

INSPECTION REPORT

**CHARING CHURCH of ENGLAND AIDED PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Ashford, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118739

Headteacher: Mrs R A Olley

Lead inspector: Ms R Frith

Dates of inspection: 22 – 24 November 2004

Inspection number: 266589

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 aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 110

School address: School Road
Charing
Ashford
Kent
Postcode: TN27 0JN

Telephone number: 01233 712 277

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of Mrs A Pinnock
governors:

Date of previous inspection: 18 November 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Charing is a smaller than average Church of England Aided School. It is situated in a small village and although pupils come from a range of social backgrounds, overall, the socio-economic status of families is average. An average percentage of pupils receive free school meals. When children join the school, they bring with them a wide range of experiences and abilities but overall, their attainment in speech and language is below that usually seen for children of this age. Also, across the school, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well above the national average and three pupils have a statement of special educational need because they need considerable help with their learning. Those receiving additional support mainly have social, emotional, behavioural, speech, communication or moderate learning difficulties. Pupils come from a narrow range of ethnic backgrounds with the majority being identified as White – British. One pupil comes from a family where English is spoken as an additional language. Currently, seven pupils are being cared for by adults other than those from their birth families. Pupil mobility is higher than that seen in similar schools nationally with over a quarter of the pupils in the last Year 6 cohort not having spent all their time in the school. Over the last two years a significant number of teachers have left or joined the school. The school is involved in a Rural Action Zone.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------|---|
| 2490 | R Frith | Lead inspector | Science Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage English as an additional language |
| 9519 | S Pritchard | Lay inspector | |
| 30717 | G Tompsett | Team inspector | Mathematics Geography History Physical education |
| 32136 | L Brookes | Team inspector | English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Charing C of E Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. Staff are successful in creating a supportive environment where pupils enjoy learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and standards are rising. The day-to-day running of the school is effective and pupils have good opportunities to enjoy a range of activities which enrich their experiences. **Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Recent developments in the way the school monitors and evaluates its work are steering improvements.
- Standards are improving in English, mathematics and science but are well below average in information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 with strengths in Years 5 and 6. This helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils' achievement remains satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 because the rate of learning slows.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They are helped to develop respect for the feelings of others and acknowledge the responsibilities of living in the school community and beyond.
- Pupils' personal qualities are developed well and this leads to good relationships and behaviour.
- The curriculum is satisfactory overall and enriched well by the provision of a good range of additional activities, particularly in sport.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall, and in some places poor. This affects the continuity of learning.
- Good systems are in place to ensure that pupils are well cared for and that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- Links with parents and other schools are good and links with the community are very good.
- Some staff are not receiving sufficient opportunities to develop their subject leadership and management skills.

Overall, the school has shown satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and is no longer judged to have serious weaknesses in its provision. Management and leadership are now satisfactory and staffing is more stable. These two factors have been significant in the school's drive for improvement. Staff have addressed the main issues identified in the last report and this is beginning to impact positively on pupils' achievement. They have also been successful in improving the curriculum and strategies are now in place to raise standards further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2004 |
| English | E | E | C | C |

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|----|---|---|
| mathematics | E | E | E | E |
| science | E | E* | D | D |

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

Although pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, in the reception year and Years 1 and 2, they are currently achieving well. Standards are generally rising and many pupils in the current Year 2 are working at levels appropriate for their age. However, a higher than average percentage experience difficulty with their learning and entered Year 1 with standards lower than those expected for their age. Consequently, overall standards for this cohort are below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are satisfactory in information and communication technology, because pupils are benefiting from the improved provision, and also in physical education. In Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics, science and physical education and well below average in information and communication technology. Standards in information and communication technology have been affected by unsatisfactory provision in the past which has affected pupils' learning and achievement. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similarly to others in their class, as do pupils learning in English as an additional language.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their moral and social development, are good. Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. Consequently, they behave well. Most pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but good in the reception year and Years 1 and 2 with strengths in Years 5 and 6. This inconsistency results in satisfactory achievement overall throughout the school even though in some lessons pupils achieve well and make good progress. Good teaching is characterised by high expectations and good subject knowledge which teachers use well to encourage pupils to learn. Work is challenging and maintains the interest of the pupils. Throughout the school, staff insist on high standards of behaviour and this creates a good climate for learning. The curriculum is satisfactory overall with good opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities. Overall, the accommodation is unsatisfactory and resources satisfactory. Pupils' personal and social needs are quickly identified and appropriate support given. Good opportunities are provided for them to get across their views and ideas. This helps them to be involved in school developments. Staff have good links with parents and other schools, and very good links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory and are helping the school to improve the quality of education and the standards achieved. The headteacher's clarity of vision and sense of purpose are being used well to evaluate the school's work and identify strengths and areas for development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally positive about the school and the provision for their children. They feel able to speak with staff if they have concerns because all are very approachable. Most believe teaching is good, pupils are expected to work hard and they make good progress. Most pupils feel that they can approach a member of staff if they have a problem, that teachers encourage them to work hard and help them to improve.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Raise standards in information and communication technology.
- Raise the quality of teaching to the best seen by sharing good practice, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Continue to strive to improve the school's accommodation.
- Ensure all teachers have the opportunity for further professional development by experiencing leadership and management of a subject.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well in the reception year and in Years 1, 2 and 6 and satisfactorily elsewhere. By the time they leave school pupils have attained average standards in English, well below average standards in mathematics and below average standards in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The 2004 national test results for pupils in Year 6 show a significant improvement in English and science standards from the previous year.
- The very low 2004 national test results for pupils in Year 2 reflect the high number of pupils with special educational needs and lower attainers in that cohort.
- Although standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are rising for the younger pupils, the standards of those in Year 6 are well below average.
- Standards in science are improving throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in the reception year and in Years 1, 2 and 6.

Commentary

- 1 On entry to school, children display a wide range of attainment and have had a variety of experiences but overall, their attainment is below that for children of the same age nationally, particularly in relation to their communication skills. Each year a few pupils join the school using a narrow range of vocabulary and not speaking clearly. Also, some have special educational needs and this also affects the overall standards on entry. Across the school, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. Due to the good quality of teaching and learning, children achieve well. Staff focus on developing their personal and social skills and on developing their speech and range of vocabulary. Progress is good so that by the time they enter Year 1, many children in the current reception year are likely to be working at the levels expected nationally for pupils of that age in all areas of learning. However, a few are not likely to reach average standards in their early reading and writing.
- 2 Attainment in the 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 2 was very low in reading, writing, mathematics and science when compared with all schools and also with schools with a similar number of pupils receiving free school meals. These results show a decline in standards from the previous year, and place the school in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally for Year 2 results in 2004. They also contribute to the school's trend of improvement over the last five years, which is below the national trend. However, these results should be treated with caution as nearly half of this cohort is identified as having special educational needs and experience considerable difficulty with their learning. Also, with such a small number of pupils in this year group, each pupil's performance represents over five percentage points and this can significantly affect the overall results.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 12.4 (13.9) | 15.8 (15.7) |
| writing | 10.9 (13.9) | 14.6 (14.6) |
| mathematics | 12.4 (16.0) | 16.2 (16.3) |

