

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLMBUSH FIRST SCHOOL

Shoreham-by-Sea

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125908

Headteacher: Mrs C F Harris

Lead inspector: Mrs J Catlin

Dates of inspection: 10th - 13th November 2003

Inspection number: 260564

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 8 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	287
School address:	Hawkins Crescent Shoreham-by-Sea West Sussex
Postcode:	BN43 6TN
Telephone number:	01273 592471
Fax number:	01273 592660
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W James
Date of previous inspection:	20/09/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Holmbush First School has 287 pupils on roll aged from four to eight. It is bigger than other first schools. The majority of pupils are from a United Kingdom white heritage. The school admits over 47 per cent of children from out of its catchment area. Most enter the reception classes in the September before their fifth birthday. Attainment on entry varies from year to year and in the past has been below that expected. This year's group of children who came into reception have come to school with the knowledge and skills expected for this age group. The percentage of children who claim free school meals is well below the national average. However, this figure is not a true reflection of the socio-economic background of many pupils. There are two pupils who speak English as an additional language, which as a percentage is low. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs, over 28 per cent, is above average. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have speech or communication difficulties. Over one per cent of pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need; this figure is broadly average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21685	Jenny Catlin	Lead inspector	Mathematics Special educational needs Foundation Stage
9370	Rosalind Wingrove	Lay inspector	
22990	Chris Furniss	Team inspector	English Religious education
24678	Averil Bowyer	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design

The inspection contractor was:

Parkman Ltd. in association with *PkR*
35 Trewartha Park
Weston-Super-Mare
North Somerset
BS23 2RT

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a good school that provides good value for money. Pupils enjoy learning and taking part in the exciting and interesting activities. They achieve well and make good progress because teaching is generally good, often very good and on occasions excellent. Overall, standards in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. There are no significant differences between the achievements of any groups of pupils.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising. Standards of literacy in Year 3 are above expectations.
- The curriculum is good because there is a rich and varied range of learning activities. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and look forward to their lessons.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the management of the school is good.
- Governors have a firm grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- There are very good links with the community, and support from parents is excellent.
- The very good induction of the youngest children ensures that they settle quickly and happily.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they achieve well and make good progress.
- Ongoing assessment is not consistently used and recorded, except in literacy, to help teachers plan lessons and activities that challenge and extend all pupils, particularly the more able.

The improvement since the last inspection is good. Pupils now have the opportunity to use the school's new research centre, and as a result their independent learning skills are much improved. This has made a good contribution to their achievement. Standards across the school are improving due to good, and often very good, teaching. There are no longer any concerns about the school's fire procedures.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	E	E	D	C
Writing	E	D	D	C
Mathematics	E	E	D	C
<i>Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average</i>				
<i>Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals</i>				

Pupils' achievement across the school is good. The current groups of pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 entered the school with attainment below that expected for their age. The above chart shows that standards for the 2003 group of **Year 2 pupils were below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.** However, these test results matched those of **similar schools.**

Standards among current Year 2 pupils seen during the inspection **are average in reading, writing and mathematics.** By the end of Year 3, standards are above expectations in literacy and in line with expectations in numeracy. The majority of pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 continue to achieve well and make good progress since they entered the school because of the good, and often very good, teaching they receive. However, there are no consistent procedures for measuring and recording how well pupils are learning in lessons and what they need to learn next. The overall attainment of the current group of children in the reception classes matches that expected for their age. These are the most able children that the school has admitted for some time and by the end of reception the majority are likely to achieve expected standards. In science, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history and religious education

standards are as expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 3. Not enough lessons were seen in music and physical education to make secure judgements on standards. Although only one lesson was seen in art and design, evidence of work on display indicates that standards across the school are above expectations. Pupils were heard singing in assemblies and standards in these sessions were also above those expected.

The most significant aid to raising achievement has been the school's focus on improving the speaking and listening skills of all pupils. There are no particular barriers to learning, although, until recently, the below average standards of children on entry to school coupled with the above average proportion of pupils with weak language and communication skills have presented the school with the considerable challenge of raising standards to match those found nationally.

The development of **pupils' personal qualities is good**. Provision for their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good**. Consequently, they have very good attitudes to school, their behaviour is good and they are willing and responsible. Attendance is good and pupils arrive at school on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good due to the good, and often very good, teaching throughout the school. This, coupled with **the rich and varied curriculum**, ensures that pupils benefit from a wide range of stimulating activities that contribute positively to their achievement. One of the factors in the very good teaching is that lessons are interesting and exciting. Therefore, pupils concentrate hard and work well, which has a positive effect on their learning. In some lessons, the needs of more-able pupils are not always met effectively because the work they are asked to complete is not sufficiently challenging. Links with other schools are very good and links with parents are excellent.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the school is well managed. The governance of the school is also good. These factors make an effective contribution to the quality of education offered to pupils and ensure that the majority make good, and often very good, progress and achieve well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Children receive a very good introduction to school. Parents are very appreciative of everything the school does to ensure that their children receive the best education possible and achieve well. Pupils enjoy being in school, are very fond of their teachers and like the interesting things they are given to do.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Ensure that day-to-day assessment is used and recorded consistently to support teachers in planning lessons and activities that challenge and extend all pupils, particularly the more able.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards are average in the core subjects by the end of Year 2. Standards in other subjects at the end of Year 2 meet expectations. By the end of **Year 3 standards are above expected levels in literacy** and in line with expectations in the other core subjects. **Standards across the school in art and design and singing are also above expectations. Pupils' achievement across the school is good.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising.
- Standards in literacy for the current group of Year 3 pupils are above expectations due to the good, and often very good, teaching which enables them to achieve well.
- Standards in art and design and singing are above expectations.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers and make good progress.

