

INSPECTION REPORT

**JOHN MAYNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL,
BIDDENDEN**

Biddenden

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118662

Headteacher: Mrs I Hodger

Lead inspector: Sandra Tweddell

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th September 2003

Inspection number: 256566

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	118
School address:	High Street Biddenden Ashford
Postcode:	TN27 8AL
Telephone number:	01580 291424
Fax number:	01580 292535
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Rickwood
Date of previous inspection:	27/4/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small Church of England school taking in pupils from the ages of 4 to 11. It is situated in the village of Biddenden and pupils mainly come from the immediate locality. The school is in a relatively privileged area; however, there are three areas of social housing within the catchment area. Currently there are 118 pupils on roll, all from a white British background. Children enter the school in the September after their fourth birthday. At first, they attend part-time. By January, all the children attend on a full-time basis. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average, as are the number of pupils on the register of special educational need. One pupil has a statement. The disabilities include severe learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The attainment on entry is below average. Over the past five years, there have been many changes of staff, including the headteacher. This stabilised last year. The reception class is almost full for the first time for many years and the attainment on entry of this group is nearer average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1709	Sandra Tweddell	Lead inspector	English French History Geography Art and design Music English as an additional language Personal, social and health education
16718	Joan Fraser	Lay inspector	
2734	Paul Cosway	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Religious education Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

John Mayne Primary school has come a long way in a short space of time under the very good leadership of a new headteacher. and now gives pupils a **sound** education that is quickly moving to good, and provides **satisfactory** value for money. The school went through a bad patch because of many changes of headteacher and staff, so there is a legacy of underachievement that is being overcome. Now, standards in English and mathematics are back to average and pupils are achieving well in most subjects, particularly mathematics. Leadership, management, teaching and learning are good and governance is satisfactory. Irrespective of their background, all pupils do equally well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership of the headteacher and resulting commitment and teamwork of staff are raising standards quickly.
- The good climate for learning which is based on Christian teaching, care for one another and respect for all, and the resulting good personal development of pupils.
- The school's self-evaluation leads to an effective school improvement plan that is used well to raise academic and personal attainment.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Children in the foundation stage are prepared well for the main school.
- Staff are tackling the lack of challenge in a few subjects for more able pupils.
- Attainment in writing and information and communication technology (ICT) is below average.

Due to the many staffing changes the headteacher rightly reviewed the priorities from the last inspection and established new ones. Standards in mathematics, the leadership roles of deputy headteacher and subject expertise have improved. Progress since the last inspection is therefore **satisfactory**.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Comparison with national figures needs much caution because class numbers have been very small. Standards in 2003 improved in mathematics and the school greatly exceeded its target of 60 per cent,. Standards also improved in science This was not the case in English but over half of the twelve pupils in the year group had special educational needs which affected results more than in mathematics and science. The progress of individual pupils was satisfactory and for some, good.

From the work seen, achievement is now good across the school. By the end of Years 2 and 6, **standards in most subjects are average** except in religious education where they are above average and ICT where standards are below average. Pupils in the reception class achieve well in all the areas of learning and most, apart from those with special educational needs, reach the goals expected of children of this age. Across the school, standards of boys' work are lower than girls', but

many boys start from a lower point and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils have positive attitudes to school, want to learn and the vast majority behave well. Attendance is average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education has improved quickly over the past two years and is now good.

Teaching and learning overall are good. The headteacher has successfully worked with a new team of teachers to bring consistency of approaches, particularly in encouraging teachers to begin the lesson by telling pupils what they are going to learn, which helps them to focus on the lesson. Many pupils enjoy their lessons because of the enthusiasm of the teachers. A key strength is the expertise of the teaching assistants whose support is invaluable in helping pupils to learn effectively.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is good in English and mathematics, which have been the focus for development. The school is a central part of the community of the small village and links with the church are strong. Parents now hold the school in high esteem. Pupils receive very good support and advice.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher's leadership is very good and she has high aspirations for the school that are supported by effective systems of management. Self-evaluation is appropriately critical and the resulting school improvement plan is used well. Governors have a good understanding of the school and support it well. They are starting to ask probing questions about how well the school is doing, although this aspect needs developing. Governance is therefore **satisfactory**.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the school and see improvements in the past year which they put down to effective leadership and a stable staff. Their children enjoy school and make good progress. Teaching is good, children are expected to work hard and there are many activities after school. Many feel homework is given inconsistently. Inspectors share the positive views of parents but found homework is given regularly.

Pupils find the school a friendly place and trust their teachers. Most enjoy their lessons and find them interesting. A few are concerned about the behaviour of others which may be a legacy from the past as inspectors found teachers manage behaviour well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Carry out the plans to improve attainment in writing.
- Carry out the plans to use the new resources in ICT to raise attainment.
- Ensure all subjects provide challenge for higher attaining pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are now broadly average in all subjects apart from ICT and most pupils **achieve well**. The standards of boys' work are below those of girls as boys start from a lower level, although many make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in mathematics is good because of determined leadership and commitment of staff.
- For many pupils, standards in singing, work in art and physical education are above average as the arts have a high profile in the school.
- Standards in religious education are above average as teachers have a good understanding of the subject.
- In a few subjects, some higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they should, although this is changing.
- Pupils' evaluation of their work in art, music and design and technology lacks rigour as this aspect is inconsistently taught.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.4 (16.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.1 (12.7)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	14.4 (14.7)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.0 (26.1)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	22.5 (25.1)	26.7 (26.7)
Science	24.5 (26.1)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. This analysis needs treating with caution as numbers in Years 2 and 6 have been very small for the past few years, due to parents' loss of confidence in the school. Pupils have underachieved in the past because of many changes of leaders but over the last year, with very good leadership and stability of staffing, achievement has improved, especially in mathematics which has been the main focus of staff development. In 2003, test results improved at the end of Year 2 and in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. In mathematics, performance was much higher than had been predicted, because of the staff development. Standards are rising quickly. This is because the headteacher has raised the

quality of the teaching through professional development, monitoring, and establishing an ethos that is focused on high standards. As a result, pupils' achievement is accelerating and is now good.