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 3 Attainment in the 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 6 was average in English, well below average in mathematics and below average in science. The school was successful in encouraging pupils to gain the level expected for their age in mathematics but overall standards were affected by the much lower than average percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5. Girls did better than boys in English and science and boys did better than girls in mathematics. Overall, the results show a significant improvement compared with the previous year and have halted the decline in standards over the last few years. The school met its targets for English and mathematics but the school's trend of improvement over the last five years has been below the national trend. When compared with pupils who attained similarly in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests, pupils also attained average standards in English, well below average standards in mathematics and below average standards in science. These results reflect the improvements made in the curriculum, the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour and the better quality of teaching.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 26.7 (24.0) | 26.9 (26.8) |
| mathematics | 25.4 (23.5) | 27.0 (26.8) |
| science | 27.8 (25.0) | 28.6 (28.6) |

There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 4 Evidence from this inspection indicates that pupils in Year 2 are currently working at below average levels in English, mathematics, and science but are achieving well. Whilst many are working at the level expected for their age, 24 per cent of this class have identified special educational needs and few are higher attaining pupils. Consequently, a lower percentage than the average are likely to achieve the higher Level 3 by the end of the year and this will affect overall standards. Pupils have benefited from the improved provision in information and communication technology (ICT) and are currently working at average levels in this subject. Pupils also reach average standards in physical education. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6 cohort than in the past, and overall standards are average for English, mathematics, science and physical education. Because provision for ICT has been unsatisfactory until recently, there are gaps in their learning and current standards are well below average. In both Year 2 and Year 6, a few pupils' enthusiasm for reading helps them to reach standards higher than that expected for their age.
- 5 No significant difference was noted in the achievement between boys and girls during the inspection although there have been some differences in the Year 6 national test results. For example, over the last three years, girls did better than boys in English, mathematics and science. However, with such a small number in each cohort it is difficult to identify trends over time. No under-achievement by either girls or boys was identified during the inspection. Also, no signs of

underachievement from specific minority groups were observed. The needs of pupils who are being cared for by adults other than their birth family are well supported and any particular difficulties they may experience quickly identified. This ensures that they achieve similarly to their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language reach the levels expected for their age and level of English acquisition.

- 6 The school has recognised the need to continue to provide appropriate challenge for the more capable pupils and practice is improving. In some English lessons, however, this could be developed further. Pupils with special educational needs reach standards in line with the targets in their individual education plans and achieve well in Years 1, 2 and 6. This is because difficulties with learning are quickly identified and they receive effective support from teachers and teaching assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Their attendance is satisfactory and most pupils arrive at school on time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's good provision for pupils' moral and social education helps to develop their good behaviour and attitudes.
- Relationships are good and enable pupils to work and play together well.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and provision for their spiritual and cultural development satisfactory.

Commentary

- 7 Despite significant staff movement over the last few years, a consistent approach to promoting pupils' good standard of conduct has been developed. This results in well-behaved pupils with positive attitudes, who work and play together harmoniously. The attitudes and behaviour of children in the Foundation Stage are good. They settle quickly into the school routines, benefiting from the induction arrangements where parents and children get to know the staff. Because the activities are appropriate and engage the children's interests, they quickly develop good attitudes to learning and concentrate well. They mix together well and soon learn to trust the staff.
- 8 Staff have worked hard to develop the good behaviour of pupils and improvements have been made since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils' good behaviour and their good attitudes have a positive effect on what they achieve. In the best lessons, suitable levels of challenge and a good pace stimulate pupils into being active and willing learners who enjoy their lessons. For example, their thinking skills were developed well in science lessons seen in Year 2 and Year 6. This encouraged them to move on from being able to describe what had happened to being able to analyse and predict what will happen next. This, together with their self-evaluation at the end of lessons, promoted a sense of spiritual awareness and understanding of their own abilities. The best led assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the sort of personal qualities the school tries to

promote but the school has not yet indicated how pupils' spiritual development is systematically developed over time through specific subjects. Pupils with special educational needs usually have positive attitudes but some in the Year 4/5 class easily get disillusioned when they experience difficulty with their learning.

- 9 Pupils respond positively to the caring ethos of the school and the good provision for their moral and social development. No incidents of challenging behaviour were observed in classes or in the playground and no pupil has recently been excluded from the school. Disciplinary measures work well. The school understands it has a part to play in challenging perceptions, such as racism and bullying and take satisfactory steps through the curriculum to do so. The work on 'News from around the World' helps pupils to understand cultures different from their own, as do their studies in geography and history.
- 10 Pupils develop a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities through the personal, social, health education programme (PSHE) and their work on citizenship. They quickly develop a clear feeling for the school community and that in the local village through becoming involved in a good range of activities. The older children play well with those younger, and sit on the same tables at lunchtime and supervise their mealtimes in a supportive and friendly manner. They also have opportunities to work in the Green Gang, thereby helping to develop the local environment. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to put their personal and social skills into practice. They regularly work in groups or pairs in lessons to come up with ideas or find solutions to a particular problem. Opportunities such as school clubs and school council meetings take these skills one step further. The good progress pupils make can be exemplified by the way the last Year 6 cohort organised their 'Leavers' Prom'. This proved to be very successful.
- 11 The vast majority of pupils arrive promptly for school. Their attendance is satisfactory; about the same as in most primary schools. Pupils want to attend school, but in-term time, holidays can lower the attendance of some. In an effort to reduce these, the school now rightly refuses to authorise any absence that cannot be justified. This has led to a higher than average number of unauthorised absences in the last reporting year. As the school office is in a separate building from where pupils are being taught, it is not always easy for the staff to note the exact time a latecomer arrives. This has led to some discrepancies in recording lateness.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.7 | School data | 0.8 |
| 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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory overall with good opportunities for enrichment. Pupils are well cared for and staff value their views. These are taken into account when making

school improvements. Links with parents and other schools and colleges are good and links with the community very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good for children in the reception year and in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory elsewhere. Overall, the way teachers assess pupils' work is good and still developing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection.
- There are some strengths in the teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6.
- Staff use their knowledge of the pupils, gained through thorough assessment, to plan work which helps pupils to succeed.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and pupils respond well. This helps to create a good ethos for learning.