Commentary

1. In 2003 the school's Year 2 test results were below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results matched those of similar schools in all three subjects. These results show an improvement in all three subjects from the previous year. Results of teacher assessments in science showed that standards were below expectations.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.1 (14.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.9 (13.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.5 (14.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 69 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The current group of children in the reception classes are likely to reach expected standards in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year. This is a more able group of children than usual and some are already near to attaining expected standards for their age. Standards in social, emotional, personal, physical and creative development are above those seen in many schools. Evidence from the work of children who have just moved up into Year 1, who entered the reception classes with attainment below that usually expected, shows that some reached expected standards in communication, language and literacy. A smaller proportion reached the expected standard in mathematical development.
3. Lessons and pupils' work in all year groups show that standards have risen since the last inspection. At this point in the academic year, standards are as expected in Years 1 and 2, except in art and design, where they are higher than normally found. In Year 3, standards meet expectations for this age group except in literacy and art and design, where they are above expected levels. Across the school, standards in singing are above those expected.
4. Pupils' achievement across the school when compared to their attainment on entry to the reception classes is good as a result of the good education they receive. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers and make good progress in lessons when they receive support from teaching assistants. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils' literacy,

numeracy and information and communication technology skills are sufficient to enable pupils to make progress in all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes to learning are very good. Behaviour is generally good, and it is very good in Year 3. Pupils' **personal development**, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, **is also good**. Attendance has improved and is in line with the national average. The majority of pupils are punctual and lessons begin on time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to learn.
- Behaviour in and around the school is good.
- Relationships are good between pupils and very good between adults and children.
- Pupils are willing to help and take responsibility.
- The school has high expectations of its pupils.
- The reception classes provide a very good start to pupils' all-round development.

Commentary

5. Pupils are very keen to come to school and look forward to their lessons and to the other clubs and activities arranged for them. They are proud of the work they do and are eager to show it to visitors. The atmosphere in classrooms is very businesslike. Pupils listen well and act quickly upon instructions. Behaviour is good in all year groups and very good in Year 3.
6. No examples of bullying or rough play were seen despite the fact that the playground area is small for such a large number of lively young children. The school manages the numbers very well by dividing up the lunchtime break with activities before lunch and a short playtime afterwards. Pupils are very willing to help if needed and Year 3 pupils act as councillors in the playground.
7. The pupils are friendly towards one another and show respect and fondness for their teachers. When asked what they like best about their school, a frequent response was "The teachers". Pupils showed confidence in speaking in lessons and when talking to adults about their work. Role-play is often used in lessons, which helps to build pupils' confidence, and good work is praised appropriately. Pupils are aware of their targets and involved in the decisions on rules for their classes. They are well aware of the difference between right and wrong. Circle time allows discussion of current events, and the theme in assemblies for the week of the inspection was "Courage and Bravery". Pupils learn about other cultures and are aware of celebrations in other religions as well as their own. Visiting speakers help to illustrate the different cultures in the world; actors come into school and involve pupils in plays, and pupils are learning to appreciate music, art and literature. Music is used effectively to set the mood for assemblies. Pupils visit local museums and are involved with other schools in musical events.

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	233	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	34	0	0
<i>The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.</i>			

8. Pupils' arrival for school is closely monitored; although very few are regularly late. Very good attendance is rewarded with certificates, and the school uses many kinds of stickers to reward good work and behaviour.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4
<i>The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.</i>			

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education in the school is **good** because all adults have a very strong commitment to offering the **best education** to the children in their care. Therefore **pupils make good progress** during their time in the school. The **very good care** and concern shown to pupils, the **good teaching** and the **good provision** for pupils with **special educational needs** are the major contributory factors.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching is **good, often very good and on occasions excellent**, and enables children to achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very encouraging towards pupils, which ensures that they give of their best and achieve well
- Most lessons are brisk and purposeful, which ensures that no time is wasted in lessons.
- There are very high expectations for the majority of children in the reception classes which ensure they that learn effectively and make good, and often very good, progress.
- There is an insistence on high standards of behaviour for all pupils from staff

- Procedures for measuring and recording how well pupils are learning in lessons and what they need to learn next are not consistently used and recorded, except in literacy, in order to help teachers plan lessons and activities that challenge and extend all pupils, particularly the more able.

