen throughout the school. Targets for development in the subject are in all the front of pupils' books and dates are added when the objective has been reached. There is a regular routine of testing at the end of units of work, and standardised tests are taken every year to assess individual progress and to identify any weaknesses in provision.
69. The curriculum is enriched by environmental studies in the school grounds, especially through joint work between pupils and staff in restoring a large pond capable of supporting a wealth of wildlife and plants. Pupils' learning is further enriched by regular extended visits to environmental centres. ICT is used well to record the results of a range of studies and experiments.
70. The subject co-ordinator has worked well to put systems in place to ensure curriculum coverage and review progress. There has been good improvement in the development of the subject since the last inspection, especially in Years 3 to 6.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils are achieving very well.
- Teaching is very good.
- ICT is used to support several subjects across the school.
- The subject is well resourced and provides good opportunities for learning.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection and the subject is well led.

Commentary

71. Standards reached by the oldest pupils in the school are consistently above average. It was only possible to see a few individual pupils working on computers in Years 1 and 2 and it is therefore not possible to judge overall standards at this stage. Work displayed, however, shows pupils developing their skills well when word processing, drawing with the computer and programming the 'Roamer' to design an imaginary island. The very large amount of ICT work on display in the other classes is of high quality. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 display a range of skills and make very good use of ICT in presenting their work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were observed very confidently creating tiles for a PowerPoint presentation. They worked with speed, knowledge and accuracy and achieved very well.
72. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good. Basic skills and procedures are taught thoroughly so that pupils can quickly settle to the main aspect of their tasks. Teachers have high expectations of the standard of work expected and set new challenges in lessons. For example, in a lesson in Years 5 and 6, higher-attaining pupils were given the extra challenge of adding action buttons to their tiles so that they could be navigated as in a website. Teachers review with pupils what they have learned by the end of each lesson and this active use of assessment is used well to help pupils understand how they can make further progress.
73. The resources for ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good. All pupils have access to a well-equipped computer suite. This supports the teaching of a comprehensive ICT curriculum and all aspects of the subject are covered, including a range of aspects of control, such as using a program called Logo and environmental measurement. Pupils have good access to the Internet and download items, for example, images to add to their word processing and to illustrate information they have collected.
74. Good leadership and management have helped develop the curriculum and ensured a common approach to the teaching of the subject. As a result, there has been very good improvement in the subject and its use in a range of other subjects since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. ICT is used to support virtually all subjects of the curriculum, and other subjects extend and consolidate pupils' ICT skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good use of word processing, drawing and control programs to support learning in other subjects. In all the geography, history and science topics in Years 3 and 4, pupils produce word processed booklets using skills such as importing and positioning photographs, imaginative use of fonts, colour, highlighting and drawing features. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 further develop their skills and have produced very good leaflets promoting an environmental centre that they have visited.

HUMANITIES

Insufficient work was seen to form a clear judgement about geography. Two history lessons were observed and pupils' work was examined, including a number of the 'books' that pupils have made on historical topics. From this, it was possible to reach an overall view about provision in the subject. It was only possible to see one lesson in religious education. Judgements are based on that lesson, on scrutiny of work and discussion with a significant proportion of Year 6 pupils. As very little work is recorded in religious education in Years 1 and 2, it is not possible to comment on the achievement of younger pupils.

Geography

Commentary

76. It was not possible to form a clear judgement about provision in geography. Part of a lesson was seen, where pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked on a questionnaire as part of a survey on traffic. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in this lesson and pupils were working in line with national expectations. The teacher's planning was good, although possibilities of conducting a town survey were limited because of the school being in a rural area. The teacher's attempts at creating virtual reality through use of the Internet and video material was regarded by the pupils as 'good fun', and the task of creating and improving on a questionnaire to be filled in by 'real people' provided a good stimulus for honing literacy skills. Pupils were, however, rather slow to settle to the task and appeared tired.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils say they enjoy history.
 - Teaching is good and curriculum planning has improved.
 - Good displays around the school celebrate pupils' good work.
 - Assessment systems have not been developed to support pupils' progress in history.
77. Standards in history are broadly in line with national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection. As a result of good teaching, pupils' achievement in lessons is now good. In their work, pupils show satisfactory knowledge of different periods and events and why things happened as they did. Younger pupils show interest in people's lives in previous times and in major events in the past. When studying the Great Fire of London pupils in Years 1 and 2 were able to talk about some basic aspects of life at that time. In response to the teacher's good questioning, older pupils in the class referred to previous learning about rats spreading the plague. In the playground, the class tested the efficiency of using a bucket chain as a means of fighting fire. In their work on 'Seaside Holidays of the Past', well displayed outside their classroom, pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed good investigative techniques, using pictures and older people's memories to research and write about the topic. The organisation of their findings into chapters and the new vocabulary they used extended their literacy skills well. They described how clothing, entertainment and food have changed, and related their learning to their own experiences.
78. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 working on a study of Victorian children showed good reading and research skills when selecting information from a text. They practised note-taking and made small sketches to illustrate a point. In discussion, they spoke with confidence about what they had found, both in answering the teacher's challenging questions and in reflecting and giving their opinions. They discovered facts about social conditions during the mid-19th century and, in learning about children from wealthy and poor backgrounds, they showed a good grasp of how different experiences can create different viewpoints. Lively and colourful displays around the school showed good work on life in Roman times and in ancient Egypt. The individual 'books' that pupils have produced on these topics are a very good example of higher-attaining pupils being challenged and also of pupils' effectiveness as independent learners. Pupils use a range of source material; they identify and explain different ways of representing and interpreting the past.
79. Teachers' planning in history is good and teaching is effective. Teachers show good subject knowledge and have the necessary skills to engage pupils' interest. Work is marked well and

displayed around the school with flair. Although schemes of work are now available and support teachers in setting work at the right level for their classes, the school is aware that the assessment of pupils' work needs to be developed.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Pupils in Year 6 have some difficulties comparing and contrasting religions.
- Teaching is good in Years 3 and 4.
- Resources need improving.