Commentary

- 12 Pupils generally make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. This is because of the good overall quality of teaching and pupils' good attitudes to learning. These judgements are made through observing lessons, looking at the pupils' work and the teachers' planning and refer to the pupils currently in the infants. Some significant curriculum developments have been made and there has been a particular focus on developing teaching by meeting the individual needs of pupils. Whilst this has always been the basis of the work, the very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs (58 per cent) in the last Year 2 cohort affected the overall structure of the year and this can still be seen in the current Year 3. Standards of this cohort were low even though teaching had been at least satisfactory, and sometimes good. This cohort continues to present challenges for the staff who are using a variety of strategies to improve their rate of learning. As yet, these have not impacted sufficiently on the standards these pupils achieve. Teaching in the lower part of the juniors is never less than satisfactory but better quality teaching is required to accelerate the rate of these pupils' learning. Many still experience considerable difficulties with their learning and progress remains satisfactory.
- 13 The rate of progress begins to improve with the older pupils where teaching is frequently good. Some significant improvements have been made with the curriculum in Year 6 and these, together with the style of teaching, maintain the pupils' interests and help them to achieve. This is seen when good links are made between subjects, for example, with literacy, design and technology and history when studying the Ancient Greeks. The teacher makes good connections between teaching different subjects which help the pupils to consolidate their learning and achieve well. The pupils' learning has also been developed through the use of mind mapping where they are encouraged to write down their knowledge and understanding in ways that connect to a particular aspect and see the connections visually on a 'map'. This is particularly helpful to those identified as kinaesthetic learners. This work, in particular the teacher's planning, is being developed across the school and could clearly be seen in Year 4/5 where pupils were making similar links in their learning between art and design, literacy and history. Pupils had learnt about the Roman Gods, had made masks and were developing play scripts.
- 14 The chart below gives an outline of the quality of lessons seen during the inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed which indicates a significant improvement since the

last inspection. One of the key important factors in the improvement of teaching is that staffing is more stable now than at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has been particularly effective in building a strong team of staff who demonstrate a consistent approach to teaching based on good subject knowledge and good knowledge of pupils' different learning styles. This is already improving overall practice. Work done within the Rural Action Zone has also helped the school to move forward and staff to develop their teaching practice. The next step is to raise the percentage of very good teaching and bring more consistency of good teaching across the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|----------------|---------|-----------|
| 0 (0 %) | 3 (9 %) | 17 (53 %) | 12 (38 %) | 0 (0 %) | 0 (0 %) | 0 (0 %) |

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

- 15 Teachers are able to plan more effectively now because assessment practice has improved and they are now more aware of the next stages needed in the pupils' learning. Planning is good and a significant feature of the best lessons. Information is also used to track pupils' progress over time so that early intervention can take place if pupils are not seen to be achieving as well as they should. In the best lessons, teachers have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn and share that with them at the start of the lesson. Appropriate support and challenge is provided, which ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment maintain a good pace in their learning. Across the school, teachers generally use their knowledge of pupils well in lessons and encourage them to improve and work harder if they think they can.
- 16 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is good. This has a significant influence on how staff manage successfully the pupils in their care. Staff are encouraging and supportive, which results in pupils becoming more confident in their abilities and what they might do to improve. This was particularly noticeable in some classes in the support given to those pupils with special educational needs. Staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well to these as they know what they should do. This means that time is generally used well and little lost because of the need to modify behaviour.
- 17 The school has satisfactory procedures to support and guide pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. It supports higher than average numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Progress against individual targets is regularly reviewed and updated by the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), in consultation with class teachers, teaching assistants, and with the support of the governor with specific responsibilities for special educational needs. Teachers know the pupils well and use this information to provide appropriately challenging tasks. Teachers receive good support from the school's co-ordinator and the local authority learning support services are involved and consulted as necessary.
- 18 Assessment procedures for those with special educational needs are appropriate. Pupils with specific needs are identified early and the targets in their individual education plans monitored regularly. They receive suitable support in class, and sometimes during targeted sessions in small groups, when they are withdrawn from class. Closer involvement between staff, parents, and the children themselves, has been established.
- 19 The school has improved its work with higher attaining pupils and those that are gifted and talented. More capable pupils were seen being well challenged, for example, in a Year 6 science lesson and the higher attainers in mathematics work in an additional lesson which

helps staff to provide work of a specific level suitable for their needs. No additional specialist support for pupils with English as an additional language was needed for pupils during the inspection but evidence provided by the school indicates that their needs are met appropriately. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and people of different backgrounds are well supported, so that they are included in all class activities and progress at a similar rate to their peers, in line with their abilities. Staff are sensitive to the needs of such pupils and value the diversity within the school.

The curriculum

Overall, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum with good opportunities for enrichment. Resources are generally satisfactory but accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some recent developments have resulted in improved planning and good links being made between subjects.
- There is good provision for extra-curricular activities, particularly sport.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for in the Foundation Stage, in Years 1, 2 and 6.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- Accommodation overall is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- 20 There have been improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection and these enhance pupils' learning and help to raise standards. Overall, the curriculum now meets statutory requirements since the development of provision and resources for ICT. However, these improvements have not been in place long enough to have impacted positively on the standards of pupils in Year 6 who have had gaps in their learning as they moved up the school. The younger pupils benefit and standards in Year 2 are now average.
- 21 The satisfactory breadth and balance of the curriculum is strengthened by the good provision for pupils with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2 and 6. Here, pupils' learning difficulties are clearly identified and their needs well met through good planning by the teachers and effective support by the teaching assistants. Elsewhere, although staff are trying hard to develop their practice and meet the needs of a large proportion of pupils who experience difficulty with their learning, achievement remains satisfactory overall. Staff have developed their provision for gifted and talented pupils by providing additional activities both within lessons and through extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is adapted to meet the pupils' needs and this helps them to achieve in line with their peers.
- 22 Recent developments in curriculum planning are helping pupils' to achieve through encouraging teaching links between subjects and developing pupils' mind-mapping skills. Although this is at a relatively early stage, the Year 6 teacher has developed her practice well and is now supporting other staff to ensure continuity throughout. Evidence supplied by the school indicates that involving pupils in mind mapping within their revision programme in Year 6 is helping to develop their memory skills. Pupils are encouraged to make links between areas of their learning and record these in different colours on a map. In science, this has proved instrumental in the raising of pupils' standards.

- 23 The curriculum for children in the reception year covers the recommended six areas of learning. Staff use information from parents and other providers to plan for individuals' needs. This gives a good continuity in learning and prepares children well for the Year 1 curriculum. The good focus on personal and social development evident here is further developed across the school and PSHE provision is now good. Pupils' personal development is also good because the school environment values pupils and encourages them to value others. Pupils have sessions of circle time (where pupils sit in a circle and discuss general issues and are encouraged to put forward their views) or citizenship and the school encourages the older pupils to care for others. The school council helps pupils to have a voice and think about their school community. Staff satisfactorily cover areas relating to sex and relationships education and drug abuse.
- 24 A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, giving pupils opportunities to sing, play an instrument, develop their creative and physical skills or learn a second language. Good relationships between the school and the community have resulted in adults helping with the 'Grub Club' where children learn how to cook food such as pizzas. Clubs are well attended at lunchtime and after school. Good links with local schools enrich provision through involvement in sporting activities. The work in the Rural Action Zone has been instrumental in developing specific enrichment activities and the school is busy planning with others to create an event in Canterbury Cathedral for next May, based on Murder in the Cathedral. The planned use of visits and visitors to extend pupils' experiences are incorporated well into the curriculum.
- 25 Some improvements have been made since the last inspection with regard to improving resources in geography, ICT, music and physical education. The school has also responded positively to the weaknesses related to the range of books and the library. All pupils now have the opportunity to visit the village library every three weeks and are encouraged to borrow books. Parents stated that this had furthered their children's interest and some pupils now regularly went to the library when they had not done so before. This was confirmed when the librarian visited the school to give an award in response to a reading challenge last summer.
- 26 Although some aspects of the school's accommodation are good, such as the outdoor area for sport, overall, accommodation is unsatisfactory and in some places poor. The school is awaiting confirmation of a building programme to improve the school but until that is received is unwilling to spend considerable sums of money which might be wasted. For example, the boiler in the old building does not work and some parts of the building are not heated. Those that are, are heated through the generosity of a local home improvement store who has given the school some heaters. Two classrooms have been decommissioned as they are in very poor condition and the dinner hall is poor in comparison with most schools of this type. Although staff make the most of the accommodation, overall it is not suitable for all activities. The temporary classrooms outside do not have water which makes art work difficult, and pupils have to move outside to the toilets. There are four buildings in total and pupils frequently have to move from one to another. Also, the administration area is away from where pupils are being taught. Governors and parents have worked hard to improve the accommodation but it still does not meet the standard seen in most other schools.