Commentary

- Most teaching meets the needs of the majority of pupils and ensures equality of opportunity. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve at the same level as their peers. The quality of teaching in both literacy and numeracy is good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons						
Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5.5%)	5 (14%)	19 (53%)	8 (22%)	2 (5.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>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.</i>						

- Teachers have very good relationships with the children in their class and are very caring and supportive. Hence, pupils feel secure in school and are eager to please their teachers, to work hard and achieve more highly. The brisk pace to lessons ensures that no time is wasted, the activities offered to pupils are interesting, challenging and often exciting, and pupils are enthusiastic. There is an assumption that pupils will always behave well, and consequently they live up to these high expectations. All pupils' successes are celebrated and there is an industrious and calm atmosphere throughout the school which has a positive effect on their learning.
- When teaching is not successful, weaknesses exist in the challenge offered to pupils and the pace of lessons. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning deteriorate and the quality of learning is diminished. There is also a lack of focus on what pupils have learned during the lesson and what they need to learn next. This has a negative effect on their progress.
- Teachers are very aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and, as a result, these pupils make good progress. Pupils' individual education plans match work effectively to their needs, and teachers make helpful notes on their progress. This awareness of pupils' needs extends to the very few who speak English as an additional language and they also achieve well.
- Assessment is used effectively to monitor the progress of pupils through the school and to ensure that those who need extra support, especially in English and mathematics, are identified and provided for. However, there are no consistent procedures for measuring and recording how well pupils are learning in lessons. This means that some teachers do not always set clear and specific learning goals based on the needs of individual pupils and some, especially the more able, are therefore not always sufficiently challenged by the work given.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good, with some very good features**. **Very good extra-curricular** provision enriches the experience of pupils, as do special events, weeks and visitors. High-quality displays in areas of the school promote pupils' learning. The range and quality of learning resources are good, as is the accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of extra-curricular activities extends pupils' learning opportunities and contributes to their personal development.

- The links between subjects help pupils to build on their previous knowledge.
- Overall, resources and accommodation are good.
- The school does not always ensure that more-able pupils achieve as well as they could.

Commentary

14. The good curriculum across the school is enriched by a range of activities both within and beyond the school day. There is a good range of lunchtime clubs. These cover music, information and communication technology, science and the environment. All these clubs are well attended. This is an area that the school has worked very hard to develop following the last inspection, resulting in very good provision. There are 'focus weeks' such as 'Be Active' and Music Weeks which involve the whole school community. All pupils have the opportunity to go on trips and educational visits.
15. The school works hard to ensure that there are logical links between the subjects. For example, the texts used for literacy during the inspection were based on the topics being studied in religious education and science.
16. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good. Individual education plans are appropriately documented, identifying pupils' targets, and are effective in supporting these pupils and ensuring that they make good progress.
17. Provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent. This is a significant strength of the school and has been built on effectively since the last inspection. There is good reflective practice in this aspect of the school's work so that children learn not only through formal sessions that develop their literacy and mathematical skills, but also through independent learning, explorative play and opportunities for personal expression.
18. The resources available to subjects are good and well organised by the subject co-ordinators. Accommodation is also good and used effectively. However, more use could be made of the Research Centre to teach computer skills to the pupils more effectively.
19. The learning opportunities provided for more-able pupils are not always effective, particularly in science, in ensuring that they make the best progress possible. In some instances the teachers' lesson planning shows little evidence of extended work for these pupils. There is not always sufficient provision for investigative work to develop their thinking and help them to achieve even better.

Care, guidance and support

The **care and support** given to pupils are **very good**. Teachers know the pupils and their families very well. It is a **very caring, happy school**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes very good care of all its pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are identified and helped to succeed.
- Induction arrangements and arrangements for pupils transferring to middle school are very good.
- Pupils care for one another.
- Governors are very aware of the health, safety and security needs of all pupils.
- Relationships with adults in the school are very good and pupils feel confident to ask for help with their work and advice on their problems.
- The school listens to the views of the pupils.

Commentary

20. The headteacher and her staff, as well as the premises manager and the governors, are aware of the importance of regularly checking health-and-safety issues. The main building is relatively modern and is well maintained and provides a secure learning environment.
21. The headteacher has been trained in child-protection procedures in accordance with the local education authority's regulations. Pupils with special educational needs are identified effectively and their parents are involved in the preparation and updating of their individual programmes of work. Special help is given to pupils with language problems. A local police officer visits the school to talk to the children and increase their understanding about personal safety and traffic problems.
22. New pupils are introduced to school in the term before they are due to start. The school liaises well with local playgroups. Parents are delighted with the information they are given in advance and the helpful and welcoming staff. The majority of children look forward to their days in the reception class and are quite happy to leave their parent in the morning and go into class. The initial information pack is followed by educational games and illustrations of the school's ways of teaching early subjects so that parents know how to help. This good beginning is followed up with meetings every term so that parents can follow progress and talk to teachers. The reading diary is used to communicate too.
23. There are very good links with the neighbouring special school where there are reciprocal arrangements that benefit pupils from both schools and enhance their achievement. When pupils are about to transfer to the middle schools they are given opportunities to visit their future school and to get to know the teachers and some of the pupils.
24. Pupils' views are listened to; a good example of this resulted in the computers in the research centre being available for use during break times. Year 3 pupils serve as councillors for the younger children. Each day they are available in the playground to discuss and settle any minor disagreements between pupils. This makes a very good contribution to their moral and social development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are excellent; links with the **local community** and with **other schools are very good.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents speak highly of the school, the headteacher and her staff.
- The school works hard to involve parents in all its work.
- The headteacher welcomes parents into school with an "open door".
- Information for parents is regular, well written and presented.
- Information meetings are offered to parents and are well attended.
- Parents support the school in many ways.
- The school co-operates well with other schools in its area.

