

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NORTHLANDS WOOD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Haywards Heath, West Sussex

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125948

Headteacher: Mrs Christine McNeill

Lead inspector: Mrs Gail McLean

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 April 2004

Inspection number: 257054

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	259
School address:	Beech Hill Haywards Heath West Sussex
Postcode:	RH16 3RX
Telephone number:	01444 455653
Fax number:	01444 414823
Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roy Farrow
Date of previous inspection:	15 March 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Northlands Wood Community Primary School is about the same size as other primary schools, with 250 pupils on roll. The intake is relatively stable and mobility is not a barrier to learning. There are about the same number of boys and girls, although there are more boys than girls in the current Year 6. Children start in the reception class and their attainment is about average. The school is involved in an Early Years Partnership initiative. There is a smaller than average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (2 per cent). The vast majority of pupils are White British or of other White backgrounds (85 per cent). A small number are of Asian British or Black British backgrounds (2 per cent). The rest are of mixed race. There are no children from refugee families or those seeking asylum. There are no Travellers' children at the school. Although the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is a bit higher than in other schools (2.3 per cent) there is only one pupil at an early stage of English acquisition. The school supports an above average number of pupils with special educational needs (26.8 per cent). The range of needs includes specific learning difficulties, moderate learning needs, speech and communication, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and Autism. Within this large group of pupils with special educational needs there is a small percentage with Statements of Special Educational Needs (0.8 per cent). A significant number of teachers (7.5 per cent) left the school during the last two years to take up senior posts of responsibility in other primary schools, but the school has not experienced any difficulty in recruiting suitable and well-qualified replacements.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21650	Gail McLean	Lead inspector	English Physical education
9334	Jenny Mynett	Lay inspector	
21171	Sally Handford	Team inspector	English as an additional language Foundation Stage Special educational needs Art and design Music
14806	John Stevens	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education
31029	Peter Thrussell	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Northlands Wood Community Primary School is a very effective school**, providing a very good standard of education for its pupils. Very strong leadership at all levels results in a high performing team, focused on excellence and enjoyment in teaching and learning. As a result, standards are rising and the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Robust analysis of the school's performance by the headteacher, governors and teachers is enabling the school to meet its own challenging goals
- Very good teaching and learning leads to above average standards in English, mathematics, science, history and art and enables pupils to achieve well
- Standards in reading, speaking and listening, although high, are not quite as high as those in writing
- The well-organised and managed curriculum is underpinning the school's work to raise standards effectively
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is managed well so that there is a calm orderly community, but recent developments need to be fully embedded into the school's culture
- Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated, their needs are met effectively and they do well
- Analysis of test results is effective in helping to shape the curriculum which is offered to pupils, but better use could be made of teachers' daily assessments to plan lessons even more precisely
- Communication with parents about the school's good achievements, policy and practice is not always fully effective, so concerns occasionally arise

Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been considerable. The key issues identified in that inspection, which took place in 1998, have been addressed very well. National and local initiatives have been implemented successfully. The commitment to raising standards is clearly evident and there is no sign of complacency.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Attainment on entry is about average. **Pupils** make good progress, overall, so that by Year 6 they **achieve well**. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and most are likely to reach the goals expected at the end of the reception year. Standards at Year 2 are above average in English and mathematics. Standards in writing are slightly above those in reading. The results of the national tests indicate that this position has been consistent for the last three years.

Standards at Year 6 are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Results of national tests fell dramatically from well above average in 2000 to below average in 2002. The school quickly addressed issues related to pupils' underachievement and standards rose to an acceptable level in 2003. Inspection findings show that the school's emphasis on excellence has

enabled standards to rise again. Historically, the school has done well in comparison with other similar schools. Although this position was lost in 2002, improvements since then are seen to be helping the school regain its former position. Outcomes of national tests in 2003, when compared with prior attainment indicators (test results in 1999) show that pupils achieved well in science. Although they did reasonably well in English and mathematics the results suggest that they were capable of doing even better in these subjects. Standards in all other subjects at Year 2 and Year 6 are at least in line with national expectations, including information and communication technology and religious education.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Pupils are keen to come to school. They behave very well and show high levels of enthusiasm for their work. They sustain concentration, persevere and do their best.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good,** with a high proportion of excellent lessons. Very strong, dynamic leadership by key staff and governors has reversed a downward trend so that standards attained in English, mathematics and science at Year 6 are above average and rising. Curriculum development, brought about by very good teamwork, has had a positive impact positively on the quality of teaching and learning so that both are of a very high standard. Recent changes to provision for pupils' personal and social development are bringing about good improvements in relation to pupils' behaviour but new custom and practice is not yet fully embedded in the school's culture or fully understood by all parents. The school's analysis of large-scale performance data is used very well to bring about improvements but not enough use is made of the outcomes of teachers' daily assessments to finely tune lesson plans so that the needs of all groups can be addressed even more thoroughly. The school's response to the growing number of pupils with special educational needs is impressive and is in line with current good practice and statutory requirements, but parents are not fully aware of the school's achievements and as a result concerns have arisen leading to unrest amongst a small number of them.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, leadership and management are very strong.** Key staff and governors fulfil their roles very well, particularly in relation to the challenge of adopting a rigorous approach to school self-evaluation and raising standards. There is a very strong commitment to running an equitable and inclusive school. The vision for the future, based on achieving excellence, is articulated well within the school but information to parents is not shared sufficiently well with them to ensure that everyone has confidence in the school. All staff, but particularly teachers, demonstrate a very strong commitment to the school and show a willingness to improve on their own personal best. Resources are used very imaginatively. The school's finances are managed very well so that money is targeted on key priorities.

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

Parents are largely satisfied with the school. The vast majority feel that their children make good progress, the teaching is good and staff are approachable. Pupils like school. They enjoy lessons, appreciate the work done by adults in the school and think teachers and teaching assistants help them to do well.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards further, especially in reading, speaking and listening
- Build further on recent improvements in relation to pupils' personal and social development
- Further refine skills in using assessments to inform planning

- Communicate more effectively with parents

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, standards are above average. The vast majority of pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls or those from different backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, achieving as well as they can. Targets for 2003 were met and those for 2004 are suitably challenging.

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

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, history and art at the end of Key Stage 2
- The vast majority of pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities
- Standards in writing are generally better than in reading, speaking and listening
- Standards in English and mathematics have a positive impact on standards in other subjects

#### **Commentary**

1. Most children are of average ability when they start school. They achieve well and the vast majority meet the levels expected of them in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year. Children who enter the school with special educational needs are identified quickly and supported well, enabling them to make good progress.
2. In Years 1 and 2, the vast majority of pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well, especially in English, mathematics and science. Standards are frequently much better than expected for pupils of this age in literacy and numeracy. This has a positive impact on standards attained across the curriculum. As a result, overall standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 2.
3. Within this good picture, standards in writing are usually better than in reading and mathematics. Considerable emphasis has been placed on developing writing skills in literacy lessons and these are then reinforced well through work in other subjects such as history. As a result, performance in writing over the last three years has been well above the national average. Reading skills are taught reasonably well and most pupils have the opportunity to practice their skills at home. Although results in reading for the last few years indicate that standards are above average, they are not well above as in writing. A good balance is achieved in relation to teaching different aspects of mathematics. Consequently, standards in mathematics, like reading, are consistently better than the national average but not quite as high as those attained in writing. The school's trend of improvement over the last few years has been above the national trend but it is slightly more marked in writing. The difference between writing, reading and mathematics over the last three years is small but noticeable and suggests that pupils can achieve even better results in reading and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.7 (16.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.5 (14.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.3 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)