Care, guidance and support

The school gives good support and guidance to pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. Staff consult pupils well on what they would like to see improved.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Individual pupils are well cared for and supported in their academic work and personal development.
- Health and safety awareness is high.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are good.

Commentary

- 27 The school is a happy secure place where pupils feel confident and have a strong sense of responsibility for the welfare of others. Parents have noticed this too. All parents at the pre-inspection meeting agreed their children were well cared for and happy in school. Most pupils say there is an adult they could confidently turn to if they had concerns. Conversations with pupils confirmed that they could rely on staff to resolve minor conflicts and personal worries. Staff know the pupils very well and support them individually. Pupils are given targets so that they know what they have to do to achieve better standards. The older pupils are encouraged to evaluate the work they do and to judge for themselves the degree of effort they have put into it. Pupils appreciate the sense of accountability and fairness this promotes.
- 28 The premises are regularly inspected for safety hazards. As a result, areas of the old school building have been sectioned off while governors work with the appropriate authorities to develop the whole site. Parents took it into their own hands to demolish a derelict swimming pool on school grounds thus removing a potential safety hazard. Risk assessments are properly made on all off-site activities. Satisfactory child protection procedures are in place and staff are knowledgeable about the reporting arrangements for these. First aid is dealt with well by appropriately trained staff. The school makes good efforts through accurate record keeping to ensure that any pupils with specific medical needs receive as high a level of care as possible. Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs receive their entitlement and good attention has been given, under difficult circumstances, to making the school accessible for people with disabilities.
- 29 Children new to the school are gradually and sensitively introduced to the school through several pre-school integration sessions that help them understand what is expected of them and how to cope with different routines. Parents are particularly impressed with the attention to detail the school gives to ensuring their children transfer smoothly from one school setting to the next.
- 30 The school council acts as a useful forum for seeking pupils' views. It was evident from the discussions held with councillors that they hold the school in high regard and are proud of the part they have played in bringing about some of the more recent improvements in school. Many examples were seen, during the inspection, of older pupils caring for the younger ones. The pupil Chair of the School Council, for example, is very good at making sure the younger representatives have a chance to air their views at her meetings.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The good partnerships between the school, parents and other schools impact effectively on pupils' learning. The school works very closely with the local community, stimulating a great deal of interest and support for its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school gives and receives very good support from the local community.
- Parents have good opportunities to get involved with their children's education.
- The standard and quality of information for parents is good.

Commentary

- 31 The school has successfully established itself as a cohesive community where pupils take good account of the needs of others and where both they and their parents feel confident that their views will be heard and their concerns dealt with. The school capitalises on the parents' eagerness to support their children's education by encouraging them to get involved at a level they feel happy with. As a result, parents have come forward to help with activities ranging from cookery to football and from gardening to reading. When a job needs doing around the school that falls within their capabilities, parents rally together, raise the necessary funds and then get on with it.
- 32 The prospectus and governors' report to parents give more than just the required statutory information. The positive style of reporting filtering through these documents and in the newsletters helps raise awareness of what the school is doing to emerge from the category of 'serious weaknesses'. This 'open and honest' approach has encouraged parents to remain loyal to the school and to feel confident they have made the right choice for their children. School productions, assemblies, church services, class and corridor displays are all open to parents, giving them the evidence to support their positive views on pupils' personal development. Parents find that progress reports and consultation evenings give them sufficient information to judge how well their children are achieving on an individual basis.
- 33 Community links are very strong. The school is proud of its village heritage and plays an active part in many of the events on the church calendar. Pupils' understanding of society is enhanced by their contact with churchgoers, charitable organisations and staff from public bodies such as the fire brigade and local library. The school is part of a wider network of schools and colleges in a Rural Action Zone. Amongst the benefits this brings are opportunities for staff to learn from others who have developed new and often very different approaches to teaching and learning. Links with the local playgroup are good and allow parents and children the chance to familiarise themselves with the school and its staff before joining the reception class. Pupils' involvement in projects such as the 'Green Gang' help them to develop a strong sense of partnership in working for the good of the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership overall but her clear vision and sense of purpose are instrumental in helping the school to improve. Leadership by other staff is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory and all legal responsibilities are well met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very thorough and accurate self-evaluation and review of all aspects and performance in mathematics and English is raising standards.
- Strategic planning has improved and now clearly focuses on raising standards.
- The chair of governors has high aspirations, a sense of purpose and challenges appropriately.
- Difficulties are presented by the poor accommodation.
- Some teachers have little responsibility and subsequent opportunity for career development.
- Leadership and management have improved with new management systems and procedures and the current good level of support offered by the local authority.

Commentary

- 34 Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher has a clear vision of how she wants the school to develop and is keen to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to achieve well. She leads by example and has created a collegiate team with teachers who are developing their teaching skills based on an increased understanding of pupils' different learning styles. This has resulted in improvements in English and mathematics. Staff are now working well as a team and share a determination to improve the quality of education and pupils' standards.
- 35 All staff set an example for pupils, especially in promoting relationships and a determination to do their best. This makes a contribution to pupils' personal and social development and to their achievement. The school's policies, planning and teaching indicate a concern to provide for all pupils. This is reflected in the classrooms by the good teachers, whose good planning incorporates interesting and challenging tasks matched closely to pupils' capabilities. This includes those with special educational needs and those who are more able. However, good practice is not disseminated to all staff.
- 36 After the last inspection, when leadership and management were judged satisfactory with some significant weaknesses, the school implemented a new management system. Two Key Stage Managers with responsibility for all areas of curriculum development and evaluation were appointed. This direct form of management has been very successful in raising standards and enabling clear lines of responsibility, communication and management to be established. This was very necessary at the time. The new system also helped in resolving the problems relating to staff mobility, though the high cost of local housing does still present difficulties with recruitment. Now, however, after establishing this good working model some of the teachers do not have any areas of responsibility and this could be detrimental to their career development. Avenues should be investigated to further their

professional development without completely dismantling this successful management system.

