

INSPECTION REPORT

**FRAMFIELD CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Framfield, Uckfield

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114550

Headteacher: Mrs Janet Wilde

Lead inspector: Mrs Patricia Davies

Dates of inspection: 12th – 13th October 2004

Inspection number: 266845

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 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	72
School address:	The Street Framfield Uckfield East Sussex
Postcode:	TN22 5NR
Telephone number:	01825 890258
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Tim Hills
Date of previous inspection:	7 th – 10 th December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- Framfield is much smaller than other primary schools; there are 72 pupils. Numbers in the school have remained largely stable, but individual year groups vary in size. This year, there is a larger than normal group of children in the Reception year. Each of the three classes contains pupils from more than one year group and, in two classes, from more than one key stage.
- Most, but not all pupils, come from the village. Only one or two pupils are eligible for free school meals, but this small proportion does not reflect the school's social and economic background; the school reports this as being largely average and with some constraints caused by the nature of a rural community. The total movement of pupils in and out of the school, other than at the normal point of entry into the Reception group and at departure to secondary education, is not extensive, but even one or two changes can have a significant effect on individual year groups.
- At present, 17 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. Most of these pupils are placed at the higher stage of support, and there is one pupil with a statement of need. The range of need includes speech and communication, learning and social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- Almost all pupils are from White UK heritage backgrounds. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- Children enter the Reception class at the beginning of the school year, and there is a staged process for moving from part-time to full-time attendance. Attainment on entry to the Reception group is broadly similar to that of children of a similar age nationally, but varies from year to year, and most groups contain a wide range of ability.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22460	Patricia Davies	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English; Art and design; Design and technology; Physical education; Foundation Stage.
19557	Elizabeth Halls	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
27654	Robina Scahill	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Science; Music; Special educational needs.
32475	Nick Butt	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology; History; Geography.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Framfield is a satisfactory school, but with significant signs of increasing effectiveness, particularly in the rate of pupils' progress. Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory, with strength in the leadership of the headteacher. Recent initiatives are having a positive effect on the current quality of teaching and learning, which is good, but these initiatives are too new to have had a full effect on achievement, which is satisfactory overall. Year 6 pupils are likely to reach standards in line with national expectations in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of the year. Those in Year 2 are on course to reach standards above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, and to meet them in science. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are also likely to meet expectations in each of these year groups. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good leadership and management of the headteacher.
- Good teaching, particularly in English, of children in the Reception group and of those with special educational needs (SEN).
- Underdeveloped systems for the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress in ICT.
- Good pastoral care, which is supplemented well by very good social and moral provision.
- The benefits of very good links with other schools.

There has been some falling away in the school's performance since it was last inspected in December 1998, but issues are being tackled robustly, and the overall level of improvement since that time is satisfactory. The most influential area of development has been in the key issue of assessment. Here, improvements are proving to be a powerful force for increasing achievement in English, mathematics and science, through the setting of targets and the introduction of strategies to tackle areas of relative weakness within subjects. The second key issue, related to the quality of curriculum planning, has also been addressed. Substantial improvement has been made recently in attendance. There is a real determination among staff to bring about further improvement, and the capacity to make this happen is good. There has also been considerable improvement in provision for ICT, but the good assessment procedures for the other core subjects have not yet been extended to ICT.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

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

The school's assessments of children when they first join the Reception group show attainment to be broadly as expected for children of a similar age, but with a wide range of ability, and there are few children with the potential for high attainment. The attainment of the current Reception group was lower than usual, but they are making good progress and most are on course to meet early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Trends in national test results over recent years, for pupils in Years 2 and 6, have fallen below the national trend. The school introduced a number of measures recently to arrest this trend, with some success. Published, but unvalidated, data from

the most recent tests (Summer 2004) show areas of improvement in both sets of tests, and particularly in the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the higher Level 5. However, caution should be taken when comparing year-on-year results, because year groups are so small and proportions of pupils with SEN, or the arrival and departure of pupils at times other than normal, can have a considerable impact on results. The most significant testimony to the school's improving academic performance is to be found in target-setting information, which indicates that pupils last year made good progress overall in English and mathematics. The comparison with similar schools given above reflects a similar picture, albeit with some variation across the three subjects. Inspection evidence shows the school to be maintaining improvement. There are some areas of good achievement, most notably in English, and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, and for pupils with SEN. However, because some initiatives have not yet made a full impact across the school and in all subjects, **achievement as a whole is satisfactory**. It is satisfactory in science and ICT and in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Standards in English and mathematics are likely to meet national expectations by the end of the year for the present lower attaining Year 6 group, and to be above expectations in reading, writing and mathematics for the more able Year 2 group. Standards in science and ICT are on course to meet expectations in both year groups. Not enough evidence was collected to make judgements in other subjects.

Pupils' **attitudes, behaviour and other personal development are good**, with very strong relationships between pupils and with staff. There has been much effort given to encouraging good attendance, and attendance levels are now well above the national average. Punctuality is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good, with particular strengths in developing moral and social awareness and understanding.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good, reflecting the increasing effect of new strategies to raise pupils' achievement. Lessons take good account of the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Teaching is strongest within Years 3 to 6, and in the work done in small groups with lower attaining pupils and those with SEN. The Reception group is also well taught, as is English. Mathematics and science are also effectively taught as a whole, but new approaches to developing pupils' independent learning skills within investigative activities are not yet fully established. Assessment systems are satisfactory, but the good procedures for English, mathematics and science are not replicated in ICT.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with good opportunities to enrich pupils' experience. The curriculum is under review, and new approaches to planning are at a very early stage. Provision for pupils with SEN is good, and other strengths include pastoral care and links with parents and the community. Liaison with other schools and colleges is very good, benefiting teachers' professional development and enriching the curriculum. Arrangements for seeking pupils' views about school life are satisfactory. Accommodation and resources are also satisfactory; learning support staff are deployed well and contribute a great deal.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has been the driving force behind improvements. She has already established training to develop the leadership and monitoring skills of other staff, so that they can play a greater role in taking the school forward. Governance is also satisfactory. Governors are keen to support the school, and are playing a greater part in evaluating the school's work and planning its future. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' and pupils' satisfaction with the school is good. Both groups particularly appreciate the school's friendly community, in which individual pupils are well known and supported.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve systems for the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress in ICT.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' **achievement is satisfactory as a whole**, but there is significant evidence that the rate of progress is increasing. Achievement is good in English, and in mathematics within Years 3 to 6. Pupils with SEN and children in the Reception class are making good progress. Achievement is satisfactory in science, ICT and in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. By the end of this school year, the current group of Year 6 pupils are on course to reach standards that are broadly in line with national expectations in English and mathematics. Standards are likely to be above expectations for those in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in science and ICT are likely to be at expected levels in both Years 2 and 6. Not enough evidence was gathered to make judgements about standards and achievement in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement in English across the school.
- Good achievement in mathematics for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Good progress in the Reception class, and for pupils with SEN.