2. Children in the reception class achieve well in literacy, mathematics, their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Achievement in personal and social development is particularly strong. The teacher has a very good understanding of how young children learn and she and supporting adults work extremely well together to give children exciting opportunities to learn. An excellent example was in the creation of a spaceship. Equipped with oxygen, (lemonade bottles strapped to their backs) children explored the environment, looking down on the world below. Boys and girls worked in this area and their achievement in English, personal, physical and creative development was high. Above all, their curiosity about the world was awakened. As a result, standards in all the areas of learning move from below average on children's entry to the class, to average by the end of the year.
3. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 has improved in English and mathematics and is now good. In other areas, good teaching and learning means that most pupils now achieve well in lessons, but the difficulties with staffing that caused some underachievement in the past have affected standards. However, standards are now rising quickly.
4. Mathematics and English have been subject to development over the past year. Staff have been trained and problem solving activities introduced across the school have raised standards, especially for more able pupils. The results of these developments are more noticeable in mathematics where standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are now average. Standards of reading and writing are average by the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6, standards are average in reading, but below average in writing. This is because many pupils do not have a wide vocabulary so their ability to write and to explain their ideas, is hampered. Also, spelling and handwriting were often careless. Staff are tackling this well and their high expectations of pupils' work have raised the quality of presentation
5. Pupils use their skills of literacy and numeracy satisfactorily in all subjects; the emphasis on research and problem solving ensures that they are improving their skills. The improvements in writing are having a positive effect on the presentation of their research findings. The good provision for numeracy enables pupils to apply mathematical skills in other subjects; for example, in geography, and design and technology.
6. Other subjects have had less attention because of the focus on literacy and numeracy, but the drive to make teaching consistent across the school has raised standards in other subjects. Achievement is now good in all other subjects and standards are improving and are close to average. ICT is the exception, as there have been problems with equipment, and with training new staff. The new computer suite was up and running in the week of the inspection, albeit with a few glitches, and although it was the first time teachers had used it, achievement in lessons was high. The legacy of underachievement is affecting this subject more than others as there has been a shortage of equipment until recently.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall. The provision for these pupils is good. They are carefully assessed and then taught and supported well. The number on the register of special educational needs has declined over the past year because of the good progress the pupils make.
8. Boys enter the school with lower attainment than girls and standards of their work remain lower. However, records of their progress show that last year, many of the boys made better progress than girls. One of the reasons for boys' lower standards is that some take less care with their work and do not check it. A few boys have poor skills of listening and smaller spans of concentration, which also affect their achievement.

9. Higher attaining pupils have not achieved as well as they should, but this, too, is starting to change as investigative activities have been used for the past year. These challenge pupils to think of solutions. More able pupils are therefore beginning to be challenged by their work and to achieve satisfactorily. Pupils from the wide range of backgrounds in the school do equally well as the caring ethos of the school reinforces equal opportunities.
10. The key to the improvement in achievement, and thus to the rising standards, is the very strong leadership of the headteacher who has carefully established priorities to develop high expectations of pupils. Another reason is the commitment of the staff to raise standards and the resulting good teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The majority of pupils have **positive attitudes** to school and **behave well**. Their **personal development is good**, supported by the **overall good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's ethos of care and respect helps pupils to learn and promotes good attitudes.
- Investigative activities support pupils' independence and willingness to seek solutions to problems.
- The provision for spiritual, social and moral development supports the school ethos well.
- Attendance has improved from well below average because of rigorous action by the headteacher.
- The provision for raising pupils' awareness of other cultures, although satisfactory, is not as strong as other features of the provision.

Commentary

11. The importance of improving levels of attendance has been identified as an area of focus in the school improvement plan. There has been significant improvement as a result of regular reminders in newsletters to parents of the importance of regular attendance. The previous year's lower than average attendance figures need treating with caution because of the small numbers in the school. They are due mainly to the illness of a small number of pupils.
12. One of the priorities for staff has been to create a climate for learning that encourages a desire to learn. Staff have been very successful in achieving this priority. Parents feel that children are secure in the friendly environment. The children agree. This has a positive effect on children's attitudes and behaviour. Adults know each child well and look after their individual needs. The strong learning ethos and the mutual respect throughout the school leads to many lessons that extend pupils' social and moral development. Many lessons have a magical quality that encourage pupils to marvel at the world in which they live.
13. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the school, saying that lessons are fun and that teachers are helpful and fair. They enjoy being trusted to work on their own sometimes; for example, in the computer suite. They are clearly aware of what behaviour is expected of them and recognise and respect the system of rewards for good behaviour, such as *catch me cards* and sanctions such as the red and yellow cards that pupils receive as warnings of poor attitudes or behaviour.
14. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to take responsibility which helps their independence. These start in the reception class, where children are expected to make choices and to understand the consequences. Representatives from each year group form the democratically elected School Council and, in the process, learn about nominations, balloting and the voting system, giving them a good insight into issues of citizenship. There was a buzz

of excitement and anticipation throughout the school when pupils standing for the positions of officers gave speeches as to why they should be elected. The involvement of governors in this process was an added bonus. Pupils know some of the governors well and welcome them warmly into the school.

15. There are strong evaluation systems in place and careful lesson planning to build up the self-esteem and confidence of each individual child. These are priorities in the school.
16. Pupils are encouraged to build a relationship with their class teacher, or the teaching assistant, so that they know they have one adult in the school they can turn to if they are concerned in any way. Relationships throughout the school are good.
17. The school is closely involved with the local church and espouses Christian beliefs. The parish priest visits the school regularly to conduct assemblies. Speakers from other denominations are also welcomed so that pupils are aware of other faiths and cultures. Pupils spoke of how they were learning about the Jewish New Year, and, with obvious enjoyment, told of dipping an apple into honey to signify the sweetness of the world. They said the apple was delicious! There are few opportunities for pupils to learn directly from ethnic minority groups within the school, but there are plans to rectify this as teachers are aware that more needs to be done. One approach is through sponsoring a child in Africa this year. It is planned to communicate with the African school by email to further each other's knowledge of their respective cultures and at the same time enhance their ICT skills.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
118	1	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The **quality of education is now good** overall. Teaching and learning, links with parents and the community and care for pupils are good. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory; it has been reviewed and continues to develop to take account of the needs of pupils in the school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** across the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many lessons are enjoyable, fostering a love of learning in the pupils.
- Pupils understand what they are expected to learn in every lesson, and this helps them to focus and therefore to learn well.
- The teaching assistants use their expertise well.
- Pupils are successfully encouraged to think for themselves, so learning is good.
- A few more able pupils are insufficiently challenged in a few subjects, but this is changing.
- Assessment is used to set targets for pupils' learning, but sometimes these targets are too general.

Commentary

18. Teaching and learning have been a focus for development, as almost all the teachers have joined the school in the last two years. Ensuring that teaching is consistent has been a priority.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons.