- 37 The Key Stage Managers have an important part to play in developing subjects, particularly through frequent auditing, checking the quality of pupils' work, their achievements and taking action as a result of this. Most of the main points for action from the previous inspection, with the exception of ICT across the curriculum, have been tackled successfully and have helped the school to improve or at least maintain standards. The school improvement plan has a stronger focus, with criteria for success and evaluation. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and good in English and mathematics; it is realistic and has been successful in driving the school forward. It is very closely linked to the standards attained and to achievement. The school analyses the results of national tests very well and checks on the learning of all pupils to see whether they are making the progress predicted on the basis of assessments. This information enables the school to identify effectively areas for the pupils' development. The school's self-evaluation is also closely linked to a review of teachers' performance and target setting that will improve this performance, by focusing on improving teaching and professional development to help raise standards. The contribution of the Rural Action Zone has also helped raise standards within the school.
- 38 One of the most significant barriers to the school's future development is the layout and condition of some of the buildings. Two classrooms have been condemned and closed because of rain water seepage and damage. Important storage areas are in wooden additions to the main building and many classes have to go outside to reach other parts of the school. The recently developed computer area is an improvement but far from being a modern computer suite.
- 39 The governing body fulfils its role by the way it both challenges and supports the school, and all its legal responsibilities are carried out well. The chair is very enthusiastic, has realistic and high aspirations and is planning many new and worthwhile initiatives. Their practice, although satisfactory overall, is developing well.
- 40 The very knowledgeable and experienced school secretary ensures that the daily running of the school is completed in a smooth and efficient manner. The finances are still managed very well. When taking decisions, very close attention is paid to 'Best Value' principles. This ensures that the governing body is very well informed about standards in the school compared with other schools and the current budget. Because of the way in which the school manages its resources, the levels of achievement and attainment of pupils and the quality of the curriculum, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 466,581 | Balance from previous year | 7,957 |
| Total expenditure | 457,401 | Balance carried forward to the next | 17,137 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,650 | | |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school has maintained the good practice identified at the last inspection. Staff have also changed their practice due to fewer children in the current reception year. Children in the reception year and Year 1 are now taught together for some sessions during the day and share resources. This ensures a good, gradual progression from the Foundation Stage to learning in the National Curriculum and reflects current national guidance. For some sessions, usually in literacy and numeracy, children in the reception year are taught separately to those in Year 1 and have their needs met well. These arrangements were appropriate at the time of the inspection and made the most of the expertise of teaching and support staff. However, the teacher is aware of the need to review this arrangement and make appropriate changes to meet the needs of all the children, including those with special educational needs and the more capable, as they develop. Although the teacher is not formally identified as the co-ordinator of provision, in effect she undertakes the duties associated with this role well. Good leadership ensures that the three staff members work well as a team and display a good understanding of how young children learn. They use this expertise well and plan work which maintains the children's interest and helps them with their learning. Planning is good because it clearly covers all areas of learning and makes good links between these, within a specified topic. This ensures that the children have good opportunities to practise their skills in a variety of contexts. Staff assess the children's learning on a day-to-day basis through careful observations and use this information to build up an individual profile of learning for each child. This helps them to identify quickly a child who might need additional support or one who should be challenged further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and this helps children to achieve well and reach standards in line with those expected for their age.
- Staff have developed good relationships with parents.
- There is a good induction programme.
- Children are encouraged to develop good behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning.

Commentary

- 41 Staff work hard to develop good relationships with parents when introducing them and their children to the work of the school. Induction arrangements are good and parents are helped to understand how they can support their children. Parents respond well and good relationships develop which help children to settle quickly into the school routines. The children quickly understand the structure of the day because staff are clear about what they expect and create a caring learning environment. Children sustain good levels of concentration because they are interested in what they are doing. They develop confidence, independence and initiative as they are encouraged to make choices after completing a set activity. Also, children are encouraged to play and work with each other and consequently are helped to develop good relationships. This was seen as children acted out the

roles of shopkeeper and customer using money to purchase goods in the toyshop. The teacher and support staff make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation and children learn how to share and take turns. Throughout the inspection, when appropriate, children were reminded of their personal targets and this helped them to improve their behaviour. By the time they enter Year 1, children have developed good attitudes to learning and good behaviour and those children observed during the inspection are likely to reach the standards expected nationally for children of that age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children are expected to reach the standard expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1 but a few are not because they experience difficulties with their learning in early reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching is good which helps children to achieve well.
- Children receive a good range of activities that develops their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

Commentary

42 Although some children have standards on joining the school which broadly match those expected for children of this age nationally, a significant minority have below average language skills. This is recognised by the staff who focus on this area of the curriculum throughout the day. They take up any opportunity to develop the children's speech and try to widen their vocabulary. The children respond well because they know they are listened to and what they say is valued. Most children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and have the confidence to speak with adults and each other. Children enjoy stories and reading and several times throughout the inspection, children were seen in the reading area sharing books with each other. All children are encouraged to read regularly with their parents at home. This has a significant effect on the progress they make and the standards that they achieve. A structured approach helps the children to match letters to the sounds that they made and this helps children with their early spelling and reading skills. On entry to school, children are taught to write their names clearly but sometimes do not hold the pencil well and this goes uncorrected. As they develop confidence, they are encouraged to write letters to their friends and write about what they have done. Most pupils achieve well because the teaching is good and they have good attitudes to learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and those in the current reception year are expected to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.
- Teaching is good and this helps children to develop an interest in their learning.
- A good range of practical activities and references to their own experiences re-enforce the children's learning.

Commentary

- 43 Mathematical skills and understanding are taught well during specific sessions, and consolidated through daily play activities. Most children enjoy their work and respond well to the activities provided because much of it is practical and they feel they can achieve. This was seen when a small group played together in the toyshop developing an understanding of the use of money to purchase toys. A good range of teaching methods is used to develop the children's learning and also helps to maintain their concentration. This was seen in a lesson when children were encouraged to develop an understanding of the passing of time and use the correct vocabulary to describe this. The group was asked to look at the class time line which had pictures of activities undertaken during the day. The teacher then developed a good discussion when children highlighted the sequence of their days using the pictures as a good prompt. This learning was consolidated as they draw pictures which included what happens during the day and at night. During this task, effective support by the teacher and teaching assistant ensure that learning was extended and language developed. Children who experience difficulty with their learning were effectively supported as both the teacher and teaching assistant asked them questions at an appropriate level and encouraged them to complete their work. This resulted in them developing confidence and the pace of their learning. When spoken with, children responded enthusiastically about making pictures from shapes and could clearly identify basic two-dimensional shapes. Most could also count confidently to 20 and backwards from 10.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Children in the reception year are likely to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.
- Good links are made between areas of learning.

Commentary

- 44 Through talking with the children and staff, observing lessons, looking at displays and looking at the teacher's planning, it is clear that children receive a good range of learning experiences and achieve well. In one good lesson observed, the children were enthusiastic when learning about toys and the differences between those in the past and those of today. They had obviously remembered their work on forces well and spoke about toys which needed to be pushed or pulled or how they moved. One child, in particular, responded very well and was given a sticker for his contribution. This raised his self-esteem and he frequently told others of his achievement. Good links were made with literacy as the teacher used a non-fiction book to show the children a range of toys. Her good questioning encouraged the children to give reasons for their answers as they were asked to sequence three dolls in order of age. This also linked well to their mathematics work. The children's

work also indicated their understanding of what to do when planting flowers and the early stages of map making as they followed *Rosie's Walk*. Throughout the day, children have access to the interest table which encourages their observational skills and their learning about light. Outside, children use bikes to demonstrate their understanding of traffic and fill their vehicles with 'juice' as one child reported. They operate listening stations and classroom computers with confidence. They have opportunities to use programmable toys in their work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning help children to achieve well.
- Children are likely to reach the standard expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.
- Children with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
- The children's confidence is developed well through using a range of resources.

