

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MILTON MOUNT FIRST & MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Crawley

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125916

Headteacher: Mr Brian Thomas

Lead inspector: Mr Christopher Gray

Dates of inspection: 8–10 March 2004

Inspection number: 256924

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First and Middle
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4–12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	460
School address:	Grattons Drive Pound Hill Crawley West Sussex
Postcode:	RH10 3AG
Telephone number:	01293 537158
Fax number:	01293 528782
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Walker
Date of previous inspection:	July 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the outskirts of Crawley and is larger than most primary schools as well as being bigger than at the time of the last inspection, since the intake has changed from one-and-a-half to two form entry. Currently a first and middle school, it is set to become a primary school for pupils aged four to eleven in September; thus, two year groups, Years 6 and 7, will leave in July. The school has recently received three awards: one for Healthy Schools, another the top award for Eco Schools (connected with environmental awareness) and a third for its status as an ambassador school for an internet-based cross-curricular computer software in whose use the school was a pioneer. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is changing with the nature of the school's catchment area. At the last inspection, it was above average, but records show that children have been entering with lower skills over the last three years, so that attainment on entry is now similar to national averages.

Most pupils come from homes whose socio-economic circumstances are more favourable than average. However, recent housing developments have included accommodation for families from more deprived backgrounds, which is having the effect of lowering overall skills on entry. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive a free school meal is well below average. Nearly 15 per cent of pupils come from ethnic minorities; the largest non-white group is British Indian. However, only four pupils are at the early stages of learning English, a similar proportion found in most schools. The proportion of pupils on the special needs register is average, as is the percentage with Statements of Special Educational Needs. However, the school has had no statements for a number of years; most of the current ones are for younger pupils - another indication of the change in entry skills. Pupils' needs include moderate and specific learning difficulties, hearing impairment and autism.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21037	Christopher Gray	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology
9769	Margaret Morrissey	Lay inspector	
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	English and French Physical education Religious education English as an additional language
11901	Pat Lowe	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Music
20877	David Pink	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2 AND 3</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>30</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school which gives good value for money.** Teaching and management are effective in enabling pupils to achieve well overall. Standards are high by Year 7.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve good standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design.
- Pupils have very good relationships with others and their personal development is good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The school is well led and managed and the headteacher provides very clear and effective direction. Governors work hard for the benefit of the school.
- The curriculum is very well enriched beyond the classroom, using very good links with other schools and the community.
- The school offers its pupils very good care and welfare and has a good partnership with parents.
- Higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 need more challenging work.
- Teachers give few clear pointers for improvement in their marking of pupils' work.
- Pupils' ability to listen carefully varies from class to class.

The effectiveness of the school has improved well since the last inspection. Standards have risen further in Years 6 and 7 since 1998 and the trend is keeping pace with national trends. The profile of teaching is stronger. The school has dealt well with most of the key issues of the last report; the provision for the Foundation Stage has improved and is now good, pupils' cultural awareness is now much more firmly established, reports to parents are fuller, and the monitoring of teaching is undertaken more widely, though there is scope for it to happen more frequently.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A	C
mathematics	A	A	A	C
science	B	C	A	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils' overall achievement is good.** The table above shows that standards in last year's national tests were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science and comparable to those attained by pupils in similar schools. The inspection finds that pupils in Year 3 to 7 achieve well. Current standards by Years 6 and 7 are well above average in mathematics and science; in English, they are above average by Year 6 and well above average in Year 7. Standards of spelling and handwriting are not as high as the quality of the content of pupils' written work. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily; current standards are similar to those of last year's national test results, at average levels overall in reading, writing and mathematics. Higher-attaining pupils need more opportunities to extend their thinking in lessons, especially in writing and science. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. They are set to meet the goals they are expected to reach by the time they enter Year 1 and nearly one-third of them will exceed the goals. Standards in ICT exceed expectations by Years 6 and 7; those in art and design exceed expectations by Year 2 and are well above expected levels by Years 6 and 7.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Behaviour is good, though a small minority sometimes find self-discipline difficult. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and their spiritual awareness is very good; there are good opportunities for pupils to develop self-knowledge and sensitivity in lessons and assemblies. Pupils' attendance is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall.** Pupils learn well because their teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and explain clearly to pupils what they are going to learn in each lesson. All teachers use computers well in their teaching and administrative work. The teaching observed during the inspection was almost all good or better in all four phases of the school; however, in Years 1 and 2, it is satisfactory overall because higher-attaining pupils are not given as much challenge as they need on a regular basis, especially in English and science. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 7. Throughout the school, teachers mark all pupils' work, but they do not make enough use of written feedback to indicate how pupils might develop or improve their work. Teachers' expectations of the standards of presentation of pupils' work and their accuracy in spelling are often not high enough.

The school provides a good curriculum, which is widely enriched outside the classroom. Personal, social, health and citizenship education plays an important part in pupils' learning. The care, guidance and welfare offered to pupils are very good. The school has established a good partnership with parents and has very good links with the community and other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, leadership and management are good.** The headteacher leads and manages the school very well and he is ably supported by the senior management team. Curriculum co-ordinators have a good understanding of how to develop their subjects. The school's governance is good; members of the governing body keep in close touch with the school's developments and are strongly supportive of the school.

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

Parents have good opinions about the work of the school. They are broadly satisfied with homework but would like the school's policy on amounts to be applied more consistently. Pupils also speak highly of their school and what it offers them. Pupils who hold responsibilities take them very seriously.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Provide higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 with more opportunities to express themselves at a level more closely matched to their abilities, especially in written work and science.
- Ensure that teachers' marking of pupils' work enables pupils to see how they might improve their work and its presentation.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to speak at length and to increase their ability to listen carefully.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall; it is good in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 7. By Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are well above average and above average in English. By Year 7, standards are well above average in all three subjects.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school at the age of 12.
- Pupils attain well in ICT and very well in art in design.
- Achievement is not as good in Years 1 and 2 as in the rest of the school, because higher-attaining pupils need more challenge in writing and science.

