

INSPECTION REPORT

RUSPER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Horsham

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125850

Headteacher: Mrs Deborah Packham

Lead inspector: Rob Crompton

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th December 2003

Inspection number: 257379

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of children:	4 - 11
Gender of children:	Mixed
Number on roll:	97
School address:	Rusper Horsham RH12 4PR
Telephone number:	01293 871272
Fax number:	01293 871135
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mike Giffin
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd – 24 th September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small village school with 97 children on roll, of whom seven attend the reception class on a part-time basis. Very few children are from ethnic minority backgrounds and all have English as their first language. When they enter the reception class, children's social skills and levels of language, mathematical, physical and creative development are good. They have a good knowledge of the world outside their immediate home and school. Thirteen children have special educational needs, which is below average. About 5 per cent of children are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The school serves an area with above average social and economic conditions.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7230	Rob Crompton	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Religious education Geography History Special educational needs
13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector	
32197	Mike Dukes	Team inspector	English Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	15
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. Under the very skilled leadership of the headteacher, it provides a very good quality of education. Good teaching enables children to achieve **well** and reach good standards. Governors work hard on behalf of the school and provide very good support. The very positive ethos, together with very successful support for personal development, means that children develop very good attitudes and behave very well. Parents are very happy with the school and work in close partnership with teachers to support their children's learning. Children enjoy school. It provides **very good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching means children achieve well and reach good standards.
- Highly effective leadership by the headteacher contributes significantly to the very positive ethos.
- Very good provision for personal development means that children have very positive attitudes and behave very well.
- Strong support from parents contributes to children's learning.
- Children benefit from a rich variety of experiences in and out of the classroom.
- Governors provide very good support and make a strong contribution to the success of the school.
- Accommodation for whole-school activities and gymnastics is inadequate.
- The Year 4 classroom is inadequate.
- Reports do not tell parents enough about how well children are doing.

Improvement since the last inspection has been **very good**. Good standards have been sustained in English, mathematics and science, and attainment has improved in most other subjects. Achievement has improved through Years 3 to 6 and is now good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Most children entering the reception class have already developed good social and language skills. Their understanding of number is above that usually found at this age. As a result of good teaching, children are achieving well and are on course to reach good standards in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year. Children build well on this good start and reach above average standards by Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Their levels of attainment in other subjects are at least in line with national expectations.

Although the table below suggests that children are not making enough progress through Years 3 to 6, the inspection found that children are achieving well in these year groups. The relatively small number of children in each age group means that the results of one or two children can dramatically influence the statistics. There was a relatively high proportion of children with special educational needs in the Year 6 class last year, which also affected the overall picture. Children in the current Years 5/6 class are achieving very well and making good progress. As a result of better teaching, standards in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, geography and history are above average. Children are working at well above average levels in science in Years 5 and 6. Standards are much better in the broader range of work outside the tests.

The school successfully meets the needs of all children, so that those with particular gifts or talents and those with special educational needs make good progress.

Year 6 results

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	E
mathematics	B	E	C	E
science	B	D	B	D

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

A strong emphasis on the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum contributes significantly to the progress children make in these key skills and also to their achievement in other subjects, such as science, geography and religious education.

Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Children have very good attitudes and behave very well because of the highly effective provision for their personal development. Attendance is well above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching is good and much is very good, which means children enjoy lessons and cover a lot of ground. Teachers establish a brisk pace and are good at motivating children to try hard. Very good relationships between teachers, support staff and children contribute to the purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Teaching is very good in Years 4, 5 and 6. Children rise to the high level of challenge in lessons and when carrying out their own research. They take pride in their work. The curriculum is planned well and stimulates children's interest. Children benefit from a good level of care and support. The school seeks their views and those of their parents, and there is a strong partnership between home and school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership and governors support the school very well. The school meets all its statutory responsibilities. All teachers have several leadership roles and carry these out effectively.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school. Some expressed concern about the information they receive about how their children are getting on. The quality of information is satisfactory overall; general information is good but reports have some weaknesses. Children's views are very positive. Although several expressed concerns about behaviour, the inspection found that most children behave very well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- continue its efforts to secure an adequate hall for assemblies, physical education and other whole-school activities and to replace the temporary classroom that has been in use for 60 years;
- improve the quality of annual reports to parents to ensure they have a clear picture of how well their children are doing in relation to their age.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement through the school is **good** and children reach above average standards in most subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the reception year, which provides a good foundation for subsequent work; an improvement since the last inspection.
- Good standards are attained in all the subjects inspected in depth.

Commentary

1. When children start school, their knowledge, skills and understanding are above the levels typical in this age group. For the last few years, the overall profile has been above average, with children having particularly good skills in literacy and numeracy. Children build on this solid foundation well and the proportion reaching or exceeding the expected standards in all areas of learning by the end of reception is above that expected.
2. Results in reading at the end of Year 2 were above those of other schools in 2003 and well above average in writing. Performance in mathematics matched that of schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, results were average in reading, well above average in writing, and below average in mathematics. In reading, mathematics and science, the proportion of children reaching the expected targets was in the top 5 per cent of all schools. With such a small number of children in each year group, statistics can vary widely from year to year. The inspection found that most children achieve well in reading, writing, mathematics and science and reach above average standards.