Commentary

45 A good range of activities is provided to develop the children's physical education. Children develop a satisfactory sense of space and move around the school well with due regard for others, holding doors open when appropriate. They ride bikes and handle items such as scissors and paintbrushes well. They use construction materials confidently and enjoy using wooden blocks to build structures. The school has now reserved adequate funds to enclose the outside area but until the work is completed, pupils play with a satisfactory range of resources within the area close to their class. This shows some progress since the last inspection and work should be complete by the spring. The children also receive a formal physical development lesson each week and this is instrumental in furthering their learning. The children achieved well in the lesson observed because work built systematically on what had gone before and they received good support from the teacher and teaching assistants. They were aware of the effect of exercise on their bodies and were clear about health and safety issues. 'You have to have your hair tied and back so it doesn't get caught', volunteered one girl. Children had already learnt to follow instructions well and generally took turns sensibly when using apparatus to travel along a beam and jump. Children's needs are well known and they are supported well. A good balance is made between encouraging independence and ensuring the safe physical development of each child, according to their capability. This is done well because assessments are made and the evidence from these used to plan the next session. A particular strength of the lesson was the way the teacher demonstrated what she wanted the children to do and asked individual children to demonstrate to others. This ensured that all were clear about her expectations and the self-esteem of children developed as their achievements were valued.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy their creative work and achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good and children reach the standards set nationally for children of their age.
- Good links are made with other areas of learning.

Commentary

46 Little formal creative work in sessions was observed but a scrutiny of the children's work and of the teacher's plans show that the children's creative skills are developed well through a range of activities. These are frequently linked to other areas of learning such as knowledge and understanding of the world. Children understand that two colours, when mixed together, make another colour and know the meanings of *lighter* and *darker*. They were pleased to talk about their paintings of fireworks and autumn sunsets and explained why they had chosen the colours they used. Some good self-portraits were also on display and the children explained how they had used mirrors to help them develop their work, for example, by using appropriate colours. Children's creative development is further enhanced through the use of imaginative play areas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards demonstrate an improving picture.
- Monitoring, assessment, tracking and analysis are good, and a strength of the school.
- Individual targets help pupils focus on how they can improve.
- The presentation of work is not as good as it might be.
- There is insufficient focus on the use of literacy across the curriculum.
- The current location of the library inhibits its frequent use.

Commentary

- 47 Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 dropped dramatically and were very well below average in reading and writing. The cohort of pupils was small and the higher than average percentage of those with special educational needs impacted on the results last year. Inspection findings are that overall standards are currently below national expectations at the end of Year 2, but this is an improvement due to a more able cohort of pupils and stability in teacher provision. Some of these pupils did not reach the nationally expected early Learning Goals on entry to Year 1 in reading and writing because they experienced difficulty with their learning and continue to have special educational needs. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 showed an improving picture with standards in line with the expected national average. Inspection evidence suggests that standards currently remain in line with national expectations and are likely to be so at the end of Year 6.
- 48 Overall, the achievement of all groups of pupils is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate support by teachers, and some by learning support assistants, so that they progress at the same rate as other pupils in lessons. More able pupils are not always sufficiently extended and could sometimes achieve better if the work were more clearly matched to their needs.
- 49 Standards of speaking on entry to the school are below average. Skills are built upon and developed by the teachers, through good questioning and by expectation. By Year 2, most pupils are speaking and listening in line with national expectations and show confidence in expressing themselves verbally. They are happy to talk to adults, many of them talking excitedly to inspectors about themselves on an informal basis. This progress continues through the school, so that when pupils leave they are confident in replying to questions and can frequently initiate discussion, or give detailed explanations of their work. Throughout the school, pupils listen attentively to teachers and each other especially when preparing for particularly exciting or stimulating lessons, such as scientific investigations.
- 50 Reading standards also improve appropriately during the pupils' time in school. Nearly all pupils reach expected standards, and in Year 2 and Year 6 their continuing enthusiasm for reading results in some being able to read at higher levels. Pupils develop comprehension skills and can write about their likes and dislikes. Many can identify a variety of favourite

authors and books. Resources to support reading are being developed. The library is small and has quite a limited stock. Its location is not ideal as it is a separate building from the classroom blocks and this limits pupils' ability to carry out individual research. Visits to the village library to select and borrow books are a regular feature of the timetable and have been developed as a direct response to the weakness in the school library provision which was identified in the last inspection report.

- 51 Progress and achievement in writing are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall in older classes. Pupils are given opportunities to write in a variety of ways but the cross-curricular use of literacy is less well developed. Presentation does not receive sufficient focus and teacher expectations for the quality of presentation are not as high as they might be. More able pupils are not always being challenged sufficiently to move them on to the higher levels particularly in Years 2 and 6. In Year 6, progress in writing is satisfactory. There is generally consistent challenge for all pupils and a reasonable proportion achieve the higher Level 5, or are close to doing so.
- 52 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Examples of good teaching were observed. For example, pupils received good stimulus and guidance on writing play scripts, using a range of literacy strategies and learnt how to include stage directions. Relationships are good and generally motivate pupils well. Pupils have positive attitudes to lessons and to teachers. On the whole, lessons are suitably focused and pupils are given clear expectations in terms of behaviour and work. Work is regularly marked but the quality of marking varies. The better marking recognises good work and also identifies clear ways in which pupils can improve, but some teachers tend to make rather vague comments. There is an established practice of setting targets for individual pupils. It works effectively and has helped to raise standards by making the learning better focused.
- 53 Leadership of the subject is satisfactory, and monitoring of teaching and standards has been developed well. Due to staffing turbulence, the subject has recently been managed by the two key stage leaders. The subject action plan is relevant and the co-ordinators implement it appropriately.

Literacy across the curriculum

- 54 While underdeveloped, this is generally satisfactory, and there is an improving emphasis on developing literacy skills across all subjects. In science for example, teachers encourage good verbal evaluation skills following investigations. Writing is less well developed. However, the upper juniors' work on the Romans and Ancient Greeks, produced evidence of some good quality research and reporting.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for Mathematics is **satisfactory** due to the levels of teaching and recent improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Current standards are below national expectations in Year 2 and in line in Year 6.

- Good planning, assessment, tracking and targeting procedures are helping to raise standards and there have been improvements in the recent national tests for 11-year-olds.
- Good evaluation of teaching, learning, progress, achievement, standards and planning by co-ordinators and head teacher have helped to focus on areas for improvement.
- Teaching has recently improved and is now good in Years 1 and 2, but there is still an occasional lack of challenge for the most capable pupils.
- Insufficient attention is placed on developing mathematics across the curriculum.