#### Commentary

1. In the 2003 national tests and Teacher Assessments, results were well above average at the expected level (Level 2 and above) in reading, writing and science. At the higher stage (Level 3), results were average in reading, well below average in writing and below average in mathematics. The average point scores (which take into account attainment at all levels) were average for all schools nationally and below those of schools with similar proportions of free school meals.
2. The overall trend is below that of the national trend. This is because of a significant change in the profile of children entering the school at age five. At the last inspection, attainment on entry was above average. Over the last three to four years, it has fallen to average levels, accompanied by a rise in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs. This change in basic skills is also reflected by a change in the backgrounds of some of the children, and is the main reason for the decline in Year 2 test results over the past three years. However, the provision for higher-attaining pupils is also a contributory factor.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (16.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (16.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. The inspection finds that pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory achievement. Standards are currently average in reading, writing and mathematics, a similar picture to the average point score of last year's test results. In writing and science, however, higher-attaining pupils need more opportunities to express themselves at greater length and this restricts their achievement. In art and design, pupils achieve above expected levels by Year 2.
4. In the national tests at Year 6, results at the expected level (Level 4 and above) were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. At Level 5, the higher stage, results were above average in English and well above average in mathematics



and science. Average point scores were well above average compared with those of all schools nationally and in line with those of schools with similar prior attainment. The trend in results is rising at a similar rate to the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (28.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.8 (29.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.3 (29.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. Current standards in Year 6, as shown by the inspection’s findings, are above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. In Year 7, standards are well above average in all three subjects. Pupils achieve well overall, though standards of handwriting and presentation are not as good as the content of pupils’ written work. An analysis of the school’s detailed tracking records shows that pupils make better progress in reading than in writing. Standards in art and design are well above expected levels by Years 6 and 7 and those in ICT exceed expectations.
6. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage. Overall standards are in line with what is expected for children of this age; good teaching enables children to make good progress, so that about 30 per cent of children are reaching above the expected levels.
7. Pupils with special educational needs are well by supported by teachers and assistants. They make good progress against the targets in their individual programmes and achieve well. The school provides well for pupils using English as an additional language. Their needs are promptly identified and the school receives appropriate support from a specialist external agency that also provides access to native speakers if required. They are enabled to achieve as well as other pupils.

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

Pupils’ behaviour, attitudes, values and personal development are good. Moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is very good. Attendance is good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have good personal development and very good relationships with each other and staff.
- Pupils’ attendance records are good, with low unauthorised absence.
- Pupils respond well to challenge and show initiative.
- Pupils’ enthusiasm for school is considerable

**Commentary**

8. Pupils’ behaviour is good overall. It is usually good in lessons and when pupils come together for assemblies and lunch; however, a small minority of pupils sometimes find self-discipline difficult, particularly in lessons. Pupils show courtesy and respect to other people, including visitors. They are polite and respectful and understand the consequences of their actions. They are keen to be praised for good behaviour; they respond well to rewards and sanctions. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection; parents and pupils are confident any issues are dealt with swiftly. Parents feel more supervision at lunchtimes would be beneficial to overall behaviour standards, though the inspection finds that the number of adults in the playground is adequate.

9. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in personal development. In the rest of the school, pupils have good attitudes towards school; in lessons and in discussion they display an open enthusiasm for learning. They show keen interest and involvement in activities, as seen in many lessons; a good example was seen in a Year 1 art lesson, where pupils were challenged to explore different media for painting, particularly enjoying using their hands and feet. Pupils in all year groups make a significant contribution to class discussion; they are able to sustain concentration and to persevere, organising their own work with good independence. For a number of Year 7 pupils, attitudes are not so positive; however, good teaching does not allow this significantly to affect pupils' learning.
10. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good and make a significant contribution to learning and to helping build pupils' self-esteem and confidence as learners. Pupils respond well to the good examples set by all staff, treat each other with care and mostly demonstrate that they learn from their mistakes.
11. Pupils' spiritual awareness is very good; this is evident in a number of lessons and particularly in assemblies. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. In one assembly, pupils were enthralled by the headteacher's taking them through the conquest of Mount Everest with pictures and artefacts. Moral development is good; all understand right from wrong and show evidence of this in their daily actions. The school promotes fairness, tolerance, and honesty, with time given for reflection and discussion in lessons. Social development is good. Pupils are keen to take responsibility for themselves and for others. They are involved in making and upholding school rules and, through the Healthy Schools Award and the Eco school project, they have gained a keen ownership of their environment. The School Council is well developed and works on useful and sophisticated issues. Pupils are aware of their own culture and traditions; a range of activities ensures that pupils' multi-cultural understanding is also developing, particularly through art, religious education and through links with Mtsiliza Primary School in Malawi and a school in Ghana.

#### Example of outstanding practice

**In this excellent assembly, the teacher provided first-rate opportunities to extend pupils' personal qualities.**

From the moment pupils entered the assembly, the teacher worked to build an atmosphere of calm and tranquillity, together with challenge, social development and spiritual achievement. Excellent use of ICT with animated graphical display took pupils through the first successful ascent of Everest in 1953. There were many opportunities to question and challenge; pupils were given time to reflect on how relationships and trust were built between the climber and his Sherpa guide. They were visibly amazed that anyone could survive night-time temperatures of -15 degrees and good links were made to the ECO work in school. All were equally amazed that this happened when the teacher was seven years old. As a result, pupils made excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

12. Attendance overall is good and above the national average; there is a very low rate of unauthorised absence. Parents receive very clear information on attendance procedures, are left in no doubt of the school's expectations and respond effectively.

## Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the last academic year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good and the curriculum is broad and widely enriched beyond the classroom. Pupils are very well cared for and the school has established very good links with parents and the community.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall; it is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 7 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The assessment of pupils' work is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their subjects well in all parts of the school.
- Higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 need more opportunities to extend their learning, especially in English and science.
- Teachers support their teaching and their own work with good ICT skills.
- Teachers do not write enough comments for improvement when they mark pupils' work.
- Assessment is thorough and constructive and is mostly used well to promote individual progress and to respond to pupils' individual needs.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4)	11 (23)	25 (52)	9 (19)	1 (3)	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.*

13. Teachers have good subject knowledge for all the subjects in the Foundation Stage, first and middle school age-ranges and this gives pupils a firm basis for good learning. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good in all areas of early learning and enables about 30 per cent of pupils to reach higher than expected levels. In Year 6, a very good science lesson was assisted by the teacher's own advanced understanding. Pupils were designing their own experiments to test the conditions under which mould will grow on bread. They were given a good range of independence, yet the teacher gave valuable guidance when she disallowed one circumstance of testing which could lead to the formation of the bacterium *botulism*.
14. Teachers' use of their ICT skills enhances both their teaching and their own work. A good example of the efficient use of an interactive whiteboard in a Year 3 English lesson is given in paragraph 65. Curriculum planning is entirely on computer, which makes for easy use and efficient cross-reference. The recording of Teachers' Assessments on computer means that the information can easily be fed into the target-setting procedure. The server gives examples of slide shows prepared for lessons (not for the inspection week) in English, geography and mathematics; for example, slides for Year 2 pupils setting out the steps involved in division.
15. Higher-attaining pupils are generally given work which extends their thinking in Years 3 to 7. Gifted and talented pupils are well supported with particular individual provision, both in class and beyond the school. But, in Years 1 and 2, higher-attaining pupils are not given enough chance to develop their thinking, especially in English and science lessons. This is more

evident in pupils' past work than in the lessons observed during the inspection, when most of the teaching observed in Years 1 and 2 was good. In science, the use of worksheets with small spaces for a limited response means that these pupils feel they are not expected to produce more work, or think at a higher level, than other pupils. In English, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged to improve their initial written efforts or to structure their writing to make it more appealing to the reader. As a result, their work sometimes rambles and lacks form.