Commentary

1. In very broad terms, the attainment of children when they first enter the Reception class is close to that of children of a similar age nationally. The school's very early assessments, however, show that most groups contain a wide range of ability, and few children with high attainment levels.

2. Year –on-year analyses of these first assessments show relative weaknesses in writing and in some aspects of personal and social skills. This year's assessments indicate that the attainment of the present Reception group is lower than usual, but their good progress since the beginning of term has brought them close to expected outcomes, and most are on course to meet the early learning goals for this age group by the time they join Year 1.

3. The school's performance in national tests has fallen over recent years, to the extent that trends in the national tests for both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have been below the national trend. The school introduced a number of measures to arrest this downward trend, with some success. Unvalidated data from the most recent tests, taken by pupils in Years 2 and 6 in 2004, show an improved picture:

- an increase in the proportion of Year 2 pupils gaining the expected Level 2 in reading and writing, and the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics;
- a greater proportion of Year 6 pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science.

When compared with national averages for all schools, the performance of the Year 6 group taking the tests in 2004 was well above the national average for science, above the national average for English and broadly in line with the average for mathematics. However, some caution must be used when comparing the results of one year with another, because year groups tend to be so small. One or two pupils with SEN can have a considerable effect on the overall attainment of a year group and on performance in national tests. This factor influenced results in the 2004 tests, for example. Pupils moving in and out of the school can also have a similar effect, and one which influenced the 2004 results for Year 6 at the higher Level 5 positively'.

4. The most significant testimony to the school's improving academic performance is to be found in data relating to progress. For example, the school's own information from last year shows a good rate of progress as a whole in English and mathematics from Year 2 onwards, although with some variations in that picture. The most conspicuous success is the present Year 6, where the school, having identified this as a much lower attaining group, has placed considerable support.

5. Comparisons with national averages for the tests taken by last year's Year 6 (2004), based on pupils' earlier attainment in their Year 2 tests, also point to overall good levels of progress, but with differences across the three subjects: well above the national average for science, above it for English, and broadly in line with it for mathematics. Unconfirmed data related to the value added to the performance of this group of pupils also shows much improvement on the results of the previous year. The 2004 comparisons were above the national average for all schools and for similar schools on the basis of prior attainment, and broadly in line with the average for similar schools measured by eligibility for free school meals.

6. Inspection evidence shows the school to be maintaining this improving picture. Improvements to assessment have led to the setting of challenging targets for individual pupils, including those of higher attainment. This development has increased the expectation of what pupils can do, and a close analysis of performance data has led the school to focus on developing particular aspects of subjects in need of improvement. Writing is at the forefront of the school's attention, and investigative and problem-solving aspects of science and mathematics are also being targeted. So, too, is ICT. Achievement is good in some key areas; in English, for example, and in mathematics as a whole, with the strongest level of achievement in this subject across Years 3 to 6. Those pupils with SEN also achieve well, and so do children in the Reception group. However, good achievement is not yet established consistently right across the school and in all subjects, and this is because initiatives are too new to have had a full impact. Therefore, **overall achievement is satisfactory**, rather than good. Achievement in the core subjects of science and ICT, for instance, is satisfactory, and it is also satisfactory in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.

7. The attainment of the present Year 6 group is lower than usual for the school; Year 6 pupils are on course to reach standards broadly in line with national expectations by the end of this school year in English and mathematics. In contrast, the current Year 2 is a more able group and is likely to reach standards above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in science and ICT are on course to meet national expectations by the ends of both Year 2 and Year 6. No evidence was found during this inspection of any significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls, higher attaining pupils, or of the very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Not enough information could be collected during the inspection to make judgements about standards and achievement in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **good**, and there are very strong relationships between pupils and with staff. Attendance has significantly improved and is now **very good**, as is punctuality. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also **good**, with strengths in the very good provision for social and moral development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attention to improving attendance.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to school life.
- A caring and friendly school ethos, which permeates all activities and helps to create very good relationships.
- Very good attention to pupils' moral and social development.

Commentary

8. Having dipped to a very low level in the academic year of 2002 to 2003, attendance is now well above the national average and levels of unauthorised absence have fallen to below the national average. The vast majority of parents ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive punctually. Most absences arise through sickness or medical visits, although some parents do withdraw their children from school to take holidays during term time. Rigorous steps have been taken to improve attendance, and effective action continues to ensure good attendance. Registration practices are efficient, attendance levels are closely monitored and parents are well briefed about the school's expectations. Good links have also been established with the school's welfare officer to supplement the school's work.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

9. Pupils' positive attitudes, behaviour and personal development are strong features of the school. Pupils are generally well behaved, polite and courteous; they respond well to the school's caring ethos. Parents were quick to mention the schools' friendliness and how well pupils look after each other. Positive aspects such as these arise in part from the small size of the school, where everyone knows each other very well and close attention is paid to individuals. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and show pride in being members of the school community. They are interested and involved in all their activities, in lessons and out of school hours. Discussion with pupils showed them to be keen to talk about what they do. New initiatives, such as the school council, prompted a particularly enthusiastic response. Because early assessments show some weaknesses in children's personal and social skills when they first start school, this area of development is given good attention in the Reception class. It is clear that routines have been quickly established, and these youngest children work and play together happily and productively.

10. There were five fixed-term exclusions during the last school year, but there have been none during this term. The exclusions were made for acceptable reasons, and the strategies introduced to help the very few pupils involved were appropriate and successful. Some residue of parental concern about the impact of poor behaviour remains, but no examples of such behaviour were seen during this inspection. Indeed, the school day is calm and orderly. The staff have high expectations of behaviour and deal quickly and effectively with the few incidents of inappropriate behaviour that occur. All pupils, including those with SEN, mix well at break time and lunchtime, and the very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well integrated. The school places a strong emphasis in assemblies and during class discussions (called 'circle time') on promoting friendship, and no incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection. A group meets weekly to work on a programme called 'Socially Speaking'. This project aims to promote good social skills and raise self-esteem.

11. Pupils show increasing levels of self-discipline and maturity as they move up through the school. Most are attentive in lessons and, when given opportunities to work independently, with a partner or in groups, they work co-operatively, sharing and valuing ideas and concentrating well on tasks. Only occasionally are pupils noisy during lessons. They are also keen to be helpful in and around the school. For example, monitor and 'buddy' systems operate to help younger pupils to make friendships during break times.

12. Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are very good and have a positive impact on their learning. They are supportive of each other and their teachers. Pupils are happy and secure, and enjoy school life in an atmosphere where all are valued. They respond well to the help given by adults and appreciate the praise that is often given. Rewards are strong motivators, especially for

younger pupils, but pupils of all ages strive to achieve them. Pupils are also encouraged to share their success achieved in activities that have taken place with family and parents.

13. Promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as a whole, with strengths in the very good provision for moral and social awareness and understanding. Pupils learn to respect the views of others and to develop strong social skills. They are also encouraged to act according to their own principles and to challenge things that they consider to be unfair. The school's church-aided status gives a good foundation to this work. School rules strongly endorse key principles, such as honesty, and pupils report that these are regularly referred to and discussed. Conversation with older pupils revealed a mature and thoughtful response to the relative importance of each rule. Members of the recently formed school council take their duties very seriously and are keen to be involved in decisions about the school. They consult with the other pupils and ensure that pupils' views and ideas are considered and discussed with the headteacher. All these opportunities give pupils the chance to think and reflect on wider and deeper issues, as do those in assemblies.

14. Cultural development is promoted well through the school's good enrichment activities and personal, health and social education. Within a predominantly white school community, pupils' understanding of other cultures is satisfactorily developed. Studies in geography and the teaching of Asian dance, for example, show a commitment on the school's part to extend this aspect of its work further.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	64	5	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons observed during the inspection showed clearly the increasing influence of new initiatives. Other good areas include the school's care for its pupils, and links with parents and the community. Links with other schools and colleges are very good. The curriculum as a whole is satisfactory, with good provision for pupils with SEN and for those activities which help to enrich pupils' experiences.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment practices are satisfactory, because good procedures are not yet influencing all subjects fully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Closely focused assessment of individual pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Underdeveloped assessment systems for ICT.
- Good teaching of the Reception group, of English, and of mathematics and science within Years 3 to 6.
- Good quality planning.
- The valuable contribution of support staff to lower attaining pupils and those with SEN.
- Too much reliance on worksheet material in Years 1 and 2, most particularly in mathematics.

Commentary

15. The quality of teaching and learning is good, which is in keeping with the judgement of the previous inspection. This finding was well borne out by the teaching seen during this inspection, reflecting the increasing effect of new strategies to raise pupils' achievement. Good teaching was seen in all classes, with the greatest proportion of good and very good teaching within Years 3 to 6. Teaching is also good in the small group work with lower attaining pupils and those with SEN. The very youngest children in the Reception group are also well catered for. English is well taught and so, too, are mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6, where the increased focus on developing independent learning skills has had the greatest impact. Information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactorily taught, as are mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2. Not enough evidence was collected during the inspection to enable judgements to be made about teaching and learning in other subjects.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 14 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4	7	3	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

16. Activities for Reception children are well planned and organised. Support assistants are effectively deployed to work with small groups, and they give close attention to individual children, particularly in encouraging language development. On almost every occasion, children are responsive and thoroughly engaged in their work and play because different areas of learning have been carefully linked and activities are interesting and imaginative.

17. Good quality planning is replicated throughout the school, most especially in English, mathematics and science, although the same quality has yet to be fully established in some other subjects, such as ICT. The needs of individual pupils, in different year groups and of varying ability, are well attended to during whole class sessions and in the planning of different tasks. Good organisation also ensures that pupils know precisely what they have to do. This allows them to get started quickly in lessons and to use the time productively. Expectations of behaviour and application are high. Frequently, activities are also exciting and, where this was seen, pupils were enthusiastic and produced interesting and imaginative work. Evidence taken from pupils' earlier work, however, showed that this level of challenge and interest is not yet firmly established as a consistent feature. This is most apparent in Years 1 and 2. In these year groups there has tended to be too much use of worksheet material, most particularly in mathematics, but also in science, so limiting the potential for greater achievement. However, the quality of teaching during the inspection gave clear signs that this relative weakness is being addressed with the use of more independent work and stimulating activities.

18. Small group work has been developed effectively and extended to target individual pupils and to support lower attaining year groups. The work of support staff with these lower attaining pupils is good and that of the co-ordinator for SEN is very successful. Well-paced and lively teaching of small groups, with a variety of activities, keeps pupils alert, interested and fully involved. The contribution made by support staff is also valuable during whole class sessions.

19. The considerable improvement to the school's assessment methods has created a valuable source of information for teachers' planning, for lessons and at the wider whole-school level. This area was a key issue for improvement at the time of the last inspection and the extent of development has been good, both in the methods and in their use. Challenging rates of progress have been set for English, mathematics and science, and these targets are regularly monitored. The close focus on the progress of each pupil allows the school to identify any special educational needs as soon as possible. This approach is particularly valuable in the Reception class, as it allows any difficulties to be identified right from the start. Pupils are also being encouraged to take a greater role in evaluating their progress and achievement, and this expectation has already been well-established with the children in the Reception class, so that they are familiar with the process

as they move through the school. The strategy is very new for other pupils, however, as are new approaches to giving written feedback. As a result, the quality of marking is not yet consistent across all classes.

20. The analysis of data by the headteacher, who acts as assessment co-ordinator, is becoming increasingly refined and results of this analysis are discussed thoroughly with staff. A list of more able pupils has been drawn up, so that their needs can be met more closely, although those with gifts and talents have yet to be identified. The greatest amount of attention has been given to assessment in English, mathematics and science, and procedures for these subjects are good. Systems for assessing pupils' progress in other subjects follow national guidance, and are satisfactory. The exception is ICT, where day-to-day assessment is underdeveloped and is, therefore, not giving teachers detailed information to use for planning future work.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory**, with **good** opportunities for pupils to take part in activities designed to enrich their experience. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision for pupils with SEN, including the contribution of support staff.
- The benefits of very good links with other schools, including preparation for entry to secondary education.
- New planning initiatives, which are too new to have had a full impact on achievement.

Commentary

21. The present curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements, and includes personal, social and health education. A key issue arising from the school's last inspection was the need to improve and update whole school and subject planning. This has been done. National guidance has been adopted to structure subject planning and, as a result, planning for mixed age classes is now good and aids teaching well. Planning for children in the Reception class and provision for SEN are well developed. The English curriculum gives pupils good scope to develop language and literacy skills, and the focus on enriching the quality of pupils' writing is now gaining momentum right across the school. The school is currently in the process of reviewing the whole curriculum in the light of new national initiatives for innovation. Links between subjects, and with areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, have been identified, so that planning exploits the opportunities for work in one subject to aid achievement in others. This initiative is at a very early stage, having been started only this term, and its effect on achievement so far has yet to be reviewed. Other initiatives have also been introduced to boost achievement. Much attention is being given to the development of ICT, for example, and to aspects of other core subjects which the school has identified as needing further improvement. The school has also focused on promoting the practical and investigative aspects of mathematics and science, and the quality of writing. Evidence supports growing success in these areas, but because much of this work is also relatively recent, its effect is not yet wholly consistent across the school.