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*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. At Year 6, standards are now above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards fell dramatically from well above average in 2000 to below average in 2002. This fall in standards at Year 6 has been quickly rectified so that the trend is now upwards, with test results returning to average in 2003. Inspection findings indicate that the very good teaching currently taking place is enabling pupils to achieve well and that standards across the component parts of English, mathematics and science are now above average. The emphasis placed on developing pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills is a notable feature of work undertaken in all lessons. The skills taught in literacy lessons are used very effectively across the curriculum. Role-play and drama are used particularly successfully to enliven lessons and reinforce key learning points.
5. In Years 3 to 6, pupils work hard and achieve reasonably well. In relation to the progress made, results show that pupils achieved as well as other pupils in English and mathematics but achieved better in science. Inspection findings indicate that the small difference between these subjects is gradually being reduced. This is due in large part to the strong leadership offered in English and mathematics and the improved curriculum planning, which is enabling teaching and learning to reach high levels of consistency and quality.
6. Standards in history and art are very high, which is a reflection of the very good teaching and inspiring curriculum offered in these subjects. The number of lessons seen in other subjects was relatively small but analysis of pupils' work indicates that standards in all other subjects are at least sound.
7. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported throughout the school. The vast majority make good and sometimes rapid progress in relation to their starting point. A key factor is the quality of the individual education plans, which are very good. They are clear and have achievable targets identified. Teachers take responsibility for writing these plans so that they are aware of each child's needs and can arrange appropriate support.
8. Although there are relatively few pupils with English as an additional language at the school, there is a wide range of abilities and backgrounds. Inspection findings indicate that all pupils are well supported and encouraged to achieve as well as they can. The school's skill at analysing large-scale performance data, together with the good partnerships which are forged with the vast majority of parents, are significant factors in the school's success in this respect.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (26.6)	26.8 (27)
mathematics	26.8 (26.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.4 (28.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

The good provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and very good attitudes, relationships, and their willingness to take responsibility. Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' very positive attitudes enable them to achieve well because they are highly motivated and eager to learn
- The warm relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves promote tolerance and a positive learning environment
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes very well to their personal development
- Attendance is higher than other schools and punctuality is good

### Commentary

9. The school is calm and orderly, with a purposeful atmosphere in lessons because pupils are co-operative, polite and well behaved. The vast majority of pupils are very enthusiastic about their school. They like most things about it but talk particularly about the *'good education and the helpful teachers... the fun lessons where they learn exciting things'*, and they enjoy *'meeting their friends and new people'*. The youngest children in the reception class show similarly good attitudes to school. They quickly settle into the routines of the classroom aided by the older children in the class. They learn to co-operate with others and are happy to share their toys and equipment, take turns and concentrate well. These children are likely to achieve their early learning goals in personal and social education by the end of the year.
10. Both pupils and parents have generally positive views about the school. Parents are particularly pleased that their children show very good attitudes, are well mannered, happy and enjoy school. They feel that the teachers' high expectations encourage their children to work hard and achieve their best. As a result, their children are developing confidence and making good progress.
11. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good both in lessons and around the school. There are a small number of pupils with very challenging behaviour and occasionally minor disruptions to lessons occur. Inspection findings indicate that the number of disruptions is increasingly rare because teachers manage these pupils' behaviour and situations very well. Other pupils are tolerant of these disturbances recognising that some pupils have complex special educational needs, *'we try to help them'* and *'it's good that they have the opportunity to be in this school'*. The school has been very successful in helping these pupils adapt to the demands of school life and ensure that good learning is maintained for other pupils. Issues related to this aspect of the school's work are not generally shared with the parental body and as a result some misconceptions have arisen in the recent past.
12. Pupils respond very well to the 'House' system and reward programmes operating within the school, indicating that they feel motivated to work hard and behave well. Harmony is a strong feature of the school, with pupils from different backgrounds being well integrated into the school. There is appropriate focus on dealing with any incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils report that although there were some bullying issues in the school these were generally sorted out quickly and other than minor disagreements between friends bullying is not a problem. Pupils are keen to stress that if they do have a problem they know who to go to and are confident it will be dealt with swiftly. Year 4 pupils spoke highly of the recent assemblies addressing conflict. These pupils were clear that work done by the teachers to help everyone understand why children *'fall out'* was very helpful. They were also very appreciative of the new equipment and activities available to them at playtimes and cited such things as the *'ball wall, fitness trail, quiet areas'* as helping them to enjoy break times and play well together. The good behaviour of pupils in and around the school is largely as a result of work done in personal, social, health, and citizenship education (PSHCE) lessons, which are developing pupils' own self-discipline. This is reflected in the small number of exclusions in the school.
13. The school's recent work to promote respect, tolerance and co-operation has been very successful. Comments from older pupils in particular show that they have noticed a great improvement in the way in which children play with one another. This is a positive

development and the school is mindful of the need to ensure that outcomes of these initiatives become fully embedded in the ethos and culture of the school.

## Attendance

Pupils are generally happy to come to school and are eager to learn. Attendance last year was very good and well above the national average, with no unauthorised absences. These figures have dropped slightly this year to good, with the majority of absences due to parents taking their children on holiday in term-time. This is not encouraged. Most parents bring their children to school punctually in the mornings and lessons start on time.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – African
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
212	3	0
8	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
26	0	0

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

14. The provision for pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is well promoted across the curriculum and enables pupils to become well-rounded individuals during their time at school. Social development is particularly well developed and results in constructive relationships being forged between both staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. This promotes a good working environment and contributes to pupils' achievement. Pupils are encouraged to undertake roles of responsibility, with older pupils acting as 'buddies' to younger ones or running the school council. Pupils undertake their various tasks conscientiously. Effective moral and spiritual development enables pupils to distinguish right from wrong, develop their own views and beliefs, and value and respect one another. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. There is a rich provision within the curriculum, through exchange links with a French school and involvement in various local festivals and competitions. The school draws effectively upon the experience of some parents to promote an awareness of cultural diversity in this country.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is very good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This is a marked improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership by subject co-ordinators is enabling teaching and learning to reach high standards
- Teachers use interesting methods to inspire pupils and make meaningful links between subjects
- Teachers' own enthusiasm is infectious so that there is a quiet buzz of excitement in lessons and pupils are keen to do their best
- Teaching and learning in reading, speaking and listening could be even better so that standards match more closely those attained in writing
- Outcomes of assessments could be used even more effectively to ensure that achievement for all groups of pupils is equally high

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (9%)	10 (23%)	21 (48%)	9 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

15. Teaching and learning are of a consistently high quality throughout the school. The high proportion of very good and excellent teaching has a marked and positive impact on standards and the quality of learning throughout the school. Overall, this aspect of the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Unlike last time, no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. This very strong improvement is reflected in the standards attained by pupils, especially at Year 6. Teachers are aware of the potential for underachievement of different groups of pupils. Records show that girls and boys, those with English as an additional language and those from different backgrounds, are doing as well as they can in relation to their starting points.
16. The school was quick to respond to the disappointing test results in 2002 and implemented appropriate remedial action. A significant feature underpinning the school's success in reversing the downward trend has been the radical amendments made to the curriculum plans. Subject co-ordinators provided schemes of work and lesson plans for each year group. Teachers have taken the guidance offered by those with subject expertise and as a result, pupils' work shows that non-specialists have been able to teach to an increasingly high standard. Furthermore, the interest and enthusiasm generated is enabling teachers to be creative, adventurous and willing to implement new ideas very competently.
17. Opportunities which exist to link subjects easily are not missed. Consequently, basic skills are frequently reinforced and taught in meaningful ways. The links made between English and history are particularly well marked and effective. For example, role-play, drama and practical activities are used effectively within history lessons to make learning meaningful and to spark pupils' imaginations. This was clearly seen in a Year 3 and 4 lesson where role-play

was used well to help pupils understand the feelings and emotions experienced by the Greek hero, Theseus as he travelled on a journey. Pupils were then able to record successfully what may have been in Theseus's mind at key points in this journey.