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	7	6	0	0	0

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

19. Under the leadership of the new headteacher, professional development, through attendance at courses, staff meetings and use of external support, has been a priority when governors allocate the budget. The headteacher has focused on her skills of monitoring, with support from the local education authority.
20. The support given by teaching assistants is very good. Governors have decided to maintain an assistant in each of the classes to help overcome underachievement. Teaching assistants are well prepared. They plan with the teachers so they know exactly what they should be doing. They know the children well. Their professional development has been a priority and they have contributed well to the introduction of a programme to improve pupils' spelling. Evaluation of the programme shows that spelling has improved.
21. Literacy and numeracy are taught well through opportunities to research and to present findings in subjects, such as history, and through problem solving activities in mathematics. Some teachers teach the key words of specialist subjects such as science. Where this happens, pupils discuss their learning more precisely.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and their achievement is good. Teaching assistants are thoughtfully deployed and teachers ensure that tasks challenge pupils at an appropriate level. In one lesson, a pupil with severe learning difficulties was given a task which involved sorting small cards into lists of similar words to find out spelling rules. The pupil worked quietly, with perseverance and with much thought, helped unobtrusively by the teaching assistant, who only intervened when necessary.
23. Staff have been introducing problem solving activities to challenge the more able pupils, and encouraging all pupils to extend their learning. These activities are placed all over the school. In one, pupils were challenged to match patterns of objects in photographs, such as a brick wall and sand, with drawings of patterns. A group of older pupils talked through this activity,

concentrating hard and with enjoyment, looking carefully at the photographs and pictures. Their language was extended as they put forward their views, as were their skills of observation, mathematics and personal development.

24. These activities are appropriately challenging more able pupils. However, staff are aware that more needs to be done. In some lessons, apart from English and mathematics, the tasks are the same for all pupils and insufficiently challenge the more able. These pupils sometimes finish early and mark time. There has been an overuse of worksheets which did not challenge all pupils appropriately, but this is changing.
25. Teachers use assessment satisfactorily to set targets for groups of pupils, and for classes. These help pupils to improve their work. Almost all pupils can tell you what their targets are, including some of the youngest, and they are proud when they achieve them. These targets now need to be refined to take account of the specific learning needs of individual pupils, particularly the more able.
26. Initiatives that have improved teaching and learning have been the introduction of WALT (what am I learning today?) and WILF (what am I looking for?) Most lessons begin with WALT and many with WILF, or the teacher explaining clearly how she will know when the pupils have achieved success. These methods clarify what pupils are expected to learn and so focus both pupils and teacher on the learning.
27. Boys and girls are taught equally well, as can be seen from records of their progress. Some boys are less careful than girls over their work and more inclined to rush into it without thinking. All groups of pupils are taught equally well, so there is no difference in learning and therefore in achievement.
28. Another strength in teaching is the enjoyment that teachers create in learning. This raises the enthusiasm of pupils and supports their learning. Examples were seen of this in history, geography, science, ICT, mathematics and English.
29. Teaching and learning are strengths of the school because of the quality of the leadership and management of the headteacher and the resulting enthusiasm and commitment of the staff.

This example illustrates why pupils enjoy their learning

In a Year 5/6 science lesson, pupils learnt, through a series of very enjoyable and memorable activities, how bees pollinate flowers. The teacher had a bee costume ready and beautifully made large-scale models of flowers, with petals, stigma and stamen. A pupil, dressed as a bee, acted out the process of pollinating a flower. The pupils then saw microscopic pictures of pollen, shown on the white board from a computer projector. With a thorough understanding of what they were doing, they stuck 'bees' wings' onto their fingers and buzzed out into the school garden to collect pollen from plants. They were excited and full of enthusiasm. Returning to the classroom, they eagerly began to write an explanation of how plants are pollinated, using the correct technical terms, with good attention to literacy skills. The quality of their written work and understanding was very high, reflecting the quality of the teaching in this memorable lesson.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** and is currently being developed. Extra-curricular provision is **good**. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of extra-curricular activities is wide and extends pupils' learning.
- The community contributes very well to pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well thought out and successful so pupils make good progress.
- Provision of ICT has been unsatisfactory, but is improving quickly.

Commentary

30. Pupils have full access to the curriculum, and in-class support is good. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and teachers are beginning to plan special work for them, especially in mathematics and English. Additionally, provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The provision for personal and social education is also good and there is good provision for the foundation stage children.
31. There were weaknesses last year in the curriculum for ICT and design and technology. The provision did not meet statutory requirements. The major omissions were in the areas of control technology and modelling, because the school did not have the necessary equipment or software to teach these aspects. The school can now cover the syllabus in full, because it has a newly completed ICT suite. Although the new equipment was only just coming into use at the time of the inspection, it was already evident that teachers are able to teach the full range of skills, and that the planning and resources are in place to ensure that the requirements will be met in full this academic year. The provision for design and technology was inconsistent last year from class to class. For example, some pupils in Years 3 and 4, were following a good programme of work that covered all aspects well, including research, design, making and evaluation. This depth of coverage, especially in the areas of research and evaluation, was not always evident in the work of other year groups. Again, current planning indicates that this has been recognised and is being rectified.
32. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in the curriculum for mathematics, English and the foundation stage, where there were some weaknesses. The school's major thrusts in terms of professional development have been in these subjects.
33. The programme of extra-curricular activities is good and was praised by parents. It includes sport, music, French and drama. Many pupils join in after-school activities on a regular basis and all pupils in Years 1 to 4 learn to play a musical instrument. These activities extend the learning of the many pupils who take part, particularly the more able.
34. The local community makes a very good contribution to learning. The school has a close relationship with the local church, and members of the local community play an important role in the school. Local people come into school to talk about the history of the area. Pupils go on a variety of visits in the area and they make good use of the church and the area around the school as a learning resource. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although the hall is small for gymnastics for the older pupils. The school has obtained funding to relay the tarmac outside the reception class and to buy more outdoor equipment for the youngest children.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for well and receive **very good** guidance about their personal and academic development. Their involvement in the life of the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care is good and supports pupils' personal development.
- Pupils' views are taken into account very well when decisions are made, which gives them an insight into their role as citizens.
- The Healthy Schools Initiative has led to improved awareness by pupils of looking after their health.

