

INSPECTION REPORT

**BRIDGE AND PATRIBOURNE CofE VC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Bridge, near Canterbury

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118654

Headteacher: Mrs Anna Newton

Lead inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th May 2005

Inspection number: 266485

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 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 377

School address: Conyngham Lane
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Canterbury
Kent
Postcode: CT4 5JX

Telephone number: 01227 830276
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs Ailsa Williamson
governors:

Date of previous April 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This Church of England school is in the village of Bridge, near Canterbury. It is larger than most primary schools, and is oversubscribed as it is very popular locally. The majority of its pupils, who come from the villages to the south of Canterbury, are from comparatively advantaged backgrounds. The overall profile of their attainment on entry to the reception year is above average. More than nine-tenths of the boys and girls are of white ethnic background, and no other ethnic group is strongly represented in the school. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is a bit higher than in most schools, and almost all are fluent in English. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is average. Mostly, their needs relate to learning difficulties or social, emotional or behavioural problems. A few pupils have physical difficulties such as visual or hearing impairment. Pupil mobility is higher than average in Years 3 and 4 as some pupils leave to attend private schools. The school has Investors in People status, and is a Beacon school. It won a School Achievement Award for its test results in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8402	Vivien Johnston	Lead inspector	English, English as an additional language, geography, history
32670	Graham Saltmarsh	Lay inspector	
30814	Elizabeth Coley	Team inspector	Mathematics, music, religious education
30244	Roger Tapley	Team inspector	Science, art, citizenship, design and technology, special educational needs
23674	Wendy Simmons	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, information and communication technology, physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school and the value for money it provides are both very good. Children enter the school with above average standards of attainment overall, and by the end of the reception year their attainment is well above average. This high standard is maintained in Years 1 to 6 through very successful teaching and a rich curriculum. The school has many other strengths and no significant weaknesses.

The school's main strengths are

- Children in the Reception year and pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve very well as a result of the very good teaching of an excellent curriculum
- Pupils do especially well in English, art and design and information and communication technology (ICT)
- The school's ethos is excellent, with a particularly strong and successful focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- A high level of care, guidance and support is provided to all pupils, in response to individual needs
- Excellent links with home and the community contribute much to pupils' learning
- The leadership of the headteacher and other staff is excellent and the school is very well managed, resulting in further improvements constantly being made

The school's improvement since the last inspection in 1999 is very good. All the areas that were identified as strengths by the last inspection have been maintained, and most have been further improved. The evidence indicates that pupils now do well in design and technology and music. The arrangements for assessing pupils' learning and tracking their progress are good overall, and are currently being developed further. Many improvements have been made in other areas, notably in the provision for ICT, and the introduction of innovative curriculum planning that makes excellent links between subjects. The school's recent focus on developing creativity has led to excellent results.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	A	A	A*
mathematics	A	A	A	C
science	B	A	A	C

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

The pupils' achievement is very good in the school as a whole, and in the Reception year and Years 1 to 6. Standards are well above average by the end of the Reception year, and in Years 2 and 6. Children in the Reception year attain the goals expected for the end of this year, and do particularly well in the areas of language and literacy development, creative development and personal, social and emotional development. In Years 1 to 6, pupils do particularly well in English, and in creative subjects including art and design. The Year 6 test results for English were very high in 2004 as they were in the top five per cent of similar schools nationally. Standards in information and communication technology are also very high at the end of Year 6.

The pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are excellent, as are

relationships and pupils' behaviour in lessons and at all other times of the day. Their attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good.

The teaching is very good throughout the school. The innovative curriculum and an excellent range of additional activities give pupils a stimulating education in which creativity and independent learning are strongly promoted. Other features that are excellent include the quality of care for pupils, and the school's links with other schools, parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school is very good overall. The headteacher's leadership is excellent, as is that of others with senior management responsibility. The school is very well managed. The governing body's effectiveness is very good, and governors have an excellent understanding of what the school does best and where further improvements are needed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents' views of the school are very positive. Parents are very involved in their children's education, and are strongly supportive of the school's ethos, high expectations and values. Although a minority feel that the school should do more to communicate with them on matters such as when the class teacher changes, the inspectors found that the home-school communications are excellent. A very small minority of parents also feel that their children are not being given hard enough work, but the inspection found that this is rarely the case. The pupils think that the school is excellent. They are very proud of it, and are extremely happy that there are always plenty of adults to turn to if they have any worries.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The inspection team found that the school has no areas that need significant improvement. It is already working on the only minor issue. This is to improve the collection and use of assessment information, including to ensure that the work is always sufficiently challenging for everyone in the class.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good throughout the school. Well-above-average standards are attained by children in the Reception year and by pupils in Years 2 and 6.

Main strengths

- Children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage, and so standards are well above average by the start of Year 1
- In Years 1 to 6, pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science and so standards and test results are well above average
- Pupils achieve very well in art and design, and in information and communication technology (ICT)
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress against their targets

Commentary

1. The overall standard attained by children in the Foundation Stage is well above average by the end of the Reception year, and their achievement is very good. They do particularly well in the areas of communication, language and literacy, creative development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. They also do very well in their personal, social and emotional development, and well in mathematical development. Many of the children exceed the goals expected for their age well before the end of the Reception year as a result of very good teaching and provision for their learning.
2. In 2004, the school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost all the pupils reached the average standard (Level 2), and an above-average proportion gained Level 3 in all three tests. The English results at the end of Year 6 were very high: they were in the top five per cent of schools nationally in 2004. The mathematics and science results were well above average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.7 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.0 (16.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.7 (17.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.4 (27.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.9 (27.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.1 (30.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Although the trend in Year 2 results since the last inspection is below the national rate of improvement, the results have shown a considerable rise in recent years. The Year 6 results have varied from year to year, although the trend since 2000 is broadly in line with that nationally. The variation is largely due to differences in the year groups, particularly the proportion of higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

4. The standard attained by pupils now in Years 2 and 6 is well above average in English, mathematics and science, and pupils' achievement is very good overall. Standards by the end of Year 6 are high in art and design, and in information and communication technology. Pupils achieve very well in these subjects. Although there was insufficient evidence to make overall judgments on standards and achievement in the other subjects, sampling of lessons and pupils' work indicated that pupils do very well. Several factors contribute to the consistent picture of academic success. These include the quality of teaching provided to each year group, the innovative curriculum with its excellent links between subjects, pupils' enthusiasm for and confidence in learning, and the support provided by parents.
5. Pupils with special educational needs do very well because the additional support they receive is very well focused on meeting their needs. Other key factors are the pupils' own very good motivation towards learning and the supportive nature of the school community. These factors contribute to pupils who speak English as an additional language also making very good progress. Those who speak little English on entry to the school usually learn the language quickly, and within a year or so they are able to work independently and successfully.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are excellent, as is their behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths

- An ethos of care, trust and respect underpins pupils' excellent attitudes to their learning and the school as a community
- Pupils develop a high level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and enjoyment of school life contribute much to the success of the school