18. The school's aims underpin work effectively in all lessons. The emphasis placed on mutual respect and care for the individual is manifest in the way the school celebrates pupils' successes and supports learning difficulties. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour and their insistence on good manners at all times underpins this very good position. Pupils' views are that they feel valued and are treated fairly. This promotes very good attitudes to learning, and is successful in preventing any anti-academic culture from developing in the school community. This is a great strength.
19. Teachers have very good subject knowledge within their chosen field of expertise and understand how different pupils learn. They all have considerable enthusiasm for teaching and learning in their subject and this bubbles over into their work. This energy, together with very effective teamwork, enables teachers to share expertise, learn from one another and teach to a high standard. Furthermore, very good links are made between subjects so that high levels of interest are created for pupils and there is coherence in their learning. The vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic, alert and diligent. A particularly strong feature is the way in which teachers promote skills in literacy across the curriculum. A wide range of functions and forms of writing is used creatively to motivate and inspire pupils. A good illustration of this was in a Year 4 and 5 PSHCE lesson where pupils were given different tasks. Emphasis was on teamwork and co-operation. In order to fulfil the tasks, pupils were required to use their initiative and communicate effectively with one another. The level of speaking and listening was good and skills in self-evaluation of success and points for development by each group were promoted effectively.
20. Interesting and appropriate types of homework are set for pupils as they move up through the school. For example, Years 4 and 5 pupils recently set about collecting resources which would enhance younger pupils' enjoyment of a story book (story sacks). Such activities are meaningful and enable pupils to apply their own knowledge and skills in situations which are relevant and interesting to them. Teachers make good use of homework to extend and consolidate what is learned in lessons. Although parents are generally satisfied with the arrangements, more information is required so that more parents can fully understand the school's policy and practice in this aspect of its work.
21. Pupils with SEN are taught well throughout the school. They make good progress and achieve well, given their prior attainment. They are fully involved in all lessons and teachers ensure that there is appropriate help available. An element of teaching that makes a significant contribution to ensuring pupils learn well, especially those with complex learning needs, is the very good classroom management and high quality planning, which builds on pupils skills and knowledge in a highly organised way. This supports pupils to in becoming independent and learning to modify their behaviour. Teaching assistants are well briefed and knowledgeable about the needs of the pupils they support. This ensures that pupils learn well and make good progress.
22. Teachers are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. As a result, they have identified that standards in reading, speaking and listening could be higher and more in line with those reached in writing. In addition, there is a recognition that lesson plans could be even more precise if teacher's daily assessments of what pupils know and understand were used to modify tasks and activities.

## The curriculum

The overall breadth of curricular opportunity is very good. Opportunities for enrichment are good and the use made of the accommodation to facilitate learning and positive attitudes is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Schemes of work are thorough and support teaching and learning very well, having a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils
- Planning, which is based on a two-year cycle, is detailed and ensures very good equality of opportunity, especially for pupils in mixed-age classes
- There is a consistency in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum but more emphasis is needed on the teaching of guided reading
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and it is very good in the Foundation stage
- Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good
- Work done to prepare pupils' for the next stage in their educational career is good, it is very good in the Foundation Stage
- There is a good range of interesting activities, clubs, visits and events which enrich the curriculum and support learning
- Good use is made of the skills of the high number of support staff

### Commentary

23. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides very good opportunities for all pupils. All key issues from the last report have been met, ensuring good improvement. The planning at all levels is detailed and ensures that pupils do not miss or repeat important elements of the National Curriculum, which could impede their acquisition of skills, knowledge or understanding. This is particularly effective in relation to the units of work provided for pupils in mixed-age classes and pupils with special educational needs.
24. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good, overall, and takes account of all areas of learning. The planning and organisation of the mixed reception and Year 1 classes ensure that children receive an appropriate curriculum to cover all the early learning goals. Children of higher ability are provided with appropriately challenging work. Children benefit from the many and varied small group sessions because there is a high adult to child ratio and adults know how to interact with them to promote learning. The strong ethos which centres children's learning on first-hand experience is translated effectively into everyday activities and develops children's language and communication skills successfully. There is early identification of children with special educational needs. They receive good levels of appropriate support. Programmes for those with complex special educational needs is good and reflects current requirements well.
25. Subject co-ordinators have offered strong leadership in relation to curriculum development. As a result, long-, medium- and short-term planning is very robust and the curriculum offered to pupils meets their needs very effectively. This is demonstrated in rising standards of achievement in English, mathematics and science. There are particularly good links with English. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well incorporated into the teachers' planning. There is an able pupil programme and, in addition, there are certain weeks each term set aside to promote cross-curricular links. For example, a week devoted to the study of the Victorians successfully incorporated work in all subjects of the National Curriculum. These enhance learning successfully, motivate pupils and inspire them to do well. Time available in the school day is used very well to ensure that the needs of pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully addressed. A testament to the school's endeavours to provide the very best opportunities for learning is demonstrated in a recent

pilot project with Year 6 pupils to investigate the benefits, or otherwise, of slightly reducing the lunch-time break. Pupils' views were sought and they are involved in an ongoing evaluation. Further work and consultation is planned before a final decision is made.

26. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum, and the number of support staff throughout the school is very good. They give a great deal of support to the teachers and pupils in their learning.
27. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises effectively with teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. Support is mainly provided within the classroom to help pupils access the curriculum, but where it is more appropriate, pupils are withdrawn for targeted support. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and the majority of these pupils achieve the same standards as their classmates. There is only one pupil in the early stages of acquiring English, and advice has been sought by the local authority specialist service, so that progress for this pupil is good.
28. The strong ethos of the school supports pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship well. Work undertaken in lessons or units of work is fully integrated into other aspects of the school's work so that there is cohesion and consistency for pupils. Sex education is handled sensitively. There is a set programme for pupils in Year 6 and parents have an opportunity to view the materials before they are presented to pupils. There is an appropriate approach to raising awareness of the dangers associated with drugs. Questions are answered sensitively yet honestly when they arise. There is an appropriate health education policy, but it needs reviewing to incorporate recent improvements to the work done in relation to PSHCE. Assemblies often focus on a moral theme, and a recent one on conflict has had a good influence on pupils' behaviour and ability to deal with disagreements.
29. Opportunities for out-of-lesson enrichment are good and numerous, including a drama, dance and French club, an environmental club and art club. After school sports clubs include football, netball, running summer games and karate. A visiting theatre group and a musical group, Opera Brava, have made visits to the school. Numerous visits have been made by the pupils to such places as Preston Manor, Hever Castle, Battle Abbey, Lewes Castle and The British Museum. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to go on a residential visit each year to Osmington Bay in Dorset. Pupils in the French club were given the opportunity, this year, to visit Lille in France. Annual school productions are a strong feature of the school. Performances are enjoyed by pupils and appreciated by parents. They provide a very good opportunity for pupils to sing, act and address a large audience. These events contribute significantly to the school's work in relation to promoting pupils' PSHCE.
30. There are good links with the pre-schools in the area, which ensures that pupils settle well when they start school. There is a very good transition for Year 6 pupils to the two main secondary schools in the area, Oathall and Warden Park. Teachers from these schools teach the core curriculum in Year 6. The school is able to share information about each child's attainment and progress so that there is continuity in learning. The school is involved with other local primary schools in setting up a learning network. The aim is to provide good support for teachers using ICT capabilities. The likelihood is that staff from Northlands Wood school will make a considerable contribution to this new initiative as well as gaining from it. There is a strong link with local businesses. For example, some businessmen and women help pupils in school with reading. This provides good role models for pupils. The school works well with the Catholic Children's Society to provide counselling and therapy sessions for pupils who need this type of support. Links with the Town Council through the Young Citizen's Week helps pupils to understand the world beyond school.
31. Overall, good use is made of the accommodation and outside area. The site is well looked after. Classrooms are bright and pupils' work is displayed to good effect, creating an



environment which is conducive to teaching and learning. Pupils are very appreciative of the improvements made to the resources available for break times. They have recognised that disagreements and 'squabbles' have been reduced now that there is more to do. Although outdoor provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is good, the lack of a garden area limits the school in its ability to help young children learn even more about the world and nature. The school's stock of resources consists of bright, modern and interesting artefacts, toys, equipment and books. They are used very well to stimulate pupils' interest and develop curiosity.

