

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Tenterden

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118670

Headteacher: Mrs G V Dougall

Lead inspector: Ms R E Frith

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 October 2003

Inspection number: 257868

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	183
School address:	Ashford Road St Michael's Tenterden
Postcode:	TN30 6PU
Telephone number:	01580 763 210
Fax number:	01233 861 069
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Brant Smith
Date of previous inspection:	9 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Michael's Church of England Primary School is an average size voluntary controlled school for boys and girls aged four to eleven years. It is a one form entry school with a significant number of children coming from outside the catchment area. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds but overall, the socio-economic status of families is broadly average. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is below average. On entry to school, overall, pupils show levels of attainment which are below those seen nationally for children of that age. Currently, 42 pupils are identified as having special educational needs, including five with a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are from White – British heritage. Those from minority ethnic groups include two pupils who come from homes where it is believed that English is spoken as an additional language. During the last two school years, teacher mobility was quite high. Pupil mobility is not a significant issue for the school. The school received the School Achievement Award in 2001 and the Activemark in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2490	R Frith	Lead inspector	Geography History Religious education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language
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5902	M Harrison	Team inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Michael's Church of England Primary School is a good school. It provides a happy and supportive environment where pupils are encouraged to value and respect others and feel part of the local and wider community. Teaching is good in most areas. This helps pupils to achieve well so that by the time they leave school they attain very good standards in English and mathematics. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 ensures pupils have a sound foundation in their learning, given that on entry their overall attainment is below average, but some pupils are slow to make progress. **Overall, the school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils in 2002 attained well above average standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science in the national test for Year 6 pupils. However, standards in reading, writing and mathematics could be higher for Year 2 pupils.
- Teaching is frequently good.
- Pupils' attitudes and values are well developed. Relationships are good and they behave well.
- The curriculum is good overall. Subjects are linked well and enhance learning. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not done as well as they could in information and communication technology as an element of the curriculum has not been taught.
- Care, guidance and support of pupils are good.
- Links with parents and the community are good.
- The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the school. They meet the needs of individual children very well.

The school has progressed well since the last inspection and successfully addressed the key issues identified in the last report. There is a continuing focus on raising standards with a recognition that these could be higher in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. The quality of teaching has improved overall and is well supported by the school's teaching and learning policy. This has helped to improve the standards achieved by the time pupils leave school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high, in the top 5% of schools; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils achieve well during their time in school but most progress is made in Years 3 to 6. In the reception class, children make a good start, achieve well and begin to understand the school's expectations and procedures. By the time they enter Year 1 most are working at the levels expected nationally for pupils of that age in all areas of learning although a small group do not reach this standard in their early reading, writing and mathematical skills. In Years 1 and 2, staffing is now more settled. Standards are improving but there is a need to develop more focused strategies, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics so that teaching becomes consistently good. Most pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 as teachers build well on the work undertaken in the lower school. Pupils achieve particularly well in English and mathematics but have not covered the complete curriculum in information and communication technology. For the curriculum covered, attainment is average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well due to the effective support provided. Pupils

speaking English as an additional language and higher attaining pupils usually achieve in line with their abilities.

Provision to develop pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, is good overall. Pupils enjoy going to school and attend well. They are encouraged to enjoy their learning and become aware of the differing needs of others. This results in most pupils behaving well, developing good attitudes and caring for those in school and the wider community.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school and the quality of teaching are good overall. Teaching in the reception class and in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. In the reception class, there is a good induction programme which helps pupils settle into school. In Years 1 and 2, teachers are particularly effective at making good links between subjects so that learning is consolidated and extended. New staff are being encouraged to use the knowledge gained from attending courses to develop their practice and the way they teach reading and writing. Throughout the school, staff encourage good standards of behaviour and promote well equality of opportunity for all. A good range of teaching methods is used to sustain the pupils' interests. Learning support assistants make a very positive contribution to the pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

Staff have developed good links with parents and the community and encourage visitors into school. The strengths of the curriculum include pupils' participation in the arts and sport, extra-curricular activities and personal, social and health education. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils are well cared for and feel supported. Pupils' views are taken into account through, for example, the school council and they contribute well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and governors have a clear vision of how the school should develop and are fully committed to running a school where all pupils are included and helped to develop well, both academically and socially. The potential difficulties arising from changes in staffing over the last couple of years have been managed well but this has affected the programme for monitoring and supporting teachers in order to raise achievement in specific areas. Effective leadership and management has brought about improvements in standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views about the school. They are pleased with the information they receive and how the school seeks their views and takes account of their suggestions. They believe that the school is well led and managed, teaching is good, children work hard and behaviour is good. The majority of pupils feel they could approach a member of staff if they had a problem, that teachers encourage them to work hard and show them how to improve their work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards further in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Ensure pupils are taught the full information and communication technology curriculum in Years 3 to 6 and consequently improve their overall standards of attainment.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Include information about attendance in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, most pupils **achieve well** so that by the time they leave school they have attained standards which are well above the national average. Children in the reception class generally **achieve well** and most are likely to reach the standard expected for their age by the end of the year. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 **achieve satisfactorily** but are often slow to make progress whilst those in Years 3 to 6 **achieve well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the reception class and in Years 3 to 6.
- In the 2002 national tests, pupils in Year 6 reached well above average standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science.
- Pupils are slow to make progress in Years 1 and 2 but achieve satisfactorily.
- Overall, pupils in Year 2 are currently reaching below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well and reach standards in line with their abilities and levels of English acquisition.
- Higher attaining pupils usually achieve well.