Commentary

25. Parents receive plenty of information about the school from the day that their children's name is entered on the roll. The prospectus is well written and contains a lot of useful information about how to help children to learn. The annual report is written and illustrated in an informative way. Both documents fulfil legal requirements. There are regular newsletters that keep parents up to date with school events and educational information. Class teachers keep families supplied with educational games. Parents are very keen to know about homework and how they can help their children at home.

26. End-of-year reports give parents a good picture of what their child has learned and can do. They set targets and comment on the pupils' development and attitude to the teachers and the other pupils. Parents are consulted from time to time; for example, they were asked what they thought of the induction arrangements. The headteacher is always prepared to talk to parents and to help if she can. Her view is that she, her staff and the parents are working to a common purpose. Parents are confident that the school is doing its best to give their children a very good start to their education.
27. Parents are encouraged to help in school. They are given opportunities to find out what this may entail. They also accompany pupils on visits and to swimming lessons. Parents and grandparents are invited to attend some class assemblies.
28. The local community supports the school very well. Large local stores have provided gifts for the parents' fundraising events and money for books. The school has also received funding for its conservation area, and local firms have also welcomed parties of children and shown them behind the scenes.
29. The school works well with other local playgroups and schools, in particular the special school next door. It has students for work experience and links with the University of Sussex, Brighton University and the Sussex Symphony Orchestra. Fifteen pupils joined with other schools for workshops with the orchestra.
30. Overall, the very good partnership and warm relationship between the school and parents contribute significantly to the learning and social development of its pupils and the good reputation of the school in the locality.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher **is very good** and the school is **well managed**. **The governance of the school** is also **good**. These factors make an effective contribution to the quality of education offered to pupils and ensure that the majority make good, and often very good, progress and achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher ensures that there is a clear sense of purpose in the school's work in order to achieve the highest standards possible
- Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good
- The chair of governors is very informed, proactive and supportive, and as a result the governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
- The commitment to including all children in the good education offered is driven by the headteacher and shared by all who come into contact with the school.
- Leadership and management of special education needs are good.
- All adults are good role models for the children and have contributed significantly to the caring atmosphere evident in the school's work.

Commentary

31. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction for the school and shares with the staff and governors her commitment to ensuring that standards are as high as possible. She has established very good relationships in the local community and the school. She has developed an effective team of teachers who are strongly committed to the work of the school. She has a strong and supportive leadership style with which she inspires all who work in the school. Consequently, all share her sense of purpose and vision for the school which is to provide a good quality of education for the children where they achieve well and attain standards in line with their abilities.

32. She has a successful management style which has enabled staff to be effective in their roles and to play an active role in the development of whole-school issues of ensuring all pupils achieve as well as possible. Her skills at delegating responsibility to staff are good and have given individuals the opportunity to develop in a caring and supportive environment. All adults are good role models for the children, and the level of care shown to all pupils is high. This is reflected in the way staff and pupils respect one another and are happy to be in the school. This contributes effectively to the good atmosphere within the school.
33. The headteacher is strongly committed to ensuring that all children should have access to a high-quality education where individual differences are accepted. A result of this is the very good practice of including pupils from the local special school in her vision of the future of education. The management of special educational needs is good and the co-ordinators receive effective support from the governor responsible for special educational needs, who is well informed and committed to the role.
34. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are a significant strength of the school's work. As a result, these young children are given a very good start to their formal education within a very caring and supportive environment in which they achieve very well.
35. The governors are effective in carrying out their statutory duties. They are clear about their role to ensure that the pupils in the school receive the best education they can and that the school continually strives to raise standards. Governors take an active role in the management of the school and key decision-making and, as a result, are well informed and have a secure, long-term strategic view of the school. This ensures that they have the knowledge to support the school in its work.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	611, 298
Total expenditure	592, 053
Expenditure per pupil	2, 062

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	823
Balance carried forward to the next	20, 068

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for and the quality of the education offered to these young children **are very good**.

36. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are very good with some excellent features. Children are achieving very well in all areas of their learning. Consistently good, and often very good and excellent, teaching was seen in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, and teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is very good. Lesson planning reflects national guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum and is of high quality. The teachers produce very detailed daily lesson plans which provide very effective learning opportunities for a range of prior attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Very good assessment practices mean that the teachers and teaching assistants keep detailed records of children's development in each area of learning which provide secure information for the next steps. The smaller steps for learning outlined in the curriculum guidance for this age range are highlighted in the day-to-day lesson planning which enables teachers to record progress against them throughout the year.
37. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good and ensure that these young children are given a very good start to their education. The environment in the Foundation Stage classroom is controlled effectively. This is having positive effects on children's learning and there are a very good range of opportunities for them to work independently and to make decisions for themselves. The school has rightly identified the need to develop the outside area so that children have improved access to outdoor activities in wet weather and this would widen the scope of activities available to them throughout the year.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children behave very well, relate well to one another and concentrate on the work they are given to do.
- There are a range of very good opportunities for independent learning.

Commentary

38. Children are learning that good behaviour is a fundamental requirement in the classroom and are quickly grasping school routines. Their behaviour is very good because this aspect of their development is continually promoted and expectations are high. They are learning to put up their hands and pay attention to adults and to one another. They have quickly come to trust the adults who work with them and it is obvious that they feel secure. Children relate well to one another and play happily together with no evidence of any unkindness. They have been quick to settle in, aided by effective induction procedures. Almost all children concentrate on the tasks that have been set for them and try to succeed. Girls tend to be more focused than boys when engaging in optional activities; a minority of boys sometimes tend to flit between activities. By the time they leave reception, the majority of the children in the current reception classes will reach the Early Learning Goals, and higher-attaining children will exceed national expectations.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to develop their listening skills and already follow instructions well.
- There are some very good interactions between the learning-support assistant and individual children, with good opportunities for imaginative play to foster language development.
- Children show interest in books and handle them with respect; parents have good opportunities to share books with their children.

Commentary

39. Children's listening skills are being developed well. Even at this early stage in the academic year, they listen well to stories and pay careful attention to detail. As a result they are able to answer questions about what happened in a story, and it is evident that some have taken in a lot of detail.
40. When small groups of children work with the teaching assistants they engage in conversations that develop their vocabulary, and give them an opportunity to express their likes and dislikes and to talk about their experiences. Many children explain what they are doing and are confident in communicating with one another. They negotiate when making decisions about what they should do when they work together. There are good opportunities for them to engage in independent activities, where their own choice and imagination dictate the focus, and this ensures that they achieve well. As a result of these well-planned opportunities they acquire new language as a result of their discovery and exploration.
41. The work seen indicates that, by the time they leave reception, most children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals, and higher-attaining children are on target to exceed national expectations. All children understand that print is used to convey meaning and write or suggest a comment to accompany their drawings. Higher-attaining children describe what is happening in their drawing and, with support from adults, write with one or two sentences that include some correct use of capital letters and full stops. Lower-attaining children show some confusion in the formation of letters, but this is addressed well by the learning-support assistants to ensure that they have a clear understanding.
42. Children are making good progress in learning letter sounds and some already have a clear awareness of the sound at the beginning of common words. The teachers' expectations are high in this area and this is enabling children to make rapid progress with their early reading skills. They show interest in books and handle them with respect; parents have good opportunities to share books with them through the system for taking books home.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching
- Good use of opportunities to reinforce children's learning.

Commentary

43. Children achieve well in mathematics, due to the good teaching they receive. Their skills in this area are often used as an integral part of activities inside and outside the classroom.

Adults make good use of incidental opportunities to reinforce learning in mathematics, such as encouraging the children to count the different types of fruits in their snack boxes. Some children can count to five and a few are familiar with larger numbers in their everyday lives. Children learn to sort equipment according to criteria, such as colour, and begin to explore concepts of capacity and measures when they use sand and water to fill containers of various sizes. They are familiar with rhymes which reinforce their knowledge and understanding of number. Children are likely to reach, and in some cases exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Having recently begun in the Foundation Stage, some children can already count beyond ten and others are making good progress in counting. Children understand how to sequence, they are learning how to order objects into sets and the use of games is developing a range of mathematical skills. Planning for mathematical development shows that the teachers' expectations are high and the range of activities closely reflects national guidance for the Foundation Stage.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good questioning skills develop children's knowledge and understanding
- Well-planned activities extend children's knowledge of the world around them.

Commentary

44. The quality of teaching is good and all adults use effective questioning skills to develop children's knowledge and understanding. Most children show curiosity about their surroundings and need little encouragement to explore, investigate and ask questions. The good curriculum offers them a wide range of experiences to expand their knowledge of the world around them and will enable them to reach, and in some cases exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. Activities are well planned to enable children to explore aspects of the environment and to relate the work to their own experiences. Discussion forms an important part of their work and children are encouraged to be observant and describe what they see. Some are confident users of computers. For example, they successfully operate a mouse when choosing the colour of their wallpaper design for Cinderella's new home.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching.
- Good use of outdoor play facilities.

Commentary

45. Teaching is good and the standard of work in some areas of physical development is above average. Children show above average skills when playing on wheeled toys, running, balancing and moving to music. They have good opportunities to develop their physical skills and respond well to the opportunities offered. The physical control shown by many children when using pencils and paintbrushes, controlling the mouse on the computer or manipulating construction toys is already good at this early point in the academic year. Provision in physical development is good and children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to learn songs, which are incorporated appropriately into literacy and numeracy sessions.
- The opportunities for children to express their own ideas through creative activities and to work expressively are very good.