32. The school building looks robust. However, the governors and staff are aware that it imposes significant limitations on teaching and learning. Discussions are already taking place with the LEA to look at the feasibility of renewing and remodelling much of it to reflect the needs of modern schools today.

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

Systems to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are very good. Teachers' good knowledge of pupils ensures that they are cared for and supported, and this fosters a commitment to equal opportunities. Pupils feel trusted and respected, and value the fact that they are given a voice.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The early identification of pupils with special educational needs and the provision of appropriate adult support has a positive impact on their progress
- The safe, caring and supportive environment supports pupils so that they can grow into happy confident individuals
- Procedures to ensure a secure and healthy environment are followed carefully
- Good induction arrangements ensure that pupils settle quickly into school
- Pupils feel they are consulted and that there is always somebody they can talk to

### **Commentary**

33. Northlands Wood Primary is a very caring school. The overall provision for pupils' health, welfare and protection is very good and parents are very pleased that their children are well nurtured and supported. Arrangements for child protection and procedures relating to health and safety are carefully organised, with the governors taking their responsibility for health and safety issues conscientiously. The induction process into the school is well thought out and implemented effectively with very good links being established with the pre-school playgroups. Reception children settle in happily because of the kind and caring way they are introduced to the school, their teacher and classmates. The transition to secondary schools is very well managed through regular visits and joint projects with secondary school staff. This ensures that pupils' progression to the next stage of education is as smooth as possible.
34. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal and academic development and progress are good, overall. Although there are no formal tracking systems in place in relation to personal development, teachers know their pupils very well and can provide targeted support where needed. The school has good systems in place offering support and guidance for those pupils with special education needs and involves various outside agencies such as those offering counselling or providing focused support programmes to in raising pupils confidence and self-esteem. The special educational needs co-ordinator has established good links with parents and runs 'drop-in' sessions and involves them in their child's reviews. The majority of parents spoke very positively about the school and feel that it treats all pupils fairly. The school complies with all requirements in relation to the Race Relations Act.
35. Pupils are very happy and feel it is a very safe and secure school. They feel that staff know them well, and talk of having forged trusting relationship with an adult: *'it's nice to be treated with respect... to be trusted'*. Pupils are confident that they can turn to a member of staff if they

have a problem or are unhappy and that issues will be dealt with swiftly. Opportunities to consult pupils and to take their views into consideration are developed very effectively, such as through the behaviour working party. Pupils also act as school council representatives and speak enthusiastically about the different things that have been implemented arising from their discussions. They feel that this has encouraged them to be more responsible and given them a greater voice and involvement in the decision-making processes in the school.

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

Partnership with parents is good. In the main, parents are satisfied and supportive of the school. The partnership with the local community and partner institutions is very good and helps enrich pupils' learning opportunities, promoting good achievement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The 'open door' policy and access to teachers enables parents to be kept informed about their child's progress
- The school has forged very good links with the local community and businesses
- The very good links with partner institutions promotes curriculum development and enrichment opportunities for pupils
- The school is not promoting itself effectively to the parent body

### **Commentary**

36. The school seeks to build close liaison with parents, to keep them fully informed and to provide them with opportunities to become involved in their children's education. Many parents expressed a high level of satisfaction about the work of the school. They think the school is well managed and find the headteacher and staff highly approachable. However, a small minority of parents expressed concerns about communication, the school's approach to bullying and homework. They feel that homework is not given consistently across the school, and as this is not always marked they do not know how useful it is. The inspection team found that the school has appropriate procedures in place to deal with bullying and pupils said they felt safe and secure at school. The homework policy is followed and teachers use homework effectively to support what is being learned in lessons. However, the team agreed with comments relating to communication. The school provides a reasonable amount of information about homework but more could be done to ensure that all parents fully understand and can support its policy and practice, especially as much of the work set is based on principles that are known to promote effective learning.
37. General information for parents is good, with the weekly newsletters keeping parents updated on different school activities and events. Curriculum information is shared with parents at the start of the year so they can see what is going on and can help their children at home. Various different events, such as celebration/class assemblies, plays and sports days, are well attended by parents. Information evenings keep parents reasonably well updated on new developments and important events. However, although parents are consulted about important issues via questionnaires, and matters are followed up, the school is not always reporting back to parents the results of these surveys and the action taken. The annual reports to parents clearly state what pupils have covered and indicate what they know, can do and understand, but they do not give an indication of how a pupil is doing in relation to what is expected of a child of that age in terms of national expectations.
38. Links with the local community are very good. The school is involved in community activities with older pupils engaged in Young Citizens Week and Remembrance services. Local groups use the school facilities for after-school activities or holiday play schemes. The school draws effectively upon local visitors or the local environment to enrich curriculum opportunities for pupils. A number of local businesses support the school with sponsorship deals or through reading initiatives. Parents offer valuable support in school with volunteers listening to reading,

helping out on trips or in the classroom; or undertaking various tasks around school, such as running the book club and uniform shop. In addition, parents help by making costumes for school plays at home. The Parent-Teacher and Friends Association is run by an enthusiastic group of parents, which organises a number of social and fund raising activities each year. The money raised has been used to sponsor school activities or purchase new equipment. Links with other schools are very good, both on a management and an academic basis. The school is involved in pioneering an innovative 'Learning Network' with neighbouring schools, whilst also sharing expertise and good practice with other schools and organisations. Good liaison with staff at the local secondary schools ensures that curriculum links are also well developed, which helps maintain continuity and learning for pupils who transfer there in Year 7.

39. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the setting of targets in the individual education plans, which enables them to be fully involved in the education of their child. The special educational needs co-ordinator is available for parents if they wish to raise any concerns or have any queries. Parents are appreciative of this 'open door' policy, and the good channels of communication contribute well to the school's position in relation to partnership with parents.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are very good. They are all of an equally high standard. All statutory requirements are fully met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and are actively involved in strategic planning; as a result, they fulfil their roles and responsibilities very well
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good; she has a clear vision for the school and motivates her staff very effectively so that they give of their best and are focused on excellence
- Subject co-ordinators offer very strong leadership; they are highly skilled, work productively with colleagues, ensure that lesson plans enable non-specialists to teach to a high standard, and know the school's strengths and weaknesses well
- The skills and expertise of support staff are used very effectively so that the school runs smoothly and teachers have time to focus on teaching
- All staff carry out their management role very competently so that the school's performance is improving steadily
- Improvements to the school's way of working and its many successes are not always conveyed well enough to parents

### **Commentary**

40. Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise to the school. They use the knowledge gained in their own walk of life to enhance very effectively the work of the school, organise their own committee structures and ensure that the school complies with all statutory requirements. They are perceptive, very supportive and clearly understand the pressures of teaching. Nevertheless, they are focused on their role as guardian of the children's education. Consequently, they require convincing answers to their probing questions. They insist on reliable information so that they can judge the school's performance and help shape its direction. They have struck a very good balance between supporting the staff and challenging them to give of their best so that they have high goals and ambitions for the school.
41. The headteacher, through judicious recruitment, retention and training of staff has successfully created a high-performing team. There is a shared vision for the school, based on enabling all pupils to excel and develop their own talents to the full. The headteacher delegates responsibilities equitably and openly. She motivates her staff very well so that there is a quiet buzz of excitement in the school and teachers are clearly willing to work very hard for their pupils, try out innovative practice and share their knowledge with other schools in the area.