22. The curriculum is enhanced by a good variety of visits and visitors. The school broadens pupils' experiences with local visits to Bodiam Castle and Michelham Priory, for example, and visits beyond the immediate area, such as to The National Gallery. Older pupils take part in a residential visit to the Isle of Wight, which enriches many areas of the curriculum, such as outdoor pursuits and ICT, as well as promoting their confidence, independence and social skills. Links with other primary schools are especially beneficial. For example, they work together to provide extra-curricular activities in a wide variety of areas, such as sport, art, music, poetry, history, drama and writing. Through close liaison and joint activities with the local community college, pupils are prepared very well for their next stage of learning. For example, pupils benefit from attending master classes at the college in mathematics, science and design and technology. The school also makes good use of other curriculum initiatives, such as that for able writers.

23. The provision for pupils with SEN is good because it is well organised and effective. Pupils' targets are well identified. Individual education plans, which give details of these targets and the support the school will provide, are reviewed regularly and parents are involved in these reviews. Teaching assistants are used effectively and are very knowledgeable about the needs of individual children. This good level of support results in confident pupils who make good progress throughout their time in the school. In recognition of its work, the school has been successful in achieving the first level as a 'Dyslexia Friendly' school.

24. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. Classrooms are spacious, and there are good outdoor facilities, which have been developed with the intention of encouraging outdoor education. Reception and staff areas have also been improved. Problems still remain, however, with the lack of a space large enough within the school for physical education, although good use is made of the adjoining Village Hall. Computers have been installed in all classrooms, but there are too few in each room to allow pupils to spend enough time using them. The good number of well-qualified support staff are deployed with an eye to need and work closely with teachers to ensure that pupils are well supported in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' pastoral care is **good**; pupils have good access to helpful support, advice and guidance. There are **satisfactory** arrangements for seeking pupils' views and involving them in school life.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Individual pupils are very well known by staff.
- Good procedures for welfare, health and safety, and arrangements for settling pupils into school.

Commentary

25. Pastoral care continues to be given a high level of priority by the school and, where needed, the school works closely with other agencies. Much of the school's good pastoral care comes from the value placed on individual pupils, who are very well known to staff because the school is small. As relationships with all staff members are so positive, pupils have ample opportunities to turn to an adult in times of trouble. Adults use information about pupils effectively to make sure that they are looked after in a happy environment, and that they have access to well-informed support, guidance and advice. For instance, those who show difficulties in their social development and who are experiencing difficulties with creating friendships, meet weekly in a support group. Pupils also look after each other readily, and formal opportunities to do this are provided effectively through systems such as playground 'monitors'. Great value is placed on these positions, for which pupils now have to apply. Successful candidates are then interviewed by their peers before being trained. Academic progress in English, mathematics and science is monitored on a regular basis and carefully assessed. Increasingly, teachers are giving pupils more critical feedback about their work, although this new approach is not yet applied consistently across the school.

26. Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and wellbeing are good. First aid provision is covered well, and trained staff members are designated to give assistance in the event of an emergency. Safe practices for everyday life in school and for when pupils are out in the community are conscientiously promoted in lessons. Equipment is regularly checked and tested and governors and staff carry out regular risk assessments. Child protection procedures work effectively because staff are experienced, well trained and vigilant.

27. The youngest children are carefully inducted into the Reception group, and later into full time attendance. Close informal links with the local playgroup also help to make this process more effective. Pupils joining the school in other year groups are helped to settle quickly into their new surroundings. Where new pupils have SEN, for example, the school contacts the previous school to

ensure that the support for these pupils is appropriate and effective. These arrangements help to develop the very good and trusting relationships between pupils and staff, and give pupils the confidence to seek support and guidance when they have a personal problem or when they want to share news of something special.

28. When given the chance, pupils are keen to share their views and ideas and take more responsibility for influencing the quality of school life. The school is beginning to harness this willingness to contribute in a greater range of areas. For example, the school council represents all year groups, and is being enabled to make decisions, including those about how to allocate a modest budget, for which it is responsible. Pupils are also being encouraged to express views about the quality of their work. This strategy is well established in the Reception group. Other pupils now regularly complete 'Learning Logs' about their performance, although this information is not yet fully used to inform discussion.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality information for parents.
- Very beneficial links with other schools.
- The good support of parents for their children's learning.
- The hard work of the Parent and Teacher Association on behalf of the school.

Commentary

29. Staff and governors give a high priority to developing and maintaining positive relationships with parents. For example, governors and staff send out an annual survey to parents and gain their views as part of the process for planning school improvement. These surveys are analysed and fed back to parents with information about how the school has responded to comments and views. The pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting with parents showed that parents have, overall, a good level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision. A very small minority of parents expressed some concerns about bullying, but evidence from this inspection shows those earlier incidents of poorer behaviour to have been resolved, and the school is working effectively to eliminate any re-occurrence.

30. Some parents also raised concerns about the quality of communication. However, once again, inspection evidence found the quality and extent of information to be good and helpful to parents in aiding their children's learning at home. Newsletters, general information and pupils' annual progress reports for parents are of good quality. So, too, is the school's attractive website. A key factor in the school's good links with parents is the school's 'open door' approach. Parents have access to the school at any time if they wish to discuss their children's progress. Staff manage, normally, to resolve any concerns of parents informally. However, in the event that a parent should wish to make a formal complaint, there is an effective complaints procedure. Staff contact parents if they have any concerns about pupils.

31. The school warmly welcomes parents into the school and a number of them visit on a regular basis, contributing well to pupils' progress, for instance by hearing reading, going swimming and helping on school trips. Parents assist their children's work at home in subjects like ICT and science, and some parents of Year 6 pupils join the school's Family Learning programme, accompanied by their children. The Parent Teacher Association is run by a small but hardworking committee and successfully raises funds to provide additional resources and learning opportunities for pupils. The trim trail and outdoor play area, for example, were funded by the Association. Its hard work is greatly appreciated by staff and has added significantly to the school's development of outdoor education.

32. Pupils benefit academically and socially from the school's good links with the local community. There is close involvement with the Church, for example, and with the playgroup next door. The school also supports village events and has links with local small businesses. Visits and visitors help to enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal and social development, broadening pupils' experiences and giving them opportunities to learn more about the local and wider community. As a priority for the future, the school wishes to improve these links still further.

33. Liaison with other schools and colleges is very good. The school plays an active part in the local group of schools, and these arrangements allow valuable chances to share professional training and curriculum activities. Two members of staff are also mentors in support of initial teacher training. Links with the secondary school ensure a smooth transfer for the oldest pupils to their new school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership, management and governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good leadership and management of the headteacher.
- The development of monitoring skills, so that all staff with key responsibilities can play a full role in evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work.