Commentary

6. Pupils are very proud of their school, and their attitudes towards every aspect of school life are excellent. They show thoughtfulness and care towards each other and all staff. As a consequence, they share all of the school's high expectations for their learning and contribution to the school, and do their best to live up to them. This is reflected in relationships being excellent, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. An outcome is that those new to the school are integrated very quickly and successfully, as are pupils who speak English as an additional language. It is also reflected in the confidence pupils have that there is always someone to turn to, should they need help. Pupils with special educational needs have very good relationships with teaching assistants, and are as motivated towards learning as the others in their class.
7. Pupils are attentive to and very interested in their lessons. Their excellent behaviour, coupled with punctuality both at the start of the morning and during the day, means that teachers can use all the lesson time and activities to maximum benefit. This is reflected in the pace and richness of lessons, and the high quality of pupils' learning. Pupils are keen not to miss school, which contributes to their attendance being well above the national average. There have been no exclusions, further illustrating the excellence of pupils' behaviour.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.6	School data	0.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

8. Pupils have a highly-developed sense of spiritual and human values. Spiritual matters are made meaningful and absorbing to them. For example, assemblies cover issues such as friendship, standing up for one's beliefs and the power of prayer. Periods of reflection and a rich selection of music give assemblies a sense of being a special occasion. They are entertaining, and humour is often used to good effect. Assembly topics are often followed through in lessons. From the Foundation Stage to Year 6, teachers take every opportunity to explore and develop the pupils' spiritual awareness further. This was observed especially in English, science and art lessons, where teachers gave pupils excellent opportunities to reflect on and appreciate the significance of what they were studying.
9. Parents are very pleased about the very successful way in which the school encourages pupils to develop their confidence and respect for others. Pupils of all ages are given many opportunities to take on responsibilities, encouraging them to develop a strong sense of self assurance and respect for others. For example, the pupils' views were sought in the appointment of the new headteacher as the school council held a discussion with each of the candidates. Pupils are keen to live up to their teachers' high expectations and so they carry tasks out with pleasure and care. Pupils' social development is encouraged further by the many visits they make as part of the curriculum, and by interacting with the many visitors whose talks and demonstrations further enhance pupils' learning.
10. The school is extremely clear about moral values. These are promoted in a positive way, through assemblies and the consistent way that pupils are treated by all staff. In lessons, pupils are reminded about following the rules and why this is important, such as to listen to each other with respect and to take turns fairly. The rightness of helping others is extended to the school's links with schools elsewhere in the world, and pupils show a good understanding of their responsibilities to those less fortunate than themselves in terms of material possessions. The school is active in its support of charity and fund-raising events, with an emphasis upon world awareness and global citizenship. For example, the school has set up a link with a primary school in Ghana, through an international charity. Letters and postcards are exchanged between children and staff, and the schools are now working towards an exchange of teachers.
11. The school places great importance on creativity and cultural development. Work in art and design makes a major contribution to this. Corridors and classrooms are rich with displays of the pupils' art work, which is of high quality and very varied in style and inspiration. Music activities, including a school orchestra, and opportunities for drama activities enrich pupils' cultural experience. For example, many visits are made to the school by performers including musicians, artists, poets and theatre workshops. Pupils of all ages have many stimulating visits to sites of cultural interest, including museums and art galleries, and work in lessons follows up and extends pupils' learning from these visits.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good, and the curriculum is excellent. The school provides very well for pupils' care, guidance and support, and has excellent links with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Assessment is good, and best in English and mathematics.

Main strengths

- Pupils of all ages have an excellent capacity to work collaboratively in lessons and independently
- The whole-school strategy of promoting learning by means of talk is highly successful

- Pupils of all ages respond very well to their teachers' high expectations of the quality of their work and of their effort and behaviour
- Teachers have excellent skills in motivating pupils through stimulating work that is adapted to meet pupils' differing needs, and ensuring that time is used to best advantage
- Pupils with special educational needs learn very well because of the way adults identify and meet their needs in lessons

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13 (28%)	15 (32%)	14 (30%)	5 (10%)	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.

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the Foundation Stage, and in Years 1 to 6. Successful teaching in all year groups is a major contribution to pupils making very good progress and to standards being well above average.
- From the Foundation Stage onwards, pupils are excellent in working together in any combinations asked of them. They very much enjoy sharing ideas and helping each other during learning activities such as when working in pairs to research ideas from reference books. Pupils of all ages are also co-operative and helpful in sharing resources. For example, children in the Reception year work together excellently in practical activities such as painting.

An example of excellent teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage was seen when the children wrote a simple story for themselves in twenty minutes. This activity built on previous work, including reading and retelling stories about small creatures. The lesson started with the teacher opening a lunch box very slowly to expose sandwiches and fruit with holes that had been made by a creature. Silence fell on the room. 'Who or what has eaten this?' asked the teacher. The children worked in pairs for two minutes, to come up with ideas. As the children shared their ideas with the class, the teacher wrote key words quickly on a large board. Then the teacher showed them a large book she had written and illustrated herself. She gave the children small home-made 'books' in the shape of fruit, each with a punched hole to simulate a creature having partly eaten it. Working in groups with an adult, most children rushed off to write their own stories in the books they had been given. One group of children went outside to look for the sandwich-eating creatures, and found that the water tray was filled with shining jewelled stones and weed, and had small plastic creatures at the bottom. On their return to the class, these children were jumping with excitement as they explained how they knew it was such creatures as dragonflies and stag beetles that had caused the problem. This helped all the children to move away from the structure of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' to write lively stories using exciting vocabulary and their own ideas. The children spelled some words for themselves, and also used the key vocabulary the teacher had written on the board. The lesson made an excellent contribution to the children's literacy and spiritual development because they were so inspired by the activities, and the stories they wrote were of a very high standard for their age.

- Teachers have an excellent understanding of how talk helps pupils to learn, and plan for a wide range of speaking and listening activities during lessons in all subjects. These activities give pupils of all ages the language and ideas they need for subsequent reading or writing tasks. Teachers' use of language is very clear, with much attention to ensuring that everyone understands any new vocabulary and expressions. Teachers promote learning through reflective talk, for example by asking open-ended questions in whole-class discussion, and encouraging pupils to think about answers that are given. Pupils learn very well from listening, as well as from contributing to discussion. The outcome is that pupils are full of ideas for their own work, and experiment with language confidently even if they cannot always spell the words correctly at first when they are writing.
- Pupils share their teachers' high expectations of them. This is shown by the way pupils of all ages are proud of their work and try to make it as good as possible. They are attentive throughout the lessons, and enjoy being expected to think for themselves. Very occasionally, the pace of the lesson is too slow, for example because the teacher has not matched the work to the level of pupils' understanding well enough. The pupils' attention drifts and they begin to chatter quietly, but they resume working hard as soon as the teacher realises and adapts the task appropriately.

16. Lesson time is almost always used very productively. Teachers plan skilfully for meeting the range of needs in their classes and ensuring that everyone finds that the work they are expected to do is appropriately challenging. In subjects such as science, the work at different levels of complexity is set, with the needs of all pupils in mind. In other subjects including English, art and design and ICT, a sequence of open-ended activities is set after the initial introduction to the lesson, and the teachers and teaching assistants provide support and challenge as pupils work in small groups. The result is that pupils are usually absorbed by the lesson activities.
17. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The teachers are skilled at preparing material at the right level for these pupils and match the work closely to their targets in the individual education plans. These targets are well constructed, and provide very good guidance to pupils, teachers and the skilled classroom assistants. As a result, the pupils make very good progress as many achieve average levels of attainment, including in English and science. Teachers and support staff take care to involve pupils who speak English as an additional language in lesson activities, and encourage them to develop confidence.
18. Teachers plan very carefully to create and exploit relevant links between subjects, and to build on what pupils learn from visits and visitors to the school. This means that knowledge and skills are reinforced systematically within a wide variety of activities. Pupils' skills in reading and writing benefit particularly from this approach, as is shown by the high quality of written work in history and geography. Homework is used very well to extend pupils' learning as worthwhile tasks are set.