Staff are very receptive to guidance offered by colleagues, advisers and educational experts. This is demonstrated particularly well in relation to two literacy initiatives. Under the guidance of the English co-ordinator, and with the support of the LEA's literacy consultant, the school has reviewed and remodelled the long-, medium- and short-term curriculum plans for literacy throughout the school. As a result, the curriculum is more precise and has greater depth and rigor, so that the standards attained by pupils and the quality of teaching and learning are improving. Another key initiative is based on excellence and enjoyment for above average Year 6 pupils. It has been highly successful and is spearheading further work, focused on raising standards for all pupils throughout the school. The discussions which took place at the staff-meeting following a presentation made by pupils involved in this initiative, were witnessed by an inspector. The high level of enthusiasm and commitment to their pupils' achievements was clearly evident in the professional dialogue which took place. Furthermore, the willingness with which teachers have responded to the LEA's request to use the school's materials as part of training for other schools demonstrates generosity of spirit and pride in their school's achievements.

42. The school is committed to enabling all pupils to participate in lessons, activities and events regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity, background or faith. The school's work in relation to special educational needs is noteworthy, especially for those with complex needs. The recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has already had a positive impact on the school's special educational needs provision, policy and practice. The number of pupils at the school with complex special educational needs is unusually high. Sometimes difficulties arise for these pupils which results in aggressive behaviour. This has presented challenges for the school community, but through the headteacher's clear guidance, the special educational needs co-ordinator's leadership and the support of all staff, very good strategies have been developed to enable individual pupils to participate in lessons and integrate into the life of the school. Furthermore, work in relation to pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education has been tailored to compliment and support the school's work in relation to special educational needs provision so that all pupils can feel safe and secure while at school. Although the school is very successful at functioning as a caring institution, recent initiatives need to be pursued further so that good developments recently secured can become even more embedded in the school's culture.
43. In 2002, the results of national tests fell from above average to below average. Staff and governors responded rapidly to this situation, undertaking rigorous self-evaluation and implementing effective strategies to remedy weakness and to build on strengths. As a result, standards rose and have returned to above average levels. However, the momentum generated over the last few years continues to gather pace. There is no complacency in the school. Staff and governors are highly skilled at analysing the school's standards, identifying patterns in performance and taking appropriate action to ensure that high standards are maintained.
44. Teachers have been supported very well and have risen to the challenge to improve their own performance. This willingness to move forward is generating a 'can do' atmosphere in the school and is responsible in large part to the success in achieving consistently high standards in teaching and learning. Through its rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes, the school has rightly identified the need to raise standards further in reading, speaking and listening and to use teacher's daily assessments of pupils' attainment and progress to further refine and improve lesson plans.
45. Support staff are clearly valued members of the school community. Those with financial and administrative roles are knowledgeable and efficient. The school relies on and benefits from their expertise. Furthermore, the headteacher and teachers can focus confidently on their key priorities relating to curriculum development and teaching in the knowledge that other aspects

of the day-to-day running of the school are in safe hands. For example, the school's

administration officer deals with routine tasks related to admittance, induction and transfer of pupils.

46. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together. Channels of communication are effective so that assistants know what they have to do and how to do it. There is a good atmosphere amongst staff and harmony between adults, which provides pupils with good role models.
47. Those with leadership roles at all levels within the school are keen to help parents take an active part in the education of their children. In general, they are very successful and the majority of parents are satisfied and feel well informed and involved. Promoting understanding of the school's overall policies, its successes in relation to cutting-edge curriculum developments, teaching methods and special educational needs is not so well covered. This results in a lack of awareness within the community of the school's strengths. As a result, it does not always receive the respect it deserves and misunderstandings can arise. For example, parents in general are not aware of the school's success in relation to supporting pupils with complex special educational needs. As a result, misunderstandings have arisen and a small number of parents have become discontented with what they perceive to be the situation at the school. This is an area for development.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	528,863	Balance from previous year	45,665
Total expenditure	507,961	Balance carried forward to the next	66,567
Expenditure per pupil	2,039		

48. Over the past years there have been fluctuations in numbers admitted and this frequently presents problems for the school in relation to organizing classes and keeping numbers of pupils in each class manageable. This, combined with past uncertainties regarding the long term capital expenditure on the building, has required the school to accumulate a substantial carry-forward figure in order to maintain staffing levels and ensure stability of internal organization for its pupils. Overall, skilful financial management enables the school to achieve its educational goals. The bursar is very efficient and provides a valuable service to staff and governors by preparing financial statements and monitoring expenditure. As a result, money can be targeted to where it is needed most. Goods and services are purchased at competitive rates and the school's procedures for ensuring value for money are robust. Its prudent use of funds is reflected in appropriate staffing levels, a stock of modern and up-to-date resources and the general level of décor which makes the school a pleasant place in which to teach and learn.

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

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

Provision for children in reception is very good. There is a strong ethos that centres children's learning around developing their language and communication skills. The adults work as a very dedicated team. The calm, orderly and friendly way in which children are managed helps to provide a warm, welcoming environment for children and their parents alike. The mixed Year 1 and reception classes are well organised to ensure that all the children receive an appropriate curriculum. There is early identification of children with special educational needs and those with complex learning difficulties receive good and appropriate support. Children of higher ability are provided with appropriately challenging work.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**. The majority of children are likely to achieve the early learning goals and some will exceed them.

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

- The well-structured and secure environment enables children to learn to become independent
- Very good relationships ensure children behave well and do their best

#### **Commentary**

49. Learning areas are well organised so that children quickly learn to be independent, to tidy up and take responsibility. They understand rules and behave well. There is sensitive support and very good systems in place for the small number of children who have challenging behaviour or who lack confidence. Teachers provide children with activities that are interesting and stimulating so that children quickly develop good attitudes to their learning. Children establish good relationships with adults, and parents are welcomed into the unit to help their children settle.

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

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

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

- Adults plan very good opportunities for children to develop their communication skills in all areas of the curriculum
- Teaching is good and sometimes very good
- Work on loose sheets of paper is undated and so does not provide a good record of children's progress

#### **Commentary**

50. Children make good progress so that the majority are likely to achieve the early learning goals and significant number will exceed them. Planning highlights the language development opportunities across all areas of the curriculum. All adults are skilled in questioning and encouraging children to express their ideas and opinions, so that children are confident to talk about what they are doing and to learn new vocabulary and expressions.

51. Children enjoy learning their letter sounds. They explore the classroom with magnifying glasses looking for the new sound and sing, hum and whisper it so that they learn well. They enjoy looking at and reading books and their reading diaries show that there is a good dialogue between teachers and parents to help children improve.
52. Planning, which centres activities on a topic, gives children the experience of writing for different purposes, such as story, poetry, letters and descriptive lists. The careful attention to building up vocabulary helps children, for example, to describe the sensation of handling sand, pebbles and shells and to add these words to a beach display. Children in the mixed age group (Year 1 and reception) present their work neatly in books. In the two reception groups, books provide a good record of children's work, but loose sheets of paper are undated and not well organised in folders.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### A guided reading session with a small group of children.

An outstanding feature of the session is the use of the reader – The Big, Big Sea.