Commentary

- 55 The picture in Mathematics is one of improvement from the last inspection in 2002. The results of the recent 2004 national tests indicate that the current Year 3 who took the test last year are still well below national standards due to the higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs and lower attainers who need considerable help with their learning. Standards in Year 2 are below average. There was a marked improvement in the percentage of pupils in the last year 6 cohort gaining a level appropriate for their age but the low percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 affected overall standards. This issue is being addressed and currently, pupils in Year 6 are working at average levels.
- 56 The best teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, teaching the pupils the correct subject vocabulary and planning well for all abilities. In response to this, the pupils are very well motivated, work at a good pace and are challenged to move onto the next level of learning. All pupils including those with special educational needs and the more able make good progress. In the two good thoroughly well prepared and planned lessons observed, the infectious yet demanding manner of the teachers with high expectations ensured that no pupil went off task and all worked hard and achieved well. In the other satisfactory lessons the work was occasionally not suitable for all abilities, especially the most capable, and consequently they were not challenged sufficiently.
- 57 Good, thorough and regular assessments are made with good analysis of trends. These are then used effectively to inform or amend future planning and set targets for the pupils to achieve. The use of information gathered was an issue at the last inspection but this has been satisfactorily addressed.
- 58 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The hard work of the enthusiastic key stage co-ordinators has given a more consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school. They are given sufficient time and responsibility to effectively evaluate the work, progress and achievement made by the pupils across the school. This has greatly assisted in the raising of standards. However, good teaching practice is not sufficiently shared so as to raise all to the good standards of teaching and learning across the school. The subject has improved since the last inspection, when teaching was found to be satisfactory overall. The results have improved and so has the level and use of resources.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 59 There was little evidence of planning that had gone into the teaching of mathematics across the whole curriculum and especially in ICT. This indicates areas for more development.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is generally good and this ensures that pupils make good gains in their learning.
- There have been significant improvements since the last inspection and standards are rising.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Although some use of ICT is effective, it is not systematically planned across the school.

Commentary

- 60 Inspection findings and information provided by the school indicate that most pupils make good progress in science and achieve well. Pupils in Year 6 are currently working at average levels and by the time they leave school are likely to be reaching the standard appropriate for their age. These results show good improvement since the last inspection. Many pupils in Year 2 are working at the level expected for their age. However, a higher than average percentage of the class has special educational needs or are lower attainers so overall are unlikely to reach the expected national level. The subject has been well managed with a strong focus on improving standards and providing a broad and interesting curriculum with an emphasis on investigative science. The latter has been a key feature in raising attainment, particularly that of more able pupils, and stimulating pupils' interest.
- 61 Most pupils in the school respond well to the way science is taught and enjoy the practical nature of the tasks. Staff have focused well on developing the pupils' skills of scientific enquiry so that by the time pupils leave school they can select a suitable way of finding things out when trying to answer a scientific question. The youngest pupils are helped to predict what might happen in their investigations and, as they progress through the school, pupils base their predictions on previously gained scientific knowledge and understanding. By Year 6, they can identify clearly the key factors to be considered when a fair test is part of the investigation. When speaking with pupils in Year 6, correct scientific terminology was used and pupils were confident in what they were saying.
- 62 In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils were keen to find out what would happen when a variety of materials was mixed with water, and they predicted which changes would be reversible and which irreversible. They worked well in groups because expectations were high and they were interested in what they were doing. When discussing their findings, the teacher's good questioning helped them to relate what had happened to their predictions. The end of the lesson was used well to assess pupils' understanding and consolidate their learning. Pupils identified the chemical reaction when bicarbonate of soda and vinegar were added together by stating '... a gas is given off – carbon dioxide' and 'the bubbles go down because the carbon dioxide has gone off into the air'. Pupils with special educational needs achieved very well because of the high level of teacher support and their good attitudes to learning. All pupils were well motivated and most said that they liked science and 'doing experiments'.

- 63 Similarly, in a very good Year 2 lesson pupils were keen to find out which was the warmest area in the room. Their understanding of a fair-test was demonstrated when a child held the ice cube instead of leaving it in the bowl to melt, and another said that this was testing the warmth of his hand not the room. Here, again, the end of the lesson was used well to assess the pupils' understanding and consolidate learning. Pupils were asked to consider why their findings might be different from their predictions. A couple of pupils who thought the temperature would be warmer in a cupboard discovered that with the door closed, the area did not benefit from the warmth of the heating system. The pupils were keen to respond to the teacher's questions and their answers indicated that they had listened well and understood.
- 64 In the best lessons seen, expectations were high and pupils rose well to the challenges set. A particular strength of the teaching was the way in which teachers developed questions that encouraged the pupils to think scientifically and explain their ideas. Although some teachers encourage activities where pupils develop their own ICT skills, these are not developed systematically at a whole-school level so it is difficult to see how pupils progress over time.
- 65 The subject has been led and managed well and this has resulted in improved standards. The co-ordinator has an enthusiastic approach and has ensured that the curriculum fully meets national expectations and the pupils' needs. She has identified strengths and areas which should be improved, such as developing teachers' confidence and expertise, and this has led to developments in the curriculum and teaching. Pupils are appropriately challenged and additional activities help to raise the profile of the subject and widen the pupils' learning experiences. These include visitors to the school who extend pupils' understanding on electricity and forces.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's resources for the subject are improving.
- The development of the dedicated computer suite is in its infancy and problems with the equipment sometimes adversely affect the success of a lesson.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work well.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

Commentary

- 66 Standards are in line with expectations in Year 2, but are well below the expected standard in Year 6. This is because deficiencies in subject provision have been addressed relatively recently, and pupils in the junior classes are starting from a very low skills base. Improvements in the teaching of ICT, and in the resources available, have been good since the previous inspection. Each classroom now has at least two computers, and regular use is made of the newly established dedicated suite. Teachers use data projectors, or an interactive whiteboard, to support whole class teaching.
- 67 Infant children use a range of tools when drawing and improved their drawings of houses with the addition of gardens, using a paint programme. A wall display shows that they have used a suitable word-processing programme to write poems, and are learning about changing fonts and editing their work.
- 68 Despite satisfactory teaching, standards in the junior years are well below average because pupils are still catching up from a low skills base due to a lack of computers in the past on which to practise their skills. The pupils in junior classes know how to log on to the network, find their way through the screen menus and identify the files they need. They are developing expertise in searching the Internet with increasing precision for material for projects. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils practised sending e-mails: for example contacting the Houses of Parliament to request further information about its structure and operation. This made good cross-curricular links with PSHE work on government. Another group composed a message to thank a local building firm for a recent class visit to a development site.
- 69 Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily elsewhere. Standards have risen quite quickly in a short time, from a low skills base, and pupils' level of achievement is improving rapidly. They obviously enjoy their lessons in ICT and in the lessons observed most could do something new by the end of it. Their word processing skills improve noticeably as they get older, although their keyboard skills are underdeveloped and pupils sometimes have trouble locating letters and symbols. Pupils show more confidence in their use of ICT and are introduced to an increasing variety of software.
- 70 In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory overall with stronger teaching in the infant classes. The planning is appropriate and is adapted from the plans to suit each class or year. For example, Year 6 pupils are currently working on lessons normally associated with much younger pupils in order to develop appropriate skills on which to base their developing expertise. Where lessons are good, teachers are familiar with the software and confident with the hardware. Assessment is in its infancy but has been designed well and has the potential to be a strength of the subject.
- 71 ICT is led and managed appropriately and suitably resourced. The whole school is committed to improvement. Clear plans for development have been prepared, which include further improvement of the ICT suite. The school has the support of regular visits by a computer technician. Provision has improved well since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory. Now every class has regular, taught sessions together with some opportunities to use ICT skills in other subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 72 The use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped although some examples of its use were observed during the inspection. It is likely that the introduction of the dedicated suite will have a significant impact on standards and expertise.