16. Teachers make good use of clear learning intentions in all lessons. These are mostly expressed in simple language so that children can use them to help their learning and evaluate how well they have learnt. Teachers mark pupils' work against the lesson intention, so that they can assess the extent to which the intention has been successful. However, they rarely mark work with any other end in view. This means that there are few written pointers to pupils about how they might have done better or where they might have gone further. Spellings are rarely corrected, with the effect that pupils' spelling is generally not as good as the content of what they write. Expectations of the presentation of work are also not high, except in science in Years 6 and 7.
17. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework to extend learning in English, mathematics and science and some other subjects, such as history and ICT. Parents are broadly satisfied, although they said that amounts vary from class to class, regardless of pupils' age. Homework for the holidays is not popular (with parents).
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Teaching in small groups is very good. It is also effective in lessons where pupils are supported by teaching assistants. The planning of class lessons to include the needs of pupils with special educational needs is not as strong. About five per cent of pupils use a language other than English at home. They are given good help in their learning and, once they overcome any initial linguistic difficulties, their rate of progress is indistinguishable from that of other pupils.
19. Assessment is thorough and constructive. The approach to assessment provides a good framework for promoting individual progress. A comprehensive database is maintained on the progress of individual pupils in English, mathematics and science. This enables predictions to be made for the expected achievement of each pupil. Targets are set to enable pupils to achieve these projections and are reviewed each term. Writing assessments are made every half-term. Investigations in mathematics are assessed and moderated in the autumn term. In all other subjects, assessment is made against precise, key learning intentions. Summative assessments are made at the end of each topic, and one piece of work in each subject is given a National Curriculum level each year. Thus, the school has a clear and detailed overview of pupils' attainment that can be updated at any time by the class teacher.
20. Assessment is used well to address pupils' needs, to highlight areas for consideration in future planning and to identify pupils who are achieving better than, or not as well as, expected. In English, mathematics and science, the accumulated information is used well to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, in terms of National Curriculum levels. Pupils are encouraged to take some responsibility for assessing their own progress against the success criteria and improving their own performance. Self-assessment is of a high standard, particularly in art and design and design and technology. Pupils are aware of their reading age and their National Curriculum levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science and know how to improve upon them.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities. There are very good opportunities for pupils to widen their experiences beyond the classroom. The accommodation and resources from the Foundation Stage to Year 7 support pupils' learning well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The planning and organisation of the curriculum are very effective in promoting innovation.
- The very good range and quality of the extra-curricular activities enhance the learning of pupils.
- The programmes of study for personal, social, health and citizenship education have a major impact on the atmosphere in the school.
- There is insufficient challenge in science in Years 1 and 2.

### **Commentary**

21. The very effective way in which innovation is incorporated into curricular practices is a major contributor to the effectiveness of this school. The very wide range of extra-curricular activities and the very effective programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education help to create a vibrant atmosphere for learning. Because of this, pupils attain high standards and achieve well. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 study a modern foreign language (French). The curriculum for all phases of the school meets statutory requirements.
22. The language and ICT skills of pupils are effectively developed across the curriculum. In Year 6 pupils use their language skills to write at length about the experience of evacuation. Pupils use their ICT skills effectively to research and enhance the presentation of their work in Years 6 and 7. An "archaeological dig" in the school grounds has resulted in pupils' finding out about aspects of their local environment in Victorian and Edwardian times. There is a strong arts programme with each year of the school involved in an annual dramatic performance. A programme of visiting artists enriches the high standards achieved in art and design.
23. Planning to support higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 is insufficient, as is the amount of science work covered by the topics in those years. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by well-trained staff. The assistance the school offers to pupils for whom English is an additional language is generally well directed; however, it is defined in terms of special needs support rather than in terms of specialist language help.
24. Staffing levels are good, though the times when some classes receive the help of support assistants are not always well chosen. The well-maintained accommodation and the pleasant outlook of the school's grounds support effective learning. The play facilities for the pupils in Foundation Stage are good and secure. However, the main school library is located in a cramped space, which inhibits its use by the pupils; this is set to be extended. Whilst access to computer facilities for pupils is good, the main computer room is small and this makes it difficult for teachers to view the work of all pupils.

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

The care and welfare of pupils are very good. Good support and guidance are offered them and they are actively involved in the running of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The health and safety of the environment are very good.
- The quality of liaison with other agencies is very good.
- Induction arrangements for all pupils are very good.

## **Commentary**

25. The procedures for pupils' safety and welfare are very good and well established. The day-to-day awareness of health and safety is very good and well known to all staff and pupils; this is supported by the governing body and the premises officer. Risk assessment procedures are well established and the school monitors and reviews safe working procedures.
26. There are very effective child protection procedures in the school, which meet statutory requirements. The policy is agreed by the governing body and is well known to all staff. First aid provision is very good; pupils are confident to seek help and are well cared for. Pupils benefit particularly from the well situated and well resourced medical room.
27. The school has good procedures for the educational and personal support of pupils. Pupils are confident that they have a voice in the school and can now make their views fully known through the School Council. Pupils' wishes and opinions are carefully considered by the school and mostly acted on. The ECO committee has set up a rota of pupils to act as light wardens; their drive to save electricity in empty rooms led them to check on the headteacher's office when two inspectors were working quietly there - all politely handled. The school counsellor visits weekly both to support the personal, health and social education programme and also to speak with any pupil requesting help.
28. Support and guidance systems are effective and appreciated by pupils; the impact of support and guidance on pupils' progress is significant. Pupils can assess their own learning, know their National Curriculum levels, and have a good understanding of how they can improve. Pupils with special needs are given good help to meet individual education plan targets. There are very good procedures for pupils' induction to Nursery, to Reception class, and for the move from first to middle school. A programme of support is also in place for any pupil who joins the school during the term.

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

The school has good links with parents and very good links with the community and with other schools.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are pleased that their children make good progress.
- All staff are approachable and give parents very good help.
- Very good links between the school, the community and other schools are used well to advance pupils' learning.