The illustrations of a moonlit beach add a magical and mysterious element to the seaside theme, which helps children talk about the mood and atmosphere. Never rushing the children, the teacher speaks softly and draws the children in, allowing them time to absorb the pictures, before they describe what they see. They are all quietly involved, anticipating the illustrations, secure in their relationships with the teacher and the warm relationships between the mother and daughter in the book. In this way their confidence develops, so that at the end, each child can choose a picture that they like: "because it's got scary shadows": "because it's all cuddly and warm": "because the lights are like my holiday in Greece". This superb session held pupils' interest and motivation and helped them to understand the book at a deeper level, so contributing very effectively to developing a love of literature.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of practical, hands-on opportunities inspires children to engage in learning
- Very good teaching leads to better than expected progress

### Commentary

53. The majority of children are likely to achieve the early learning goals and a significant number will exceed them. The provision of a range of activities gives children the chance to explore and experiment mathematically. The skilled questioning by adults helps them develop the language to talk about what they are doing, so that an outstanding feature of a very good lesson was that, by the end, children could clearly and confidently explain the different ways they had combined numbers of shells. There is good support for children at an earlier stage of acquiring mathematical skills.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of experiences helps children learn about the wider world
- The absence of an easily accessible outdoor nature area restricts opportunities for children to learn about the natural world

## Commentary

54. The majority of children are likely to achieve the early learning goals. Very good planning and provision ensures that children have good and interesting experiences. Through the seaside topic, children learn to explore and describe the natural features of a beach, such as the “squidgy, tickly sand”. They enjoy weighing, mixing and crumbling the mixture to make octopus biscuits. Their understanding is heightened by the recent visit they have made to Brighton, so that in a history session, they can readily identify the differences in the photographs of Brighton in the past and present. Children are mainly confident to use the computer and more able children can click and insert icons to produce a pictogram.
55. No lessons were seen in the area of **physical development**. As a result it is not possible to make a firm judgement in relation to provision. However, indications are that most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals at the end of the reception year. The range of activities enables children to learn to use pencils, paintbrushes, and to cut, stick and join successfully. There is good opportunity for using small construction equipment but the outdoor area is used for a variety of activities, which limits the chances the children have for using the wheeled vehicles and large construction material.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good range of activities motivates children to engage in learning
- The involvement of adults in children’s learning ensures that knowledge and skills are developed well

## Commentary

56. The majority of children are likely to achieve the early learning goals. The shared area buzzes with activity. Children can be observed concentrating at producing paintings, using the sticking area to make things, experimenting with water and sand and playing in the role-play area or with the “small world” settings. There are always adults on hand, not only to help children develop their skills, but questioning and prompting children to talk about what they are doing and to interact with each other. The outdoor area has similarly good provision and children especially enjoy serving their customers in the Beach Café. The outcomes of children’s artistic work brighten the early years environment.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and, although high, the standards in reading, speaking and listening are slightly below those found in writing
- Strong leadership is enabling the school to improve the curriculum, and the quality of teaching and learning, which is reflected in the above average standards throughout the school
- Reading, writing, speaking and listening are inter-related effectively across the curriculum, which has a positive impact on standards in all subjects
- The vast majority of pupils have very positive attitudes towards reading and writing



- Teaching methods are relevant to the pupils and generate high levels of interest in learning  
**Commentary**

57. The subject co-ordinator is offering very strong leadership. She is highly skilled and knowledgeable but also has passion and commitment to her subject. These qualities combine so that she is fully aware of what teachers and pupils can achieve and how to help them achieve it. She has put together a detailed set of long-, medium- and short-term plans that underpin lessons very effectively. As a result, there is depth and rigour in English lessons which is reflected in the improving position in relation to standards attained by pupils, their level of achievement and the quality of teaching and learning.
58. Standards, overall, are above average at Year 2 and Year 6. The quality of teaching is consistently of a very high standard, with evidence of excellent teaching in the juniors. The content of lessons is carefully considered so that lessons will appeal to both girls and boys and pupils from different backgrounds. Appropriate adult support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils are challenged to do their best because tasks are harder than those set for other pupils. Consequently, pupils achieve well in relation to their own capabilities and standards are rising year on year.
59. The school has focused on raising standards in writing. Training for staff has resulted in stimulating lessons, which ensure that pupils learn through first-hand experiences and capitalise on natural links between subjects. Creativity is encouraged and ICT resources are used particularly effectively to enhance learning. There is a quiet buzz of excitement in lessons. For example, a Year 5 literacy lesson on writing instructions, with the potential for being dull, was transformed and given meaning, purpose and vitality. Role-play quickly transformed the class of pupils into a squad of Greek athletes. Marching in step, they followed their trainer (the teacher) into the hall and in orderly groups practised throwing the discus (paper plates), throwing the javelin (long art straws) and long jumping with weights (supermarket bags filled with sand). The use of inexpensive, plentiful resources ensured that every pupil was actively participating as an athlete throughout the practical session. When the athletes returned to classroom they eagerly set about writing instructions for each sport. The words flowed easily and the level of specific detail was impressive. 'Learning by doing' was sufficient for the more able and they wrote freely until the end of the lesson. Photographic images showing key stages for each of the sporting activities were available for those who required additional support and ICT programs were organised so that pupils with learning difficulties could insert key vocabulary into pre-written sentences. By the end of the lesson all pupils had successfully written out detailed instructions for at least one sport. Planning showed that these would be used later in history lessons on the Greeks. Such simple but effective teaching and learning methods are characteristic of the literacy lessons. As a result, pupils are writing accurately, using a wide range of vocabulary and attaining standards, which are above average for their age and achieving well in relation to their capabilities.
60. Standards of attainment in reading, speaking and listening, overall, are just slightly below those in writing. Pupils read fluently, confidently, and are able to decode unfamiliar words with relative ease for their level. Initiatives which enable members of the local business community to support pupils' reading are embraced and parents are actively encouraged to read with their children at home. Books and texts used in literacy lessons are in good condition, modern and up-to-date, ensuring that stereotypical images and views are not promoted in relation to gender, ethnicity or religious belief. As a result, pupils are well supported and even the youngest pupils have favourite books or authors, know how a book works and are developing very positive attitudes and a genuine love of reading. The English action plan indicates that the school has rightly identified the need to bring standards in reading up to the level of writing through even more focused and effective use of teaching methods in guided reading sessions.

61. Standards in speaking and listening are generally about average. A small but significant number of pupils attain above average standards. The vast majority of pupils converse confidently and clearly, using a wide range of vocabulary. Nevertheless, the school is aware that skills in relation to speaking and listening could and should be higher still.
62. The school clearly has high ambitions for its pupils and it is not satisfied with second best. As a result, targets and plans to encourage excellence in all aspects of English are challenging yet realistic. Work has already started in relation to meeting these ambitious goals. A focus group of high-attaining Year 6 pupils, working with the co-ordinator in an after-school club, embarked on the study of two novels on mountaineering. The work culminated in a trip to an outdoor adventure centre where pupils experienced the thrills and spills of climbing a rock face. To celebrate and share the different types of writing, which resulted as the study progressed, pupils made a presentation to their parents and teachers. The lively and thought-provoking event showed that with appropriate support and challenge these pupils are able to reach standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening which are comparable to those normally expected at secondary school. The staff-meeting which followed this presentation was designed to spearhead work on supporting able, gifted and talented youngsters in every year group so that the standards achieved would match their true capabilities. The discussion was highly professional and demonstrated that teachers are working hard to ensure that pupils are inspired to do their best and develop talents to a high level.
63. The school's system for tracking pupils' individual progress, analysing large-scale performance data and setting realistic targets is robust and effective. The attention to detail in analysing test and teacher assessments to identify patterns and then implement appropriate action is a strength in English. It is a key factor in the school's success in raising standards. Nevertheless, the school has rightly identified the need to use the outcomes of individual lessons, and assessments of what pupils have learned in them, to improve planning even further so that tasks and activities can be even more closely matched to pupils' needs.