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (15.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.0 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.7 (16.1)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. In 2003, results at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics matched the national average; in science, they were above average. When compared with similar schools, results were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Again, the small number of children in the year group means that the results in particular years do not reflect the quality of education. The inspection found that children are making good progress in Years 3 to 6 because the quality of teaching has improved on previous years.

¹ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by all of their children with an average for all schools nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (26.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.6 (24.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.5 (27.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 17 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In addition to achieving well in English, mathematics and science, children are doing well in all the other subjects inspected in depth. They achieve well and reach good standards in information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, geography and history. Good work was also seen in art and design, design and technology and music, but there was not enough evidence to fully evaluate standards in these subjects or in physical education.
5. Children with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets and children with specific gifts and talents build well on their strengths. Boys and girls do equally well.
6. The good progress that children make through the school is the result of good teaching supported by very strong leadership and management. It reflects the school's determination to ensure all children have equal opportunities to do as well as they can.

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**. The school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance levels are **well above average**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for personal development helps children to become confident and socially and culturally aware.
- Strong teaching leads to positive attitudes in class.

Commentary

7. The school makes every effort to ensure that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well. Assemblies make a very good contribution to children's spiritual development. Children are encouraged to reflect on issues and make a personal response; for example, many wrote very sensitively about Remembrance Day. The willow classroom² project is successfully encouraging children to reflect on the natural environment and the wonders of nature. Moral development is promoted successfully; for example, children are involved in drawing up the school rules. Teachers frequently put the onus on children to make the right choices, for example by trusting them to behave sensibly when working in the library and computer station without the continuous presence of an adult. The Christmas production and other performances rely very much on children's commitment to doing the best they can and working as a team for the good of the whole school community.
8. Children's social development is enhanced simply by being part of everyday school life and seeing how adults and children get on with each other. Children are frequently asked to cooperate with one another in lessons, and good opportunities to participate in residential trips and outdoor education help them to become independent and self-reliant. Through good

² This has involved children in designing and helping to plant willows in the shape of an igloo, in which they will play and learn during the summer months.

teaching in subjects such as religious education, English, geography, art and music, children develop a good sense of their own cultural heritage and of the diversity of cultures within Britain. For example, the 'heritage week' last year brought together an excellent range of activities, from accounts of a visit to the Royal Albert Hall to the rules for playing marbles.

- In class, children are open and receptive. They are willing to have a go and do their best because teachers capture their interest and provide stimulating activities. Outside, children have a good range of activities and lots of space to play in and these help to channel their energy constructively. Children were very enthusiastic about the recently constructed adventure apparatus. Although almost every child in the school appeared to be trying it out at once, they did so with good humour, cooperating well and taking turns. Children are confident and mature when talking to adults; they have a delightfully open approach, reflecting the success of the school in developing positive attitudes.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.2	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions for several years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**. Consistently good teaching is underpinned by a well-planned curriculum, with many additional opportunities for children to learn. Children are well cared for, guided and supported. Good links with parents contribute significantly to children's progress.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. In Years 4, 5 and 6, the teaching is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Challenging teaching means children are eager to learn.
- Children in reception are making good progress because the quality of teaching has improved.
- Good support from teaching assistants helps children to progress, although their time could be used more effectively during some lessons.
- Children's progress is assessed thoroughly and enables teachers to set individual targets.
- Homework is used well to support learning.

Commentary

- Children respond well to the consistently effective teaching across the school. They rise to the good level of challenge in lessons and to the high expectations for behaviour. Teachers are skilled at motivating children to do their best. Children's attention is sustained because the pace of lessons is brisk and the work is interesting. Teachers' good background knowledge enables them to respond to children's questions and extend their thinking. Teachers are good at explaining things in different ways, while their use of questioning draws on children's existing

knowledge and extends it. The practical approach taken in subjects such as mathematics and science works well. Teachers use resources and educational visits effectively to help children's understanding in geography, history and religious education. Homework is used well to support class work. It is set regularly and most children tackle it conscientiously. The quality of teaching is good across all the subjects inspected in depth. Evidence from the subjects where children's work was sampled suggests that teaching is also effective there. The teaching of science in Years 4, 5 and 6 is excellent, which means children make rapid progress and reach well above average standards.