Commentary

35. The pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to the headteacher and staff. Teachers and teaching assistants know the children very well and are extremely sensitive to particular needs so that all groups of pupils, whatever their background, are supported appropriately. Pupils with emotional difficulties are given very good support to build self-esteem. Imaginatively, unsettled pupils are often given 'time out' in the school garden and mini-beast city; a wild life area, which provides a peaceful and calm haven. Parents feel that their children settle into school well because of the careful induction procedures.
36. Child protection procedures are good and understood by all staff. There is now a dedicated medical room with disabled facilities, where children who are unwell can be looked after in an appropriate environment. All the teaching assistants have a first aid qualification and their skills are routinely updated.
37. The school has effective procedures and policies for ensuring the security of the pupils and the health and safety of all who work in the school. The governors' health and safety committee checks the fabric of the buildings and authorises any repairs needed. The school has identified that the lower school pathways are in poor condition and could present a safety hazard. Funding has been secured to enable this work to be put in hand. As part of the Healthy Schools Initiative, funding has been received to supply drinking water in the classrooms, which the pupils have welcomed
38. The learning environment of the school enables pupils to be articulate and confident and able to express their opinions clearly and talk enthusiastically about activities which they enjoy particularly. Through the School Council, pupils willingly involve themselves in matters which affect everyone in the school. Twice a year they are given a questionnaire that invites them to say what is good about the school or what they are unhappy about. Pupils say they feel that the school listens to their views. A very high priority for the headteacher has been to involve pupils in making decisions about how the school runs. The elections for membership of the School Council is an excellent example of this very good approach.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is good and there are good links with other schools and with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are pleased with what the school provides.
- Regular communication with parents keeps them involved and up to date with their children's progress.
- Parents are involved in the life of the school so they can support their children.
- The headteacher is building strong links with the community to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

39. The school has worked hard to improve and strengthen relationships with parents. The quality and frequency of communication are very good and help parents to be actively engaged in the education of their children. Parents say they feel that they are kept well informed about the school's activities and their children's progress.
40. A thriving Parent Teacher Association energetically works to raise funds to buy equipment for the school. The computers in the newly established ICT suite were purchased as a result of their efforts, which has increased the opportunities for the children to develop their skills.
41. The headteacher starts building up good relationships between parents and staff when children enter the reception class. Parents are welcomed into the school and teachers are readily accessible for consultation after school. Parents have been invited into school to be shown how they might help with their children's mathematics and spelling.
42. Once a year, parents are given a questionnaire to canvas their views on school issues, and an informal forum of parents is held twice a term. This is a very good aspect of provision. As a result, a parent now produces the monthly newsletter. Termly consultation evenings are held to inform parents about standards and the progress of their children. Annual written reports are produced before the summer consultation evening to allow discussions on progress and targets.
43. Parents help in school in a variety of ways such as hearing reading, gardening, and sorting out the library and this involvement contributes to the children's learning. Additionally they help with after school clubs and with visits to other venues. Most parents reported that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns, and that they are confident that they will be listened to, and any matter of concern will be dealt with.
44. There is a well-established induction procedure for entry to the reception class, with close liaison with the playgroup that shares the school site, to familiarise parents and children with the classroom and the teacher before admission. Parents find arrangements for transition of Year 6 children to the feeder secondary schools helpful. Currently there are few curriculum links, but the staff recognise that this is an area for improvement and plans are in place to facilitate this.
44. The community plays a significant part in school life. A local artist voluntarily helped the children over a period of two months to build a model of their village, which not only honed their artistic and technical skills, but made them aware of their local history and environment. Pupils also study the history of the village with the support of local people.
45. During the Queen's Jubilee celebrations last year, the School Council was invited to plant trees in the village. The school in turn invited villagers back to the school for tea and cakes. Pupils are involved in running stalls both at the village and church fetes. Pupils were also proactive in supporting others in the village to prevent the village from losing its post office. As a result of the efforts of all involved, there is now a mobile post office providing a service to the community.
46. There is a bi-annual visit to Marchant's Hill, an outdoor activity centre, which enables children to experience friendships with children from other cultures. There are also plans to visit a larger school, possibly in London, to allow children to mix with other ethnic groups and widen their understanding of other cultures.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**, and the leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. Governance is **satisfactory**, with strengths in the strategic development of the school and management of the budget to raise standards. The leadership of key staff is **satisfactory** overall and is improving as they develop their new roles.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and vision of the headteacher have led to rapid improvement in teaching and learning and therefore in the achievement of pupils.
- Adults have a shared commitment to raise standards and their teamwork is very strong.
- The school improvement plan involves all and is used well to effect change.
- The school's self-evaluation is good and the priorities that have been established have improved the quality of the provision.
- Governors seek best value in the work of the school so money is used well.
- Much of the work of governors is good, but they are still lack the skills to challenge decisions made by senior management.

Commentary

47. The school's rapid improvement is due to the aspirations of the headteacher who has focused on raising attainment. The methods she has used are discussed throughout this report, but are summarised here:
 - A strong vision for the school based on a climate that encourages all to contribute and that raises the confidence of pupils;
 - Methods to involve teachers, other adults in the school, governors, pupils and parents to take part in making decisions about the school;
 - A strong focus on the professional development of staff, including teaching assistants;
 - A careful analysis of where the school was when she was appointed and where it should be;
 - Using this analysis to involve staff and governors in drawing up a plan for school improvement that drives the move to raise standards;
 - Focusing on key priorities and working to achieve success in these;
 - Thoughtful deployment of staff to support teaching and learning.
48. Evidence for the success of these approaches comes from parents and pupils who are pleased with the school, from the climate for learning and from the rise in standards that began last year.
49. There is a range of experience amongst the staff from newly qualified to those with many years experience. The deployment of staff, such as the teaching assistants and support given by the headteacher, takes account of the different experience and expertise. For example, in an art lesson, achievement was good because an assistant who had taken a course in art, supported a teacher and used her newly found skills to extend the learning of a small group of pupils.
50. Governors know the school well and understand its strengths and where it needs to develop next. They visit regularly and have methods to gauge how well the school is meeting its targets. They are very supportive and give up much of their time; for example, they take stock of the library and reject books that are no longer useful. They are developing a five-year strategic plan for their work. Governors are developing the confidence to challenge the school, but still lack skills in this area. This aspect of their work is currently satisfactory.