Commentary

- 1 On entry to school, children's attainment is below average overall. This is because there are more pupils of lower attainment than usual and a substantial number of children display below average standards in their personal and social development. Due to the good teaching overall and provision of a broad and interesting curriculum, most children achieve well and reach the standards expected for their age nationally in all areas of learning by the time they leave the reception class. However, there is a small group each year who fail to reach this standard with their early reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- 2 Attainment in the 2002 national tests for pupils in Year 2 was well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing when compared with pupils in all schools. These results were similar to those in the previous year. When compared with schools with a similar number of pupils claiming free school meals, they attained very low standards in reading and mathematics, placing them in the bottom five percent of schools, and well below average standards in mathematics. Teacher assessment in science indicates that pupils attained well below average standards. There has been some improvement in writing, an area on which the school has concentrated its attention, but in reading between 1998 and 2002 the school's trend worsened compared to the average national trend for all schools which has risen steadily. Last year the situation deteriorated further and unvalidated test results for 2003 show that the percentage of pupils failing to reach the expected level rose from 24% (in 2002) to 43% in reading and from 17% (in 2002) to 46% in writing. These results were short of the governors' targets for this group of pupils. Similar targets have been set for this year. In mathematics, the school improved its standards up to 2002 when they were in line with the national average but since then they have not reached this level. In 2003, there was an increase in the percentage of pupils attaining a level above that expected for their age in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.0 (14.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.5 (14.0)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	14.7 (14.6)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 3 Attainment in the 2002 national tests for pupils in Year 6 was well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science when compared with pupils in all schools. These results showed an improvement compared to those in the previous year. When compared with schools with pupils who scored similarly in their Year 2 National Curriculum tests, they attained very high standards in English, placing them in the top five percent of schools and well above average standards in mathematics and science. The latter reflects the very good provision in Years 3 to 6 that encouraged pupils to achieve very well. The school was successful in meeting its targets for the percentage of pupils reaching the standard expected for their age in English and mathematics in this year. Over the last five years, the school's trend of improvement was broadly in line with the national trend for English, mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (27.0)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	28.4 (27.0)	26.7 (26.6)
science	29.5 (28.8)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 4 Evidence from this inspection shows some improvement and indicates that the pupils currently in Year 2 are working at levels below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, more could be done to ensure that the majority of pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils currently in Year 6 are reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Any differences in this attainment and that of previous years reflect the differences in cohorts rather than any deficiencies in teaching, as pupils are continuing to achieve well.
- 5 No significant difference was noted in the achievement between boys and girls during the inspection although there have been some differences in the Year 6 national test results. For example, in 2002 boys did better than girls in English, mathematics and science. However, with relatively small cohorts such as those found in this school, this sometimes changes from year to year.
- 6 Pupils of higher attainment are generally appropriately challenged and the setting in mathematics helps those younger pupils in Years 3 to 6 to be challenged well. It is unclear how effective the setting is for those pupils of higher attainment who spend two or more years in the top set. The school is continuing to develop its provision for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, with many achieving very well in Key Stage 2. For example, in the national tests of 2002/2003, 8 out of the 9 pupils with special educational needs achieved the nationally expected level in mathematics with two of them achieving at a higher level. In English, 5 out of 9 pupils achieved the expected national level. This in itself was very good as pupils entered the school with low attainment in communication, language, literacy and mathematics. These results also show how the

support given when these pupils are in the lower part of the school provides a good basis for their learning thereby enabling them to make more rapid progress as they get older.

- 7 There are not enough pupils from specific minority ethnic groups to analyse any trend in their progress and attainment but individual pupils achieve well. The progress in English language development made by pupils who speak English as an additional language is generally good and they achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are **good**. They have **good** records of attendance and punctuality. Opportunities for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is good and nearly all pupils arrive at school on time.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They participate well in lessons and persevere with their work.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, in the playground and at lunchtime.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- More opportunities are needed for pupils to learn to live in a multicultural society.

Commentary

- 8 Pupils' attitudes to learning throughout the school are good. Both parents' and pupils' questionnaires revealed that pupils like school and think that lessons are interesting. Children in the reception class learn the routines of school life and gain the skills to work together well in a variety of situations. As a result, they are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development. Pupils are enthusiastic and show interest in the range of activities provided for them beyond the school day, such as clubs and sporting activities. Pupils show a good level of enterprise and take responsibility, for example, collecting for charities and working with younger pupils as reading buddies. Pupils with special educational needs also show good attitudes to their learning. This has a positive effect on the progress they make. They have very good relationships with the learning support staff.
- 9 Teachers and learning support assistants act as good role models and show a sincere respect for all pupils which encourages them to be involved in all that the school has to offer. This also encourages pupils to show respect for the feelings and values of their peers and others. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. Pupils were seen to share equipment and ideas during lessons and to help each other. For example, when editing their own work in literacy, to improve its impact they often asked a friend to read through it to check its meaning. Pupils' behaviour is good. Teachers have very high expectations of good behaviour and pupils' movement around the school is sensible and there is no oppressive behaviour, harassment or racial tension. There have been no exclusions in the year prior to the inspection.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	121	0	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	29	0	0

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

- 10 The school very successfully encourages pupils to attend regularly and follows up absences promptly by letters to parents. The great majority of parents support the school in this, evidenced by the fact that virtually all pupils arrive on time thus allowing lessons to start promptly. Most of the authorised absence is accounted for through holidays taken in term time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

- 11 Pupils grow and thrive in this caring community where they are given the opportunity to explore the values and beliefs which influence their lives. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual development, as seen when pupils spent time in the calm atmosphere of assembly reflecting on the way a tiny seed can become a mighty tree. In the course of classroom life teachers provide good opportunities too, such as when the Year 5 teacher revealed in science that she had found out that on average a drop of blood takes only a minute to pass around the body and return to the heart. Pupils' personal development is good. Teachers try to build choices into the curriculum wherever they can and give pupils the responsibility to find out, to prove what they are saying and to be responsible for the choices they make. In most classes, opportunities are provided for pupils to be involved in self-assessment on some aspects of their work.
- 12 Pupils' moral and social development is good, exemplified in their good behaviour and in the way they work together. Pupils elect representatives to the school council and in some lessons, group endeavour is promoted, for example, where Year 5 pupils are working together to create a 'water' collage for the hall. Here, each pupil's individual contribution will be only a small fraction of the whole but every contribution is valued. Lessons in personal and social education give pupils the opportunity to explore spiritual, moral and social issues whilst learning to be good citizens. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Whilst pupils have a good awareness of their own culture, they need more opportunities to expand this to improve their knowledge of the rich cultural heritage of modern-day Britain. The school has benefited recently from work with Zimbabwean dancers and singers and attempts to use assemblies and religious education lessons to raise awareness of other cultures. However, the school

has only a few library books or pictures featuring Black and Asian British citizens. Overall, more work needs to be done in this area.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching is **good** overall and pupils are supported well through experiencing a **good** curriculum and **good** levels of care. Links with parents and the community are also **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. More could be done to accelerate the rate of learning in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good in the reception class and in Years 3 to 6.
- There are some good features of the teaching in Years 1 and 2 and it is never less than satisfactory.
- Staff use a good range of teaching methods which engage the interest of pupils and encourage them in their work.
- Staff have high expectations of good behaviour and pupils respond well to this.
- Learning support assistants support pupils well.

Commentary

13 Most pupils make good progress throughout their time in school and achieve well. This is because of the good overall quality of teaching and provision of a good curriculum. The chart below gives an outline of the quality of lessons seen during the inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and teachers demonstrated a consistent approach to teaching based on a good knowledge and understanding of the school's policies, procedures and expectations. Teachers use the expertise of learning support assistants well in lessons and this enhances pupils' learning. The majority of very good teaching was seen in the junior part of the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	7 (19%)	20 (54%)	10 (27%)	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.

14 Planning is generally satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good elsewhere. In the best lessons, teachers have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn and share that with them. They provide appropriate support and challenge, which ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment maintain a good pace in their learning. They use assessments of pupils' work well so that the activities provided build systematically on prior learning. In some lessons in the infant area of the school, the expectation and provision for pupils, particularly in English and mathematics, is less effective. This is because the school has not developed an overall strategy to increase their rate of learning so that they reach average standards by the end of Year 2. However, there are signs of improvement here as staff attend courses, develop their subject knowledge and range of teaching strategies.