HUMANITIES

Inspectors observed two geography lessons but no history lessons were being taught during the inspection period. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and teachers' planning and spoke with staff and pupils. It was not possible to make overall judgements on provision in geography or history.

Geography and history

The lesson seen on investigating the differences between Charing and a small island off the coast of Scotland was very good. This was because the teaching moved at a pace with an enthusiastic approach, with inventive resources and took the pupils around their village, making them look and think of the differences, similarities and lifestyles. This practical field work approach ensured that the pupils were thoroughly attentive and made very good gains in their learning. From the evidence of previous work seen it is evident that the curriculum in both subjects is adequately covered.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

One lesson was seen in art and design, design and technology and music, and three were seen in physical education. Inspectors also spoke to staff, analysed the school's curriculum provision and evaluated pupils' work and displays around the school. It was only possible to make an overall judgement on physical education.

Art and Design

Pupils' books contained insufficient work to make a secure judgement about standards in art and design. Although the work seen in sketchbooks did not adequately reflect the quality of work seen in displays, it is evident that pupils have the experience of using a suitable range of media including clay, collage and needlecrafts. Some good cross-curricular links were seen, for example, pupils in the observed lesson were studying costume and stage design, which linked well with their literacy and historical work on the Roman theatre.

Design and Technology

In design and technology, a study of pupils' work showed that they are gaining the experience of using a range of media and materials. However, they sometimes confuse art and design with design and technology. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were seen developing their knowledge of how wheels and axles can be assembled in different ways. Work in the books of Year 6 pupils shows that they have been involved in designing Greek sandals and show a good understanding of the design and construction processes. They have learnt to evaluate their designs and to adapt them as a result.

Music

Since the last inspection, the school has made improvements in music provision by adding to the range of musical instruments and developing the programme of work. In the Year 6 lesson observed, pupils made good progress because they were taught well by a teacher who had high expectations of work and behaviour. Teaching built systematically on pupils' prior experiences and pupils reached sound standards in their learning. By the end of the lesson, pupils understood the social and cultural meaning of lyrics by comparing two songs from the American Civil War. This was due to the teacher's good questioning which helped to develop the pupils' thinking and use their previously gained knowledge well.

In assemblies, the pupils sung enthusiastically; their singing being tuneful and melodious. Opportunities were lost, however, to vary what they were singing. Where possible, the school enriches its curriculum by inviting visitors to school, such as an African dancer. Pupils are also given the opportunity to develop their singing, or play the flute or trumpet, through additional lessons taken by a specialist teacher. Opportunities are provided for pupils to perform in front of a wider audience, for example, at Christmas time and for Year 6 before they leave the school. All of these activities enhance pupils' learning and appreciation of the performing arts, music and culture.

Physical education

The provision for physical education is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards achieved by the pupils are in line with national expectations.
- Good teaching helps pupils to enjoy physical education and make good progress.
- The variety and number of extra-curricular sports activities have recently grown and are now good.
- The level of resources and equipment has improved and outside facilities are good.
- Good links with larger local schools enhance provision.

Commentary

73 From discussions with the teachers and pupils and the three lessons seen, pupils enjoy physical education, make good progress in the necessary skills and attain levels in line with national expectations. Some of the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were unsatisfactory at the last inspection but this has improved. The good and recently growing provision for extra-curricular clubs and activities greatly enhances the curriculum. Teachers, classroom assistants and parents assist with these activities.

74 The school offers the whole physical education curriculum, including swimming. The teaching and learning seen was good overall with 2 good and 1 satisfactory lessons observed. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In a good lesson seen in Year 6, the pupils' catching and throwing skills visibly improved during the session. This was due to the teacher's good, clear explanations, perceptive praise, comments and encouragement as to how pupils could get better. The pupils then put their improved skills into a realistic game situation that emphasised the importance of the need for those skills.

- 75 The satisfactory level of accommodation inside, the good outside facilities and the improved levels of equipment and facilities enhance the pupils' progress and achievements. This was an issue at the last inspection which has been addressed well.
- 76 Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The recently introduced local arrangements for the sharing of teaching expertise, facilities and equipment, links with other local schools and the Rural Action Zone have improved the levels of teaching, learning and resources in the school. The subject has improved since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the school's work was sampled through the observation of daily practice and outcomes, the observation of one lesson and discussions with pupils and staff. Provision is good overall, and links well with the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All classes cover aspects of development relevant to the age of the pupils in lessons such as science or in formal PSHE and citizenship lessons. The school places due attention on providing sex and relationship education and drugs awareness, although the school has no formal written policy for drugs education.

Pupils in Year 6 show a mature attitude to the topics covered and are keen to learn more. Displays of newspaper articles help them to become aware of current issues both in this country and beyond. Pupils are also encouraged to put forward their views on certain topics by writing on a whiteboard at the entrance to their class and do so during lunch or play times. In response to 'What do you think Iraq is actually like?' pupils responded, 'lots of fighting and bombing' and 'innocent people dying'. These comments are then discussed as a class. Pupils in other parts of the school also show through their comments and prayers how they think about others and current issues. Examples include, 'Dear Lord, please stop people from cutting down trees and save the environment', 'please help people to stop the fox hunting', and 'Dear God, please help the people in Iraq and stop the fighting'.

In one good lesson observed, Year 6 pupils were keen to find out about the House of Commons and the House of Lords. They effectively used the Internet to gain answers to their questions and were delighted when a package arrived from the House of Commons following their request for more information. This motivated them further and they showed their interest by asking questions.

Pupils readily take responsibility and develop an understanding of their own role within the school community. This was seen in the way pupils accept a variety of responsibilities in their classrooms, throughout the school, and when acting as writing buddies. Pupils are clear about the nature of bullying and also racism and how these should be discouraged. This is strongly emphasised within the PSHE and citizenship programme and through the community ethos developed throughout the school.

Personal and social education is also implicit in all aspects of school life. Pupils talk confidently to adults and know that their ideas are valued. The school council introduces pupils to the concept of democracy, and is giving them the opportunity to suggest improvements, such as the introduction of problem boxes and a football club.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 4 |
| How inclusive the school is | 4 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 4 |
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 4 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 4 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 4 |
| The quality of teaching | 4 |
| How well pupils learn | 4 |
| The quality of assessment | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 5 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 2 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 3 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 4 |
| The governance of the school | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 4 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 4 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 |

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