## **Commentary**

29. The school's partnership with parents is good and the high degree of support provided by parents is beneficial to pupils' progress. Parents feel the school contributes well to community life and are pleased that their children attend the school. They feel their children are making good progress and staff expect pupils to work hard and achieve to the best of their ability.
30. The school provides a good range of information, both written and verbal, to ensure parents are well informed about pupils' progress. The statement of intent provided at the beginning of each term provides information on what pupils will be learning and how parents can support them and it is valued by parents. Reports are considered helpful and of good quality and parents are impressed by the opportunities pupils have to take responsibility for their own learning. There are still a number of parents who would like to be further informed on pupils' learning, and especially on the way mathematics is taught.

31. The school offers parents and pupils advice on how to complete homework and this is appreciated; parents are concerned that homework is not set consistently and, on some occasions, they feel that pupils in Years 3 to 7 have excessive amounts to complete. They also feel holiday projects are intrusive on family leisure time.
32. The Friends of the School Association is instrumental in raising large amounts of money to provide support for the school. This has benefited all areas of learning across the school in the last year and is very much appreciated and valued by the headteacher, staff and governors.
33. The school constantly strives to extend and improve its links with the community, which are already very good and have a very good impact on pupils' learning. The school regularly brings the community into the school, both to broaden pupils' learning and to raise their local and wider environmental awareness. A very good example of the two-way links in which the school seeks to be involved is the work with the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, which was supported by the pupils; in return they have provided CD-ROMs for use in the humanities curriculum.
34. The links with other schools and colleges are very good. Pupils are well supported before and at their transfer to secondary school. Work with the local secondary school and with the local cluster schools includes shared training sessions and having work experience pupils in the school. A number of initiatives with other schools, colleges and the local education authority help enrich the school's curriculum and widen experience for staff.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher leads the school very well, and is ably supported by his senior management team. Curriculum co-ordinators have a thorough understanding of how to develop further their respective subjects. The school's governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The experienced headteacher provides robust and imaginative leadership.
- The deputy and assistant headteachers form a strong and cohesive senior team that facilitates the headteacher's open and consultative approach to management.
- The governing body strongly supports the school and has a clear understanding of its strengths.
- The school effectively evaluates its performance and correctly identifies areas for further improvement.
- The information that the school collects about its pupils is used very well to track their progress and initiate improvements in their learning.

### **Commentary**

35. The headteacher gives very clear direction to the vision and work of the school. Under his leadership, the school has continued to improve on the good standards reported at the last inspection, accurately identifying areas that require further improvement and taking the right steps to ensure that shortcomings are remedied. The school's new approach to the teaching of writing through drama and the imaginative use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning are examples of the headteacher's continual quest to improve the quality of pupils' learning and to try out new ideas on their behalf. He is well supported by the busy deputy headteacher. He is more closely involved in management than he was at the last inspection, but still has many responsibilities. Together with the two assistant headteachers, the head and deputy form an experienced and cohesive management team receptive to the needs and suggestions of the hard-working staff. Their corporate and open approach to leadership means that staff members feel well supported and

are well motivated to do their best for the pupils. Subject leaders, carefully chosen for their

interest and expertise, have a thorough knowledge of where improvements need to be made, and the challenge for the school is to disseminate existing good practice more widely.

36. The management of the school is equally good. Its structures are uncomplicated and well defined so that there is a free flow of information between managers and staff in both directions. The management of subjects is generally good. Almost all managers bring particular experience or expertise in varying proportions to the task of subject development, and this ensures that staff have good support at their disposal when this is required. The school has very good systems for gathering information about the progress of its pupils. It accurately identifies those areas where improvements are needed and implements the right measures to overcome weaknesses. However, it could do more to ensure that such remedies are implemented consistently across the school; for example, by more rigorously ensuring a common approach towards marking and towards the setting of challenging tasks for higher-attaining pupils. Arrangements for the performance management of staff are good. This currently forms the principal focus for the monitoring of teaching, which could be more frequent.
37. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed by the co-ordinator and another specialist teacher. The co-ordinator is the deputy head; because of an increase in the numbers of pupils on the special needs register, his release time is to be augmented next term. The provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is also the responsibility of the deputy head, which he manages well.
38. Members of the governing body keep in constant touch with the school's developments and are strongly supportive of the headteacher. They are well briefed, both by the headteacher and by members of staff, who sometimes report on recent developments to the relevant sub-committees. Many governors take a keen interest in the school's activities, some displaying a very close interest in the curriculum area for which they are responsible. Their role in supporting and challenging the school's work is considerably stronger than it was at the time of the last inspection. For example, they have much closer involvement in the construction of the school's development plan. The governing body now fully meets its statutory obligations.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,012,096	Balance from previous year	61,039
Total expenditure	1,000,590	Balance carried forward to the next	72,545
Expenditure per pupil	2,147		

39. The governors' finance sub-committee receives regular updated reports on the school's income and expenditure. Its Chair has an excellent understanding of the schools' financial arrangements, and is well placed to advise her sub-committee on the decisions they take. Priorities for expenditure are closely informed by the school's development plan, a detailed document that defines its objectives and success criteria in measurable terms where possible. This is updated annually by means of a thorough consultation process that involves both staff and governors. The school prudently monitors its spending while constantly seeking to improve its facilities and provision. For example, a new library is to be built in a few months, a facility urgently needed because the present accommodation is too cramped. For major projects such as these, the school thoroughly investigates likely sources of funds and properly designates a proportion of its budgetary reserves: part of the large balance carried forward into the current financial year has been earmarked for this new library.



40. The school makes good arrangements for the day-to-day administration of its budget. Its competent finance officer ensures that the headteacher and chair of the finance sub-committee are frequently briefed on the school's budgetary position, and takes the right steps to ensure that it secures bulk supplies at advantageous rates, thus making good use of the principles of best value. The school receives good support from the local authority when seeking advice on tendering or securing contracts.

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

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

41. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Standards on entry match those expected for children of this age. Children make good progress and achieve well in the six areas of learning. Standards, overall, at the end of the Reception Year match those expected for children of this age in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. About 30 per cent of children exceed national expectations.
42. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The Foundation Stage leader has created an effective team. Teaching is good and leads to good learning. Strengths of teaching are very good planning, insistence on high standards of behaviour and the valuable support given by teaching assistants and voluntary helpers. The level of care and the quality of support are very good. Thorough assessment procedures enable staff to respond to children's individual needs. The outdoor area is used well and is to be further developed, in order fully to complement the indoor classroom. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

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

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

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

- Very good induction procedures enable children to settle quickly into routines.