15 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is good and sometimes very good. This has a significant influence on how most staff successfully manage the pupils in their care.

Teachers are encouraging and supportive, which results in pupils becoming confident in their abilities and aware of how they can contribute positively to the learning of others, for example, the Year 6 reading buddies. Staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well to these as they know what is expected of them. They develop good attitudes to learning and behave well in, and around the school.

- 16 Teachers use their knowledge of pupils well in lessons and encourage them to improve and work harder if they think they can. Some are also effective in indicating through their marking how pupils can improve their work. Provision of homework is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. It is good in Years 3 to 6 and supports the work done in school, particularly in English and mathematics.
- 17 The school has improved its work with higher attaining pupils and is developing its practice for those that are gifted and talented. In the best lessons, work is interesting and challenging and consequently maintains the interest of the pupils, as well as progressing their learning at a good rate. Within the setting arrangements for mathematics, pupils of higher attainment were seen being well challenged.
- 18 Pupils who speak English as an additional language progress in line with their peers and currently have their needs met well within mainstream classes. Teachers and support staff are effective in ensuring their participation in lessons. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are well supported, so that they are included in all class activities and progress at a similar rate to their peers, in line with their abilities.
- 19 The teaching of pupils with special needs, by learning support assistants, is often very good and never less than good. There is good liaison between teachers and support staff and work is discussed and planned on a daily basis. More could be done to make the recording of daily work and progress easier to complete and more objectively assessed.

The curriculum

Pupils receive a **good** curriculum which maintains their interests and supports their learning **well** over time, particularly those pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' learning is enriched by their **very good** participation in sports and activities outside the formal school day. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for enrichment which result in a good curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2, and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- The good provision offered by learning support assistants enhances pupils' achievement.
- The instability of teaching staff has slowed the pace of development in some areas.

Commentary

- 20 The school provides a good curriculum. All areas of the statutory curriculum are in place apart from in information and communication technology (ICT), where one area is not fully covered. In addition, the school meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education that forms the basis of provision. Assemblies contribute well to the development of pupils' religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and arrangements for collective worship are good.
- 21 The quality of provision for personal, social and health education including sex education, drugs education and citizenship is good. The staff ensures that pupils are prepared well for

transfer to secondary school. Pupils themselves have regular opportunities to contribute to school development through their School Council.

- 22 There is a wide range of clubs and out of school activities that are well attended by pupils from across the whole age range. There are good opportunities for pupils to compete against pupils from other schools in athletic and sporting events and take part in creative activities such as the school's art competition. The curriculum is enriched further through visitors to school.
- 23 Teachers and learning support staff are aware of the needs of pupils identified on the Code of Practice and plan accordingly to meet their needs. Individual education plans are effective in ensuring that pupils have complete access to all areas of the curriculum. Provision is most effective in the junior classes and especially for pupils who have statements of special educational need. Although the school has highlighted pupils it deems to be gifted and talented, it has not yet made specific arrangements to support these pupils on a regular basis.
- 24 A satisfactory number of qualified and experienced teachers are employed to meet pupils' needs and ensure coverage of the National Curriculum. Staffing is more stable now although in the recent past frequent changes in teaching staff have affected development in some areas, for example, in Years 1 and 2. The teaching staff has a suitably broad range of individual strengths in subject knowledge. Teachers and pupils are well supported by a good number of suitably trained and effective learning support assistants. They make valuable contributions to the work of the school and, in particular, to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

The advice, guidance and support given to pupils are **good**. This is based on **good** monitoring of their achievements and personal development. **Good** systems are also in place to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of all pupils. The school pays **good** attention to seeking pupils' views and acting on them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements are good.
- Staff encourage good attendance.
- Staff know their pupils well.
- There are very good relationships and an atmosphere of trust.
- Pupils' personal qualities are well developed.
- The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to become involved in the development of the school.
- There is a very busy road outside the school with fast moving traffic and the school is working to ensure that the pupils are safe and their parents aware of the dangers.

Commentary

- 25 Because child protection has a high profile, the school ensures that this issue is handled sensitively and effectively. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. An example of this is the great care and effectiveness, with which the school controls and protects children when they are accessing the Internet. Staff are well aware of what to do if they suspect, or have disclosed to them, any concern that an individual child may need protection. Staff always work in the best interests of pupils to safeguard their welfare and, because of genuine interest, will intervene to protect pupils from harm.

- 26 The school ensures well that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment in those matters under its control. It takes all reasonable steps to keep pupils safe and protect them from injury or ill health. This is supported by a comprehensive health and safety policy, which includes appropriate arrangements and a range of specific risk assessments. However, the road at the entrance to the school does pose a danger, without good supervision, because of the speed of traffic. Staff and governors have brought this to the attention of both pupils and parents.
- 27 The school provides a caring environment where pupils feel safe, secure and happy. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils are known well by staff. Pupils have confidence that if they are in difficulty or have a problem they can go to an adult for help. It is clear that there is an ethos of trust in the school. Older pupils befriend and help younger ones. Nobody is excluded from activities. For example, in numeracy in Year 1 and in a combined Year 3, 4 and 5 class, through a good choice of activities, teachers were effective in including all pupils in their learning.
- 28 The school has good procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and eliminate oppressive behaviour including bullying. An example of helping and supporting good behaviour is the range of playtime equipment provided, which children can choose to play with at lunchtime. Good behaviour and attitudes to work are recognised and rewarded accordingly, for example, in celebration assemblies.
- 29 There are good informal procedures to monitor and support the personal development of pupils. This has a significant impact on the good achievements made by pupils. They are effective because they are based on the teachers' detailed knowledge of the personal qualities of individual pupils. Information is used to develop the personal attributes of pupils such as confidence, initiative, taking responsibility, social skills, moral skills and the making of choices. They understand the consequences of anti-social behaviour and are developing the skills to be most effective in relationships. These opportunities ensure that pupils become increasingly independent, self confident and knowledgeable about themselves and healthy and safe living. Pupils with special needs are well screened on entry to school and their needs are quickly established. Because of the shorter time spent in Years 1 and 2, as opposed to Years 3 to 6, less progress is made, although support packages are still put into effect well.
- 30 There is a good induction programme which helps parents to understand the school's procedures and expectations and consequently, parents are able to contribute to the smooth transition from home to school. Parents are also told about the importance of good attendance. The school sends out very clear messages, which include that achievement is affected when pupils are absent. There are very good procedures to monitor and support good attendance.
- 31 Pupils feel valued and their views are considered and acted upon to resolve those matters important to them through the many opportunities the school provides for example, the School Council. This is a most impressive example of the partnership the school has with its pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the local community are **good**. Links with other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high regard which parents have for the school.
- The provision of information to parents.
- Seeking, valuing, acting on the views of parents and dealing with any concerns or complaints.