11. Staff work together very effectively as a team in the reception/Year 1 class. The temporary teacher is very well supported by the teaching assistant. They have a good understanding of how young children learn and this means that all the teaching is well thought through and based mostly on practical experience. Staff establish warm relationships and provide stimulating activities for children. The indoor and outdoor areas are used very well to provide a good range of activities that appeal to children's sense of fun. As a result, children enjoy learning and achieve well. Most take part enthusiastically and are keen to contribute their ideas. The good quality of teaching observed represents a very good improvement on that seen during the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory.
12. Teaching assistants provide good support, particularly during group work where they explain tasks clearly and help children to concentrate. They are well briefed in supporting children with special educational needs, working in close partnership with class teachers. However, they could be deployed more effectively during lesson introductions and summaries. Teachers rarely ask them to retain their groups at the end of lessons, to allow more children to take an active part in reviewing how they have got on.
13. Teachers gain a good understanding of how children are progressing through informal assessments, marking work and structured tests. They are increasingly using this information to set individual targets, often involving children in deciding priorities. It helps children to understand clearly what they need to do to improve. Children are taught in two ability sets in English and mathematics in Years 4, 5 and 6. This works well, although there is still a wide ranging level of attainment in the upper ability set. There is room for children in this set to be given more work at different levels, so as to challenge those with higher attainment in particular.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	8	10	1	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.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum for all children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wide range of interesting learning opportunities.
- Learning is enriched by additional activities and clubs, though boys are under-represented in some of these.
- Good provision for children with special education enables them to achieve well.
- The school grounds have been creatively developed to provide very well for learning and playing outdoors.
- The use of the village hall for physical education and for whole-school events is unsatisfactory.

- The temporary accommodation used as a Year 4 classroom is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

14. The staff and governors have worked hard, under the very strong leadership of the headteacher, to create a good quality curriculum. Innovative planning has ensured that, not only does the school meet all its statutory requirements, but it goes beyond them. For example, French is taught to older children and swimming is provided in Years 3, 4 and 5. Also, children enjoy learning from the steady stream of visitors, which include those from police, health, religious and musical groups. Children benefit from a good range of outings such as those to places of worship. Older children learn a lot during their residential visit to Dorset. Such activities enhance the learning and complement the good teaching and the creative projects that staff organise, such as the Christmas productions, heritage week and the willow classroom. As a result, children feel very positive about their school. Their attitudes to learning are very good, they achieve well and they reach good standards.
15. A good range of clubs and activities enriches the curriculum, which is impressive for such a small school. Around 80 places are taken up enthusiastically by children of all ages. Some activities are attracting mainly girls, notably the choir, aerobics club and music groups. The school's good work in enhancing the curriculum would be even better if staff found ways of engaging more boys in these valuable experiences.
16. The curriculum is modified when necessary to meet individual needs, for example to provide booster classes for children who are not making the expected progress in literacy or numeracy. The well-qualified and experienced team of teaching assistants provides good support in helping children to participate in all activities and to benefit as much as possible from them.
17. Accommodation is good for the youngest children but unsatisfactory in the school overall. There is no accommodation for indoor physical education. The school uses a small, draughty and noisy village hall. This is adequate to some extent for floor work but not for gymnastics and dance for older children. The village hall is similarly unsuitable for whole-school events such as assemblies. Opportunities for quiet reflection are hindered by the exuberant noise of toddlers in the adjacent playgroup and by their necessary trips through the hall to use the toilet. The temporary hut, which is the Year 4 classroom, is unsatisfactory. It is cold, draughty and noisy from heating and ventilation. The only space available for music tuition is in this building, though this frequently disturbs the otherwise very quiet and purposeful atmosphere in the adjacent classroom.
18. By contrast, the outdoor accommodation is very good. Much creative thought has gone into developing the grounds. The tree tunnel, willow classroom and seating among statues complement the landscaped trim-trail, climbing apparatus and the ample hard and soft play surfaces. Together, these provide very good opportunities for children to learn and play productively outdoors.

Care, guidance and support

Care and support for children are **good**. Consultation and involvement of children are **very good**.

- Staff know the children very well and daily routines are well organised.
 - Children feel well supported by adults.
 - Induction for reception children is very good.
 - The school council is a very good channel of communication.
19. The key to the good care and support offered to children is the small size of the school. All adults know all the children and their individual ways and needs very well. Added to this is the

deployment of the teaching assistants as midday supervisors, so that the children enjoy continuity and consistency of care all day. Children responding to the inspection questionnaire felt certain that they were well looked after: "People care for you. You can turn to someone".

20. The school's arrangements for the induction of children into reception are very good. This is because of the very close liaison with parents and with the playgroup attended by most new entrants. Parents and children complete an 'All about me' booklet, which lets the school and the families share information, and meetings to discuss this help everyone to iron out any concerns. As a result, children settle in very quickly and are ready to start learning.
21. The school council is particularly successful in involving and consulting children. It goes beyond the usual matters that such groups generally discuss to get to issues which are at the very heart of the school. Children contribute their ideas for the content of assemblies, for example, and have been responsible for the production of the school's charter of behaviour. This is not a list of do's and don'ts, but a positive and thoughtful set of guidelines which reflect the way in which the school gives children the scope to grow and flourish; for example, 'Don't be scared to put forward new ideas and suggestions to improve our school'.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Main strengths and weaknesses

Links with parents, other schools and the community are **good**.