51. The leadership of the foundation stage, of English, of mathematics and of religious education is good, and of other subjects is satisfactory. All the managers in the school, many of whom are new to their posts, and some who are new to teaching, have attended courses to help them with the role of managing an area or a subject. All have produced an analysis of their subject and an action plan to focus the work. These are more detailed in English and mathematics, as these two subjects have been a priority. The role of the deputy headteacher has been clarified, - an improvement since the last inspection. Leaders are benefiting from professional development, which is helping them to come to grips with their roles.
52. Staff are well aware of the need to treat all pupils equally, although more work is needed on challenging more able pupils. Most groups achieve well. The climate for learning, which encourages respect and care for one another, plays a big part in raising achievement.
53. A key reason for the rise in standards is the school improvement plan. This document has come about through discussion with staff and governors. It has led to appropriate decisions about priorities and the course of action to achieve them. The document is used by governors at their meetings, by staff at their meetings and is reviewed regularly. The school's self-evaluation procedures have been used well to create this document. The school's performance in national and school tests has been carefully analysed to bring about improvement. It feeds into the improvement plan. This information is also used thoughtfully to track the progress of individual pupils.
54. Finances are managed wisely and governors ensure that they receive best value from their spending. An example of this is when new computer equipment was needed. Before accepting a quote that was reasonable, other schools which had used the suppliers were visited to find out about the quality of the machines and the services offered. Their five-year strategic plan includes budget forecasts.
55. The school still has two barriers to its success; the first is the legacy of underachievement caused by staffing problems and the second is to persuade parents that the school no longer underachieves. An indication of the growing confidence of parents is that numbers in the new reception class are higher than they have been and that all the pupils come from the village. Effective leadership and commitment of staff are overcoming both of these barriers and the school has very good capacity to continue to improve.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	310,676
Total expenditure	316,139
Expenditure per pupil	2,547

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	13185
Balance carried forward to the next	7722

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for the foundation stage is **good** and for personal development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of the interaction between the adults and the children is good.
 - Teaching and learning are good, and sometimes very good, so pupils achieve well.
 - The leadership is good and there is a clear direction for the work of the reception class.
 - Sessions are well planned, with a clear focus, with activities appropriate to pupils of all abilities. Children's learning is therefore taken forward well.
 - The outside play environment needs repair; this is in hand.
58. Children enter the school with below average attainment in the six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. They make good progress through the 'stepping stones' of the Foundation Stage curriculum during the time they spend in the reception class, and most are on course to reach the standards expected of five year olds in all areas of the curriculum by the time they enter Year 1.
59. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. It is at least good in all areas of the curriculum and very good in creative development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. The teacher plans a good range of activities that help the children to learn the skills they need. She teaches the basic skills required for literacy and numeracy to good effect. All adults who work with the children have high expectations of behaviour and learning. They use a good range of teaching methods and manage the children very well. Their knowledge of the children is very good and they make good use of this to help them develop learning skills and social skills. Assessment systems are good and are used effectively to support children's learning.
60. The adults are skilled at fostering independence which leads to very good attitudes. Children's achievement is good; they acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. The children are very interested in all the activities, learn to concentrate for increasing lengths of time, and become independent. During lessons, many children work unsupervised at specified tasks while the adults work with other groups. The teacher ensures that staff know the children well before they enter the school, so that they can take account of particular needs or any differences in the backgrounds of the pupils.
61. Leadership and management of the foundation stage are good. The teacher has a very good knowledge of how young children learn and she uses this to plan a curriculum that ensures all can achieve well. Resources for most areas of the curriculum are good. There is a secure tarmac area just outside the classroom for outdoor play. This is a pleasant area, large enough for the children to take full advantage of the good range of large play equipment for physical development, but the surface is uneven and potentially dangerous. Funding has now been obtained for this to be upgraded.
62. There were three areas of focus, personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy and mathematical development. In each, the children are in line to reach the standards that are expected by the end of the year and are achieving well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for children to develop their own interests encourage them to become self-reliant and develop good personal skills.
- Adults foster a love of learning through making it enjoyable.
- Adults' very good knowledge and assessment of the children support their teaching to good effect.

Commentary

63. Children settle quickly and confidently into the class. They learn to take turns and share. Assemblies and class discussion time are planned opportunities for children to think about themselves and others, and to share ideas about what is special to them. There are very good, sustained periods when children can choose activities and explore their interests, with excellent support from the adults who challenge and extend their skills and knowledge. These features of the provision ensure that children achieve well to reach the goals that are expected of children by the time they leave the reception class.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities for speaking to adults and other children develop the skills of communication well.
- Development of early reading skills is good because books are readily available and adults convey a love of reading.

Commentary

64. Children develop their skills in listening and speaking through a good range of role-play activities. They recount their personal experiences when discussing what they do at home, and use appropriate language when interacting with adults and other children, though their listening skills are developed more rapidly than their speaking skills. They enjoy looking at print, pictures and books, and most learn to write short simple words by the end of the year. Staff are working, with the rest of the school, to improve the quality of writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good reinforcement of numeracy skills throughout the day consolidates children's understanding of number.
- Knowledge of number and shape is reinforced through a wide and varied range of activities.

Commentary

65. Children learn quickly, because numeracy skills are reinforced throughout the day. They learn the names of shapes, such as squares and rectangles, and their properties. They learn to count and to divide during simple and appropriate games. The teacher makes sure that there is an interesting and varied range of activities for children to explore and thus extend their understanding of mathematics. The adults in the reception class are skilled at observing children when they start an activity, and encourage them to learn. As a result, children's understanding of number, shapes and size grows.

Other areas of learning

66. Good progress is made in creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world because the provision is thoughtful and often imaginative. Children make particularly good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn to understand and respect the environment, learning about nature and living things. Creative development is taught well. They sing songs, paint and play construction games each day. Their physical development is also fostered well, through outdoor play and opportunities for movement in lessons in the school hall. Some, particularly boys, do not enter the school with a good awareness of the space around them, or the need to take care of the effect of their actions on others, but they improve as a result of sensitive and skilful teaching.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND FRENCH

English

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good so pupils learn well.
- The subject is well led and managed and is leading to rapid improvement in standards.
- There are many good opportunities to extend literacy skills which extend pupils' skills in reading and writing.
- Standards in writing are below average in Years 3 to 6 because of a narrow vocabulary, but are a focus for development.
- Targets set for pupils are not always focused on their specific needs.

Commentary

67. In the past, including in 2003, standards have seemed low in comparison with other schools but numbers in the classes have been exceptionally small and there were many pupils with special educational needs so comparison with other schools requires caution. In the work seen, standards are average by the end of Year 2 and in speaking, listening and reading are average at the end of Year 6. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs has decreased over the past few months as some make good progress and no longer require extra support. This is contributing to the difference in standards this year, along with the improving provision. The legacy of underachievement has affected the pupils in Year 6 more than others, but effective leadership and management are overcoming this problem. Standards of writing by the end of Year 6 are currently below average. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary, do not use standard English and have weak spelling. Last year, spelling was a focus for attention through a pilot programme. This was successful and has been

extended to all pupils this year. Writing is a focus for attention this year following analysis of pupils' work and information from tests. This is improving the achievement of all pupils in writing.