- Curriculum links with the secondary schools are under-developed.
- Attendance data is not included in the governors' annual report to parents.

Commentary

- 32 Parents are well informed every two weeks with clear, readable general school information in newsletters. They have several opportunities to receive information on their child's progress throughout the year and a good written report annually, which details effort and achievement grades with a clear and helpful explanation of their meaning. There is a minor omission in the Governing Body's Annual Report to Parents relating to attendance. Information for parents, whose children have special educational needs is good and most take an active involvement in the progression of their child's individual education plan. Targets are set for children as appropriate e.g. to learn their tables thoroughly to help their mental recall. Parental views are most positive and they are very pleased with what the school provides. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and where appropriate, they attend annual review meetings. Education plans often make suggestions as to how parents can help at home.
- 33 Parents are appreciative that their children receive the help and support they need, for example, those who are parents of children with a disability and those who approach the school to seek help for the child to achieve its full potential. The school does all it can to establish a good partnership with its parents and a few dedicated parents help in school in a variety of ways. Homework is used effectively to extend pupils' learning and achievement and stimulate parental support. Most parents contribute to pupils' learning. The school holds regular events for parents to enable them to better support their child's learning, for example, a recent "Brain Friendly" evening to support thinking and learning skills. There is an active and effective Parents' Association, which has supported the school, through most successful fund raising, in the provision of playground equipment, books for the library and CD players.
- 34 The school sees the community as a rich resource and uses it effectively to enhance pupils' learning. For example, it has a community notice board, which has much evidence for its support of charities and its involvement in the community. People from the community visit the school to enhance the curriculum and use its facilities. There are, for example, strong and productive links with the local church, which are very effective in the personal development of pupils, as was seen in a good assembly on the theme of Saint Theresa. Pupils go into the community and use the surrounding environment well, for example, visiting shops and local rivers. Pupils were consulted for their views and designed a play area for the local playing field, many of their ideas being incorporated by the council.
- 35 Visits are made by the school to pre-school settings and there is a phased induction into the reception class. Links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer are satisfactorily supported by the appropriate transfer of pupil information, transfer days, some staff liaison and some use of their sporting facilities. Curriculum links, however, are as yet under developed to ensure continuity of learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher and governance of the school are **good**. The management of the school and leadership of other senior managers are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors are active in the school and hold it to account.
- The leadership of the headteacher is good.
- The headteacher is committed to running a fully inclusive school.
- The monitoring of performance data and of teaching could have a sharper focus.

Commentary

- 36 The leadership of the headteacher is good. She has a clarity of vision of the school's future development and has created an effective team of teachers and of support assistants. As a result the school ensures that its pupils achieve well by the time they leave, with some of them achieving very well. Strategic planning reflects and promotes the school's ethos and values. Almost every parent, who replied to the questionnaire, agreed that the school was led and managed well.
- 37 The headteacher's commitment to full integration of all pupils, the promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are given complete access to the full curriculum. Pupils with both physical and academic weaknesses are supported alongside the most able bodied, bringing benefits to both. The headteacher's planning and commitment to keeping a large group of support staff in the school, despite financial restrictions is very commendable.
- 38 The co-ordination of the provision for special educational needs is now shared between two members of staff. The process works well and tasks are clearly delineated. Regular meetings are held between the co-ordinators and support staff, at which time progress of pupils and future strategies are discussed.
- 39 Although the school monitors annual data, resulting from the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, the outcome of this and other test data, is not shared sufficiently with all staff. As a result not all teaching and support staff have a full picture of standards and progress across the school. At the same time it is difficult for them to understand a picture of the "value added" nature of their work, the difference they make to the overall achievement of pupils as they pass through the school.
- 40 Although the headteacher has completed a wide range of monitoring of teachers in their classrooms, the format of the monitoring relies too much on the use of descriptive text and not enough on making judgements about strengths and weaknesses in teaching. If clearer judgements were to be made about quality, the resulting information would feed readily into the good continuing professional development programme for staff, already in existence.
- 41 The governance of the school is good. The governors are very committed and take advantage of a wide range of training opportunities. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and take an active role in shaping its vision and direction. The governors support and challenge the headteacher when compiling and reviewing the school improvement plan, for example. Governors generally fulfil their duties well. However, there is an element of the I.C.T. curriculum which is not fulfilled in line with statutory requirements. Financial planning is thorough and takes full account of the cost of implementing the school's plan for development. Governors have a good understanding of the school's finances and there are effective procedures for monitoring and controlling expenditure. The balance identified as carry forward has been agreed with the local education authority and includes contingency reserves, an allocated sum to fund the 2003/4 budget shortfall and a sum to act as a cushion against the predicted decreases in future budget allocation.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	436,998
Total expenditure	445,344
Expenditure per pupil	2,307

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	66,067
Balance carried forward to the next	57,722

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

At the time of the inspection, the vast majority of children were attending for just the morning sessions and had only been in school for a few weeks. In response to this, leadership and management of their introduction to school and learning was **good**. The teacher had developed a good induction programme which catered for the needs of pupils, some who were barely five years of age and others who were soon to be five. Planning is good because it clearly covered all areas of learning and made good links between subjects. The outside play area had been developed since the last inspection and staff were making the most of the rather cramped inside area. All staff assess the children's learning on a day-to-day basis through careful observations and use this information to build up an individual profile of learning for each child.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have developed good relationships with parents.
- There is a good induction programme.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Children's independence is encouraged.
- Children are encouraged to develop good behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning.

Commentary

42 Staff have developed good relationships with parents, who are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. Most parents respond well and, for example, read books with their children to encourage their early reading skills. These good relationships, together with a good induction programme, helps children to settle into school routines both part-time and full-time in the reception class. A caring learning environment is created where children understand the structure of the day and by the time they enter Year 1, most are developing good attitudes to learning. Children are also encouraged to play and work with each other and consequently are helped to develop good relationships. Teachers and support staff make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation and children learn how to share and take turns. Through their own behaviour and working relationships, staff display good examples of how children should behave and the children's skills are continually developed through the positive interactions between staff and children. The tasks provided ensure a good balance between teacher-directed activities and times when children are able to work without direct adult supervision. This develops the children's confidence and growing independence and initiative when they are presented with choices.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children receive a good range of activities which develops their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Children receive good support from the learning support assistants.
- A small group of children are not expected to reach the standard expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