Commentary

46. Children learn a range of songs within literacy and numeracy sessions, which support their learning in these areas. Most children join in with well-known songs and many enjoy copying the teacher's movements when enacting a song. They show a good awareness of music when given the opportunity to dance.
47. Children have opportunities to paint, where there is no adult-determined starting point, and painting is well organised within an imaginative context to ensure that they gain the most they can from the experience. Children in the previous reception year produced some lively drawings to illustrate written work.
48. There are some very good opportunities for imaginative role-play and the effective use of space and adult interaction in this aspect of children's play means that they are achieving well. Most are likely to reach, and in some cases exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- English is used very well in other subjects to extend and develop writing skills.
- Good teaching ensures good progress and achievement.
- Good leadership and management have a positive impact on standards and achievement
- Marking and day-to-day teacher assessment are not always used to help teachers plan work that challenges all pupils, especially the more able.

Commentary

49. The results of the 2003 national tests showed that Year 2 pupils were below the national average in reading and writing. The results matched those found in similar schools. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that writing is improving and that Year 2 pupils are at about the level expected for their age. Pupils in Year 3 are above the expected level in both reading and writing.
50. Although standards vary from year to year, pupils generally enter the school below the level expected. Teachers work hard to develop their listening skills and pupils are encouraged to develop their speaking skills through class and paired discussions. They are encouraged to use sentences rather than single words. Progress is good and by the time pupils leave the school they are confident speakers and have a wide vocabulary.

51. Reading skills are developed well and pupils have very positive attitudes to books and to reading. Letter sounds are taught well and constantly reinforced. Teachers use whole-class texts very well to model emphasis and expression in reading. Good examples of this were observed in Years 1 and 2, where pupils were greatly stimulated by and relished joining in the reading of 'Funnybones' and 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. Pupils receive good support from home and regular encouragement and help in school, where raising reading standards has been a priority. All Year 3 pupils spoken to were able to find information books on given topics in the library and to use contents pages, indices and glossaries to find information. They use the Internet at school and at home for research.
52. Having raised reading standards the school is aware of the need to improve writing, which has been identified as a priority. Handwriting is regularly taught and pupils are given many opportunities to write. The artwork and creative writing involved in the 'Tin Forest' displays in Year 3 are impressive, showing that pupils have begun to develop and use a wide vocabulary to enrich their writing, with words such as 'kaleidoscope', 'picturesque' and 'vibrant'.
53. The overall quality of teaching in English is good, with some very good teaching being observed during the period of the inspection. Relationships are very good and teachers are very good role models, constantly encouraging pupils so that they really want to learn and do well. Lessons are well planned and resourced, with teachers generally ensuring that work matches the needs and abilities of pupils. Assessment in English is good generally, but some of the day-to-day assessment lacks clear focus and occasions were observed where teachers did not have high expectations of pupils, and where the most capable pupils were not sufficiently challenged. Not all teachers share the learning objectives for the lesson with pupils with the result that some pupils are not sure about what they will learn or the skills they will use and develop in the lesson.
54. The subject is led and managed well. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are monitored well. There have not been many opportunities to monitor lessons. Overall assessment in English is thorough and used well, particularly to identify pupils needing to join extra support programmes. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and make good progress towards the targets set for them. Resources are good and are used well by teachers. Information and communication technology is used effectively to help pupils in research and some good examples were seen of work done by pupils using computers. This is an area that is still being developed.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. One of the strengths of the school is the way that literacy is developed across all subjects and this is helping to raise standards. Good, well-planned opportunities to develop literacy skills were seen in a wide range of subjects, including geography, history, science and religious education. One good example is the link with history and the sensitive work done by Year 3 on evacuees. Pupils have produced some fine work that shows understanding of the feelings and emotions of children and parents who experienced wartime separation. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress against their prior attainment.
- Teaching is good with some very strong features.
- Standards are rising.
- The use of information and communication technology is under-developed.