- Parents are very well involved in school life and children's learning.
- Information for parents is good, apart from children's annual reports.
- The school plays a central role in village life.
- Links with other small schools benefit staff and children alike.

Commentary

22. The school regards parents as equal partners in their children's education and gathers, respects and acts on their ideas wherever it can. Parents are consulted every year on school development planning and decisions are fed back to them in the governors' annual report. They are also asked for their views on specific aspects of school policy, such as the rewriting of the school aims. The headteacher and other staff are always readily accessible and available to talk to parents about their children each day, and governors hold termly surgeries. Teachers draw parents into their children's learning in imaginative and interesting ways. As part of their work on the 1960s, for example, children in Years 5 and 6 devised questionnaires about the Beatles for their parents to complete. The results of these have provided fascinating primary sources of evidence for children to use in their history research. This undoubtedly added to their achievement.
23. General information for parents is good. The prospectus, the governors' annual report, newsletters and curriculum information are all attractively presented, helpful for reference and well aimed at their target audience. By contrast though, the school recognises that reports to parents need overhauling. At present, reports do not give parents a consistently clear picture of how well their children are doing or what they need to do to improve. Some also contain jargon and errors.
24. Children learn a lot about community life from taking part in village activities. The school's involvement with the church, the art group and the flower show, for example, helps children develop a sense of what it means to be an individual in a small community and how their role matters. Equally, involvement with other small schools in the area, through sports tournaments and other competitions, helps children to prepare for moving to the much bigger environment of secondary school. They get to meet other local children and adjust to being in larger social

groups. Staff share expertise with other schools and broaden their own knowledge and experience, thanks to these links.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** and the governors fulfil their roles **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's clear vision for the school is shared by staff.
- Strategic planning reflects the school's aims.
- The headteacher rigorously monitors standards and teaching.
- English and mathematics are led well.
- Staff are provided with very good opportunities for professional development.
- The governance of the school is very good.

Commentary

25. The headteacher inspires a common sense of purpose throughout the school. As a result, Rusper is an inclusive school where staff treat children as individuals and provide good role models for them. The staff are united in their high aspirations for children's achievements. Strategic planning promotes these ambitions very well. The headteacher has very effective strategies to improve the quality of teaching and of the curriculum. Teachers lead curriculum subjects well. Monitoring by the co-ordinators for English and mathematics has been particularly successful in contributing to improvements. The headteacher ensures that parents are able to make a positive contribution to their children's learning and to school life.
26. The headteacher, staff and governors have devised a thorough programme for reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This includes the regular review of performance data. As a result, the school has an accurate picture of how well children are doing and focuses on areas for further improvement. This has led to more effective teaching since the last inspection and to rising standards. New staff receive a rigorous and supportive induction to ensure consistency in the high quality practices in the school. High priority is given to enabling staff to benefit from further training. Financial management is linked well to achieving the priorities of the school.
27. Governors make a very significant contribution to the school. For example, they have helped shape the direction of the school by reviewing and re-establishing its aims. They have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, gained through their effective monitoring and evaluation. As a result, the governors are sufficiently well informed to debate issues thoroughly rather than 'rubber stamp' ideas suggested by the management team.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	290,425	Balance from previous year	19,897
Total expenditure	272,362	Balance carried forward to the next	18,063
Expenditure per child	2,696		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

28. At the time of the inspection, there were ten children of reception age. Three attended all day and seven only during the morning. Reception children are taught in the same class as eleven Year 1 children. The teacher was off ill and a temporary teacher was teaching the class, supported by a teaching assistant. The teaching assistant plays a major role in assessing children's progress. She maintains comprehensive portfolios of individual children's work. These include useful information provided by parents as children start school, precise steps that children need to make to improve and detailed records of their progress. These records indicate that the rate of children's progress has improved from a satisfactory level last year and that they are now building well on their previous attainment. This reflects good progress since the last inspection when provision was unsatisfactory in personal and social development, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching helps children to achieve well and reach good standards in all areas of learning.
 - Careful assessment and tracking of children's progress help staff to provide challenging work.
 - Improvement has been good since the last inspection when the provision for some areas of learning was unsatisfactory.
29. Children's **personal, social and emotional development** is very well supported. Staff establish very good relationships and help children to learn the conventions of behaviour in school. Children soon learn not to call out when the teacher is speaking to the class and to take turns when working alongside each other. They respond well to the very warm approach of the temporary teacher and the teaching assistant. This was exemplified when a child, who had been very reluctant to speak for the first few weeks, answered his name for the first time and the day after took part in an animated conversation with the teaching assistant. The role-play area is used well to promote children's social skills. Children played alongside each other sensibly in 'Santa's Workshop', wrapping presents and 'writing' cards.
30. Very well planned opportunities for **communication, language and literacy** help children to progress well. Staff frequently engage children in conversations, extending their vocabulary and promoting clear speech. They read stories to children every day and this spurs children's interest and motivates them to read for themselves. Letter sounds are taught systematically, which gives children confidence as they start to read simple texts themselves. The teaching assistant makes a very good contribution to children's learning in all areas, particularly in early literacy skills. She devises sequencing activities, such as putting the story of the nativity in order, and is very good at encouraging children to talk and express themselves.
31. Regular practical work supports children's **mathematical development** very well. A strong emphasis on sorting objects according to their size helps children to develop a good understanding of shape. Displays including Russian dolls, and boxes of different sizes invite children to explore and put things in order; labels such as 'smallest' and 'largest' help them to develop appropriate vocabulary. Daily routines, such as counting the number of children present, help children to gain a good understanding of how numbers are used for counting. Their ability to identify 'one more' and 'one less' in numbers up to 20 indicates a good standard of numeracy. Most children recognise coins and can add small amounts together, which also indicates above average attainment.