Commentary

43 A significant minority of children have standards on entry to school which are below those expected for pupils of this age nationally. Staff recognises this and provide an environment which encourages children's speaking and listening skills and supports the developing use of vocabulary. Some good examples were observed when the teacher was encouraging pupils to respond to a puppet and when children were retelling the story of *The Three Little Pigs*. Children's speaking skills are also systematically developed through the provision of specific activities, such as in the imaginative play areas. Most pupils make good progress and have the confidence to speak with adults and each other. Children are interested in books, handle them carefully and show enjoyment in a range of stories. They have regular opportunities to listen to stories and respond well. All children are encouraged to read regularly with their parents at home, which has a significant effect on the progress that they make and the standards that they achieve. On entry to school, children develop their writing skills by learning how to hold the pencil correctly and recognising and writing their own names. They become aware of writing for different purposes through, for example, playing in the 'airport' and writing a passenger list. Teaching is good because it recognises the children's needs and is aimed at developing their skills in a challenging but supportive environment. Learning support staff use their expertise well to encourage responses from the children and develop their confidence and self-esteem. Most pupils achieve well and will reach the standard expected for their age at the end of the reception year. A few will not as insufficient time is available for them to progress from their below average attainment on entry.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of teaching methods is used.
- A good range of activities re-enforce the children's learning.
- Teaching is good as staff respond to the changing needs of the children.

Commentary

44 The children's mathematical skills and understanding are taught during specific sessions, and consolidated through daily play activities. Most children seem to enjoy their work and respond well to the activities provided. A good range of teaching methods is used to develop their learning and also helps to maintain their concentration. The children thoroughly enjoyed watching a video on the number five and joined in enthusiastically repeating the numbers. Later, children were taken outside to discover the magic number five which had been placed in various areas. This learning was also consolidated by the children drawing the number five on the ground outside, making the number five out of malleable material and drawing around

their fingers and counting the five digits. The teaching is flexible as staff, for example, in one lesson observed, changed what they had planned to do as the children were tired and needed more physical activity before settling to another task. Although most children will reach the standard expected for their age by the end of the reception year a few are not expected to, even though they have made good progress and achieved well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Children develop good early scientific skills through practical activities and observation.
- Children develop a good understanding of countries different from their own which, in turn, increases their cultural awareness.
- Good links are made with other areas of learning.

Commentary

45 Through speaking with the children and staff, looking at displays in the reception teaching area and looking at the teacher's planning, it is clear that children receive a good range of learning experiences and achieve well. The outside area is used to develop children's understanding of plant growth and living things as they are encouraged to match photographs of flowers to those that they have grown, decide which creatures had been eating the plants and which lived in the woodpile. Good links are made with language and literacy as children discover the characteristics of different materials when reading the story of *The Three Little Pigs* and how the pigs made their houses out of straw, wood and bricks. This is extended to discover the texture of materials as children make rubbings of, for example, bricks. A particular strength of the teaching is the way staff develop the children's understanding of different countries by studying France and Italy. A good range of activities are provided so that children know about differences in food and language, and the journey to each country is highlighted on a wall map. Children also play well together in the 'airport' as they check in their luggage and travel by aeroplane as 'Italy is a long, long way away ... you can't walk there'. The children's cultural development is extended well in this area of learning as it is during their weekly religious education lessons.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's independence and social development is encouraged.
- Children are well managed and encouraged to follow instructions.
- Health and safety issues are addressed well.
- Children are not encouraged to demonstrate to others when they are doing well.

Commentary

46 Children in the reception class have good opportunities to ride bikes and play outside and have regular formal physical education (P E) lessons. Overall, they achieve satisfactorily and make good progress in relation to getting familiar with the teacher's expectations and following instructions. In one satisfactory lesson observed, the teacher and support staff were particularly effective in developing the children's independent skills through encouraging them to change into their P E kit. Appropriate support was given when necessary but the

majority of children responded well to instructions and wasted little time. The teacher then shared what she wanted the children to learn with them and taught the warm-up session well. Throughout the lesson, she was keen to encourage the children to become familiar with the use of apparatus, health and safety issues and to follow instructions. For example, children were encouraged to put away the mats safely. Staff had obviously settled the children into the school's routines and relayed their own expectations well, although a few children showed below average standards in relation to their personal development and staff had to work hard to encourage a positive response. Because of this, the pace of learning slowed and achievement overall remained satisfactory. Children with special educational needs were well supported and encouraged to do well. Their progress was similar to others in the class. By the end of the lesson, children's attainment was similar to that expected for their age nationally and they had learnt to travel around the hall in a variety of ways using the space well. Opportunities were missed for staff to demonstrate good practice through encouraging children to show others what they could do.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links are made with other areas of learning.
- Children enjoy their creative work.

Commentary

47 The children's creative skills are developed well through a range of activities which are linked successfully to other areas of learning such as knowledge and understanding of the world. In one lesson observed, following their work on Italy the children were encouraged to develop their use of colour, and skills of painting, through 'making' pizzas. They could explain why they had chosen red 'because tomatoes are red' and enjoyed sticking on pieces of coloured paper to reflect a variety of toppings. Others in the class enjoyed making puppets after seeing Pinnochio. They obviously enjoyed this work and sustained their concentration well. In another lesson, children made masks of the characters in the *Three Little Pigs* story and enjoyed using these to act out the story. Children's creative development is further enhanced through the use of imaginative play areas. During the inspection, they were seen using the airport checking in area, acting out the roles of travellers and airport staff. This activity was successful in developing the children's creative skills as well as their speaking, listening and writing.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory** in Years 1 and 2 and **good** in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 and, as a result, pupils achieve very well and their attainment in English is high by the time they leave school.
- In these classes assessment is helpful to pupils. They are made to understand what they have to do to improve their performance.
- Standards of attainment remain below average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils in Year 2 do not always benefit sufficiently from the way reading is taught.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to practice and develop their writing, particularly in Year 2.
- Language skills are used and put into effect well in other subjects particularly in Year 3 to 6.
- Not all time allocated to literacy is used systematically to enhance pupils capabilities and develop their language skills.
- Standards have deteriorated in Year 2 and, along with provision, improved in Year 6 since the previous inspection.