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

64. The emphasis placed on reading, writing and speaking and listening is an underlying strength to learning in all subjects. This is a significant factor in the school's success at maintaining and raising standards since the last inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in both the infants and the juniors
- All pupils achieve well because teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good
- Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject and behave well
- Good questioning by teachers helps to generate a good pace in lessons
- Expectations are high and pupils are challenged effectively

### **Commentary**

65. Standards in mathematics in both Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. In the 2003 national tests, results showed that most pupils in Year 2 were above the national average at the expected level and almost half were well above the higher level. Standards of pupils in Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average but inspection evidence now indicates that the current Year 6 pupils are above average. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are very well supported by the teachers and teaching assistants. In these lessons, pupils benefit equally from what is on offer. Although statistics show that there is no difference in the performance of boys and girls

in Year 2, they indicate that boys do out perform girls in Year 6. Inspection findings show that boys and girls are treated equally, the curriculum is not biased towards either boys or girls and all pupils were working up to their potential.

66. The quality of teaching and learning varies from satisfactory to very good but is mostly good. Teachers are confident in the three-part structure of the numeracy strategy. They share the lesson intentions with the pupils and these are reviewed at the end of the lesson to ensure that pupils understand what has been taught. A key feature of the good and very good lessons is the brisk pace. Good questioning by teachers helps to keep the pace of the lessons moving. This was particularly noted in a lesson with pupils in Year 5, where pupils were given quick-fire questions at the beginning of the lesson and had to round numbers, such as 26714, to the nearest ten thousand. Analysis of work and observation in lessons indicate that problem-solving and investigative work takes place. For example, in a lesson in Year 6, pupils were given various statements and had to solve a problem by using a table. Pupils are polite, have very good attitudes and behave well in lessons.
67. Assessment arrangements, overall, are satisfactory with good features. Analysis of large-scale performance data is thorough and used well. For example, following the use of optional national tests, outcomes are used by teachers to produce half-termly targets for pupils in each year. Each pupil is placed into a certain group and they know the targets set for them. A special springboard programme takes place twice a week for pupils in Year 4 and 5 to support those identified as needing additional support. Daily evaluations of lesson plans take place to identify what went well and what did not. More use could be made of these assessments to fine tune the work for pupils which follows. Pupils generally know how they are doing. Marking varies from the congratulatory to the more careful remarks that are constructive and encourage improvement.
68. The subject leader is knowledgeable and committed. She has only been in position since September 2003, when she was new to the school, but she has made a good start in a short time. She has made an audit, and found strengths and weaknesses. She has produced targets based on observation of lessons. She organised a maths week in October 2003, which was well received by staff, pupils and parents.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

69. This is at least satisfactory and there are a number of curricular areas where a link has been established with mathematics. It is used in particular with information and communication technology and in science, where pupils compare results in investigations.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and all pupils achieve well
- Teaching and learning are good; pupils have many opportunities to investigate for themselves and this contributes to high standards
- The subject is well co-ordinated
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection
- The good assessment procedures are not yet being used fully to plan future learning opportunities for all abilities

### **Commentary**

70. The high standards reported at the last inspection by Year 6 have generally been maintained and those by Year 2 have improved. This has been against a background of high staff turnover

in recent years. The co-ordinator has worked well to create an enthusiastic team, improve its subject knowledge, develop a more practical approach to the subject and to raise its profile with both pupils and parents, so that attitudes towards the subject are now very positive.

71. The evidence on learning through first-hand experience was apparent both from the lessons seen and pupils' past work. In a very good lesson seen in Year 3, pupils made good progress in locating and identifying mini-beasts in the school's wildlife area and pond. The lesson was very well prepared and resourced, with apparatus for carefully collecting and examining specimens. A thorough introduction enabled pupils to work quite independently. Knowing just what to do and what was expected of them contributed to the good behaviour shown by the pupils and to their progress. Pupils' past work shows that the results of investigations are carefully measured, recorded and compared. Good use is now made of mathematics in data-handling, a weakness reported at the last inspection. However, the school recognises that more use could be made of information and communication technology to support learning in science, particularly in the area of data-handling. Pupils are generally expected to record their findings for themselves, often showing a good use of literacy skills and knowledge and understanding of subject vocabulary.
72. Individual progress in the units of study followed is carefully recorded against clear and precise objectives. However, the use of this information to plan the next step in pupils' learning is not yet as secure. Past recorded work and the lessons seen show that although teachers are sufficiently aware of the range of ability in classes, this is not always evident in their planning of activities for this range. This results especially in some lack of challenge for higher-attaining pupils and expectation of their recorded work. For example, the work produced by Years 1 and 2 classes indicates that similar learning opportunities, with similar recorded outcomes, have generally been provided for all ages and ability. However, questioning does at times recognise and challenge more able pupils further, and the good use of teaching assistants supports lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, well.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- By Year 6 standards in communicating information are above average
- Improvement since the last inspection is good
- Teaching and learning are good
- The good assessment procedures are not yet being used fully to plan future learning activities for all abilities

### **Commentary**

73. By Year 2 and Year 6 standards in ICT, overall, are average. This shows a good improvement since the last inspection when standards by Year 6 were below average. Pupils' work in Year 6, particularly that linked to English, in communicating information is now above average. This is evident from their good use of keyboard skills and ability to change and use font, size and colour for effect. It culminated in their good multi-media presentations on the *Titanic*, many of which allow the user to select different slides. A very good presentation by some Year 6 pupils to parents on mountaineering, an English research project, also involved multi-media presentations. It helped to make parents better informed on the possible uses of ICT and raised the subject's profile.
74. The lessons seen were well-planned and prepared, and indicated proficient subject knowledge. They were introduced effectively so that pupils could quickly experience 'hands on', in order to be actively involved themselves. Good use was made of the skills and expertise of teaching assistants who worked competently and confidently with groups of pupils, often away from the

class teacher. This allowed teachers to make more effective use of the limited number of computers available in the ICT suite. This was evident in a very good Year 5 lesson where the teaching assistant gave good support to a group of lower-attaining pupils, using the classroom computer. Teachers manage classes well. Their very good relationships with pupils results in good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning.

75. The subject is well led and managed. The newly appointed co-ordinator is well supported by the headteacher and a technician, all of whom are very keen to move the subject forward and to make ICT a natural tool for teaching and learning. All pupils keep a record on disc of the work they have completed and there are good assessment procedures that carefully record the progress they make in attaining ICT skills. However, these are not always used sufficiently to plan work for the full range of age and ability within classes, so that skills can be more consistently developed at an individual and appropriate level in order to raise standards further.

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

76. Displays around the school and work in pupils' books now show a satisfactory but developing use of ICT to support learning in other subjects; for example, the use of digital photography to illustrate work, of a digital microscope in science, and of the Internet to research in history and geography. New computers have recently been installed in all classrooms and digital projectors are planned for all rooms. A good range of software has been installed and teachers' planning monitored to help ensure the delivery of the full curriculum.

### **HUMANITIES**

77. **Geography** was not a focus for the inspection. As a result no lessons were observed. Therefore, it is not possible to make a firm judgement on provision. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have learnt about the seaside as their project. A project on Ghana has given pupils in Years 3 and 4 good opportunities to compare and contrast the lives of people living in England and Ghana. Year 5 pupils have looked at Egypt and discovered the advantages and disadvantages brought about by the building of the Aswan Dam for people living in that part of the world. Pupils in Year 6 have looked at the circumstances surrounding the building and sinking of the *Titanic*. The work on display shows that pupils have a well-developed understanding of how the environment affects people.
78. The co-ordinator, is knowledgeable and fulfils her role effectively. She has planned schemes of work for use across the school and has rightly identified the need to improve the school's work in relation to map work and fieldwork.