Commentary

34. The school's commitment to tackling areas needing attention, raising standards and increasing achievement is clear. The driving force behind improvement is the relatively new headteacher, but her determination is shared by all the staff. Strengths in leadership and management have also been recognised by parents, who, at the pre-inspection meeting, were unanimous in their praise of how well the school is run. The success of the school's recent endeavours is most marked in the evidence of improved levels of progress and in significantly higher levels of attendance. The provision for SEN is very well managed and strongly led by an experienced co-ordinator, so that the support provided for pupils with SEN enables them to progress well. Opportunities for professional development are given a good level of attention. This is particularly so in the case of learning support staff and also in ICT, where recent training has much improved teachers' knowledge and confidence. Many of the school's initiatives, however, are at an early stage of implementation and are not fully established. Plans to augment the leadership and management skills of all staff with key roles and responsibilities are already in place for the coming year. This is intended to increase their contribution to evaluating the school's work and ensuring that new strategies are effective right across the school.

35. Good support from the LEA is willingly sought and used. This has helped to develop the school's ability to evaluate its performance and move forward independently. The collection, use and analysis of assessment information, for example, have helped the school to pinpoint where it needs to focus, and are increasing helping to hone key priorities and strategic planning. These factors, and those described above, indicate that the capacity within the school for future improvement is good. Teaching staff have monitored lessons in connection with key responsibilities for performance management and in the core subjects of English and mathematics, but the sharing of leadership and management skills and responsibilities across all key roles is one of several new initiatives that are not yet fully developed. Some time is also now being allocated on a regular basis to allow the deputy headteacher to look more closely at the impact of new strategies.

36. A new chairman has just been appointed to the governing body. He has a valuable background in education and has been fully involved in the preparation for this inspection. The governing body is wholly committed and keen to support the work of the school. All statutory requirements are met. Members have recognised the need to develop a more influential role in the school's development

and in the monitoring of its performance. Like the staff, they have also willingly accepted guidance and support to extend their involvement and, consequently, they now play a greater part in evaluating data and planning for the future. Visits made during the school day are also becoming more closely focused. The office is efficiently managed by administrative staff. Financial monitoring and day-to-day financial arrangements are satisfactory, as are arrangements for ensuring that the school gets the best value for its decisions and for what it spends. Unspent balances are being appropriately retained to enable the school to provide staff to support larger than usual groups of pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	201,515.00
Total expenditure	191,889.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,703.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	9,344.00
Balance carried forward to the next	9,626.00

37. The expenditure for each pupil is close to the national average, despite the fact that this is a small school where costs are often higher than average. When account is taken of all aspects of the school's performance, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Reception group is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned and organised activities.
- Good assessment of individual children's progress and achievements.
- Good attention to developing personal and social skills.
- Too few opportunities for free independent writing activities.

Commentary

38. There is a carefully staged approach in the Reception year to introducing children to full time education. All new children join the class at the beginning of the year, but do not move from part time to full time attendance until the beginning of the term in which they have their fifth birthday.

39. This year's Reception group is larger than usual, with 16 children, and some parents expressed concerns about the demands of teaching a bigger group, particularly as the class is shared with pupils in Year 1. Inspection evidence, however, found Reception children to be well taught within a happy and well-organised environment. This marks a good level of improvement since the school's last inspection, when provision for the Foundation Stage was found to be satisfactory. The leadership and management of this key stage are satisfactory, with strength in the attention to planning and assessment and the creation of a close working team.

40. Teaching and learning are good as a whole, particularly in the key areas of:

- personal, social and emotional development;
- communication, language, and literacy skills;
- mathematical and physical skills.

All activities are well planned and purposeful, and imaginative links are created across the six areas of learning to make learning interesting and relevant. The time given to whole class sessions, play activities and small group work is well balanced and carefully planned. Children move smoothly from one activity to another, because routines and expectations have been quickly established early in the school year. Support staff work confidently, demonstrating that they have been briefed well about what they have to do, and teamwork in the class is good. High levels of adult support during activity sessions ensure that all children have plenty of individual attention. Despite some limitations in the amount of designated outdoor space available to these children, outside areas have been developed with thought and are used so that children can benefit from an interesting variety of activities.

41. Assessment systems are thorough and comprehensive. All staff contribute, and children also take part: for example, they are encouraged to consider what they have learned that they did not know before. Observations of children's performance (across all areas of learning) are frequent and regular, and this close attention ensures that any problems or particular needs are quickly picked up and support given early. The school's first assessments of the present Reception group show attainment to be lower than usual, with a wide range of ability and a significant minority of lower attainers. Because progress is good, their present attainment is already much closer to expected levels. It is, therefore, likely that, in personal, social, language and literacy, mathematical and physical skills, most will reach the learning goals expected of these children by the time they enter Year 1, although a small minority will not. Not enough evidence was gathered to make a comprehensive judgement about likely attainment in the other areas of learning.

42. Children's **personal, social and emotional** skills are encouraged well, reflecting the high priority given to this area of learning which was noted in the school's last inspection report. In response to the relaxed yet industrious atmosphere, children work and play with confidence, on their own, alongside, and sometimes in close co-operation with others. Although it is early in the school year, children clearly know the well-organised routines, and quickly gather to form a circle to discuss their work, or collect their break time snacks. Adults have good relationships with the children and readily encourage and 'model' good behaviour, such as taking turns. In larger groups, the class teacher's warm and friendly manner creates a 'safe' environment in which children are keen to talk about their activities in front of others.

43. **Communication, language and literacy** are taught well as a whole. Children are constantly encouraged to talk about their activities, and this is particularly valuable because a significant proportion of the youngest children in this group have limited speaking skills. Support staff target individual children and small groups, as a matter of course, to discuss what they are doing, and whole class sessions also give children good opportunities to listen and to talk together. During large group discussion, children listen attentively and happily contribute. They are enthusiastic about traditional stories, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. This enjoyment is especially noticeable when their deeper understanding of characters' feelings and reactions are aroused through imaginative role-play strategies. One such strategy was 'modelled' by the class teacher, who donned a long blond wig to take the part of Goldilocks and answered children's readily offered questions about her behaviour in the bears' home. Some children write their first name and other words, forming letters correctly; others make marks to convey meaning. Higher attaining children read their work confidently, and are keen to write more. Small groups of children are given close attention and support when they are taking part in directed writing activities, such as writing (and posting) a birthday party invitation to the Three Bears. Children can choose to write independently in the role play area, and adults 'model' these activities when the role play area is introduced. However, opportunities for more spontaneous writing, when children can 'practise' the skills they learn when under the supervision of adults, are not as strongly promoted as are other aspects of communication, language and literacy.