Commentary

- 48 Although most pupils enter Year 1 with standards appropriate for their age in speaking, listening, reading and writing, a small group does not. Sound teaching in Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to make satisfactory progress but not enough to impact on their levels of attainment by comparison with other pupils of their age. Except for the few higher achieving pupils many do not have a sufficient range of skills to decipher words with which they are not familiar and have not built up the phonic skills to recognise that some letters when put together, such as 'ph', 'str' and 'gh', have distinctive sounds of their own. They have difficulty in predicting what happens next in stories because many cannot follow the sense of the story just reading it as a number of words listed together rather than a narrative plot. The approach to reading is not sufficiently systematic to ensure that these skills are developed and secured. Guided reading sessions do not make good use of the time available nor set out what the pupils are expected to learn within it. Pupils are supported in learning to read by dialogue between parents and teachers through reading diaries. Some parents comment within them however, that their children are not being encouraged to change their books frequently enough. Also, books pupils were attempting to read to inspectors were not always well matched to their needs. Year 2 pupils' work shows an improvement in some areas of writing, for example, writing instructions. In other areas the amount of work undertaken is insufficient for them to make the progress they need in order to catch up with their cohort nationally and indeed achieve the governors' targets set for this group of pupils.
- 49 Pupils in Year 1 make sound progress overall and special attention paid to targeted groups of children, for example, those working on the school's plan within the Early Literacy Strategy, make good progress. Teachers and classroom support assistants in Year 1 have developed a consistent approach to using the National Literacy Strategy, know their pupils well and strive to attain a good match between the learning needs of the pupils and the work they are given to do. Time is used well in this class particularly during guided reading sessions when all children are challenged in a variety of ways to improve skills associated with reading at their own level. In classes 1 and 2, teachers and learning support assistants make every effort to develop pupil's speaking and listening skills. Waiting longer after asking a question would allow a greater number of pupils to offer answers and increase opportunities for them to develop in this aspect.

- 50 By means of good and some very good teaching in Years 3 to 6, particularly in Years 5 and 6, pupils make very good progress, achieve well and attain high standards by the end of Year 6. Year 6 pupils are well taught and are quickly developing writing skills which make their work interesting to read and clearly demonstrate an ability to communicate their ideas well. They are able to edit their work taking into account the effect it will have on their intended audience. Many confidently use complex sentences and also use short ones with high impact to good effect. The structure of written narrative and reporting is nearly always appropriate and, in one lesson observed, the teacher skilfully introduced her class to the use of incidental location, which clearly placed the story but without interrupting the unfolding narrative. Pupils quickly absorbed this technique. These pupils pay attention to presentation and are well above average in their spelling, grammar and punctuation. So confident are the higher achieving pupils that they were observed to experiment with breaking the known rules and trying, for example, one-word sentences for effect. In this work, pupils drew on the high level reading skills they have developed, distinguishing between implicit and explicit points of view and understanding how moods, feelings and attitudes are portrayed in stories and reports.
- 51 The abilities described above have been developed not just in the few weeks that pupils had been in this class, but during their time in other classes. Very good teaching in Year 5, for example, used drama techniques to encourage empathy in order to stimulate interplay between characters within pupils' writing. Specific literacy targets had been developed with the pupils to guide them and inform them of their progress. The foundations laid within the early years and in Years 1 and 2 have created a platform on which Year 3 to 6 teachers can build. The work of learning support assistants, particularly their contribution to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs, feeds directly into the good standards attained.
- 52 The subject benefits from sound management through two co-ordinators who both have good levels of expertise in the teaching of literacy. They have carried out a number of monitoring exercises, observing teaching, reviewing pupil's work and analysing test results and have called upon expertise from outside the school when appropriate. As Year 5 and Year 6 teachers their experience is centred in Years 3 to 6 and much of their work is prompted by the analysis of SAT results. Data available on the outcomes of teaching and learning elsewhere within the school is not being used sufficiently to identify necessary improvements. The monitoring of teaching and pupils' work does not lead to agreements on changes to be undertaken by staff involved and the use of ICT is insufficiently promoted within the subject.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 53 Language skills are used and put into effect well in other subjects particularly in Year 3 to 6. The common approach, throughout the school, to the promotion of literacy through other subjects has been important in giving opportunities to practice reading and writing in a number of contexts. This appeals to a greater number of pupils and has contributed to the virtual disappearance of differences in attainment between boys and girls reported in the previous inspection. Pupils' dramatic representation of the story of a Roman God in Year 3 and another of Noah's Ark in music in Year 4 are good examples of this.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory** in Years 1 and 2 and **good** in Years 3 to 6: pupils have **achieved well** by Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are generally slow to make progress in Years 1 and 2 but achieve well in mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A significant proportion of pupils attain standards beyond national expectations by the end of their time in the school.
- As a result of very good support and the use of setting for mathematics in Years 3 to 6, pupils with special needs often achieve very well.
- For average and above average attaining pupils, the setting system has not yet been fine-tuned sufficiently to cope with their needs.
- Although pupils are generally making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, there is still room for improvement in both teaching and learning.

Commentary

- 54 By the end of their time in the school, the vast majority of pupils have achieved well. They have improved from being below the nationally expected level on entry to the school, with many leaving with at least above average attainment in mathematics.
- 55 In several classes, which have a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, these particular pupils often achieve very well, in relation to their low starting point. This is due, in no small measure, to the very good support they get in their learning from class teachers and especially from the learning support assistants. For example, over the last two years, only three out of eighteen pupils with special educational needs failed to achieve the nationally expected standard for their age, with some pupils achieving even higher standards, by the time they left the school.
- 56 The system of setting mathematics across Years 3 to 6 into different attainment groups does not necessarily reduce the sizes of the groups. It does, however, ensure that in the groups where attainment is low, there are a number of well qualified assistants giving very good support and ensuring pupils make good progress in their lessons. In the groups where pupils have average or above average attainment, not enough thought has been put into the problem of pupils being in the same set for two years and possibly repeating work.
- 57 This system is not in place in Years 1 and 2. Whilst some teaching here is good, at times insufficient emphasis is placed on providing pupils with work which is appropriate to their level of attainment and challenges them to achieve well. Too often the tasks set are the same for all levels of attainment in the class and the outcomes of learning are only affected by the amount of support pupils receive.
- 58 The co-ordination of mathematics has recently been strengthened by a “shadow” co-ordinator being appointed with overall responsibility for Years 1 and 2. This should provide good opportunities for addressing some of the issues mentioned above.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 59 Mathematics is used satisfactorily across the curriculum, although there is little evidence of it being planned systematically. For example, mathematics is used in science to log temperature readings, create charts and make graphs. It is also used to draw time lines in history. However, planning statements do not show sufficient planning for its use in order to make firm cross-curricular links.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 6 are above average.
- The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are below average.
- The way pupils are introduced to practical work in Year 1 is good.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the work are good throughout the school.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils with special educational needs in Year 3 to 6 to investigate for themselves and tasks are too directed.
- There are weaknesses in pupils' ability to record what they know and what they have found out in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