#### **Commentary**

43. Carefully planned and well-focused activities ensure equality of access to the curriculum for all children. They respond well and become independent users of the classroom and the outdoor area. Children's good attitudes, behaviour and relationships promote good learning. They are encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others as they dig, plant, water, and make mud pies in the school garden. Their independence develops as they carry out simple responsibilities, such as putting out the mats in gymnastic lessons. They develop an understanding of right and wrong and accept the need for a common code of behaviour. When making bread rolls, they take turns, and help with clearing up. Through stories like 'The Ugly Duckling', they learn that people are different but feel the same when they are treated unkindly.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

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

- Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are taught well.

#### **Commentary**

44. There are well-planned opportunities to develop language skills and an early emphasis on sounds, letter formation and word-building skills. Children use a widening range of words to express their ideas. For example, having read the poem 'Mud' and the story 'The Mud Pie' with the teacher, children wrote a group poem which began with the words, 'Running, soggy, sloppy soil makes gooey water mud...'. Following a lesson on rhyming patterns ending in 'ug',

children each made a small, colourful fabric rug. They develop their reading skills through listening to stories and reading individually to one or more of the 20 voluntary helpers each week. Most children confidently re-tell stories, such as 'Farmer Duck'. They obtain information from non-fiction texts about pets and vets and carry out role-play in the vet's clinic. The National Literacy Strategy is introduced gradually.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's mathematical skills are developed through practical activities.

#### **Commentary**

45. Children solve simple problems, create a pictogram of their pets and print a graph on the computer. They use the vocabulary of time for making appointments with the vet. After counting animal attributes up to ten, they record them on the computer. They learn to add by combining two groups of animals. Most children recognise numerals to 20 and count reliably up to ten objects. The language of addition and subtraction is developed through stories, such as 'Five Little Ducks'. Children weigh out ingredients for making bread, using scales with adult help. They begin to understand money, as they use price labels and coins in the class shop. Most children compare two groups of objects, saying whether they have the same number, or 'more than' or 'less than'. They develop an understanding of capacity and weight as they fill small and large bottles with water, using words such as 'more', 'less', 'full' and 'empty'. In describing shapes, they use language such as 'circle', 'cube', 'bigger', and 'smaller'. The National Numeracy Strategy is introduced well.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A range of activities develops children's understanding and use of the senses.

#### **Commentary**

46. Children become familiar with the environment as they explore the school grounds. They talk about the weather and, through reading 'Handa's Surprise', learn about warm climates and exotic fruits. They cuddle animals brought in by a local farmer and learn how to care for them. Most children identify the parts of a growing bean plant. They learn about the life cycles of birds. Children investigate objects and materials, by using all their senses, as appropriate. They make predictions about the best place to melt ice, investigate instruments to see how sounds are made and note how ingredients change during cooking. In learning about the everyday use of technology, they are helped to use a digital camera. Children competently use a range of software to support the development of reading, phonics, writing, number, sorting and matching. Their awareness of religious beliefs develops as they learn that people have different values, cultures and beliefs.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given many opportunities to respond to rhythm and music.

#### Commentary

47. Children respond to rhythm, music and stories through movement and learn to start and stop, on request. They move with developing confidence, imagination, control and co-ordination, and with an awareness of others, in the hall and outside. Climbing equipment is used safely. As children travel along, under and over equipment, they use a range of body parts and learn to turn in the air whilst jumping from low apparatus. They develop their throwing and catching skills. Their awareness of the importance of exercise develops. Physical skills in the classroom are taught well. Children use construction kits and junk materials to build animal homes and create a class farm. They use salt dough to shape fruit, vegetables, bread and cakes for the class shop. With adult support, they use knives safely to chop and slice fruits. They dig and rake outside when preparing the soil for planting.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for imaginative and creative development.

#### Commentary

48. Children explore colour, texture and space, as they work together on tie-dyeing activities. They communicate their ideas by stitching and adding sequins to the fabric. When exploring colour, shape and space in two dimensions, they make pictures and posters to display in the class shop. They observe and draw beans growing in jars. Children draw their faces from observation, using mirrors. They express their ideas in dance and accompany music with their bodies, voices and percussion instruments. Most children sing simple songs from memory and add songs and percussion to the story of 'Little Red Hen'. They explore loud and quiet sounds with their hands, voices and instruments. Children compose music that depicts growth, and listen to music from other cultures.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2 AND 3

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

#### English

The quality of provision for English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 6 and well above average in Year 7.
- Pupils achieve well between Years 3 and 7 because teachers' expectations are high.
- Higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 could be offered more challenging work.
- Writing and drama are used well to support pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum.

- The quality of pupils' listening varies from class to class.
- Marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work.
- The subject leaders have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development.

### Commentary

49. Standards of work are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Those in Year 7 are well above average. Overall, standards are similar to those found at the last inspection, although they have declined a little at Year 2 and have improved at Year 7. These differences are largely explained by variations in the overall ability of each year group, although higher-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not always offered work that is difficult enough. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 7, although there are variations across different aspects of the subject.
50. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in speaking and listening. Many are articulate when speaking informally, but could reach even higher standards of proficiency in lessons if they were expected to speak at length or offered questions that challenged them to explain, justify or illustrate their answers. Too often, teachers' questions anticipate the nature and length of pupils' responses. In a few classes, teachers encourage pupils to discuss questions or issues in small groups; in others, drama is used well to encourage pupils to sustain an argument or develop a character. However, such good practice is not yet consistently applied across the school. In most lessons, pupils listen carefully to the teacher, although in a small minority there is an undercurrent of talking that spoils concentration. Pupils listen carefully to each other when they take part in drama or role play, and when they are engrossed in the work they have been set. They respect the views of others, and generally wait patiently before making a contribution. Difficulties in concentration usually occur when pupils are not expected to settle quickly enough.
51. Achievement in reading and writing is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and is generally good in Years 3 to 7. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make at least satisfactory progress in learning the values of sounds and in building up a fund of words that they recognise by sight. However, those unsure of their sounds would benefit from rehearsing them aloud more frequently to improve their familiarity with them. By Year 2, many pupils are beginning to enjoy books and to read with expression. Pupils' progress is frequently checked, both at home and at school, and their achievements are carefully recorded. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils build on the solid foundation they have acquired, making good progress so that, by Year 6, many are reading fluently and confidently, able to discuss or write about the plot or characters of their chosen book, or predict its outcome. However, older pupils are not always sufficiently guided in their choice of individual reading, nor challenged to read from a wide enough range of authors or styles.
52. Pupils write at length from the time that they enter Year 1. This is a good strategy, which ensures that pupils do not shy from attempting unknown words and that they develop the confidence to express themselves without restraint. By Year 2, a large proportion are writing uninhibitedly and recount real or imagined events in their correct sequence. However, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged to improve upon their initial efforts or to structure their writing to make it more appealing to the reader. As a result, their work sometimes rambles and lacks form. Between Years 3 and 7, pupils achieve well in writing because teachers' expectations for its content and structure are high. Pupils write on a range of themes and use their skills well to support learning in other subjects. The best imaginative and descriptive writing in Year 6 is often of high quality. In a good lesson in Year 7, pupils were challenged to deduce the motives and character of a figure portrayed in a short dialogue, and the task elicited telling written comments that revealed their understanding of sub-plot and thought processes. Those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils, and they are often well supported in their efforts.