32. Children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** outside their immediate home and school is developed well. For example, children were fascinated when a local minister came in to talk about how Christian children are baptised and enjoyed playing the roles of parents and godparents. They gain a good understanding of how things change over time by looking at past and present pictures of the seaside and identifying similarities and differences. Working alongside Year 1 children is helpful, particularly for the full-time children who are ready for more challenging work. This was evident as they worked confidently during a history lesson on past and present toys. Children develop good early computer skills because they have access to the classroom computers and also work in groups in the small computer suite.
33. Children's **physical development** is promoted successfully through a good range of activities. Inside the classroom, their manipulative skills are developed as they cut and stick. For example, children were carefully cutting items from toy catalogues to create their own Christmas lists. Others made 'biscuits for Santa' from play dough and made paper snowflakes. During a lesson in the village hall, the reception children benefited from working with older children who provided good role models. They were achieving well as they devised movement sequences and commented on one another's efforts. Outdoors, a good range of activities and wheeled toys helps children's physical development as they pedal and steer wheeled toys and play games in small groups led by the staff.
34. **Creative development** features strongly in daily activities. The classroom has many examples of children's work with different media, such as paint, collage materials and malleable materials such as plasticine. Adults often join children in the role play area and develop scenarios which appeal to children's imagination and stimulate the creative use of language.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well.
- In some lessons, teaching assistants and parent helpers are not managed as well as they could be.

Commentary

35. Good leadership and management have helped to sustain above average standards since the last inspection. Children reach good standards in reading and writing by Year 2. They continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6 so that standards are also above average by Year 6.
36. Throughout the school, both boys and girls achieve well, with significant recent improvement in the rate of progress between Years 3 to 6. Children with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that they achieve as well as their classmates. However, sometimes teachers do not enable the assistants to use their good skills as fully as they could, for example, by leading introductions for smaller groups. Teachers challenge and extend the learning of higher attaining children so that they too achieve well – an improvement since the last inspection when this was a weakness.
37. Standards in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school. Teachers continually find ways of encouraging children to talk to the class and to each other through discussions and presentations. Consequently, children are generally confident and clear in

their speaking, and most are able to listen carefully for sustained periods, showing respect for those speaking.

38. Children achieve well in reading and steadily develop skills and their enjoyment of books as they move through the school. Standards are above average because teachers give reading a high priority. Children are taught strategies for tackling new words confidently and teachers provide good opportunities for group, paired and silent reading. Teachers use a wide range of interesting texts and books in attractive classroom displays to inspire children to read. They are also successful in encouraging children to read to parents at home and this contributes significantly to children's progress.
39. Standards in writing have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Staff have worked hard to achieve this. For example:
- they have implemented successful methods following staff training;
 - they ensure children write more frequently;
 - they plan interesting and creative lessons;
 - they motivate children by celebrating their work in displays.
40. These strategies have led to children writing clearer reports, such as accounts by Year 1 children of their visit to a toy museum. By Year 6, children use paragraphs well in their writing of specialist reports, using complex sentences. Children frequently write poems spontaneously as a means of expressing their feelings, and their story writing is lively and interesting. They are motivated to present their work as neatly as possible because teachers create displays and make class and individual books that celebrate children's achievements.
41. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The main reasons for the improvement are:
- setting by ability in the top three year groups has helped teachers to focus well on meeting the needs of individual children;
 - very good teaching extends the learning of the most able children in Year 6 very successfully;
 - teachers use assessments well to plan subsequent work, which was a weakness at the last inspection;
 - lively approaches capture children's imagination. For example, when a teacher read from 'Blodin the Beast', Years 2 and 3 children were spellbound.

Literacy across the curriculum

42. Children use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. They have many opportunities to practise and consolidate their use of information books when undertaking research in history and geography. Teachers help children to use the correct technical terms in subjects such as science. Writing skills are developed well through history, geography and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**, which is better than at the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in the quality of teaching have led to better standards.
- Challenging work helps all children to achieve well.
- Teachers' assessment and marking are of a high standard.
- Teaching assistants are not always used as well as they could be.