An example of challenging teaching that made excellent links between subjects and a visit.

The teacher used an interactive whiteboard very well to illustrate slides from Egyptian tomb paintings in the British Museum. There was a gasp of excitement as the pupils recognised some of the features they had seen on their visit the previous day. The pupils showed a very good understanding of techniques used by the Egyptians when they were creating scenes from everyday life, such as painting a person with a side profile but with eyes staring straight ahead. Inspired by the imaginative teaching, pupils started designing their own tomb paintings depicting their lives today. Some were able to use grids and calculate the size of their designs accurately, ready to position them skilfully on their model tombs.

19. Overall, the arrangements for assessing the quality of pupils' work are good. In English and mathematics, assessment information is used very well to track pupils' progress and to identify those who need extra help, together with the areas which teachers need to give more attention as pupils have done least well. Pupils are set targets for a whole term but not for shorter periods, for example through advice given in marking, and so they are sometimes not as clear as they should be about exactly what to do next to improve the quality of their work. In mathematics, the work is occasionally not challenging enough for higher-attaining pupils because teachers have not realised from assessment information that the pupils could be doing even better. On the other hand, during most lessons pupils' learning benefits from question-and-answer checks on how well they are doing and advice on how to improve their work.

The curriculum

The curriculum is imaginatively planned and of excellent quality. Resources and accommodation are very good.

Main strengths

- The curriculum is innovative and implemented very successfully
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- An excellent range of additional activities enriches the pupils' learning
- The school has very good resources for learning, accommodation and staffing

Commentary

20. The curriculum is planned to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. Its improvement since the last inspection is excellent. Arrangements for design technology and music were quickly improved after the last inspection. The school has recently extended its teaching time so that each class receives two hours of physical education per week, to encourage pupils' physical development and wellbeing. ICT is embedded into other subjects as well as being taught in discrete lessons from time to time. Curricular time has been found to teach French, though this is not a weekly feature of the lessons for all year groups.
21. Curriculum development is excellent. Issues raised by monitoring are fed into the school improvement plan and are linked to teachers' performance management targets. For example, checks on children's learning in the classroom and teachers' analyses of test results in English, mathematics and science led to curricular changes. As a result of adapting the curriculum in the light of monitoring information, the English results rose dramatically in 2004, and standards in science are now higher than indicated by the 2004 National Curriculum test results.
22. The school has been innovative in its approach to covering the National Curriculum. Links between subjects provide for creativity as well as for high standards in each subject. These links are carefully planned, and so teachers always know which specific knowledge and skills they are to focus on in each activity. For example, Year 2 pupils working on measuring and weighing in mathematics also learned about how Victorians used scales and measures. Pupils' sketchbooks show that topics in English, geography and history are regularly explored through art. Occasionally, theme days for the whole school focus on an area of the curriculum, such as design and technology, giving pupils an intensive experience and time to develop their ideas. The curriculum is further enhanced by many visits and visitors, including inspiring schemes such as the Covent Garden Opera Project. Through working with professional tutors in opera, pupils are planning and developing their skills in music, drama and design. They are creating an opera company that will write an opera, design the stage sets and advertise the performance for parents at the end of the term.
23. The planning for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Their difficulties are identified early in their school life. Teachers produce very detailed, high-quality individual education plans to support their learning, giving them a curriculum that is relevant to their needs. These plans not only describe problems and set targets, but are also highly effective working documents because they provide detailed strategies and advice on how difficulties may be tackled. The very inclusive treatment of pupils with special educational needs ensures they catch up with parts of lessons missed when they are withdrawn from class when being taught in smaller groups. This is why these pupils make very good progress.
24. The support for learning outside lessons is excellent. The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. Take-up is high as nearly three-quarters of the pupils take part in an activity each week. Sporting coaches ensure instruction of high quality. The art and ICT clubs are very well attended. Demand has been so great that an extra club is run on Saturday mornings. The school orchestra meets each week, run by teachers and parents.
25. The provision for personal, social and health education is excellent. Pupils are encouraged to be independent, trustworthy, and to take responsibility. For example, in some lessons higher-attaining pupils are grouped with the less confident in order to help them with their work. 'Talking partners' are used very well in the English lessons in order to improve speaking and listening skills. Themed weeks such as healthy eating week encourage pupils' understanding of issues such as the impact of poor diet on physical fitness. Regular visits, such as to the Isle of Wight by pupils in Year 6, develop teamwork and self-reliance very successfully.
26. Resources are very good, and evidence of careful purchase. Resources for ICT are now excellent, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The staff are very well qualified, and the support staff are very well deployed. The school grounds provide a very good resource to enrich pupils' learning. The playground has wooden chairs and tables so that pupils can sit quietly to chat or to read. The 'gym trail' gives opportunities to further develop physical skills. Major improvements have been made to the accommodation. It is now very good as mobile classrooms have been replaced by a new building. This is strikingly attractive as it is clean, bright and very well maintained. However, some

classrooms are cramped which makes moving between desks awkward for both teachers and pupils. The building of an excellent covered area outside the reception classes and a new garden area enable children in the reception classes to learn more effectively, and this has contributed to the significant improvement in the progress made by these children.

Care, guidance and support

The school offers its pupils excellent care and support. It provides very good guidance, and is excellent at seeking and acting on pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Exceptional care and support are used skilfully to ensure that all pupils do very well
- The attention to health and safety of pupils and the staff is excellent
- Pupils have trust and confidence in all of the adult staff at the school
- Pupils know that they are important and that their views are valued highly
- Pupils are given very good guidance on their work during lessons, but are often unclear about what they should do to improve their work subsequently

Commentary

27. Pupils are provided with a very caring and supportive environment. Pupils know that they are important and matter as individuals within the school community, and that their views are taken seriously. Staff know and understand individual pupils extremely well, and this extends into doing all they can to get to know their parents and carers. The school takes great care to identify and provide the social or pastoral support pupils may require, and to check its effectiveness. Parents are very pleased with the care the school offers to their children.
28. The school's support for pupils' personal development and relationships is excellent. All staff, whatever their individual job in the school, work together as a strong and wholly effective team to encourage pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem and to reach their full potential. For example, older pupils are encouraged to care and take responsibility for younger ones.
29. The success with which pupils with special educational needs are integrated into the life of the school is evidence of the very high quality of care they receive. Considerable trouble is taken by teachers and teaching assistants to boost pupils' confidence and to find solutions to any difficulties or problems. For example, lessons in improving social skills are planned into the curriculum in order to help pupils learn more effectively, and a few pupils receive extra help in this area. Another significant feature of the care with which these pupils are treated is the unobtrusive yet positive friendliness and respect shown to them by other pupils. A similar level of care is provided to those who speak English as an additional language.
30. Health and safety are given a high priority and so the overall standard of health and safety in the working environment is excellent. The school building and grounds are very well maintained, cared for and respected. For example, very little litter is dropped, and in the dining hall pupils are careful not to spill food or drinks. Serious accidents in the school are extremely rare and stand as testament not only to the safety of the school but also to the pupils' excellent behaviour in and around the site. Arrangements for dealing with accidents and incidents, should they occur, are well known to staff and pupils. Pupils are confident that they can turn to any of the adults in the school if they are worried about anything. All pupils and their parents know that bullying will not be tolerated by the rest of the school community, and very little of such behaviour occurs as the occasional incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils would not hesitate to report this kind of behaviour and are entirely confident that any occurrence will be promptly and firmly addressed. Child protection procedures are comprehensive and effective.
31. The school makes exceptional efforts to seek pupils' views, through both questionnaires and the extremely capable school council. Consequently, pupils know that their views and opinions are important and will be acted upon wherever possible, if appropriate. The school council discuss proposals for school improvement, new initiatives for fund raising and they

recently interviewed the short listed candidates for the post of headteacher which will become vacant after the retirement of the present head at the end of the summer term.