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards and achievement in history are good
- A new scheme of work is closely linked to literacy
- Most of the teaching and learning is good

### **Commentary**

79. Standards in history are good and above that expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. Good progress is made and pupils achieve well. A newly introduced scheme of work closely links work in history and literacy to the benefit of both subjects. This was noted in a very good English lesson where the teacher, dressed as an ancient Greek warrior as part of the study on Greeks in Years 4 and 5, convincingly answered twenty-six questions from pupils in half an hour on life as a warrior. Pupils were inspired by this stimulating lesson, asked well-

constructed questions and as a result developed their speaking and listening skills as well as their knowledge of the Greeks. In the second part of the lesson, they used writing skills well when making notes on what they had learned. The new scheme of work embraces the needs of infants and juniors effectively.

80. Teaching and learning is good, with very good features. The lessons are characterised by brisk pace and creative use of resources, including the Internet. For example, one class used the Internet to find information on the Olympic Games. Pupils listen well and contribute their ideas confidently during lessons. Resources are used well to develop pupils' skills of enquiry and their ability to make deductions from a variety of sources. This was clearly evident in a lesson on Greek warriors where pupils looked at photographs of Greek artefacts to determine what warriors wore. A striking feature of work done in history is the very good use teachers make of role-play to make lessons memorable. A recent project on the Victorians involved pupils in dressing-up and acting out activities associated with the different lives of people living at that time. Furthermore, an article in a magazine featured the pupils and their work in one of its publications. The school makes good use of such opportunities to ensure that pupils' are inspired to learn and that their efforts are valued.
81. The co-ordinator, who has only been in position since September 2003, has made a good start at monitoring, evaluating and re-shaping the scheme of work. Assessment of pupils' learning takes place during and after lessons but better use could be made of the information gained when planning subsequent lessons. Homework, including holiday homework, is given on a regular basis and the activities which pupils are asked to engage in are carefully designed and used effectively to promote and consolidate knowledge and understanding in history.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been sound improvement in religious education since the last inspection, when it was an issue for development
- More time is now devoted to religious education, which has a positive impact on standards
- Teaching and learning in the juniors are good

### Commentary

82. Although no lessons were observed in the infants, sampling of pupils work, talking to pupils and staff indicate that standards, by the end of Year 2, are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Year 6, standards are also in line with the locally agreed syllabus, which is an improvement on the last report. Most religious faiths are studied. The school draws well on the different faiths of its pupils and their families to promote understanding of similarities and difference between the major world faiths. For example, a Hindu family and a Jewish family were invited into the school to talk to pupils about their religions and a Muslim boy who attends the school talked about Islam.
83. More time is now devoted to religious education and each class has at least one lesson per week. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the two lessons observed in the juniors, teaching and learning were good. Good questioning helps to keep the pace of the lesson moving. For example, in one lesson about David and Goliath, pupils had to demonstrate and state how they would feel if they were in the Israelite camp. They were also asked to give the difference in reaction between the Israelites and Philistines. Generally, pupils achieve well.
84. There are good links with local churches. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 visit and compare a Roman Catholic church with a modern Anglican one. The local vicar and ministers from non-conformist churches contribute to school assemblies and help pupils to understand

the significance of Christian symbols and celebrations. A good example of this was when the vicar demonstrated a baptism using a parent and her baby as models.

85. The co-ordinator, new since September 2003, has made a good start. She has linked the locally agreed syllabus with a national one, with the result that there are now more units to study, which ensures pupils do not have repetition. Resources have improved since the last inspection.

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

86. As only three lessons were seen in **art** it is not possible to make a firm judgement on provision. However, displays around the school and work in portfolios was looked at. This evidence indicates that, by the end of Year 6, standards achieved are better than expected and pupils make good progress as they move through the school. This is an improvement on the standards seen in the previous inspection.
87. Teaching in the lessons seen was good. A strong feature of the teaching is the clear planning for the development of pupils' skills and the demonstration of techniques. Resources are well selected, so that they stimulate the pupils to produce interesting and imaginative work. For example, in a good Years 1 and 2 lesson, pupils were excited by the challenge of weaving with different materials; especially, using the different looms, oven racks, plant supports and the outdoor fence.
88. Displays of pupils' work enhance the school environment. Recent studies of the work of well-known artists show that pupils can produce work using similar styles and techniques successfully. A strength of the way the subject is organised is the very good links with other curriculum subjects, so that, for example, pupils use the computer to call up the work of Monet so that they can produce a design in a similar style. In another lesson, pupils extend their knowledge of ancient Greeks by studying the designs on Greek pots and plates to identify and draw different features. Throughout the school, sketch-books are used very well for pupils to practise their skills.
89. As **design and technology** was not a focus during the inspection no lessons were observed. Therefore, no firm judgement can be made on provision. Work on display and planning shows that all aspects of the subject are covered.
90. Only three lessons were seen in **music** as this was not a focus for the inspection. The good standards seen in a Year 6 lesson indicate that progress is good and that music retains a significant place in the curriculum. In the three lessons seen, pupils' enjoyment was evident and they responded with great gusto to instructions to sing and play musical instruments, all the while with good control. It is clear that teachers are confident to teach the subject and pay good attention to building up pupils' musical knowledge.
91. Singing in school assemblies is good. In a singing assembly, older pupils responded very well to improving their diction in a newly learnt song. They sang confidently and enthusiastically, with evident enjoyment. In the absence of live music, well-selected taped music provides a rhythmic and exciting accompaniment.
92. A number of children learn to play musical instruments and develop their performance skills by giving public performances, with some going on to play in local youth orchestras. There is a well-attended drama club which includes music and there are weekly singing sessions for all pupils.

### Example of outstanding practice

***Year 6 music lesson in which pupils build up the different elements of singing, body percussion and instrumental percussion to a performance.***

This is courageous teaching from a teacher with high expectations and great confidence. The outstanding feature of the lesson is the teaching, based on an excellent choice of backing track, clear and competent demonstration, as well as the well-planned, highly organised teaching of the skills the pupils need. The teaching assistant is very well briefed, and adult intervention is subtle and supportive. The pupils' response is excellent, they behave very well, captured by the anticipation of what is coming next, at times, gasping at what is being asked of them. As a class, they learn to harmonise, singing the song in two parts and then to clap and beat out the different rhythms using body percussion. When asked to work in groups, they work with outstanding confidence and responsibility to develop a range of percussion accompaniment with body and instruments, led by a conductor. The co-operation between group members provides good evidence of the high quality community spirit within the school. At the end of the lesson, the pride that pupils have in what they have produced is palpable.

93. It is not possible to make a firm judgement in relation to the provision of **physical education** because not enough lessons were observed during the inspection. However, it is clear from documentary evidence that physical education is regarded as an important subject. There is full coverage of all aspects of physical education, including swimming. The co-ordinator offers strong leadership and has produced high quality schemes of work, and lesson plans that give good support to non-specialist teachers. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils have regular periods of vigorous physical activity, and planning shows that activities and learning in lessons link well with the school's work on promoting healthy life styles. For example, the benefits of regular exercise are known and understood by pupils. Furthermore, the co-ordinator has ensured that interesting equipment and resources have been provided for pupils to use at break-times. This initiative enables pupils to practice and develop physical skills such as hand/eye co-ordination when playing with balls, to engage in physical activities which contribute to general fitness, and to develop skills in teamwork and co-operation. Pupils who were interviewed during the inspection spoke enthusiastically about the improvements such as the 'trim trail' and 'ball wall'.

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

94. Not enough lessons were seen in this area of the school's work to enable a firm judgement to be made in relation to overall provision. However, the school's aims and values underpin all aspects of this subject so that it is a successful element of school life. Pupils' personal development has a high profile and is clearly identified in the policy and practices related to promoting healthy life styles, sex and relationships education, alcohol and substance abuse and personal safety. The school is receptive to new initiatives. For example, it is working towards the new award known as Investors in Children.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
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>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
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>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
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	2
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>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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