68. A sample of work showed improvements in Years 1 to 6. The expectations that teachers have of their pupils has been raised and this has led to work being more extensive and to being better presented. However, boys' writing is not as well presented as that of the girls and is often less extensive. The work sampled also demonstrated that the achievement of pupils has accelerated over the past few months and boys and girls are now achieving well. This accelerating progress means that standards of writing are likely to improve to average by the end of the year.
69. Many pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6 enjoy reading and most have a favourite author. Pupils in Year 2 talk about the plots of books and give a few details of the book's characters. By the end of Year 6, most discuss their reading and explain what attracts them to a book. Lower attaining boys are less sure about reading books, but they read comics and magazines. Many pupils use reading well for research. Higher attaining pupils are fluent speakers and by the end of Year 6, take part in discussions, putting forward points of view, taking on board the opinion of others and responding to the ideas of others. Many of the pupils in Year 5/6, who stood for School Council posts spoke confidently and clearly about why they should be elected. A significant number of pupils, often boys, do not have an extensive vocabulary and have difficulty in explaining their ideas.
70. Achievement of all groups of pupils has accelerated and is now good. Challenging work is set for higher attaining pupils that extends their skills of literacy. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate work and they are effectively supported by their teachers. Teachers know their classes well and take care to ensure that all are included in activities.
71. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Many of the lessons are well planned and challenging, which makes them enjoyable so pupils are highly motivated to learn. Year 6 pupils rewrote *The Highwayman* as a drama script, renaming it *The Freewayman*, set in the United States. They were asked to design a title using ICT, the first time the suite had been used as it was new in the week of the inspection. Although many had had little experience of using design programs, by the end of the lesson all had produced a creditable piece of work. Their high achievement was due to the level of challenge and the stimulating teaching.
72. The school's focus on problem solving activities and improving skills of thinking are seen in many lessons. It begins in Years 1 and 2, with opportunities to develop independence; for example, in one lesson, pupils were asked, in groups, to choose their favourite poem from a number offered to them, and then present it to the class as a drama activity. They worked very well together, supported when necessary by the assistant and the teacher, and each group managed a simple production by the end of the lesson. Pupils in Year 3 were encouraged to investigate spelling patterns through an exercise using cards. They achieved well because they thought about the activity and could explain the patterns they had found. Pupils in Year 5 were challenged by questions after they had read *The Iron Man*. They were invited to explain why they thought as they did. The combination of high expectations, enthusiasm for the novel and excellent subject knowledge from the teacher, motivated and enthused the pupils so that they discussed the novel animatedly and a few asked questions. As a result pupils learnt a lot about the characters in the book.
73. All pupils have targets for literacy and almost all can discuss them. Assessment is used satisfactorily. Targets are set for groups of pupils or for the whole class. They are not always specific to individual pupils. This is a weakness. All teachers encourage pupils to try out their ideas in draft first in a draft book before writing them out neatly. In the best teaching, teachers use this as an opportunity to help pupils develop their vocabulary and to reshape and re-order their ideas. Too often, however, teachers use the first draft to correct spelling and grammar. This does not necessarily improve imaginative writing.

74. The upheaval in staffing and the resulting legacy of underachievement since the last inspection means that the school has had to refocus its priorities. Writing has appropriately been identified as a new focus. As a result of the focus on spelling last year good progress is being made. ICT is used to finally present a piece of writing, but is not yet used to draft writing and improve it.
75. The subject is well managed and the action plan for the subject is appropriate to raise standards. There is a strong focus on English throughout the school. Pupils write books and enter poetry competitions and many have the pleasure of seeing their work in print. The school celebrates book and poetry days and invites authors in to talk about their work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

76. The National Literacy Strategy is taught well and is being developed by the introduction of a programme to improve spelling and handwriting. It is too early to gauge its long term effect on writing.
77. Teachers give pupils opportunities to apply and develop their skills of literacy in many areas of the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to research and to present their work to audiences. In history and geography, they use books and other sources of information to find out about the world, both now and in the past. They present the information in a range of ways, using text, tables and charts. The results of research are often presented as books, which are then put out for other pupils to read.
78. Links are made effectively with other subjects. A storyteller was involved in an arts project. After making seats from pieces of dead wood found in the Millennium Field, pupils composed poems that they wrote on leaves and then hung from the seats. Many pupils spoke pleasurably about this experience.

French

77. French is taught from Years 3 to 6 and the subject was sampled during the inspection. Pupils in Year 6 are working at a level that is lower than would be expected. This is due to the 6 week summer break. Their achievement is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils use French phrases to describe themselves and their families, but many of the other pupils need the support of the teacher to do so. Some of the boys are embarrassed to speak in French, whereas the girls are willing to try. The accents of pupils are reasonable. Most copy phrases accurately and can read them without much support. Pupils who attend the French Club at lunchtimes learn about life in France and extend their understanding of French culture.
78. Too little teaching was observed to make a clear judgement. Teaching relies heavily on a recorded programme and the use of French to teach the subject is very limited. The school now has ICT resources to support the teachers, but teachers have not used them because the ICT suite has not been available.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen considerably over the last two years from being well below average to close to average. This is because staff have worked hard to improve the provision.
- Teaching and learning are good.

- Lessons are well planned, with a clear focus and with activities appropriate to pupils of all abilities.
- Boys do not work with the same care and diligence as girls.

Commentary

79. The test results at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally. However, these results need treating with caution because of the small numbers in the sample means that the results fluctuate from year to year. The headteacher recognised that there was a problem with standards in mathematics and sought to improve teaching and learning. The professional development that followed has borne impressive results. Good teaching is now leading to good learning and pupils are achieving well. The use of the National Numeracy Strategy has resulted in better teaching and learning by more knowledgeable and confident teachers. In addition, improved systems for the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress have been developed, enabling teachers to focus specific teaching and support where it is most needed. Pupils are set useful and realistic subject specific targets to encourage them to improve. As a result, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Results in 2003 exceeded the target set for mathematics because of the work put into the subject.
80. By the end of Year 2, most pupils reach average standards and are confident with numbers up to 100. They are mainly secure in their understanding of tens and units. Most can recognise right angles and identify which shapes contain them, such as a square. All pupils recognise different coins and understand their relative values. They make sensible decisions when deciding which coins to use to pay for different items.
81. By Year 6, attainment is close to average. These pupils have been affected most by the legacy of underachievement so have achieved well to reach this point. Pupils do money calculations confidently and accurately. They divide using a range of different methods and multiply using mental mathematics and their knowledge of multiplication tables. They recognise prime numbers and work out the factors of other numbers. They are familiar with standard measures, including those of capacity, and calculate the area of irregular shapes. The higher attaining pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems is good.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is now good overall throughout the school. All teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan effectively to ensure that pupils' learning builds progressively. As a result, all achieve well, including high attainers and those with special educational needs. At the end of lessons, teachers bring pupils together to discuss their work. This helps pupils to make progress, by consolidating what they have learnt. The pupils respond well, concentrating on the tasks, taking the work seriously and showing a real desire to succeed. In a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher applied positive strategies to encourage good behaviour, such as praising those who were keen to answer questions or were quick to start work. This led to good relationships and good attitudes to learning. The teacher made good use of practical aids to support pupils' learning. This aided pupils' conceptual development. She gave them times by which she expected work to be completed, and this established high expectations and ensured a brisk pace.
83. The subject is led well and the National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively introduced into the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