32. Induction procedures are comprehensive and reassuring for both parents and children. Parents are initially welcomed to a meeting where they are provided with a prospectus and other pre school documentation with the opportunity to see the entire school. They then return with their children who go into class to meet their new teacher and stay for a short sample activity. The school also hosts coffee mornings for new parents.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the local community are excellent. Parental support and involvement with the school are also excellent. Parents receive very good information about their children, life within the school and its work in the wider community. Links with other schools and colleges are excellent.

Main strengths

- Links with parents contribute much to pupils' learning
- Parental support, including the Parents and Friends Association, is strong and significantly benefits the school
- The school has a pivotal role in the local community
- Links with other schools and colleges are strong

Commentary

33. The school places great importance upon its relationship and partnership with parents and it welcomes their contributions and participation in all aspects of school life. Parents are consulted about the school's plans and development, and there are daily opportunities for parents to talk with any of the staff. As a consequence, parental support for the school is very strong.
34. As at the last inspection, almost all parents are delighted with what the school provides for their children. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting or completed the questionnaire were extremely supportive of and happy with the school. They wholeheartedly agreed that the school is a safe caring place in which their children thrive. Parents showed a strong sense of ownership and affection towards the school, reflecting the views of their children. A small minority felt that the school could provide them with more detailed information regarding their children's progress. These concerns were not generally borne out by the inspection evidence. Very good information is provided to parents. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well presented and contain helpful and relevant information. The school's comprehensive website is a particularly good feature of home-school communication. Parents and other enquirers can access school news and current newsletters, find out about what is being taught and the work pupils are doing, and view the prospectus and a host of other material. The website is regularly updated, and its popularity is illustrated by the number of enquiries: nearly 9000.
35. The school is very good in liaising with parents about the quality of their children's work. The end-of-year reports for children in the Reception year are very good. Reports for pupils in Years 1 to 6 are very informative in English and mathematics, and good for other subjects. In addition, short reports in the autumn and spring terms give key information focusing on English and mathematics, with pupil targets for the coming term. Each term, the school hosts consultations for parents, and the meetings are always extremely well attended. These regular consultations are also used by the school to gauge parents' views and opinions on what the school is providing for their children. A questionnaire is sent to parents. It is used to monitor parents' views on the school and elicit comments and suggestions.
36. The school takes its role in the local community especially seriously, and has excellent links with the community including a close affiliation with the local church. Local people are always welcomed to school productions and events, and pupils entertain local senior citizens and work on various projects in the area. Many local residents come to the school to talk with the pupils. Topics include what life was like during the last war, working on a cross-Channel ferry, healthy eating, and medicine and drug abuse. The Parents and Friends Association raises very substantial funds through local area links and business sponsorship. School fetes and social events are a key part of village life, bringing wide-ranging benefits for both the school and the population it serves.

37. As a Beacon School, the school provides excellent links and support to a wide range of mainly smaller schools in the area. It hosts a number of training and staff development days, recently including the topics of raising standards in literacy, and school maintenance. The school works closely with several teacher training institutions. It welcomes student teachers for teaching practice together with other students who have expressed an interest in teaching as a profession. It regularly trains teachers through the Graduate Teacher Programme.
38. Links with the local secondary schools are particularly close. For example, pupils are sometimes taught science and physical education by specialist staff from a secondary school. Transfer and induction arrangements to secondary schools are reassuring for both pupils and parents. Secondary teachers visit the school prior to transfer and visits are arranged for pupils to see their next school, familiarise themselves and take part in activities and sample lessons.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher's leadership is excellent, and excellent support from senior staff sustains the very good management of the school. Governance is very good, and the school complies fully with all statutory requirements.

Main strengths

- The outstanding work of the headteacher is central to the school's success
- The staff and governors have very high expectations for the care and achievement of all pupils
- Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- The headteacher has created an excellent team who inspire, motivate and support each other
- Financial management is excellent

Commentary

39. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has the full support of her staff. Senior managers commented that she is "a forward thinking, dynamic and powerful leader with high expectations, who is caring, supportive and just great". Inspectors agree with all of these extremely positive comments. She goes about her work in an energetic way and never lets things stand still. At all times, the needs and care of the children are central to her vision. She also ensures that her staff are cared for, valued, praised and supported. Together, they form an excellent team. The headteacher delegates very well, whilst ensuring a firm grasp of the school's work overall.
40. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has enhanced her skills by working with a school facing significant difficulties. This experience had a profound effect on her determination to do the very best for the children at this school. Most notably she has worked to make learning a joy to children. By reviewing the curriculum, with the support of governors and all staff, she has widened pupils' learning opportunities so that learning is highly creative and links, almost effortlessly, from one subject to another. In particular, the provision for art, English, ICT and science have developed tremendously. By careful selection she has created a team of staff, who are fully committed to very high achievement for all pupils, not only in their academic work but also in their wider personal development.
41. The headteacher has sought to create "a learning school", and so the continuing development of staff is given a high priority. The headteacher and governors have made a very strong commitment to providing training for all staff so that their skills can be updated for the benefit of the school, and for their own personal development. This commitment also extends to initial teacher training, with three graduate trainee teachers currently working within the school. These new teachers make a very good contribution to the working life of the school. Their presence enables more established teaching staff to have the opportunity to reflect on, and improve even further, their own professional practice. When new teachers join the school, excellent arrangements are made for them to learn procedures quickly so that they contribute to school life as soon as possible. Staff performance is meticulously

reviewed. Procedures for the performance management of all staff, including support and office staff, are excellent, with individual targets being linked to the school improvement plan.

42. The school has very well qualified teaching and support staff, which contributes significantly to the quality of teaching and learning. Support staff are deployed very effectively. In anticipation of Government reforms concerning teachers' workload, the school has ensured that higher level teaching assistants have received training so that they can be deployed in ways which will assist the management of these reforms. The school recently had its Investors in People accreditation renewed.

43. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well led. The management of teaching assistants is very good. A strong focus has been placed upon further training in order to deal with the diversity of pupils' need. Teaching staff draft and continuously review pupils' individual education plans, which provide very good direction for teaching. The action plan is comprehensive and has identified further refinement for the assessment of skills as an area for development. Consequently, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school.
44. Senior staff and subject managers provide excellent support to the headteacher. All staff work with the headteacher to evaluate the school's results and provision for pupils' learning. By doing this and by asking searching questions about the effectiveness of their work, staff identify the most important elements for improvement. For example, recently there has been a very successful focus on improving the opportunities for higher-attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 to improve their skills in writing.
45. Excellent leadership is the reason for very good overall school improvement, particularly the excellent improvement in standards in ICT. In 1999, standards in this subject were average whereas they are now exceptionally high. This is due to the very significant development in staff skills, the curriculum and resources. In all subjects, leaders not only provide very good role models as teachers, but also routinely identify where improvements are needed.
46. Management is very good, resulting in more very good and excellent teaching than reported by the last inspection. The school's many improvements and innovations have been managed very successfully. Assessment is the only area that has had insufficient focus in the past, although it is has been identified as a priority and is now receiving appropriate attention. For example, the school has recently started to use a computer system that will enable staff to track pupils' progress from year to year in all subjects, once sufficient data has been collected.
47. As in 1999, governors continue to give very good support to the school. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for development. Results of national tests, and other assessments of pupils' progress, are rigorously analysed and discussed with the governing body so that they have a very good understanding of how well the school is performing. While they have a very good overview about the performance and achievement of pupils, their understanding about children's starting points in the reception classes is not as detailed as other aspects of their knowledge. This limits their wider understanding of how much progress pupils make during their time in the school. Nonetheless, governors ask very challenging questions about the school's performance. Following evaluation of past results, firm action has been taken to improve the achievement of higher-attaining pupils in mathematics, and the provision in music is being carefully monitored. Together with staff, pupils and parents, governors accurately agree excellent priorities and set rigorous targets for improvement, which the school is on track to meet.
48. Expenditure is monitored very regularly and carefully. There is a very clear understanding of how to organise funding efficiently to meet the needs of the school's improvement plan. The school ensures best value exceptionally well. The headteacher has been instrumental in gaining additional funding for the benefit of the pupils. For example, funding was obtained for an excellent outside canopy for children in the Foundation Stage. This has resulted in a better curriculum being provided for the Reception year, and very good achievement. Since the last inspection, the improvement in the accommodation has been excellent, reflecting careful planning and financial rigour.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,230,022	Balance from previous year	24,112
Total expenditure	1,180,636	Balance carried forward to the next	49,386
Expenditure per pupil	3,115		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.

Since the last inspection, there has been very good improvement, which reflects the very good leadership, management, teaching and learning. The significant improvement in children's progress is a result of changes in the curriculum and the accommodation, and further development of the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are extremely caring, and form excellent relationships with the children. Moreover, staff are extremely enthusiastic, have very high expectations and make learning fun. As a result, the children make very good progress and achieve very well. Staff make good use of assessment information to record children's development and plan future lessons. When children join the reception classes they are well above average in speaking, whereas in most other aspects they are above average. The exception is in physical development, where their skills are average. Children are very successfully prepared for Year 1. Almost all children reach the learning goals expected for their age and many exceed them. Standards by the start of Year 1 are currently well above average.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths

- Children achieve very well because of excellent relationships, very exciting activities and very good teaching and learning
- Children show excellent attitudes, behaviour, confidence and independence
- Links with spiritual development are very good

Commentary

49. From an above-average starting point, the children make very good progress in learning how to communicate and socialise with others. Standards in this area of learning are much higher than nationally expected by Year 1. This makes a significant contribution to the children's very good achievement in the school as a whole. Teaching and learning are very good. Relationships are excellent. Staff have a gentle and sensitive style, which helps the children to grow in confidence, feel secure and show initiative and independence. Children learn to concentrate, persevere and negotiate with others because teachers plan exciting activities and help them to overcome difficulties. Moreover, these activities and interventions invite children to express their feelings and experience wonder and joy in learning, which supports their spiritual development very successfully. There is a very strong emphasis on treating each other with courtesy. Children build on their already good behaviour to make it excellent by the start of Year 1, due to teachers' skilful involvement with and management of children in their care.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is excellent.

Main strength

- Learning is fun and rooted in meaningful activities that develop all aspects of communication very successfully

Commentary

50. Standards in reading and writing are well above expectations by the start of Year 1, and exceptionally high in speaking and listening. Achievement is excellent, in relation to the children's above-average starting point when they join the school. Teaching is excellent because it is inspirational and rooted in helping children to show independence and develop new skills rapidly. Activities are excellently planned to inspire the children to work quickly and hard, with skilful support from adults. Staff are especially successful at encouraging the children to talk through their ideas and ask and answer questions with confidence and accuracy. Children learn how to make up stories

and write for many different purposes. Staff constantly speak to the children about what is happening, which enables them to hear and use new words in natural conversations, which is excellent practice. Children quickly master reading skills. These are taught on a daily basis and they are further supported by reading three times a week on a one-to-one basis with adults, as well as by group reading activities. Children learn writing skills very successfully because teachers provide time to model writing and then encourage them to take responsibility and experiment for themselves.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is good.

Main strength

- Very practical teaching and learning help children to think and learn for themselves and achieve well

Commentary

51. This area of learning is well taught and standards are higher than average by the end of the Reception year, with most children meeting or exceeded the standard expected at this point. The staff are skilled in helping the children to understand new things. For example, teachers used a large-screen computer presentation to help children to see symmetry in photographs of butterflies. Children make good progress in counting and beginning to recognise the patterns in simple addition sums to twenty. Learning is usually challenging, with examples of children making their own track games to help them with ordering, counting on and back to twenty. Sand and water activities help the children to learn successfully about measuring. They know simple shapes and compare size and weights of objects with growing accuracy.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is excellent.

Main strengths

- Planning is excellent and provides for the children to experience many exciting activities
- Children are inspired to learn quickly
- This area makes an excellent contribution to spiritual and social development
- Computer technology is used very well

Commentary

52. The work seen during the inspection was extremely exciting. Both within and outside the classroom, teachers plan inspiring opportunities for children to learn by observing growth, change and development in nature. For example, they learn to show their emotions and delight in daily observations and care for hatching chicks. All children enjoy planting and working together to care for the numerous plants in their outside garden centre. The children's achievement is excellent, reflecting the excellent teaching and learning. These are rooted in widening the children's language and communication skills and their wider joy in life, which enhances their spiritual and social development to an excellent standard. Computers are used very successfully to develop above-average skills. This is because children have focused lessons in their classes using laptop computers, and then they consolidate skills in their computer area throughout the day. The very high ratio of computers to children and use of other equipment gives pupils an abundance of practical learning opportunities. Children learn about different cultural traditions, which help them to respect the views and beliefs of others. Cutting, joining, folding and building activities are numerous, and provide a strong basis for design and technology work in Year 1.

Physical development

Too little direct teaching was seen during the inspection to make an overall judgement on provision. The outside area is used regularly, although the climbing apparatus lacks challenge and is more suitable for younger children. However, staff encourage increased agility through lessons in the school hall and occasionally by using the adventure area in the school field. Many activities gave children opportunities to demonstrate fine hand skills when manipulating small objects and

malleable materials, demonstrating good dexterity and co-ordination, as seen when Reception children made props for their story telling.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is excellent.

Main strengths

- Children are encouraged to use their imagination and think for themselves
- There are excellent links with communication and spiritual development
- The range of role-play opportunities is excellent

Commentary

53. Children make excellent progress in this area of learning because teaching and learning are first rate. Staff organise a superb range of opportunities allowing children to have fun, explore, use their imaginations and widen their ability to use language to talk about their ideas. Adults are highly skilled at encouraging children to respond to what they see, hear, touch and feel and to express their emotions. There are six role-play areas, which are used in a highly effective way to widen children's social, communication and imaginative skills. For example, children used the flower shop area to make arrangements for a wedding and then pretended and acted out a wedding. Whilst in the 'fire engine' they explored their fears about fire, being trapped and then rescued. Children confidently experiment with mixing colour when painting, and create interesting collages using a range of materials and textures. Computers aid this. For instance, the children learnt about Van Gogh, using this technology before mixing sand to paint to create textures in their landscape pictures. Resources are very well organised to encourage the children to think for themselves. Displays are a superb example of work being used to celebrate effort and enhance children's self-esteem. Children really enjoy making music and moving to music in a creative way.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is very good.