Commentary

43. Standards in mathematics are above average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Staff have worked hard to raise standards. They assess the children's progress each half term and analyse the results to see where learning is good and where there are gaps. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. She has overseen the introduction of teaching in ability groups in Years 4, 5 and 6 and this is having a positive effect on raising standards. Children's numeracy skills are particularly strong, as is their understanding of shape and space. More able children in Year 6 are beginning to construct algebraic formulae, indicating above average standards for their age. Other children find some difficulty in solving word problems and in mental mathematics. The school's careful analysis of individual progress has brought this to light and the school is taking action to improve children's skills in these areas.
44. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now very good overall. Teachers plan work to match children's needs, which means all ability groups achieve well. Teachers help children to identify what they need to do to improve by giving very good written feedback and by displaying children's targets. Lively teaching captures children's interest and enthusiasm. Children are supported well by teaching assistants but sometimes their very good skills are under-used, particularly when the teacher is addressing the whole class, where they could be noting the level of children's participation or understanding. Computer programs are used well and regular homework contributes to the good progress that children make.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. Children often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. Although the links between mathematics and other subjects are not planned in a structured way, teachers ensure that regular links are made. For example, a range of graphs, charts and diagrams is used by all age groups in geography and science, often presented by computer.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 means that children achieve very well and reach high standards.
- Children learn quickly because most work is practical.
- Children's skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT play a significant part in their learning.
- Teachers' good background knowledge enables them to explain scientific ideas clearly and to ask challenging questions.

Commentary

46. Children benefit from very good teaching. In the Year 4 and Years 5/6 classes, the teaching is exceptionally strong. Children in Year 4 revealed a very good understanding of the properties of liquids and gases. Prompted by the teacher's skilful questioning, they used scientific terms such as viscous, particles and molecules. Earlier they had produced very imaginative 'aliens' guides' to solids and liquids. These were very well presented and provided an excellent opportunity for children to use their literacy skills in an appropriate context. The teacher drew successfully on children's knowledge of solids and liquids to extend their ideas about the relationship between molecules in gases, and the children were fascinated as they carried out various experiments and observed the effect of introducing carbon monoxide into a liquid. A similar level of interest was generated during an excellent lesson in Years 5/6 when children were devising an investigation into evaporation. In both lessons, the teachers did not 'spoon feed' the children but encouraged them to think things through themselves. Independence is also promoted well when children write up their plans and findings. As a result, children develop very good investigative skills. Teachers successfully encourage children to explain things clearly. When asked what they had learned during the lesson, one child replied succinctly, "If you apply heat energy to a liquid, it will probably turn into a gas", and another, "Gas spreads out more when not enclosed in a container".
47. Very effective leadership means that imaginative approaches that appeal to children are adopted in each class. Year 2 children were delighted when they investigated forces through experiments with catapults, comparing the amount of stretch in the elastic to the distance travelled by the missile. They recorded their results as graphs, drawing on earlier work in mathematics to produce accurate bar charts. A further link to numeracy occurred when children recorded the lengths of shadow when learning about light.
48. Computers are used frequently to support work in science; for example, children in Year 2 used a graphics program to produce images during the work on light. Children in the Years 5/6 class used a spreadsheet to record the results of their investigations into evaporation, using the power of ICT to spot patterns and make predictions.
49. Teachers' very good knowledge of the subject underpins all work in science. This enables them to explain everyday things from a scientific perspective and to respond to children's questions. Their enthusiasm for the subject is picked up by the children and this makes a significant contribution to children's positive attitudes and rapid progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children regularly use ICT for research, calculation and presentation, and this contributes significantly to the development of their skills.
- Good planning means that the level of challenge is increased as children move through the school.
- Resources are adequate but there are no facilities for teaching whole-class groups.

Commentary

50. Children achieve well and reach above average standards; an improvement since the last inspection. The most striking aspect of the provision is the way ICT is integrated into the curriculum. There are numerous examples of children using ICT in other subjects. Children in Year 1 were exploring pictures and movie clips of toys from the collection in a local toy museum. The teaching assistant working with them used questions very well to draw out their

knowledge and understanding and to help them use appropriate language. The level of children's skill in using the Internet browser and 'hyperlinks' to search out information meant that they needed very little prompting in using the computer and could focus on what they were doing rather than how they were doing it. Similarly, children in Year 2 demonstrated good standards as they used a professional level desktop publishing program to extend their creative writing about monsters, further illustrating the school's success in teaching ICT as an integral part of learning.