Commentary

56. **At this point in the academic year, standards are as expected in Years 1 and 2. In Year 3, standards meet expectations for this age group.** Compared with the below average attainment with which these groups of pupils entered the reception classes, this indicates good progress. This is due to the good teaching that they receive both mathematically and in the development of their language, so that they have the vocabulary to tackle problems that rely on them reading and understanding the task set. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to that made by their peers. Provision for these pupils is good and the teaching assistants are used effectively to promote their learning.
57. Teaching meets the needs of all pupils, ensures equality of opportunity and has improved since the last inspection. Most teachers' planning for lessons is thorough and effective. The learning intentions of the activities are usually clearly expressed in the teachers' planning and are shared with the pupils; all tasks in the lessons where teaching is good are purposeful and organised well. There are high expectations, routines are established well and the management of pupils is good. The quality of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory, involves all staff and gives them the information they need to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Because of the very good relationships pupils have with their teachers, they are confident in saying when they do not understand and teachers are equally confident in acknowledging this and offering to reinforce areas which some pupils find difficult. One of the most significant strengths of the mathematical learning in the school is that pupils are encouraged to explain the methods by which they arrive at their answers and explore how to solve other problems using these skills.
58. The subject manager demonstrates good subject knowledge and much of this is shared effectively with all staff. She has, with the support of some good teaching across the school, made a clear contribution to the improving standards with which pupils are leaving the school. Test results are analysed to help the school focus on any areas of underachievement and to provide future targets for year groups and individual pupils. However, the way teachers track how well the pupils are doing are not always effective in tracking pupils' attainment across the school. Not all teachers are clear about what pupils already know and what they need to know next. There is no portfolio of pupils' completed work to help teachers correctly identify at what level they are currently attaining and how new learning will build on what they already know. This has affected the progress the school has been able to make in raising standards. Although the subject manager systematically checks teachers' lesson planning and the work in pupils' books, she has not checked effectively the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils are offered the same learning opportunities within each year group and across all year groups. Therefore progress is occasionally uneven and particularly affects more-able pupils. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. There are effective links with most other subjects. These are planned well by all teachers to ensure that pupils can make links with other subjects such as science, design and technology, and geography. The use of information and communication technology is under-developed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a result of the generally good teaching.
- Opportunities in science are used to develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy.

- There is a good emphasis on the use of scientific language, and pupils appreciate the importance of investigations and fair testing.
- Too little use is made of information and communication technology to support science.

Commentary

60. The evidence of work seen by the current Year 2 pupils and an analysis of work completed last year indicates that standards are average. In teachers' assessments of pupils' work in 2003 few pupils achieved the higher Level 3 and there is little evidence to suggest that there will be an improvement next year. The current Year 2 entered school with below average understanding of the world about them and poor language and communication skills. These have had a negative effect on the standards being reached, but pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. In Year 3 standards are as expected for those pupils, but they also achieve well. However, planning for lessons in some classes does not always include challenge for the more-able pupils. This is because the way teachers keep check on what pupils have learnt is weak. All pupils do the same task and record their answers on a prepared worksheet. This restricts opportunities for them to achieve even better. A shortcoming in pupils' achievement across the school is that opportunities for them to use their computer skills in the subject are not sufficiently taken; for example, using their skills to display and analyse data that they have collected.
61. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching varied between satisfactory and good. Overall, teaching and learning are good across the school. In lessons where teachers' knowledge was secure and lesson planning showed a clear focus, pupils showed an interest in and enthusiasm for the subject and learned well. A lesson for Year 3 pupils where they were carrying out a fair test to show which toothpaste was the most effective illustrated several features of effective teaching. The investigation was stimulating and caught the pupils' imagination well. This 'hands on' approach promotes learning through discussion and prompts these young scientists to use scientific vocabulary.
62. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. She has good subject knowledge and is committed to raising standards. Planning which is based on the nationally recommended scheme of work is secure. Assessment is satisfactory, but the use of this information to set individual and group targets is under-developed. Opportunities for extending pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject are promoted through a weekly science club.
63. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to improve the standards in investigations and exploration in science. However, there remain some areas for development. There is no moderation of pupils' work to give the teachers a clearer picture of the attainment of each pupil. The use of information and communication technology is limited and does not make a sufficient contribution to pupils developing skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been recent improvement in resources and staff expertise.
- The newly appointed co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic.
- Information and communication technology is not used consistently to support learning across the curriculum.
- Not enough use is made of the computers in the Research Centre.

Commentary

64. Across the school pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain the standards expected for their age. Most achieve satisfactorily.
65. In the direct teaching sessions seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Since the last inspection national funding has meant that the resources for the subject have improved and staff confidence and knowledge are growing. The school's new Research Centre means that pupils have regular access to computers. However, there are not enough computers for a whole-class lesson. The room is presently under-used as it remains empty for most of the morning. Pupils could achieve better if they had more access to the computers and longer periods of time in the Research Centre.
66. In the lessons seen teachers' subject knowledge was used well to give clear instructions and demonstrations on how to bring up a programme and use it to communicate ideas through pictures. As only half the class can use the computers in these short lessons progress is limited. To ensure that pupils have maximum time allocated on the computers some class teachers introduce the lesson on the classroom computer, enabling the pupils to begin their task immediately. Pupils work well together on the computers, offering suggestions and help to each other.
67. Examples of their work show that the older pupils are confident in accessing the internet for research into their topics in history and geography. Pupils are able to use ICT for word processing, art and some data handling as well as control technology through the use of the Roamer. During the inspection little use was made of the classroom computer. Pupils are enthusiastic about ICT, and many in Years 2 and 3 join the weekly computer club.
68. Recent changes in the subject leadership have yet to be consolidated but the new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and her action plan recognises the areas for development. She knows that ICT is not fully embedded in the curriculum and more cross-curricular links need to be made.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. ICT is used to support successfully some subjects of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 make good use of drawing and word processing. Pupils in Year 3 use the internet to support their work on World War 2. Posters for bedrooms contained some imaginative use of font colours highlighting and importing of pictures. They produce leaflets promoting places they visit.