Main strengths

- Pupils achieve very well and so standards are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6 in all areas of the subject
- The school's focus on language and literacy development is a key factor in pupils' success in other subjects
- Very good teaching gives pupils the confidence and skills to learn very well
- Parents give strong support to helping their children learn to read well

Commentary

54. The assessment results at the end of Year 2 were well above average in reading and writing in 2004, and have risen in recent years. The Year 6 results were very high in 2004, in comparison with schools nationally and those in which pupils gained similar results in their Year 2 tests four years previously. The proportion of pupils who gained Level 5, which is above the standard expected for eleven-year-olds, was very high: three quarters of the pupils gained Level 5, whereas nationally about a quarter do so. This was a massive improvement on the 2003 results, and reflects the impact of the school's focus on English in 2003-04.
55. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are well above average. Overall standards in Year 6 are lower than the 2004 results because of differences in the proportion of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils of all ages and all levels of prior attainment achieve very well in all areas of English. They are confident and fluent orally, joining in discussion readily. In class discussion, they explain the thinking behind their comments

clearly. The younger pupils make very good progress in reading, helped by carefully-planned teaching of skills and phonics. Home-school communication about reading is very good, particularly for the younger pupils. Parents' support makes a strong contribution to enabling pupils to learn to read independently, and to extending the older pupils' experience once they have moved off the reading scheme.

56. Pupils of all ages learn to write confidently in a wide range of styles. The standard of presentation of written work is high from Year 1 onwards, as pupils of all levels of attainment strive to write legibly and accurately. They also love to use adventurous language even when they cannot yet spell the words correctly, often taking their cue from high-quality discussion that preceded the writing activity. This means that their work is lively and interesting. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly helped by this approach as they remain willing to have a go at all writing tasks as they are not constrained by fear of making mistakes. Their progress is also helped by adults' systematic, careful attention to teaching the skills and vocabulary they and other pupils need. Almost all pupils spell accurately by the time they are in the upper year groups.
57. Strengths in teaching include the skilled way language is taught, excellent relationships that are fostered in all lessons, skilful management of lesson activities so that time is not wasted, and high expectations of pupils' effort and attainment. The work is stimulating and challenging to all in the class because teachers take care to involve everyone in discussion and to adapt group and individual tasks to the pupils' various needs. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and enjoy the lessons. They take great pride in their work, and are keen to contribute their own ideas and suggestions. They are very good at independent and collaborative work, using their initiative to sort out problems. Marking of written work is encouraging but often gives pupils too little information about how to improve in future. However, teachers make very good use of test results and other assessment information to identify who needs extra help.
58. English is led and managed very well. The curriculum is very well planned, with a wide range of additional activities such as visiting poets, drama and role-play events, and theatre visits for the older pupils. The improvement since the last inspection is very good, and staff have a clear understanding of the next steps in developing the subject.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. Teachers and support staff promote language and literacy skills excellently in other subjects. This is because the school's approach to learning is based on the understanding that pupils need to be helped to develop their language in order to learn and do well in each subject. For example, teachers make a point of discussing the work to be done and sharing ideas orally, before asking pupils to tackle tasks independently. Teachers and teaching assistants provide excellent role models in their own use of language, which helps pupils to become familiar with the words and grammatical structures they will need to use in their reading and writing. Pupils of all ages listen to adults extremely well, and so are very good at picking up ideas in discussions with teachers and support staff. They also listen attentively to other pupils, and so pupils learn through talking to each other in collaborative activities.
60. Links between English and other subjects are carefully planned, and contribute much to developing pupils' literacy skills. Teachers provide much help in how to read successfully, taking opportunities to reinforce or develop further the skills that are being taught in English lessons. For example, pupils often have opportunities to research from books in subjects such as history and geography, and are guided in how to do this. Written work benefits from a similarly strong link, with the result that pupils' writing is generally of a high standard in all subjects.

61. **French** was sampled. It is taught when curricular time is available. Written work from pupils in Year 2 showed that they have learned a range of vocabulary for greetings and simple dialogues. In a very good link to work in English, they have made booklets of their French work, including a contents page. One lesson was observed, in which Year 3 pupils learned food names and expressed their likes and dislikes. The use of a humorous situation for a speaking and listening activity in small groups encouraged fluent dialogue. Self-assessment was a strong feature of the lesson as pupils noticed and corrected their mistakes in the dialogues.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables pupils to achieve very well and results in standards being well above average
- Pupils are very well motivated and keen to learn mathematics
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of very good support from teaching assistants
- Some parents are involved in their children's learning by attending weekly mathematics sessions

Commentary

62. Standards in mathematics have remained consistently high over recent years. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 were well above the national average in 2004, and above average in comparison with similar schools. Results in the tests taken at the end of Year 6 were also well above the national average, and average in comparison with schools in which the pupils had similar results at the end of Year 2. Standards seen during the inspection were also well above average in Years 2 and 6. The school carefully analyses results of tests in all year groups to see where improvements need to be made, and then puts in place strategies to deal with any weaknesses. For example, this year the school has focused on problem solving, as it was identified as an area of mathematics where the pupils could do better.
63. Achievement is very good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because the work is matched to their needs very well and they receive very good support from their teachers and teaching assistants. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on solving word problems, pupils who needed extra support made very good progress because the teaching assistant's questioning guided them through each problem until they found what to do to solve it. Pupils approach their learning with great interest and enjoyment; they want to do well and they have excellent attitudes towards mathematics.
64. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers know their subject very well and are very good at developing pupils' mathematical skills. A starter activity quickly focuses pupils on their work. The pace of lessons is very good, and pupils are clear about what they are expected to achieve. Teachers are very good at asking questions such as, 'How do you know that's the right answer?' and so pupils are challenged to think more deeply. This is very successful in improving their understanding of mathematics. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils create a very effective environment in which to learn. Pupils' progress is checked carefully, and the school identifies and sets targets for individual pupils. The work is mostly well matched to each pupil's needs, although occasionally a very small minority of higher-attaining pupils find the tasks too easy. This is because staff do not use the targets that have been set explicitly enough in lessons, so that they are at the forefront of the pupils' minds. In addition, marking sometimes gives too little guidance on how to improve their work.
65. Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear vision and a commitment to raising pupils' achievement, valuing all pupils and encouraging them to be successful. The innovative practice of involving parents in their children's learning is a great success. Some parents in Years 3 and 4 attend school for weekly sessions to learn alongside their children, and pupils say this has made a difference to their confidence and approach to mathematics. Resources and accommodation are very good. Annual mathematics days, when the whole school focuses on investigating areas of the subject, make a very good contribution to pupils' interest and skills in the subject. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good; the quality of teaching has improved, the programme for parents to be involved

in their children's learning has been developed, and the new accommodation, along with the new interactive whiteboards, has made a very effective contribution to learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Pupils are given very good opportunities to use and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in religious education pupils have worked out the difference in cost between Easter eggs and bars of chocolate as part of an investigation into the commercialism of Easter. In science, pupils have taken measurements of shadows. In art, grids have been used to transfer information accurately on to tombstones, and Year 5 pupils have undertaken mapwork during their field study. A survey was carried out in Bridge village to discover when people had died as part of a history task, and sensors were used in ICT to record temperature in both degrees Celsius and degrees Fahrenheit. The wide range of opportunities to practise what they learn in mathematics lessons contributes to pupils' numeracy skills being well above average.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is very good.