- 60 Teacher assessment in 2002, the last year for which national comparisons are available, show pupils to be behind those in other schools by the end of Year 2. However, the way pupils answer scientific questions and describe what they see and know is around average for their age notwithstanding the fact that many cannot reproduce this understanding in written form or read texts to increase their knowledge. It is thus a lack of literacy skills which currently prevents pupils from reaching higher levels of attainment. Pupils join Year 1 with satisfactory levels of understanding about the world around them and the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their scientific skills and knowledge and in aspects such as life and living processes progress is good. Their achievement in science is sound.
- 61 In Years 1 and 2 science is set in appropriate and interesting contexts so that pupils engage well with the lessons. In Year 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and pupils are given the opportunity to handle and examine materials and predict whether, on heating, the distributed items would change in any way. Pupils enjoyed watching their teacher make toast and popcorn and many understood that some things changed forever. Some pupils know that other materials, on cooling, would return to the way they were before. However, no such materials were examined so the lesson was partly lost on most pupils. The teacher challenged pupils to prove the answers they gave her. Pupils benefit from good teaching and learning in Year 1. In this class, within their topic on toys, pupils were asked to find out what they could do to Teddy's cloth hat to stop him getting wet in the rain. Each child tried to wet different materials and eventually one waxed the cloth with crayons and proved that it could now keep the raindrops off Teddy's head.
- 62 Progress is good as pupils pass through Years 3 to 6 and by the end of Year 6 attainment and achievement are good. National assessments in 2002 demonstrated that pupils' levels of attainment are above those found nationally. This represents an improvement in standards since the last inspection. This is mainly due to the quality of the demands placed on pupils in lessons, the way they are challenged to think about and describe what they are doing and the interest and knowledge of their teachers. The higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well because the work set for them frequently confronts them with new concepts to compare with their previous ideas. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they are frequently engaged productively in practical tasks which take account of their individual needs, and supported well by learning support assistants who are committed to their achievement. Attainment in scientific enquiry is a little lower than the pupil's understanding of facts and theories. This is because although there are sufficient opportunities for practical investigative learning, teachers tend to set up failsafe activities rather than letting pupils make some mistakes and then learn from them.

- 63 In all lessons observed, teachers' understanding of scientific concepts and the needs of their pupils was good. Pupils were taught in a Year 5 lesson about the way the heart worked and came up with thought provoking questions as well as demonstrating secure knowledge about nutrients and oxygen carried by the blood it pumps around the body. Pupils in Year 6 learned about chemical reactions and physical mixes and were encouraged to consider the differences between them. In both key stages, the marking of work encourages pupils and tells them how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their subject understanding and skills. Information and communication technology is under-used both as a tool for demonstrating what is being taught, for example, the way the heart works, and as a means for pupils to record their findings in experiments and investigations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory** overall, although there is still a small element of the National Curriculum which is not yet taught at both key stages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of ICT is good overall.
- Pupils are taught skills well and have good opportunities to put them into effect.
- Work in some aspects of ICT is above that expected of pupils in Year 6.
- The co-ordinator of the subject has very good subject knowledge and provides a good role model for other teachers.
- By Year 6 pupils have not experienced work in using sensing hardware and logging the findings, while pupils in Years 1 and 2 have had too few opportunities to use simulations.

Commentary

- 64 Although standards were noted as being satisfactory at the last inspection there have been considerable changes in the demands of the subject since then. The school has managed to keep pace with the vast majority of those changes and pupils achieve well in many aspects of the work. This is due to the availability of the ICT suite which provides greater access to computers for pupils. It is also due to the improvements in teachers' skills, following their training. Teaching in all lessons seen was at least good, with teachers having good subject knowledge, well planned step-by-step teaching of skills and challenging tasks for pupils to complete.
- 65 In a Year 6 lesson, the subject co-ordinator put into effect a very well planned lesson. It allowed pupils to practice multi-media presentation skills before embarking on the creation of a full presentation which would use sound, moving images, text and graphics at a level at least in line with national expectations at this early part of the school year.
- 66 In order to keep a check on pupils' achievement, the co-ordinator has set up a portfolio of work to which all classes contribute. This most useful method of assessment not only allows the co-ordinator to check on progress but would enable teachers to have a clearer understanding of standards if she were given time to share the outcomes with staff.
- 67 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have some access to control technology as they program floor robot toys, but have little access to simulations and games, which allow them to make decisions and take on roles. Also, in Years 3 to 6 the work in the areas of control, measuring and sensing lag behind other areas of the curriculum. The school does not have the hardware or software to tackle this work, neither do the teachers have the experience of working with this area of study.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 68 Although the school plans its work making links between subjects, not enough emphasis is placed on the use of ICT as an integral part of the school's topic work or indeed to support such subjects as English, mathematics and science. Some teachers' planning does not have space to note links with ICT and as a result these links are often forgotten.

HUMANITIES

Inspectors saw two lessons in religious education, three in history and none in geography. Other evidence was gained through looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work. Insufficient evidence was available to make secure overall judgements on teaching, learning, achievement and standards in geography.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a good curriculum with a wide range of learning opportunities.
- Planning is good and ensures that effective links are made between history and other subjects.
- The subject co-ordinator provides a good example through her own very good teaching.

Commentary

- 69 The lessons observed and a scrutiny of work, indicate that pupils experience a good range of learning opportunities and work at levels which are similar to those seen nationally for pupils of the same age. Teachers' planning is good and the work presented is used well to stimulate the pupils' interests and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in line with National Curriculum requirements. History is frequently taught through a topic approach and this helps teachers to make appropriate links between subjects. The programmes of work and planning ensure that teachers are clear about what pupils should learn and build learning systematically.
- 70 Very good practice was observed in Year 1 when pupils were studying the topic of 'Toys'. Here, the history co-ordinator started the lesson well by reading a book about teddy bears with the class. Her teaching encouraged the development of the pupils' literacy skills well. Through her good questioning, pupils indicated that they knew the difference between story and information books and how to use a contents page. The pace of learning increased and small details, like showing the pupils sawdust and telling them that this was used to make bears in the past, resulted in pupils identifying the difference between old and new bears and how each were made. The teacher also provided the pupils with a wide range of toys so they discovered, for themselves, differences between toys they were familiar with, and those from other periods. The pupils realised how their lives would have been different years ago as they sat by a 'roaring fire' drawn by the teacher and listened to stories and read books because as one pupil said 'there was no television then'. Pupils achieved well in this lesson because they were interested in what they were doing. The practical nature of the activities, the teaching methods and resources stimulated their learning and maintained their concentration well.
- 71 Display in this classroom showed how good links between subjects had been made, thus consolidating and extending the pupils' learning. Links with art and design and design and technology were obvious through the use of a painting as an historical source. This encouraged pupils to look at the toys and games played in the past. This was contrasted with a display of the pupils' work on 'Children's games in 2003'. Pupils also made toys from

recycled materials and teddy bear collages. Links with literacy were further extended through the pupils writing about their favourite character in 'Toy Story'.