44. Children's **mathematical development** is enhanced by good attention to mathematical language, and by the use of other areas of learning to reinforce mathematical concepts and vocabulary. The story of 'The Three Bears', for example, proved to be a perfect choice for exploring the current theme of size. Children also chalked out garage and parking spaces in the outdoor area and then tested to see if the space accommodated their wheeled toy. Paintbrushes of varying sizes were also used to provoke discussion and to practise vocabulary. Support staff work unstintingly to draw out and promote mathematical language through discussion. Higher attaining children count up to nine objects, while lower attainers have an awareness of number names, but do not count accurately.

45. As well as having their own area for outdoor education, children also use the larger play areas to extend their **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Roads and junctions are mapped out on the playground for children to learn about road safety, for example. Information and communication technology (ICT) programs are selected to link in with other topics and the computers are always available for children to practise simple skills. As a result, higher attaining children confidently use the mouse to move fairy tale characters about the screen, select icons and delete items. Lower attainers investigate the different icons and learn their function by trial and error. Occasionally, children are inhibited from making greater progress because they are left to work independently for too long.

46. Use of the Village Hall for lessons makes a valuable contribution **to physical development**. In these sessions, children listen carefully to instructions and music. Many are developing an awareness of space and bodily movement, and use this understanding to create large and small shapes and put these ideas together to make a little dance. Simple implements, such as pencils and brushes, as well as larger apparatus, are handled competently.

47. Specific daily sessions are given over to developing painting and art skills, as part of the children's **creative development**. Classroom displays show a range of painting and collage work. Role play areas change their focus regularly, so that children have a variety of contexts in which to use their imagination. The use of props is very popular, as are the role play activities described above. In both cases, such strategies ensured that children had plenty of ideas for their conversation in the Three Bears' house. There are very good opportunities to learn about music and gain, for example, a growing understanding and recognition of high and low notes, as the children did in a lesson during this inspection.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of target setting and assessment to increase the rate of pupils' progress.
- Focused attention given to improving the quality of pupils' writing, particularly in Years 4 to 6.
- Effective teaching of basic reading skills.
- Monitoring and evaluation skills and responsibilities, which have yet to be fully developed and shared.

Commentary

48. Several key initiatives have been introduced to accelerate progress and improve standards in English, and one of the most influential and successful has been the attention given to assessment and the setting of realistically challenging attainment goals for all pupils. At an individual level, this development has enabled the school to identify and target those pupils needing extra support, and to check pupils' progress at regular and frequent intervals. In addition, assessment information is generally used well in English lessons to cater for the needs of pupils in different year groups and with different abilities. The school's analysis of last year's information shows pupils to have made good progress, although the rate of improvement was greater in reading than it was for writing. Inspection evidence shows that the majority of pupils continue to make good progress in this school year, including those of higher attainment and those with SEN, and are achieving well. This success is particularly marked in the current relatively lower attaining Year 6 group, in which pupils are likely to reach standards that are broadly in line with national expectations in all aspects of the subject by the end of this school year. The higher attaining Year 2 group are likely to reach standards above those expected nationally in listening, reading and writing, and to meet the standards for speaking skills.

49. English is well taught. Because the school had less success last year in writing than it did in reading, this area continues to be a major priority for further improvement. Writing opportunities are well-balanced, so that pupils are introduced to a wide range of styles and audiences, and close attention is given to the formal skills of punctuation and spelling. The greatest level of achievement, however, is taking place where pupils are encouraged to be creative and imaginative in their writing, and this is true for pupils of all abilities. Evidence from pupils' work over time shows that this approach has had the most impact on teaching and learning in the class with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 but, more recently, pupils in Years 2 and 3 are responding with the same enthusiasm and lively work to similarly stimulating opportunities.

50. Where the encouragement of good quality writing is most effective, there has been a deliberate drive to increase pupils' range of vocabulary. Exciting themes, such as mythological creatures, are chosen to hold pupils' interest and give plenty of scope for word choices. During one good lesson, pupils in these older year groups readily offered a wide range of vocabulary and ideas for

transforming a mundane sentence into one with rich description and suspense. To help do this, pupils gave examples of similes, showing they were familiar with the use of imagery. Pupils in Year 6 with the potential for attainment at the higher Level 5 are also being encouraged and motivated within an 'able writers' group which has been organised by the local partnership of schools. The quality of handwriting has been improved in Years 1 and 2 since the last inspection, when there was some concern about standards in this area, and the quality of presentation is satisfactory throughout the school.

51. Reading is also encouraged well. Pupils talk enthusiastically about books and stories, and are keen to read. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 read accurately, and many read fluently, using several strategies to work out unfamiliar words. Those of higher attainment read rapidly and with good expression. Schemed readers are a useful resource for encouraging younger readers although, very occasionally, middle attaining pupils continue to make their way through the scheme even when they are able to read more challenging material. Pupils in the current Year 6 readily research information, for example about favourite authors. The very few with relatively higher attainment discuss characters and plot, and refer to the text to select powerful words and phrases. On the whole, however, pupils are not as confident with the more challenging reading skills which explore text and its meaning, as they are with basic reading skills. Phonic knowledge and understanding are promoted well, particularly with pupils who need extra support. Support staff work effectively and there is much very good teaching from the co-ordinator for SEN. Teaching assistants are well-briefed, and a variety of tasks and well-prepared resources, combined with a lively and encouraging manner, fully engages these lower attaining pupils.

52. Two other initiatives are under way, but these have been introduced more recently and are, therefore, not as yet making such a strong impact on pupils' performance as those described above. First, the school has identified the need to focus on developing pupils' speaking skills in order to create a foundation for boosting other language and literacy skills: some pupils, in Year 2 for example, do not always speak with confidence, particularly in larger groups. This initiative is making headway where, for example, opportunities to talk with a partner enables pupils to express and develop early ideas. The chance to do this was particularly successful in the class with the oldest year groups, as it added much to the quality of subsequent discussion.

53. The second initiative is very new and is aimed at improving feedback and dialogue with pupils about their performance. Marking now has more comment about the quality of work and how it could be improved, although the impact of this new approach has not yet been monitored formally to ensure that the approach is consistently applied across the school. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall, and monitoring skills are still being extended. The analysis of assessment data has been fully shared with the subject leader for English. She, therefore, has a good knowledge of the relative strengths and weaknesses within this subject, and is taking a strong lead in the introduction of improvements. However, she has not yet completed her training in monitoring skills and so, at present, her contribution to gathering and analysing data, and evaluating the effect of new initiatives on teaching and learning, is not fully developed.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Opportunities to use language and literacy skills in other subjects are satisfactory, with some good opportunities for personal research. This position reflects the early stages of the school's new approach to curriculum organisation and planning. In some subjects, such chances are good. This is true of science, for example, where pupils are encouraged to write up their experiments. Good examples were also seen in design and technology activities, particularly in the written evaluations of design projects. Opportunities in history and geography are satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of information about pupils' progress to set targets for future learning.
- Good teaching as a whole, but with an over-reliance on worksheets in Years 1 and 2.
- The quality of marking, which does not always identify what pupils need to do to improve.