Main strengths

- Standards are well above average, and pupils achieve very well in science
- Pupils with special educational needs make excellent progress
- The quality of teaching is very good, with a very strong focus upon developing pupils' lines of enquiry
- Very good leadership and management are providing a creative science curriculum

Commentary

67. The school took part in a national trial of the National Curriculum testing for pupils in Year 2 in 2004. The results were above the national average, and average when compared to schools with similar proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Results in Year 6 were well above the national average in 2004, and average when compared to schools in which pupils had similar results when they were in Year 2.
68. Recent changes to the science curriculum have made it more creative, with a stronger focus on pupils developing their own lines of enquiry. For example, staff have introduced more activities that develop pupils' skills in carrying out scientific investigations. As a result, pupils now gain good enquiry skills and a very good understanding of scientific concepts through challenging, practical tasks. Year 2 pupils make good use of their own experiences when carrying out investigations. They give very careful thought to what might occur and begin to draw reasonable conclusions from their findings. By Year 6, pupils have developed into 'young scientists'. They explain the key factors to be considered in fair tests and draw conclusions from the outcomes of their investigations, both with very good knowledge and understanding. As a result of the improvements to the way the science curriculum is taught, pupils are making very good progress and achieve very well. Standards have risen, and are well above average by Year 2 and Year 6.
69. Pupils with special educational needs achieve excellently because the tasks and activities are very well planned to ensure they are developing an understanding of scientific concepts, without being inhibited by weak skills in literacy or numeracy. As a result, these pupils often reach average to above-average standards in their work by Year 6. Excellent support is provided because the teaching assistants are very skilled at their job. For example, Year 3 pupils with special needs were shown how to make simple tables to record the facts learnt, enabling them to record a complex amount of data from an experiment on measuring the lengths of shadows accurately.
70. Pupils are very highly motivated and very keen to learn. This is because the way in which the teachers present the work is exciting, challenging and enjoyable. Teachers plan very interesting lessons, with a very good range of practical activities to help pupils to develop scientific skills through first-hand experiences. A strong emphasis is placed on making tests

fair in investigations. For example, Year 1 pupils were asked to test their ability to identify the sounds made by different objects when blindfolded. Suggestions included the idea that, to make the test fair, pupils should not touch the object. ICT is used very well to teach science and to provide extra challenge for higher-attaining pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 have designed multimedia presentations to record research carried out on the solar system.

71. The subject is managed very well and its improvement since the last inspection is very good. Areas for development are quickly identified and corrected through very thorough monitoring of teaching and planning. Assessment is good. Science-based trips to local environmental centres, show grounds and farms have been introduced. To raise the profile of the subject further, the school is participating in the Eco School programme.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

Provision in information and communication technology is very good.

Main strengths

- Standards are very high by the end of Year 6, and overall pupils' achievement is very good
- Recent developments in ICT have been excellent, particularly in Years 5 and 6
- Planning for links between ICT and other subjects is excellent

Commentary

72. The quality of recent developments in this subject is outstanding. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and extremely high in Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. It is very good overall in Years 3 to 6.
73. Pupils make the most progress in Years 5 and 6 because of the tablet computers that are used in these classes. The pupils' work is of an exceptionally high quality, indeed marvellous. Year 6 pupils have the skills, knowledge and understanding which are more commonly found later in secondary education. The pupils work extremely quickly, with confidence and precision. For example, they use hyperlinks and hidden controls accurately when making multimedia presentations which unite sound, visual effects and moving text. Pupils' skills and confidence show outstanding development. Those with special educational needs work confidently at an average level, with some aspects of work at an even higher level. Higher-attaining pupils thrive on the challenge and encouragement provided. All pupils are highly motivated. They are doing so well because they are allowed to work on their own ideas while learning strong basic skills.
74. ICT is taught largely through opportunities that are created in other subjects, although specific ICT lessons are occasionally taught when new work needs to be introduced to the whole class. There was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in this subject. However, planning and the lessons seen showed that pupils develop a good range of skills from Year 1 to Year 4, both formally in ICT lessons and within lessons in other subject. Links with homework are very good.
75. Leadership is excellent, firmly committed to raising standards and enhancing pupils' achievement. Management is very good. The overall improvement since the last inspection is excellent. Then, standards were average and are now they are exceptionally high by Year 6 as a result of developing staff skills, the curriculum and resources. The drive to secure additional funding has enabled considerable up-grading of resources to a very good overall standard. Notably, model practice is evident in Year 6, with every pupil having the latest tablet computers to use in school. However, it is not easy for staff to check pupils' progress from year to year because the school has not kept on-going assessment information.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. ICT is integrated into other subjects very successfully because of the way the school approaches the teaching of ICT. Opportunities to teach and practise specific skills are planned for very carefully, and are excellent in Years 5 and 6. In discussion, Year 6 pupils commented on how they love to try new ICT ideas at school and at home. They showed many different skills keenly, using tablet computers. Pupils enjoy using ICT to help them with learning beyond academic work. For example, while on a school visit to the Isle of Wight, the Year 6 pupils especially enjoyed sending daily messages home to keep their parents informed about what was going on.
77. The school's excellent planning for curricular links includes ICT very successfully. Examples of the teaching and use of ICT in other subjects include computer art, control technology work in science, database work in mathematics, and communications work in many subjects including English. Pupils are often asked to find out information from the Internet, and they regularly use word processing. Pupils' personal and social skills are much enhanced through the use of ICT. For example, pupils have sent pictures to another school in India, and have presented their work at a Kent ICT conference, which involved interviewing speakers and cabinet ministers.

HUMANITIES

78. **History** and **geography** were sampled during the inspection. The work in both subjects is stimulating, not least because teachers plan for excellent links between history, geography and other subjects particularly art, English and ICT. For example, Year 5 pupils worked on the theme of Egypt as a holiday destination, covering a wide range of issues such as how the River Nile affects the lives of Egyptian people, why tourism is important to the country and what tourists need, the significance of Howard Carter's archaeological discoveries of 1922, and how tourist brochures use powerful words and images to persuade their readers. The pupils had plenty of opportunities for independent thinking, and used a wide range of resources including the Internet to research information and tablet computers to draft their own brochures. Their learning was excellent.
79. Pupils' written work and classroom displays showed that pupils in other years have had similarly rich experiences. In Year 2, pupils have looked at modes of travel, Bridge village in the past, how to draw maps, and how to record key information about people including Florence Nightingale. They have been encouraged to ask historical questions, and to find out how to answer them. The challenging work has given pupils of all levels of attainment the opportunity to learn a great deal about people and places. Very good opportunities for fieldwork include Year 2 finding out about the local village, a trip to Frog Firle Farm as part of Year 5 pupils' work on rivers, and Year 6 pupils looking at the landscape and sites of historical interest during their visit to the Isle of Wight.
80. In the lessons observed, key strengths were that teachers had high expectations of the pupils' understanding and independent thinking, used a wide variety of resources to give them lots of ideas, and explained how to do the work so that everyone had good examples to build on. The pupils' collaborative learning was often of a very high order, and they worked enthusiastically throughout the lessons. An additional strength is that both subjects make a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the topics studied and the thoughtful approach to them.
81. In **religious education** lessons, pupils learn about the main world religions and their relevance in today's society. A good awareness of other world faiths as well as Christianity was evident in the work which pupils had completed in their books, as well as in two of the lessons observed. Pupils in Year 1 looked at Hindu food and discussed whether their favourite foods would be suitable to offer to a person who believed in Hinduism. Year 3 pupils made very rapid gains in their learning about the main similarities and differences

between a Sikh and a Christian wedding ceremony, by watching a video of a Sikh wedding and taking part in role play. Year 2 pupils were taught effectively about the topic of prayer, as were pupils in Year 4, who were learning about how difficult and dangerous it was to be an early Christian. Pupils responded well in these lessons to the good support given by teachers and teaching assistants, to the effective planning and to the opportunities given to discuss their ideas and opinions with their talking partners, as well as with the whole class.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is excellent.