- 72 In another very good history lesson in Year 4, pupils' literacy skills were well developed as they wrote a letter to Henry VIII in the character of Anne Boleyn. The teacher's good subject knowledge was used well as she sensitively told the pupils about the lives of some of the King's wives. As she read Anne's last speech before her death, pupils were fully engrossed and some quite moved. This helped them to make their writing more interesting and become aware of the audience. Throughout, the teacher's confidence, enthusiasm and management skills motivated the pupils very well and helped them to achieve very well and make very good progress. In this lesson, pupils with special educational needs also achieved very well due to the dramatic nature of the work and the teacher's good storytelling. In addition, pupils were very well supported by a learning support assistant whose questioning maintained their interest and developed their understanding.
- 73 Although history has not been a key focus for the school over recent years, effective leadership and management have ensured that staff use the time well to cover the full curriculum. There have been good improvements since the last inspection. History has played a substantial role in developing pupils' skills in other subject areas, making the work enjoyable and maintaining pupils' interests. In the lessons observed, all pupils showed good attitudes to learning and behaved well.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some good teaching observed in Year 6 helped the pupils to achieve well.
- Religious education is taught in a way that promotes respect and interest in different faiths and beliefs.
- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Assemblies make a positive contribution to pupils' religious and spiritual development.
- Some activities are not sufficiently challenging or develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding in religious education.

Commentary

- 74 Teachers' planning ensures that religious education is taught in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of a range of different faiths and beliefs. Pupils receive a religious education lesson each week and consolidate or extend their learning through assemblies which also enhance their religious and spiritual development. This was observed when the giving to others during Harvest Festival was celebrated and pupils were encouraged to respond to the natural world and reflect on the miracle of growth. In another assembly, pupils were helped to understand the concept of 'hope' and experienced a good sense of community whilst singing together.
- 75 The school has close links with the church that adjoins the school grounds and pupils regularly visit it. There is no evidence of visits to non-Christian places of worship or, for example, the use of ICT programs to enable pupils to experience a virtual tour of a mosque. However, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher successfully used a video to develop the pupils' understanding of Judaism. She has good subject knowledge and used this well to ask and answer questions which encouraged the pupils' thinking, and maintained their concentration and interest. She created a good climate in the classroom where pupils felt confident to ask questions, and her sensitive approach was used successfully so that pupils talked about their own experiences. Previously, she had helped to celebrate non-Christian religions and

develop pupils understanding by inviting a parent to talk about his experiences in a mosque. Throughout this part of the lesson, pupils achieved well but learning slowed when they were given a practical task which did not develop their religious knowledge or understanding.

- 76 In a good Year 6 lesson, the good planning, management and high expectations of the teacher resulted in a lesson where pupils achieved well when learning about the idea of 'community' and the responsibility being part of a community brings. Pupils were encouraged to think about the different communities they were part of and helped to understand how their roles would change as they got older. Good questioning by the teacher encouraged pupils to respond well as they spoke about, for example, the responsibilities of being an adult compared to a child. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported so they felt positive about recording their ideas. This lesson, whilst reflecting the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education also played a significant role in developing pupils' personal education. In the two lessons observed, pupils were learning both about religion and from religion. They had good attitudes to learning, relationships and behaviour.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

During the inspection it was only possible to observe singing, although planning clearly shows that all aspects of the music curriculum are being taught. Only two art lessons were seen, one for only a short period. Pupils worked enthusiastically when observed and co-operated well sharing resources and materials. Work on display in and around the Year 2 classroom showed that pupils could select relevant materials from a variety of differently textured ribbons and cloth to create pleasing effects in the crowns they were making. The final collage gave them the opportunity to investigate a range of materials within their science topic. Display work in the Year 4 classroom showed very good portraits mimicking Tudor frames and portraits to a high standard. Pupils had decorated the frames themselves to replicate those they had seen in books. The work tied in closely with the history topic being undertaken. No lessons were seen in design and technology but a sound curriculum is in place which is blocked to make the maximum use of time.

MUSIC

Provision for singing is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides pupils with good opportunities for singing.

Commentary

- 77 In two assemblies, pupils sang songs to a good standard. They sang "Give us Joy" with enthusiasm, whilst in the same assembly, the leader of the assembly, the music co-ordinator, discussed the music being played as pupils entered. He showed good subject knowledge as he told them about the life of Beethoven.
- 78 At another assembly, pupils sang "Thank you God". Again they were enthusiastic, sang in tune and had good diction. These positive traits were seen again in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils worked on clapping rhythms before singing a number of songs which they knew by heart. They were accompanied well by the music co-ordinator, whose skills are well used across the junior classes, thus ensuring pupils have a specialist input for their music. As a result, the school has maintained its standards since the last inspection.
- 79 There are a number of club activities, which give very good support to pupils' interest and progress in music. The school provides clubs for hand-bells, choir, recorders and a newly formed instrumental club. Local authority tutors also provide individual tuition for strings,

guitar and keyboard. A good number of pupils attend the Ashford Music Festival and sing songs for the elderly folk in the area at Christmas.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject co-ordinator plays a significant role in ensuring pupils experience a wide range of good quality activities in the subject.
- Extra-curricular activities in sport are very good.
- The teaching of dance, seen during the inspection, was good.
- The school does not yet have an effective system of assessing pupils' progress in physical education.
- Gymnastic equipment is old and has not been replaced for many years.

Commentary

- 80 During the inspection it was only possible to see lessons in dance. However, a close examination of planning, a discussion with pupils and sight of the many photographs around the school, points to a well-organised and full physical education programme for all pupils. As a result of the efforts of the subject manager the school was awarded the prestigious Activemark for encouraging pupils to take part in sport. The work of the subject manager, who is knowledgeable and very enthusiastic, is a driving force behind innovations in the subject. She supports her colleagues well and was seen teaching alongside a colleague from the local secondary school in a joint venture.
- 81 In the two dance lessons seen, teaching was good. As a result, pupils made good progress in their understanding of movement, use of space and working together. They achieved well and were pleased with their results. The school has maintained its standards in this work since the last inspection.
- 82 There is a very good range of after school activities available to pupils, mainly for the junior classes, in which they can sample different sports and improve their levels of skill. Such activities as netball, football, gymnastics, tag rugby, athletics and cricket are provided by the staff, whilst private providers offer such sports as karate and dance. Many of these club activities lead pupils to play competitively against other schools in a wide range of sports and experience success.
- 83 The school has not yet developed an assessment programme in order to check pupils' progress. At the same time, there are minor weaknesses in the range and quality of gymnastics equipment in the school's hall.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

There was not enough evidence to report on this subject separately but pupils were observed during a School Council session. The School Council provides a very good opportunity for staff to gain the views of pupils and for pupils to develop confidence and responsibility. Very good relationships were evident in the session observed and pupils spoke well, putting forward their views on a range of issues including school rules, the playground, swinging on the branches of trees and having pets in school. Also, Year 6 pupils were seen as they acted as 'reading buddies' to children in the reception class. Here, they related very well and provided good role models for the younger children. They were well prepared and showed good skills in choosing books with the children and encouraging

them to respond to the stories. They were particularly impressive in asking the children questions, for example, to encourage them to predict what would come next in the story and to give reasons for what they liked about the books. Pupils are helped to develop through a formal personal, social and health education programme and by the time they leave school they show a mature attitude and have a good understanding of a range of issues.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