Commentary

54. Pupils' achievement is good overall, but strongest in Years 3 to 6. Through the use of good assessment and tracking of pupils' progress the school has identified problems and given extra support where needed. This is particularly true for the oldest year groups. As a result, progress has improved. The current Year 6 group, for example, made particularly good progress last year (school data), and are currently achieving well. By the end of the school year, this relatively lower attaining group of pupils is likely to be reaching standards broadly in line with national expectations. The subject is well led, and management skills are being developed further to strengthen monitoring. The school has used its analysis of data effectively to identify the need to improve areas, such as problem solving, in order to increase achievement and improve standards. Lessons have also been observed. Good links have been made with parents, through parents' evenings, to assist in developing mathematics at home as well as at school.

55. Teaching and learning are good, as illustrated in lessons during this inspection, but are strongest in the oldest year groups where, for example, there is greater evidence in pupils' work of the school's focus on problem solving. Pupils respond well to lively, challenging lessons. They work hard and co-operate well with each other when working in groups. Lessons are planned with different activities for pupils in the different age groups, and practical activities reinforce what has been taught. A very effective lesson for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 was challenging for all ability groups, including the more able. Year 6 pupils had to decide the intervals on a graph for a wide spread of data, and showed confident problem solving skills. The overhead projector was used to illustrate how to tally, and this demonstration accelerated pupils' learning further. Skilled teaching assistants are deployed effectively and give good support to pupils with SEN and different age groups within the classes; as a result, these pupils make good progress in mathematics. Mental oral starters are good. Lively counting and a variety of games and activities motivate pupils and they learn well. These skills are then applied in subsequent group activities. For example, the older pupils first revised their knowledge of two, five and ten times tables in preparation for their work with graphs and, during later activities, more able pupils explained to others how this knowledge could be applied. During lessons, teachers encourage the frequent use of relevant mathematical vocabulary, and knowledge of these terms is reinforced within attractive displays. Where these features are present, pupils make good gains in learning.

56. Pupils in the current Year 2 group are a more able group than usual, and are likely to reach standards above those nationally expected by the end of the year. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but, when looking at their work over time, there has been too heavy a reliance on worksheets. Good opportunities for investigative work took place in lessons during the inspection, and pupils in Year 2 responded with interest and made good improvement in their knowledge of 2 and 3 dimensional shapes. In the same lesson, more able pupils rose to the challenge, and applied their knowledge of the two times table to count in groups of four and six. However, there are few examples in pupils' work of using mathematics to solve problems and, therefore, insufficient opportunities for pupils to try out different approaches and to practise their own strategies. As a result, pupils in these two year groups are currently achieving satisfactorily, rather than well. Marking is also satisfactory. Praise is used judiciously to encourage pupils to do well, but more able pupils are not shown how they can develop further. New marking strategies have made a greater impact for older pupils, where feedback points up areas for development, but have yet to fully develop across the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Teachers make good use of mathematics across the curriculum and link work well with ICT. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop mathematical skills as they create line graphs in science, and measure accurately in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of assessment information.
- Opportunities to develop independent investigative and recording skills are not yet fully developed.

Commentary

58. The school's assessment information and evidence from this inspection indicate increasing levels of progress. This is because, in all year groups, there is a greater and growing emphasis on the acquisition of independent and investigative skills. As a result, the present quality of teaching and learning in this subject is good as a whole, as demonstrated in lessons during the inspection, but these approaches to teaching science have yet to be fully developed and established. As a result, provision is satisfactory at present, as is pupils' achievement. Standards in the present Year 2 and Year 6 groups are likely to be broadly similar to national expectations by the end of this school year. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The school is in the process of reviewing planning for this subject by incorporating the nationally recommended scheme for science into new whole school planning. The plan is clearly focused on the need to raise standards, increase the level of challenge further and improve pupils' practical, investigative and recording skills.

59. Good assessment systems have also helped to improve the increasing rates of progress. The information they give valuably supports lesson planning, and ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes are well helped and given activities appropriate for their age. Scientific knowledge and understanding are generally covered well, and this is reflected in the national test results, which have never been less than above the national average for Year 6 pupils. In lessons, well-prepared resources and appropriate questioning help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils with SEN make good progress because they are encouraged to join in with whole class discussion and are given help with recording their work.

60. The growing impact of the school's attention to investigation and independent learning skills was particularly apparent in lessons during the inspection, through good and very good teaching. Where teaching was very good, practical work was well structured to ensure that pupils were stimulated by a range of exciting tasks. Year 3 pupils in this lesson enthusiastically planned fair hearing tests to try out on their Year 2 classmates, their interest heightened because they were using objects they had brought from home and these had to remain secret. This lesson was also particularly successful because there was a good balance of time given to direct teaching and independent work. In a well-taught science lesson with those in Years 4 to 6, pupils in different groups were supported and challenged well. There was particularly effective help in this lesson for pupils with SEN by teaching assistants. After taking little interest at the beginning of the session, the interest and enthusiasm of these pupils grew significantly in response to close support from the teaching assistant. Homework is also used well to encourage independent learning skills. Pupils are asked to make observations at home, for example, and share them with the class. Older pupils brought examples of electrical circuit diagrams into school, and many pupils are confident in finding

information from the Internet. Pupils also benefit from links with parents and local schools. For example, the school reports that parents make a valuable contribution to their children's learning by helping them revise for tests. Close links with the local community college include the involvement of Year 6 pupils in a cross phase science project.

61. Work in pupils' books shows that they record scientific information in a variety of ways. However, their investigative work has not yet required them sufficiently to develop their own skills of planning experiments, making predictions and recording results independently, and this limits what they can achieve. Year 6 pupils record their work with care and the content is well-organised, particularly that of the relatively more able, but they are still only at the early stages of recording their observations independently. Similarly, these pupils conduct investigations, such as measuring, and record shadows at different times of the day, for example, but they still rely on the teacher to remind them about fair testing. In Years 1 and 2, earlier work was often completed on published worksheets, which gave these pupils, and particularly the higher attaining pupils, little opportunity to develop their own ideas.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership, which is bringing about rapid improvement.
- No day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress.
- Well planned links with other subjects.
- Too few computers in each classroom.