Main strengths

- Standards in art are outstanding, due to excellent teaching and learning throughout the school
- Art and design is playing a key role in the school's development of a creative curriculum

Commentary

82. Standards in art and design by Year 2 and Year 6 are very high. Overall, all groups of pupils achieve in an excellent way. This is partly because of highly effective planning for links with other subjects, so as to develop pupils' skills. Improvement since the last inspection has been exceptional.
83. By Year 2, pupils have developed an excellent range of skills, and confidently use a variety of techniques and materials. They are beginning to make thoughtful evaluations of their work. For example, during an art club pupils discussed maturely how they could make the texture of their paintings better by adding more flour to the paint. Year 6 pupils' watercolour paintings are vibrant, showing excellent perspective. Their work includes the use of pencil, charcoal, pastel, paint, clay, papier-mâché and textiles. Pupils also develop an exceptional understanding of other artists' work, and have taken inspiration from a wide range of sources and experiences. For example, the school has produced an impressive sculpture illustrating pupils' feelings of what the architecture of Canterbury Cathedral is telling them in the twenty-first century.
84. The teaching of art and design is highly effective because the work is planned very well and in considerable depth. It is based on pupils' experiences, giving them very good opportunities to make choices on the media to use in order to create an effect. For example, in an excellent lesson Year 1 pupils discussed the objects they had found on a visit to the beach. They were given opportunities to select from a wide variety of materials in order to create a collage. Photographs of the beach visit were used to develop the pupils' skills in creating dull and shiny surfaces. As a result, the pupils showed initiative and produced wonderful results. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and establish a positive atmosphere in which pupils can develop their confidence. They achieve a very high standard. This is because the teachers love teaching this subject: there is a gallery of teachers' art work in the staff room.
85. Art and design is very well led and managed, and its improvement since the last inspection has been rapid. The subject is central to the school's development of a creative curriculum and so is given excellent status. Curriculum plans identify the art and design skills that are to be taught within other subjects. For example, Year 5 pupils working on the history module 'The Ancient Egyptians' used the Internet to find good examples of canopic jars, and then made their own models of papier-mâché, and decorated them with heads. Themed weeks, artists in residence and exhibitions of pupils' work have all helped to raise the profile of the subject.
86. No **design and technology** lessons were observed, but a sample of work was seen and planning documents were scrutinised. The work shows that pupils have opportunities to use

a wide range of materials including junk materials, food, wood and fabric. Links with other subjects are very good. For example, pupils in Year 1 used construction kits to design and make models, and wrote instructions so that others could make models from the information they gave. Pupils in Year 2 have designed and made puppets. Their evaluations identify the important strategies to use in order to produce a quality product, and are written with very good use of technical vocabulary. By Year 6, pupils are proficient in their design skills and so have created complex games to use in their numeracy lessons. The standard of work seen was well above the national expectation for Year 6. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the pupils' making skills, the use of a wide range of resources and the scheme of work.

87. It was possible to see only three **music** lessons during the inspection and one orchestra rehearsal. Therefore it was not possible to make a judgement on standards or provision in this subject. Very good teaching and learning occurred when the teacher had very secure knowledge of music, and when pupils were engaged in activities which encouraged the development of good listening skills and offered opportunities for fun and enjoyment. Good links were made with other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils linked their music hall songs to their work in history on the Victorians, and Year 6 pupils composed a new set of lyrics to the well-known song *Amarillo*. Year 4 pupils linked their compositions based on rhythmic patterns to other work on the Aztecs, and added actions and props in order to prepare for a performance to parents. The orchestra was also practising for a future performance, and pupils clearly enjoyed this opportunity of making music as part of a team. Good listening and notational skills were evident and good progress was made during the rehearsal.
88. It was possible to see only two lessons in **physical education**. Both demonstrated how pupils develop skills in a progressive way. In one lesson, pupils were improving their skipping. The teacher made very good links to their work in English by introducing 'Jump, jump, sugar lump', a poem which the pupils had been reading. This helped pupils with the rhythm of skipping. No additional challenge were set for higher-attaining pupils, but overall the pupils made good progress in developing their skills. In a good lesson on rounders, pupils quickly learnt batting and fielding skills, which helped them to play a successful game. In both lessons, high quality demonstrations by the teacher helped pupils to make good progress.
89. There is a very clear plan for improvement in physical education, which reflects the excellent leadership and management of the subject. Resources are very much better than reported by the last inspection. In the last two years, the time allocated to physical education has increased to over two hours per week. This includes two formal lessons and an additional programme of hockey, netball, rugby, football and rounders. Pupils benefit from an excellent range of learning opportunities, due to the development of staff skills in teaching the subject and to widening links with the community. For example, several teaching assistants are highly skilled in netball and hockey, while other staff have taken training in cricket skills. In gymnastics and dance, staff have been working very successfully to improve creativity, as part of the school's focus on this. The provision for able and talented pupils is very good. They are provided with skilled teaching in gymnastics, county support in cricket and links to leading football teams. Tennis is taught from Year 2. Pupils also enjoy specialist teaching in volleyball and basketball. Links with local schools are very good for training and competitions. Physical education makes an excellent contribution to pupils' social and personal development, especially through the work on keeping healthy.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

90. The provision for **citizenship** is very good. It is taught through personal, social and health education, 'circle time' and within the rest of the curriculum. Courtesy and respect for everyone are fundamental features of the school's approach to citizenship, teaching pupils

to be good members of the school community and to be aware of their responsibilities within the wider world. Teachers and other adults are very good role models. The school is quiet, voices are not raised, whistles are seldom blown. Pupils are not ordered about. For example, at the end of break times a teacher walks onto the playground and holds up the name of each class. The pupils then line up promptly and in a very orderly manner. Pupils learn to resolve differences by examining alternatives. For example, during a break time two pupils were arguing and neither would give in. They both decided to walk away and play with others. Later they were observed playing together in a friendly manner, having resolved the argument by themselves. Through their geography work, Year 5 pupils explore how a country's resources can be used to improve tourism to create a better quality of life. Talking partners are used in literacy lessons in order to encourage pupils to cooperate and help each other. There is a consistent approach to monitoring social issues in 'circle time', which is held in every class during the week. Through the school council pupils are actively engaged in planning and improving their facilities as well as developing very positive attitudes towards recycling and green issues.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	1
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	2

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