84. There is an effective numeracy policy and all teachers are aware of the need to reinforce skills in all the subjects of the curriculum. There is good use of number skills in all the subjects of the curriculum. Number skills are used well in science, including the recording of the

results of practical work in graphs and tables and the measuring of the growth of plants. Teachers seek out opportunities in art, design and technology and ICT to give pupils practice in mental mathematics, and to reinforce what they have learnt in their numeracy sessions.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are increasing the emphasis on investigation so pupils' skills in scientific investigation are improving.
- Teaching and learning are good so standards are improving.
- The resources for science are good, and support teaching and learning well.
- Standards are below average, but improving because of the effective leadership by the headteacher.

Commentary

85. National test results at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were well below the national average, in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally. Provisional results for 2003 show an improvement but, although standards rose, relatively few pupils reached the higher grades. It must be understood, however, that the number of pupils in the year group was small and more than half had special educational needs, and so these results represent satisfactory achievement for the majority. The inspection evidence shows that current standards in Year 6 are close to average. Improved teaching and learning are raising standards and achievement is now good. There is a greater emphasis on investigative science, on pupils discovering for themselves, and on pupils writing in their own words rather than using photocopied worksheets.
86. Teachers' assessments for pupils in Year 2 in 2002 showed that the attainment of pupils was below average. The work done by pupils in Year 2 indicates that standards in 2003 were also below average. There was an over-reliance on duplicated worksheets in science, with too little direct input from the pupils. Work is being done to improve science provision in Years 1 and 2, and standards, though below average at the time of the inspection, are likely to be close to the national average by the end of the year. The achievement in lessons is now good.
87. By the end of Year 2, pupils know about plants and animals in their local environment. They have carried out a field study, collecting different kinds of seeds and understanding that some are designed to be spread by the wind and others by animals. They record some of their observations in tables and write notes. They know what plants require in order to grow and can name the parts of plants. Higher attaining pupils have a clear understanding of the function and importance of leaves and petals.
88. By the end of Year 6, most pupils know how an electrical circuit functions. They can say what the effects will be of changes in a circuit, such as introducing more bulbs in parallel or using longer wires. They investigate light and dark to find out how shadows are formed and how to make shadows longer or shorter. They write up their investigations clearly and record their results in graphs that they can interpret and explain. They understand that some changes are reversible in materials, such as when water freezes, and that some are not, such as when paper is burnt. They organise and carry out investigations, with a good understanding of the factors that will make for a fair test.
89. The pupils enjoy science and are eager to be challenged and questioned. They are excited when they are able to make predictions and then discover the answers for themselves. The teaching and learning are now good overall, and very good in some instances. It is well-planned and well resourced. Teachers try to make lessons enjoyable and, as a result, pupils

respond well. Teachers have moved away from using worksheets to introducing many practical investigations. These are taught in an exciting way that fires pupils' enthusiasm and encourages them to think deeply. This is particularly effective for more able pupils.

Example of an investigative activity.

In a science lesson in a Year 3-4 class, the pupils were asked whether a plant would still grow as well without its leaves. A lively discussion followed. The pupils decided to test out their theories. They worked out that they would need a control plant, with all its leaves, to compare against their defoliated example. In small groups they chose identical plants, selected one as the control and removed leaves from the other. They measured both plants so that later they could measure the growth in each. The groups made their own decisions about how many leaves to remove from the other plant. Some removed them all. Others, remembering their work on the environment, found it emotionally difficult to remove any for fear of hurting it! They wrote about their work well, using different sheets according to their ability – more able pupils being expected to write more and to use their own words. A good, very well resourced, scientific investigation was begun, which had the pupils buzzing with excitement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- New equipment and software are enabling the National Curriculum requirements to be covered in full.
- Teaching and learning are good, and achievement is accelerating as a result.
- Standards are below average, but improving due to staff training in the new equipment.

Commentary

90. The recent improvements in the provision for ICT - including a new computer room – along with rigorous management action and developing skills and enthusiasm of all the staff, have ensured that the school has improved teaching and learning. However, the new equipment had only just come into use at the time of the inspection. The school was suffering from a backlog of problems, for example, a lack of hardware and software - especially for control technology - a shortage of computers and malfunctioning printers. Although these problems have now been overcome, there has not been time for standards to rise. Until this year, the school has not been meeting statutory requirements for the subject and pupils have underachieved. There has now been satisfactory improvement since the last report, however, and standards are beginning to rise. Achievement has been unsatisfactory, but is improving. In the lessons seen and recent work, achievement is good.
91. By the end of Year 2, pupils know how to control programs, how to open and close them, and how to save their work, though some need help with this. The higher attainers, who often have and use computers at home, know the names of the equipment they are using and can use the keyboard and mouse accurately and well. Lower attainers are hesitant and need adult support to carry out work using the computers.
92. By the end of Year 6, a few pupils attain average levels, but most have below average knowledge and skills. They can use computers to make presentations and word process their

written work, but they are not adept at this. Good work was observed on spreadsheets, as the pupils learned to put information into tabular form and add totals automatically. There are clear signs that the recent improvements in provision are having a positive effect on pupils' attainment and it is improving. The pupils are now learning to use a computer to control a light and a motor. They can use simple databases to record and analyse data, such as details of names and physical characteristics of people. In all classes, pupils can control tape recorders and CD players.

93. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers prepare the lessons well and have good subject knowledge. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are assessed as they proceed through the units of work and their attainment is carefully recorded. Pupils are taught in small groups in the new computer suite and the proficiency of the teaching is developing pupils' skills well. All pupils are well motivated by the new developments in the subject, are enthusiastic about their work and have good attitudes to technology. This is because teaching is lively and motivating. This subject is now a focus for development and the action plan is highly appropriate. Leadership and management are satisfactory as the subject has just been targeted for development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

94. Pupils have good opportunities to use computers to support their learning in other subjects. For example, in history, pupils locate pictures and paste them into their work. This helps them to improve their understanding and presentation. Pupils use word processing to produce final pieces of work, although not for the process of drafting and editing.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships with pupils are good and encourage an ethos of questioning.
- There is a strong emphasis on teaching religious stories and their significance, and pupils have a good knowledge of religious stories as a result.
- Assessment is not always used to plan for learning, so a few pupils underachieve.

Commentary

95. Attainment is above the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus, both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are achieving well, making good progress in their knowledge of Bible stories and, for the older pupils, in their knowledge and understanding of other faiths. The provision for religious education is well planned and contributes significantly to the school ethos, reinforcing the messages that the school gives about caring for others and working together.
96. At the end of Year 2, the pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories. They can retell the story of Moses and understand the importance of worshipping and trusting in God. They have learnt about the Jewish festivals and special days, and the importance of Passover. They learn the significance of Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter.
97. Teachers plan well to cover the locally agreed syllabus and the good relationships throughout the school play a key role in the teaching as pupils feel free to contribute their ideas and to ask questions. At the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of Islam and understand the significance of Muslim festivals, religious artefacts and stories. All pupils learn about the Seven Pillars of Islam and the importance of the mosque and the significance of

Ramadan. They compare religious beliefs and learn to recognise factors that the world religions have in common, such as holy stories and pilgrimages. They empathise with people from other faiths; for example, by imagining themselves on a pilgrimage to Mecca and comparing this journey with a Christian pilgrimage. They have a good understanding of religious concepts. They write about the significance of baptism and marriage. The messages behind parables are explored and they consider the true meaning of Christian teaching, such as 'love thy neighbour'.

98. Teaching and learning are good. In a very good lesson in Year 3 and 4, pupils explored the concepts of being individual and yet being part of a group. They were encouraged to produce excellent models of people, each one unique and yet joined to the next. Many teachers have a strong personal commitment to the subject and very good subject knowledge. As yet, there is relatively little assessment and recording of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Religious education has a place in the school and its curriculum that is appropriate in a church school. Leadership and management of the subject are good.

History and geography

99. These subjects were sampled during the inspection and the overall provision is **satisfactory**. Staff are re-thinking how these subjects are taught. Links have been made successfully between these and other subjects without losing sight of the need to ensure continuity and progression within them. This approach started last term, so it is too early to judge the impact on standards. An early indication however, was how well pupils recalled their work from last year and the detail they were able to give. The liveliness of the teaching and the careful planning are two reasons for this good learning. The achievement of all pupils has improved over the year. At the beginning of the year, there were a large number of worksheets that did not challenge all pupils sufficiently, but this is changing as the curriculum is reviewed. Achievement was good in the lessons that were sampled.
100. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average. By the end of Year 2, pupils begin to understand how distance and objects can be shown as a plan and they start to talk about their local environment. They develop an understanding of the passing of time, using terms such as *long ago* and *long, long ago* to describe when things happened.
101. By the end of Year 6, the work pupils do on the Millennium Field and in their school garden helps them to understand the need to care for the environment, and to recognise how fragile it is. They referred to the pollution from car exhausts. Many understand plans of the school field and discuss features on them. They are given many opportunities to research and to present their work to others, in books and orally in class. This makes effective use of their literacy skills. Their study of the history of the locality enables them to reflect on the past and to hypothesise about events. Many have a good understanding of events at different times, supported by suitable historical investigation.
102. Although few lessons were observed, evidence from talking with pupils and the sample of work shows that teaching and learning have improved over the last year and are now good. Teachers use the methods that have been introduced last year, such as investigation and challenge. As a result more able pupils are made to work harder, but sometimes not hard enough. Boys' work is not presented as well as girls' as they take less care. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and their achievement is good.
103. Leadership and management of the subjects are satisfactory. Some evaluation of pupils' work has been done, but the subjects have not yet been given as high a priority as literacy and numeracy. This is planned.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

104. Art and music were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to give a judgement on provision. The standards of singing and of works of art are high, as the arts are given a high priority. Singing in assembly is expressive, often jubilant, and pupils open their mouths well so diction is good. All pupils in Years 1 to 4 learn to play the ocarina and recorder, and a few pupils from all years learn to play the guitar. Choirs are a regular feature, although very few boys take part. Many pupils go on to join the band, which plays at local events and includes different types of recorders, guitars, ocarinas, drums, bells, tambourines, shakers, chime bars and a xylophone. They play, following a simple notation. These pupils achieve well.
105. Teaching and learning in the performance elements of art and music are good, but appraisal is satisfactory. Pupils are taught how to use a range of media and the techniques needed for them, and they produce work of a high quality. Landscapes used mainly colour washes, thoughtfully and carefully placed to create a background before introducing objects. One pupil had painted a field of sheep on the image; the sheep were tiny as were the fences holding them in. It was exquisite. Observational drawings pay great attention to detail. For example, one boy used careful, and sometimes delicate, pencil work to depict barrels and the hoops on them.
106. In the lessons seen, pupils were insecure about evaluating their own work and that of others. This aspect, along with musical composition, is not given as strong an emphasis by teachers as the performance aspects of art and music. Although the arts have a high priority, they have not been a focus for development as the school is rightly focusing on literacy, numeracy and ICT. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

Physical education

107. This subject was sampled. Standards are above average in games by the end of Year 6. Like other subjects, assessment and recording of progress are weaker than in English and mathematics. The teaching sampled was satisfactory, pupils are managed well, helped by clear instructions. Teachers demonstrate well so that pupils can learn from good examples. The very good provision for teaching games leads to high standards when competing against other schools. Pupils enjoy taking part in the lessons. As in the arts, the subject has not been a focus for development. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.

Design and technology

108. Design notebooks from pupils in Year 2 show that they are developing good design and learning skills. Teaching in the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory. At the end of Year 6, standards are average and sometimes above average in design and making; achievement is satisfactory. There is less emphasis on research or evaluation. Pupils have little choice in the materials they use. The teachers' planning is monitored, but there is not a planned programme of lesson observation. There are no assessment procedures. The subject is soundly led and managed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

This area was sampled. The provision is good. Each teacher takes every opportunity to discuss living and working together as a community and the pupils' involvement in making decisions about the school supports their personal development very well. Circle time, the school council and the very strong emphasis on social and moral development support this area of the curriculum very well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).