62. The subject leader has a clear vision for the development of the subject and her influence has led to rapid improvement in the past year. She has put together an effective action plan, which includes further training for staff and the purchase of additional resources. The quality of planning and teaching are regularly monitored, and recent training and support for staff have boosted their confidence successfully. More links are being made with other subjects and computers are generally well used in lessons. As a result of these improvements, pupils achieve satisfactorily in this subject. Standards remain at nationally expected levels in Years 2 and 6, as reported at the time of the last inspection.

63. Computers have been allocated to classrooms; no direct teaching of ICT skills was observed, but satisfactory use of ICT resources occurred in many lessons. For example, Year 2 pupils confidently sorted shapes on the computer during a mathematics lesson; as part of their science investigation and Year 3 pupils correctly programmed a computerised Roamer toy to follow instructions. Key vocabulary was helpfully revised to make sure pupils got the most from this last activity. Planning clearly identifies suitable opportunities for learning, and staff use resources to promote ICT as a tool for everyday life. Teachers use projectors to introduce new material in an interesting way, for example when looking at the work of the artist Bridget Riley. Year 6 pupils used the Internet to research aspects of life in Ancient Greece, and began to plan a Power-point presentation of their findings. Those in Year 6 also use word processing skills competently, varying the size, colour and type of font, for example, to create different effects. Homework is well used to help learning for the majority of pupils, particularly those who have access to computers at home.

64. The school is aware, though, that further development is needed and, because of this, the subject remains a priority for more improvement. For example, there is no system at present for assessing pupils' progress as they work through each topic, so that teachers do not have enough information about how well pupils are doing to use in planning future work. There are no direct sessions timetabled for the teaching of ICT, and there is considerable pressure on the small number of computers in each classroom, so that pupils have insufficient time with them to learn and practise new skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The school is committed to developing pupils' ICT skills through different subjects and this approach is increasing the range of ICT opportunities, so that current use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Evidence from lessons and pupils' work shows a variety of opportunities offered in many subjects. This includes listening to talking books for the Reception children, and creating a block graph on computer to show eye colour. Year 2 and Year 3 pupils use programs to improve their spelling and knowledge of multiplication tables, and visit an educational website to develop their scientific skills. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have researched the author Michael Morpurgo, using Internet search engines. An ICT club and a residential visit enrich this subject's curriculum and give additional opportunities for pupils to hone their skills.

HUMANITIES

Not enough evidence was collected for judgements to be made about provision in history and geography, or about the standards achieved in these subjects. The commentary that follows is based on evidence from a very small sample of teaching, discussion with pupils and teachers and a scrutiny of curriculum plans and pupils' work.

Commentary

66. During work on **history**, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have used reference books and the Internet to complete some independent research into aspects of Ancient Greek life. They have also linked this work with that in English, where they are studying Greek myths. Well-designed posters reflect their studies about World War Two, and this work was usefully linked with a design and technology project, in which pupils made a model of an air raid shelter and tested its strength. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors, including a workshop on a Victorian theme.

67. Current studies in **geography** for pupils in Years 2 and 3 are about a village in India, and are allowing these pupils to contrast this locality with their own. They are well helped in this work by a good range of reference books. Previously, these pupils have studied the seaside. Environmental studies are fostered well by residential visits to the Isle of Wight for pupils in Years 5 and 6, which take place every two years.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Not enough evidence was gathered to enable judgements to be made about the quality of provision, standards or achievement in each of the subjects of art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Evidence for the commentary below is taken from a small sample of teaching, discussion with pupils, photographs and pupils' work.

Commentary

68. Pupils' work shows that the curriculum for **art and design** represents all aspects of the subject and includes some good opportunities to write evaluations about the quality of completed activities. Standards of finish are generally good, and higher attaining Year 6 pupils make detailed, careful drawings. During the inspection, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 were painting patterns from ideas stimulated by science work about light and dark. There was a quiet, tranquil atmosphere, mainly inspired by listening to a story as they painted.

69. Samples of pupils' **design and technology** work indicate that the subject is competently planned and that all aspects of the 'design and make' process are covered. During this term, Year 6 pupils have made 'pop-up' illustrations for books. Last year, Year 2 pupils designed playgrounds,

having first looked at existing playground furniture in the park. Work is generally completed to a good standard of finish and, as with art and design, pupils are encouraged to write about and evaluate their completed designs: some of these are thoughtfully done. Where necessary, a writing framework is used to help guide pupils' responses.

70. In **music**, pupils were observed in one lesson with the Reception group and Year 1. In this lesson pupils learned to listen to music and, with the help of pictures, identify high and low sounds. Standards of singing are good throughout the school, as heard during assemblies, when pupils sang enthusiastically. Music groups visit the school so that the pupils experience live music, and several pupils in the school to learn to play the violin, flute and keyboard.

71. The school still suffers from limitations in its accommodation, but makes good use of what it has for teaching **physical education**. Good opportunities to enrich what the school offers have also been created through links with other schools, particularly the local secondary school, and through the use of visiting specialists and residential visits. All pupils from Year 1 onwards go swimming, and the school reports that all of last year's Year 6 group could swim at least 25 metres. Two small samples of teaching show that the school is keen to give pupils as wide an experience as possible in this subject, and pupils clearly enjoy these activities. During a dance lesson in the adjacent Village Hall, pupils were thoroughly engrossed in creating the movements of Asian dance and in trying out ideas to capture a traditional Indian story. They followed movements accurately, although some had difficulty keeping to the rhythm. Later in the session they worked with a partner to create a small dance. The use of a taped programme was a useful resource for information and ideas, but sometimes directed their response too closely or did not give enough time for pupils to try out ideas for themselves. The hall was also used, when it rained, for a games lesson. This lesson was with the oldest pupils, and focused on defence and attack tactics in basketball. The content of the lesson was quickly adapted to the confines of being indoors; pupils were suitably warmed up at the start and were kept busy and active by a variety of activities. In response to these activities, pupils became increasingly more agile at dribbling and dodging to avoid being 'tagged'.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Not enough evidence could be gathered to enable judgements to be made about the quality of provision in this area.

72. The curriculum for personal, social and health education and citizenship is under review as part of a wider discussion about how the school plans for different subjects. At present, there are regular opportunities for pupils in each class to discuss relevant issues, such as healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. An appropriate policy is in place for sex education. Visiting drama groups enrich the provision, as does the school's attention to encouraging physical exercise and healthy eating. The school has focused on positive relationships, and gives additional support to pupils with difficulties. Pupils are encouraged to think about their own learning through the use of weekly 'learning logs', when they write about what they have learned. Year 6 pupils run a business, growing and selling bulbs, which develops their entrepreneurial flair. The recently formed school council gives pupils a formal opportunity to take on specific roles and responsibilities, and to make a valuable contribution to the school community.

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	3
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	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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