53. Standards of presentation and handwriting across the school are average. While pupils are systematically taught to join their writing, they are not shown sufficiently how they can improve their work or make it more aesthetically pleasing to the reader. Many pupils write quickly because they express themselves with such facility, and this does not favour careful work. Some older pupils write in a neat, cursive hand, although a small proportion still print their writing. By contrast, pupils use their computer skills well to produce booklets resulting from individual research. Spelling skills are average; mistakes are sometimes careless, suggesting that pupils do not read their finished work with sufficient precision.
54. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good overall in Years 3 to 7. Seven out of ten lessons observed across the school during the inspection were good or very good. The principal difference in quality lies in teachers' expectations for higher-attaining pupils over time. Younger pupils are not always given tasks that challenge them to demonstrate their skills fully or to improve enough on their initial efforts, and there is less than the expected difference between the quality of writing of higher and average-attaining pupils. In Years 3 to 7, pupils achieve well because much is expected of them. Pupils are often set imaginative work that leads them to explore ideas and write for a range of purposes. In a few classes across the school, marking is detailed and constructive enough to incite pupils to higher achievement, but such good use is not consistent. The school uses drama well to enhance the quality of speaking and writing. In one very good lesson, pupils identified so effectively with a story character after role play that they quickly wrote imaginative dialogue reflecting his thoughts and motives.
55. The subject is well managed by experienced co-ordinators, who clearly understand how to carry out further improvements. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and recorded so that teachers have a very good understanding of their relative abilities. There is scope to increase the monitoring of teaching to ensure that agreed improvements are applied to a common standard. Resources for English are good, but the size of the library, criticised at the last inspection, is still too small to allow its use for research. However, the school has plans to remedy this in the coming months.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

56. Writing is imaginatively used to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, such as history and design and technology. Pupils deploy their word-processing skills very well to present extended history projects. Drama and role-play successfully enhance pupils' listening and speaking skills and are used as an effective vehicle for airing moral and social issues.

### **French**

57. This subject was sampled as only one lesson took place during the inspection; no overall judgement may be made on teaching and provision.
58. Although no teaching was seen at Year 7, there was sufficient evidence to indicate that standards here are above average, and that achievement in both Years 6 and 7 is good. These findings are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils acquire a good accent because they are taught to listen carefully and to imitate faithfully the speech patterns of the teacher. The taped voices of native speakers extend pupils' experience of hearing the language. Before they leave the school, many pupils are confident in expressing basic facts about themselves and their preferences. Some are able to describe their appearance (*j'ai les yeux bleus et les cheveux marrons*), while others talk confidently about their homes (*dans ma maison, il y a une cuisine et trois chambres*). Writing is used very well to reinforce learning, so that pupils make equally good gains in the four principal aspects of the language. Pupils find lessons interesting and are well motivated to learn.
59. Although no overall judgement may be made on the quality of teaching, the one lesson seen and the quality of pupils' learning indicate that it is likely to be good. The teacher prepares his

work thoroughly, offering pupils a wide range of skills to practise and moving briskly from one activity to the next so that they are obliged to listen attentively. This variety of tasks keeps pupils interested and enhances their motivation to learn. A range of resources is used very imaginatively; a glove puppet, a PowerPoint presentation, dictionaries and a story book all enriched pupils' understanding in the lesson seen. However, pupils could be allowed more time to imitate and practise the language for themselves in pairs or small groups. Sometimes, they move on without consolidating previous learning sufficiently.

60. Subject leadership is very good. The experienced teacher is very well qualified to lead the subject, and his initiatives are well supported by the senior management team. Arrangements for the assessment of pupils' skills and understanding are very good. Although the time allocated for French is about half that recommended for Year 7 pupils, the school has more than compensated for this by introducing the language in Year 6. It is planned to extend the language to younger age groups when the school becomes a primary school this year. This is a good initiative, which anticipates national targets for language learning. In the course of their work, pupils develop a good understanding of French culture, which culminates in a residential visit to Normandy; this is effectively linked to other studies in geography and history.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall.
- The use of assessment information to support pupils in their learning is very effective.
- There are good opportunities for enhancing the learning of higher-attaining pupils.
- Pupils are given too few opportunities to explain and discuss their ideas and some pupils do not listen effectively to their peers.

### **Commentary**

61. By Year 6 and in Year 7, the standards attained by pupils are well above average in all areas of mathematics, representing good achievement. This is because of the strong leadership of the subject co-ordinator, the very effective use of assessment data to track and challenge pupils and the good teaching. Effective teamwork amongst the teachers ensures consistency in most years. Standards achieved by pupils in Years 1 and 2 are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards in Years 6 and 7 have improved since the last inspection; those by Year 2 are lower, owing chiefly to children's lower entry skills.
62. The quality of teaching is good overall; it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 7. Teachers know their pupils well because of the very effective systems for tracking the progress of pupils. The very good day-to-day assessment allows teachers to match learning very closely to the needs of the pupils. However, in Year 2, planning is not consistently based on pupils' prior attainment in one class. The absence of a national test at the end of Year 1 means that the tracking of pupils' progress is not as good in Years 1 and 2 as it is in Years 3 to 7. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and in most classes maintain high expectations of all pupils. The structure of the National Numeracy Strategy is used effectively to support pace and challenge in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in classes by effective teaching assistants. Pupils are set in mathematics from Year 3 and this promotes the learning of high attainers. In Year 6, higher-attaining pupils have an enrichment programme in addition to their normal provision. In Year 5 pupils are given the opportunity to make decisions about their learning when the teacher asks whether they wish to proceed with the given examples or rejoin the teacher for a recap on the use of multiplication.
63. Whilst pupils are able to speak well they are given too few opportunities in lessons to explain their ideas and methods. The teachers too often accept simple short answers to questions

and pupils are not given the opportunity to develop their spoken language. Pupils are not encouraged to listen carefully when other pupils speak. In some classes, notably in Years 5 and 7, pupils often speak whilst the teacher is speaking, reducing the quality of their learning. The effective monitoring of teaching and learning, which has resulted in improved standards in Years 3 to 7, indicates good improvement in leadership and management since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. Numeracy skills are developed in other areas of the curriculum. In geography, pupils collect and analyse data from charts and graphs. In science, pupils carefully measure length and capacity in their investigations.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Standards are high by Years 6 and 7.
- In Years 1 and 2, teachers use worksheets which limit pupils response, especially that of higher-attaining pupils.
- Teaching is good in Years 3 to 7.
- Pupils are experienced in planning, executing and drawing conclusions from experiments in Years 3 to 7.
- The topics in Years 1 and 2 contain too little science work.