51. Older children turn naturally to the Internet when seeking information. The current work on the Indus Valley in Year 4 and the Years 5/6 topic on the 1950s and 60s have involved much research. Children have very good general computer skills. They use 'search engines' with assurance and are confident enough to be selective in the material they decide to keep. Around the school, there are many examples of children's good skills in word processing and the use of graphics programs. They choose fonts, insert text and picture frames into documents and move them around documents with ease. This is illustrated by the excellent three-fold pamphlets about the Indus Valley produced by Year 4 children, which include text in three columns, attractive fonts and imported clip art. Older children often harness the power of the computer to calculate; for example, they recently created a spreadsheet to automatically calculate the area and perimeter of shapes of different dimensions. Children are becoming increasingly confident in creating digital images, using graphics programs and digital cameras. For example, children in Years 5 and 6 created movement sequences in art using a series of digital pictures.
52. The newly appointed co-ordinator is very well supported by an experienced teaching assistant and they provide good leadership. A manageable assessment system has been introduced recently and this, together with the carefully structured curriculum, helps teachers to offer further challenge as children move up the school. As a result, children build successfully on their existing skills and make good progress. Teaching is effective. Although there are no suitable facilities for teaching whole classes at the same time, teachers and support assistants have good expertise and work closely together to provide frequent opportunities for children to work individually or in small groups. They do a good job with the resources available, although the lack of suitable accommodation for teaching large groups prevents children from making even more rapid progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

53. As the examples above illustrate, the use of ICT across the curriculum is very good. It enables children to develop their computer skills and, at the same time, it contributes significantly to their achievement in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

Provision in these subjects is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because the teaching is challenging.
 - Visits to museums and places of historical and geographical interest help children's learning.
 - Teachers successfully encourage children to take a pride in their work.
 - Children have good opportunities to practise and consolidate their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
54. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Effective leadership and management have raised the profile of geography and history across the school. The teaching

is very good. The subjects are popular because teachers make lessons interesting. Children rise to the challenge of finding information themselves from books, CD ROMs and Internet sources. Good planning ensures that the subjects are studied in depth. This means that children develop a good knowledge and understanding, rather than simply completing worksheets or sterile exercises.

55. Direct experiences make a significant contribution to children's achievements. They talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about their visits to museums. For example, during their visit to a toy museum, children in Year 1 had learned a lot about how real artefacts can be used to find out about the past. Older children were well informed about the Victorian period following a visit to a local house of the period. They also appreciate the value of first-hand accounts. For example, their study of the 1950s and 60s was greatly enhanced by discussions and the use of questionnaires with their parents and grandparents. A visit to a local nature reserve drew a very positive response. Children in Years 4 and 5 collected soil samples and compared the soil found in different areas. They drew maps of the area using conventional symbols. Some were keen to write poems expressing their feelings on being in such a contrasting environment to their own village – a good example of how teachers successfully promote literacy during work in the humanities.
56. Teachers frequently encourage children to present their work in imaginative ways. Children in Years 2 and 3 created 'story boards' illustrating the sequence of events during the Great Fire of London, while others wrote diary entries as if they were Samuel Pepys. Their factual knowledge was impressive; for example, they knew that Pepys wrote his diary in code. When studying the ancient civilisation of the Indus Valley, children in Year 4 produced 'museum' displays containing the main facts and made clay tablets, reproducing those made in the period. Older children produce project folders and take great pride in them. For example, following independent research, children produced extremely well presented and informative booklets on different types of environment, such as mountain ranges, savannah, rain forests and deserts.
57. Children discuss their work with confidence. They express their ideas very well because teachers provide many opportunities for them to offer suggestions and opinions. This was evident during a discussion on recent topics, when older children offered very mature ideas about the popularity of the Beatles: "They were working-class and spoke out about things...their views could be widely heard because TV was becoming more widely available...their songs contained messages of peace and love". Reading and writing skills are also promoted well as children do their own research and write up accounts. The use of time lines in history and graphs in geography are examples of good links with mathematics.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good guidance for teachers helps them to approach the subject in interesting ways.
- First-hand experiences through educational visits contribute significantly to children's achievement.
- Religious education makes a good contribution to children's awareness of cultural diversity.

Commentary

58. Achievement has improved since the last inspection. Effective leadership by the headteacher is helping children to reach good standards. She has drawn on a range of sources to produce comprehensive guidelines. There is a good range of artefacts and books to support the

teaching of each topic. For example, models and posters relating to Lakshmi and Vishnu³ help children to learn about Hinduism and children's Bibles support their knowledge of Christianity. Children in the Years 2/3 class were keen to identify aspects of a small statue of Lakshmi. The teacher supported their learning very well with prepared card lists of significant words, such as lotus flower, ocean and conch, and explained the Hindu belief in the 'after life' very clearly. The teacher built well on children's good knowledge of Diwali and extended their understanding successfully. During another lesson, the same teacher skilfully drew on children's existing knowledge of Christianity and referred them back to a comment by a recent visitor that, 'It's not the church building that's important but the people'.