Commentary

80. Standards are in line with those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. From the evidence available, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and good in Years 3 and 4. By the time pupils reach their final year in the school, they can talk about what is precious to them and relate it to what is precious to Christians. They can highlight a range of features about the other religions that they have studied, for example, recounting the steps taken by Muslims before praying. They also know that adherents of the major religions can be found in Britain as well as in the areas of the world from which they originate. They do, however, have difficulties comparing and contrasting the religions they have studied and relating to their experience of Christianity. For example, they know that although most people in their area are Christian, not all go to church. They think that all Sikhs wear turbans and are unaware that all religions have adherents with differing degrees of commitment.
81. Although it is not possible to judge teaching in Years 1 and 2, evidence from displays and planning shows that pupils are receiving their full curriculum entitlement, learning about Christianity and Judaism and visiting the local church. The only lesson seen was in Years 3 and 4. This was a good lesson and scrutiny of the books in this class shows very consistent teaching over the past year, with the whole range of the curriculum well covered. A feature of the lesson seen was the very open atmosphere in which pupils realised that their opinions and feelings would be taken seriously, discussed and valued. Teaching at this age uses a variety of approaches in the subject and some very good poems were on display in which pupils wrote, from Sarah's point of view, about the faith needed by Abraham to be prepared to sacrifice his son. In contrast, there is only a small amount of written work in the books of the pupils in Years 5 and 6, most of it factual rather than reflective. Work is comprehensively marked but there is not an assessment system to compare pupil performance against the levels expected at various ages.
82. The subject co-ordinator sets a good example by her own work in the subject and supports others through the development of the curriculum. She has purchased a basic range of artefacts and books; these need improving to help older pupils in particular to see more clearly the similarities and differences between religions.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Insufficient work was seen to form an overall judgement about provision in design and technology and physical education. One physical education lesson was observed, one design and technology lesson and a limited amount of design and technology work was scrutinised from displays. No evidence was seen to form a view about music. Although only one art and design lesson was seen, it was possible to examine a good deal of work on display, to look at some sketchbooks and to talk to pupils in order to reach an overall judgement about provision.

Design and technology

Commentary

83. Design and technology work on display in Years 1 and 2 suggested that standards are in line with national expectations. As part of their study on the Great Fire of London, pupils have produced effective paper models of buildings which have been placed to represent a London street at the time. Pupils are excited about the resulting scene, which is part of a very attractive display in their classroom.
84. The school is now placing appropriate emphasis on designing and not just on making, and a display of work by older pupils shows that they have a satisfactory understanding of the design process. They present their ideas neatly and annotate their drawings, with an awareness of the possible materials and some of the techniques they might use to realise their ideas. Final products, such as fabric shoes, show good attention to finish and pupils come up with some innovative ideas. From the limited amount of evidence available, standards are in line with national expectations.

Music

Commentary

85. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, where pupils worked on designing musical instruments, their work was in line with national expectations. Those who played instruments were able to use their knowledge of sound boxes and strings in their plans and higher-attaining boys in Year 6 were determined to make an instrument that played notes. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 5 showed a lack of research and basic musical knowledge and, as a result, their designs were frequently over ambitious or immature.

Physical education

Commentary

86. In the Year 5 and 6 physical education lesson observed, pupils achieved well as a result of good teaching, but standards were in line with national expectations because of gaps in pupils' previous learning. Pupils were keen, worked well in pairs and groups, and were mindful of safety.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show enthusiasm and enjoy art.
 - Lessons are well planned to allow pupils to investigate and develop their ideas.
87. Standards in art and design meet expectations, as was the case at the last inspection. Pupils' sketchbooks and work on display indicate that pupils undertake an appropriate range of activities, plan, make and evaluate their work and achieve satisfactorily in the subject. In a very good lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 had researched different chair designs as preparation for making a model chair of their own. Their carefully annotated drawings showed thought about shape and stability. Further sketches included ideas for decorating their chairs. Pupils used their imagination and brought to school feathers and fabrics in order to create a page of samples in their sketchbooks. Well-planned teaching and the involvement of a parent who is a

professional designer led to very good achievement by most pupils. They learned new vocabulary, showed good development of ideas in their drawings and were enthusiastic about transforming their designs into a three-dimensional model.

88. Large papier mâché pots and spiders on display showed good cross-curricular links and added to the range of materials pupils use; standards evident in this work are in line with national expectations.
89. Teaching is good, and as a result, pupils achieve well, although this has not yet had sufficient impact on standards to raise them above national expectations. Lesson objectives and explanations are clear and pupils settle quickly to their tasks. The pottery club is an example of the school's good involvement of outside expertise.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Insufficient work was seen to form an overall judgement about provision in personal, social and health education or citizenship. Judgements are based on curriculum planning and discussions with staff and pupils.

Commentary

90. The school has appropriate arrangements for teaching personal, social and health education and makes provision for citizenship within this. One main session of citizenship a term is taken by a retired policeman (who works freelance with a number of other local schools) and citizenship is otherwise included as part of circle time. The impact of timetabled lessons, enrichment activities, and the school's involvement with the local community ensures that pupils make good progress in their personal development, learn about health, and know how to function as positive members of society.

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	4
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	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
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).