#### **Commentary**

65. Standards by Years 6 and 7 are well above average and pupils achieve well, showing good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have one theory and one practical lesson every week, and the standard of older pupils' write-ups of experimental work is high. For example, an above average Year 7 pupil, considering the results of an experiment to demonstrate shadows caused by the sun, wrote, "I think the times for angle number two might be anomalous, because ..." and went on to give a lucid and plausible explanation for the apparently absurd results. Teaching is good overall in these years, especially for the older pupils, whose lessons are taken by the middle school co-ordinator.
66. Standards are average by Year 2. This is satisfactory achievement and reflects not only the lower skills with which pupils are now entering the school, but also the limited opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking. Teaching is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn science as part of a topic which also encompasses history, geography and design and technology. Although this practice makes sense at this level, the science content of the topics, as shown by pupils' past work, has been small. Moreover, pupils of all abilities usually complete the same work sheets, which require short answers - often one word. Where a longer response is wanted, the space provided is often limited to little more than a couple of inches, meaning that higher-attaining pupils do not have enough opportunity to respond at length and develop their ability to hypothesise.
67. The two co-ordinators have been appointed recently and there has been too little time for the impact of their work to be seen. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. Good work has been covered in improving the assessment system, and the fact that the middle school co-ordinator teaches Years 6 and 7 gives her a good understanding of standards at the end of the school. But there has been no opportunity for them to monitor teaching in the first school or in Years 3 to 5.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**



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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are good by Years 6 and 7.
- Teachers use their own ICT skills well in their teaching, curriculum planning and assessment.
- Resources are good but the ICT suite is too cramped and under-ventilated.

### **Commentary**

68. Pupils achieve well throughout the school because the subject is well taught and resources are good and are used well. Standards are average by Year 2 and rise to be above expectations by Years 6 and 7, similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils learn all aspects of the subject, as detailed in the last paragraph of this section.
69. Teachers have participated in much recent training and have up-to-date and confident skills. An example was seen in a good English lesson for Year 3 pupils of very efficient use of an interactive whiteboard. Pupils were examining the pattern of a poem about the country, which used a succession of nouns and verbs of sound. Pupils were asked to come to the front and highlight the nouns or verbs in different colours on the whiteboard. This enabled them to see clearly how the pattern worked and gave them pleasure in operating the equipment. Curriculum planning is good and is virtually all on the school's server and teachers are familiar with using it in this form. Assessment records for several subjects have also been transferred to computers and will be so soon for them all. Examples of ICT work prepared by teachers were seen on the server; for example, a set of slides for a Year 2 geography lesson and a presentation to aid children in creative writing.
70. Teachers and pupils use the ICT suite well, despite its shortcomings. There are enough machines for all classes to have one per pupil, though the amount of space for each computer is so cramped that there is no room between machines, as they are cheek-by-jowl on the tables. This means that pupils cannot easily work without interruption from their neighbours. The room itself is narrow so that there is scarcely any room for the teacher to walk between the rows of seats, which have clumsy, wheeled feet which are easy to stumble over. The air-conditioning unit is inadequate even for such a small room, especially when teachers leave the door open to avoid a feeling of claustrophobia.
71. The subject is well led and managed. Teachers' confidence and facility in using the equipment owes much to the co-ordinator's work. The subject nationally has moved a long way in the six years since the last inspection and the improvement made has been good.

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

72. Pupils use ICT in most subjects; for example, Year 2 pupils produce pictures in art and design lessons and tally information about transport in mathematics lessons, creating pie and block graphs. Year 6 pupils make *PowerPoint* presentations about India, covering aspects of geography, history and religious education. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 use control technology to program models they make in design and technology lessons. The most impressive examples are the history projects which Year 7 pupils are just completing, after two terms' work. This is undertaken in school and at home, though a few parents resent the pressure they say they feel to provide home computers. Pupils were asked to choose a member of their family to research and many chose grandparents or great-grandparents. Several families have made long journeys to photograph birthplaces or to interview relatives (whose help with writing is occasionally evident). The finished products are either in book form or on CD-ROM and have used a variety of different applications. Most include sound, animations and recent and historical photographs and documents, scanned into the school system. The preparation of

these has made an important contribution to pupils' personal development and inspectors enjoyed reading the examples they were shown.

## HUMANITIES

Only one lesson in religious education was seen and so no overall judgement may be made on teaching or provision. Geography and history were not foci for inspection; no lessons were observed and the subjects were sampled.

### Religious education

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 2 display a good understanding of the messages underlying the parables of Jesus.
- Higher-attaining pupils in Year 7 often produce independent work of a high quality.
- There are no procedures for assessing pupils' achievement in the subject.

#### Commentary

73. As at the time of the last inspection, standards are similar to those expected by the locally agreed syllabus in Years 2, 6 and 7, and achievement across the school is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 1 know that certain days are special in people's lives for different reasons. They write prayers of thanks at harvest time, and write briefly about the Christmas story. Those in Year 2 display a good understanding of some of the parables of Jesus. Not only do they relate the stories in detail, but make a good attempt at explaining the teaching behind them. For example, two pupils understood that the story of the Good Samaritan is about 'loving people who do not like you'. Pupils know the purposes of baptism, and understand that Christians regard Jesus as a special person because he is the Son of God. However, they have little understanding of the fact that people hold different beliefs, and have not heard of other religious groups such as Jews or Muslims.
74. By Year 6, pupils have the expected level of understanding of some of the similarities and differences between beliefs and practices of different faith groups. For example, they explain essential differences between Judaism and Christianity. They display good knowledge of the principal events surrounding the life of Jesus, and understand how faith informed the attitudes and work of well-known figures from different eras; for example, Daniel and Mother Teresa. In Year 7, pupils explore the reasons why people believe in God, and write balanced arguments in consideration of the evidence for God's existence. Pupils are offered good opportunities to explore these issues through independent research, and higher-attaining pupils develop detailed arguments and draw well reasoned conclusions.
75. The curriculum offers satisfactory coverage of the principal elements of the agreed syllabus. As part of the school's programme of self-evaluation, it is experimenting with teaching the subject as a blocked unit each term to ensure that pupils explore areas of study in sufficient depth. The headteacher leads the curriculum well, and is very well qualified to manage it through this period of transition. At present, there are no procedures for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding, but these will be crucial if the school is to make a well-founded evaluation of the new arrangements for teaching the subject.
76. From evidence of pupils' work in **history**, it is clear that effective use is made of pupils' literacy skills to enhance their learning. Pupils in Year 6 support their English texts by exploring the evidence related to evacuation in the Second World War. Descriptive and report writing are also expected of pupils. Regular trips to places of historical interest enhance this provision. In Year 2 pupils 'interviewed' a character playing Samuel Pepys in order to develop their understanding of evidence for the Great Fire of London. Pupils' work in **geography** shows that they develop their map work skills effectively in Year 4. In their comparative studies of two

contrasting areas, pupils carry out an investigation into the facilities available in those places. In their studies of rivers, pupils increase their geographical vocabulary by using precise terms.