59. Recent visits have been made to local churches, a synagogue and a mosque. Children talked about these visits enthusiastically and recalled many similarities and differences between these places of worship. Year 4 children were encouraged to express their feelings when inside different buildings; "I felt good...I felt safe". They had a very good understanding of the reasons why stained glass windows in churches often portray biblical events. Children recalled their visits to a mosque and revealed a very good knowledge of the beliefs held by Muslims, including the five pillars of Islam. Such visits, together with good teaching, enable children to reflect on the impact of faith on people's lives and on their own beliefs.
60. The subject successfully promotes children's awareness of the diversity of cultures within Britain. Children develop positive attitudes because their views are underpinned by knowledge and appreciation of the customs and beliefs across a wide range of cultures.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

61. During the inspection, part of only one lesson was seen in art and design, no lessons were seen in design and technology and parts of two lessons were seen each in music and physical education. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about provision. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke with co-ordinators and children about the subjects, looked at past work, briefly observed some music groups and attended the Christmas production.
62. The school provides a wide range of interesting work in **art and design**. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, the children had a variety of materials and used them well to convey a sense of movement. They skilfully combined textiles, cardboard and paint as they portrayed the flying hair and clothing of sports people in action. Good cultural links are made as the children make mehndi and rangoli patterns during the festivals of Diwali and Eid. All children have work displayed at the annual village art show, which gives them a sense of pride. Learning in the subject is enhanced by prints of the work of famous artists being displayed around the school, alongside children's work. Visits, such as to the National Gallery, also have a positive effect. For example, children used computers to create work in the styles of Mondrian and Pollock following such a visit. The needlework club provides good enrichment in Years 2 and 3, though very few boys take advantage of this.
63. In **design and technology**, children in Years 2 and 3 showed a high standard of design and evaluation when they produced Christmas boxes for biscuits, Joseph's coat and lavender bags. They designed, created and evaluated moving monsters using simple pneumatics. Children in Year 4 designed and made good quality pop-up books, which were proudly on display for others to enjoy. In the Years 5/6 class, children have made a good start in designing slippers by measuring, cutting and shaping templates and incorporating some creative ideas.
64. In **music**, visiting teachers were seen for parts of two class lessons and briefly in two instrumental tuition sessions. In addition, the whole school was heard singing in assembly and in the Christmas show, where they sang in a range of styles with great confidence and enthusiasm to a very good standard. In the lessons taken by a visiting teacher, the Year 4

³ Lakshmi and Vishnu are Hindu gods. Lakshmi represents all that is female, Vishnu all that is male.

children responded to her good teaching by extending their understanding of writing and reading standard musical notation. Another good lesson with Years 5 and 6 gave the children confidence to record their improvised rhythmic patterns. Children listened in a sustained way to one another's performances, which they evaluated very well. Music is enriched in the following ways:

- teachers regularly play a wide range of styles of recorded music in classrooms and assembly;
- visiting musicians play for children;
- children take part in the district music festival;
- music tuition is available for recorders, violin and woodwind;
- the choir performs in the local community.

Within this rich range of activities, boys appear to miss some of the opportunities offered. For example, there are no boys in the choir and very few play in the recorder groups.

65. In **physical education**, parts of two lessons and some dancing were seen. In a Years 5 and 6 games lesson, a parent helper and teaching assistant were well deployed in teaching netball, football and hockey in small groups. The children had reasonable skills in their marking, passing and shooting, and cooperated very well in teams. Similarly, the Years 2 and 3 children demonstrated broadly average gymnastic skills when balancing with a partner. Nevertheless, there were times in this lesson when children spent too long being inactive, listening to the teacher. In the Christmas production, children of all ages took part in some good improvised dance. They interpreted the moods of the different music styles very well. There is good provision for swimming for children in Years 3, 4 and 5. By Year 5, all children meet the national target of swimming at least 25 metres. There is a good range of opportunities for children to participate in physical activities outside of lesson times. At different times of the year, there are clubs for netball, football, athletics, golf, aerobics, rounders and inter-school competitions. It is noticeable that no boys attend the aerobics group. The accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory because there is no hall. The noisy and draughty village hall, which is shared by other groups, does not provide for the gymnastics requirements of older children. There are good facilities outdoors, with new climbing apparatus and both hard and grassed areas.
66. In all these subjects, the role of the co-ordinators is less strong than it is in English, mathematics and science. This is because the school has rightly focused on these core subjects and because each teacher has a number of different roles to fulfil. There are no formal systems of assessment in these subjects but no evidence was seen to suggest that standards are suffering as a result.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

67. Due to timetable arrangements, it was not possible to observe any lessons. However, discussions with the subject leader and groups of children indicated very good provision. Older children have an excellent idea of why they have lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship. They are aware that lessons are focussed on developing their sense of responsibility and offer them opportunities to develop their own views and express opinions. When asked how good social development might be described, children used words such as friendliness, politeness, patience, understanding, forgiving, truthful and trustworthy, indicating a high degree of understanding.
68. Following the introduction of lessons in citizenship, older children have a very good understanding of democracy, describing it as 'power to the people'. They were well informed about how the Suffragette movement had led to votes for women. It is evident that lessons in health education have a strong impact. Children spoke knowledgeably about the dangers of smoking, highlighting the increased risks of cancer, the effect on arteries and the risks

associated with smoking during pregnancy. They were well aware of how certain foods can be classified as healthy and unhealthy.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