HUMANITIES

70. No lessons were observed in **geography, history or religious education**. An analysis of work completed shows that pupils make satisfactory progress in both geography and history. Standards attained are in line with expectations. Some of the work seen in Year 3 is above the expected level; for example, the good work done on World War 2 and especially the evacuees. There are no consistent procedures in either geography or history for assessing and recording how well pupils are progressing from lesson to lesson. Good use is made of visitors and visits to extend pupils' experiences and enrich the curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject makes a positive contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Links with other subjects are good

Commentary

71. Pupils make satisfactory progress and are attaining standards in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make the same progress as all other pupils.
72. No lessons were observed so it is not possible to make a secure judgement about quality of teaching. Good links with other subjects help to make learning more meaningful to pupils. For example, the work on light and celebrations has included art, science, history and geography. Links with festivals such as Divali, Sukkoth and Harvest Festivals help provide positive opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Standards in religious education have been maintained since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. Insufficient work was seen to form an overall judgement about provision in **design and technology, music and physical education**. No class lessons were observed during the inspection in these subjects. No evidence was seen to form a view about physical education and music, apart from singing. Although only one art and design lesson was seen, it was possible to examine a good deal of work on display and to look at some sketch books in order to reach an overall judgement about provision.
74. **Design and technology** work on display throughout the school suggested that standards are in line with national expectations. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils are introduced to interesting topics and have the opportunity of developing appropriate skills. For example, pupils in Year 1 created their own fruit salads, and pupils in Year 2 made bread and sandwiches. In Year 3, pupils design and make Joseph's coat of many colours. There was little evidence in the work seen to show how often pupils have the opportunity to evaluate their own work. Resources are good, but the use of ICT to support learning is very limited.
75. In **music**, pupils were observed singing, during lunch-time clubs and a violin lesson. The standard of singing was good. Pupils have a good sense of rhythm and sing tunefully with clear diction, and most obviously enjoy singing. All the pupils in Year 3 learn to play the recorder and have the opportunity to learn the guitar. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 can also learn to play the violin if they wish. They make good progress and enjoy performing in concerts. There are two lunchtime clubs to promote the areas of composing and performing, and the exploration and appreciation of music. This aspect of music was a weakness at the last inspection, but considerable improvement has been made since then. These extra-curricular activities contribute well to pupils' overall musical experiences, as do concerts and performances. The many musicians who visit the school to perform music from other cultures enrich the curriculum. Some pupils have been given the opportunity to work with the Sussex Symphony Orchestra.
76. There was insufficient evidence for an overall judgement to be made about the standards and provision of **physical education**. In discussion with the co-ordinator and from a scrutiny of teachers' lesson plans it is clear that the scheme of work is providing coverage for all the strands of PE, including swimming in Year 3. The school promotes sport through its 'Be Active Week', when a skipping coach works with the pupils on a variety of skipping techniques and games. The climbing frame in the younger children's playground enhances the outdoor and adventurous activities.
77. In all these subjects the role of the co-ordinators is good. They are enthusiastic about their subjects and areas of responsibility. However, there does not appear to be any systematic monitoring and evaluation of their subjects.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show enthusiasm and enjoy art.
- Good displays in the classroom and around the school enrich pupils' learning.
- There are many examples throughout the school of good cross-curricular links

Commentary

78. Standards in art and design are good, as was the case at the last inspection. Pupils' sketchbooks and work on display indicate that they undertake a range of activities that are interesting and varied, and achievement is good. The display in the hall about 'The Sea' shows plenty of creativity and imagination. It showed that pupils were able to work confidently with a range of materials including paint, pastels, clay, thread and ICT. In Year 3, pupils used weaving techniques to illustrate words through colour. This showed good cross-curricular links with literacy. Pupils in Year 2 study various artists and then produce work in different styles. The use of sketchbooks across the school promotes pupils' ability to build on previous learning and shows good progress in their art and design skills. In Year 1, pupils' observational drawing of pineapples shows how careful and detailed their drawings are.
79. There are many examples throughout the school of good cross-curricular links. In Year 1, pupils have made pairs of clay shoes that are now part of the number display for counting in twos. In Year 2, art and design brings together science, literacy and religious education in a display about light and celebrations. Work with Tarmont Community Artists to design and make a mosaic on Southwick Green, and a sundial for the school, are good examples of the school's involvement of outside expertise.
80. Good leadership and management have helped to further and extend the curriculum. The subject manager is knowledgeable and teachers are appreciative of the support and guidance she gives.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision for personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- It is taught well across the school and is reflected in pupils' attitudes to one another and their excellent relationships with their teachers and other adults.
- It is developed effectively throughout the curriculum.

Commentary

81. Personal, social and health education is an integral part of the life of the school. Consequently, pupils are confident to express their feelings in a trusting and secure environment. Teachers are confident in their teaching of this sensitive area, with timetabled sessions and its inclusion within subjects; for example, the importance of a healthy diet in science, and in physical education lessons the effect of exercise on their bodies. The school has a sex education policy and relationships are taught effectively as part of the curriculum and make a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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