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

Four lessons in art and design were observed. As design and technology, music and physical education were not foci for inspection, these subjects were sampled; no lessons were observed.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very effective teaching methods ensure the progressive development of skills.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to improve their work.
- Pupils' sketch books show consistent development in their work through the school.

### **Commentary**

77. Standards are above expectations in Year 2 and well above expectations in Years 6 and 7. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in Year 2. They make very good progress and achieve very well in Years 6 and 7.
78. Art and design has a very high profile in the school and pupils' learning is enhanced through the strong emphasis on skills and techniques. Visual images help to overcome learning or language difficulties, enabling all pupils to have full access to the curriculum. The use of sketch books to gather information and test particular techniques, such as shading, is excellent. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and leads to good learning. High standards are encouraged through the study of the work of great artists, in all year groups, including the work of Vincent Van Gogh, Alfred Wallis, Paul Klee, William Morris and John Piper. Leadership and management are very good. Portfolios developed for each year group provide a record of pupils' high quality work. Artists in residence greatly enrich the curriculum. A willow artist helped pupils to create a 'Living Sculpture' in the school grounds. Pupils were taught by a sculptor to make wax models that were later coated in bronze. Of particular merit is the work of the art club on 'Pattern and the use of mixed media', inspired by Gustav Klimt. An art enrichment day at a local church for a group of very able pupils led to the creation of a very good water colour montage. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

### **Example of outstanding practice**

#### **In an excellent lesson for Year 4 pupils, the teacher enabled pupils to maximise their learning by using a combination of stimuli and evaluation criteria**

Pupils were challenged to produce an abstract design to depict water, using and extending elements from their initial designs. The design modelled by the teacher, and added to by pupils, linked with their work on rivers in geography. Quiet background music, depicting a rainforest, created a calm and pleasant climate for learning. Pupils were encouraged not to worry if their ideas didn't succeed, but to try again. An indication of their commitment was the ongoing assessment of their own work, using the success criteria, 'Have I used different magnifications?' 'Does my design flow across the page?' 'Do my ideas link well together?' 'How can I improve my work?' Excellent class management enabled pupils to circulate freely to examine the work of other pupils, in order to extend their own ideas.

79. **Design and technology** has a high profile. It was not possible to observe any lessons owing to timetabling arrangements. Pupils in Year 6 explained the school's consistent approach to planning, designing, making and evaluating products. Their annotated designs, planning and evaluations are of a high quality and they have a very good understanding of how they can improve. They use their literacy and mathematical skills well. ICT is increasingly being used in

the design process. Pupils undertake a broad range of designing and making activities. The quality and quantity of the models on display are exceptional. They include clay pots, mosaics, Tudor houses, shelters, wheeled vehicles with gears, cars, ships, aeroplanes, masks, chairs, playgrounds, roundabouts, photograph frames and siege weapons. There is evidence of the use of hydraulics, and of control technology in Year 7. Teachers' planning, pupils' work and discussion with the subject leader show that the subject is taught regularly and skills are developed progressively. Resources are good and are used well. Examples of work suggest that food technology is taught well. Assessment is good and is used to respond to individual needs. Leadership and management are good. The school aims to refine further the recording of pupils' skills and achievement.

80. There is a comprehensive scheme of work for **music**. Constructive assessment procedures are used well to respond to individual needs. A new system is being established which will provide more consistent and comprehensive recording and tracking of pupils' progress in all strands of music. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own performance and they demonstrate a very good understanding of how they can improve. Accommodation and resources are very good. Visiting musicians regularly perform for each year group. There is a school orchestra and choir. The choir performs in assemblies, in the Crawley Schools Music Festival and at a residential home for the elderly. Children participate in concerts with other local schools. Lessons from visiting teachers are available in violin, viola, keyboard, woodwind, saxophone, guitar, brass and drums. Recent musical performances have included a First School Christmas production of 'The Grumpy Sheep', a production of 'The Emerald Crown' by pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 and a performance by pupils in Years 6 and 7 of 'Fiddler on the Roof'. Leadership and management are very good.
81. Pupils are taught all aspects of the curriculum for **physical education**. In Years 1 and 2, pupils practise balancing, and link movements into a smooth sequence. They refine their responses to music of different tempi, and begin to exercise control over the movements they make. The school provides swimming lessons at the local pool for pupils in Year 3. By Year 6, pupils have practised a range of more sophisticated skills that involve gymnastics, games and dance. For example, they rehearse Indian dances using gesture and expression to intensify the illusion they are trying to convey. Pupils learn the cultural significance of the actions they perform, and this work links closely with their studies of different cultures and beliefs. Teachers give pupils sufficient opportunities to demonstrate and improve upon the skills they practise. Older pupils regularly use the school's fitness circuit to warm up for outdoor lessons, and practise such adventure activities as climbing, abseiling and orienteering during a residential visit. Some competitive sports are organised, but extra-curricular sporting activities are usually targeted towards the older year groups. These pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and are well motivated to succeed.

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

82. This is a strong feature of the school's curriculum. The school council has been in existence for seven or eight years and is a well-developed feature of the school. The council has made decisions about school uniform and commissions other pupils to carry out activities such as running the school newspaper. They have their own budget. It is also linked with another body of pupils who review the environment of the school.
83. In an excellent lesson for Year 6 pupils led by the headteacher, pupils explored the feelings of loss with a visiting bereavement councillor. Pupils began to understand that death brings feelings of sadness but also an opportunity for the celebration of a life. Pupils are allowed to explore their own feelings and emotions. In Year 4 pupils work to share feelings, show respect and appreciate the differences in others.

84. The strong emphasis on paired work and respect for others makes an important contribution to the life of the school. Extra activities such as training older pupils in conflict negotiation enhance the opportunities for learning. The curriculum for Year 7 pupils meets statutory requirements.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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