

INSPECTION REPORT

**HIGH HALDEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Ashford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118666

Headteacher: Mrs Anne-Marie Trustram

Lead inspector: Mike Milton

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th October 2004

Inspection number: 267009

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	96
School address:	Church Hill High Halden Ashford Kent
Postcode:	TN26 3JB
Telephone number:	01233 850285
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Janet Rymer-Jones
Date of previous inspection:	25 th November 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

High Halden Church of England Primary School is smaller than other primary schools with 96 pupils taught in four classes. There are slightly more boys than girls. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The area that the school serves is generally an advantaged one but it includes pockets of socio-economic disadvantage, some of which is severe. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and statements of special educational needs is above the national average. Pupils' special needs include: communication difficulties; social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; and multi-sensory impairment. Nearly all pupils are of white UK heritage and no pupils learn English as an additional language. A small number of pupils come from Traveller backgrounds. Pupils' attainment on entry fluctuates from year to year, and is broadly average. During 2003-4, 10 pupils joined or left at times other than the start or end of the school year and, as a proportion of the school's population, this mobility is above the national average. There are four class teachers and two of these joined the school at the start of the autumn term 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1723	M Milton	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information and Communication Technology; Geography; Religious Education; Personal, Social and Health Education.
8991	P Goldsack	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
32702	A Savva	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Design and Technology; History.
11816	G Jones	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; English; Art and Design; Music; Physical Education; Special Educational Needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's inspection in 2002 reported serious weaknesses in its provision for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and this resulted in pupils' underachievement and low standards. Since then, the causes of the serious weaknesses have been remedied, and teaching and pupils' achievement are now good although these improvements have not yet been in place long enough to have their full effect on pupils' standards. **High Halden Church of England Primary is now a good, effective school.** The headteacher's relentless drive, professionalism and strategic planning have enabled the school to address its serious weaknesses effectively. Year 6 pupils are on track to reach standards that match national averages by next summer in English, mathematics and science. The school has a strong Christian ethos and **provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's ambitions for the school focus on what is best for the pupils, and are being implemented with the strong support of the governing body and staff;
- The good teaching and learning include a very good contribution from the teaching assistants;
- Parents make a strong contribution to their children's learning;
- The school has made very good progress in developing information and communication technology (ICT) for teaching, learning and management;
- The assessment of pupils' progress in the Reception class and in English and mathematics is very good but there are not whole-school systems for other subjects;
- The management of the library has been modernised but the book stock is inadequate.

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection. Since then, teaching and learning have improved from unsatisfactory to good in Years 3 to 6, and the standards of Year 6 pupils have improved significantly. A good range of actions has been taken to address successfully the key issues identified by the previous inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	E	E	E
mathematics	C	E	C	D
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.*

Caution is needed in interpreting the grades in the table above, as they are based on the results of small numbers of pupils in Year 6. **Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school from Reception to Year 6.** The children in the Reception class are on course to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the start of Year 1 in most areas of learning. Pupils in Year 2 are on track to reach above average standards in reading and writing, and average standards in mathematics. In the 2004 national tests, the Year 6 pupils' results improved for English and mathematics but were broadly similar for science. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach average standards in English, mathematics and science. In ICT, standards match national expectations and are rising. Boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those with Traveller backgrounds achieve well.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good in general although a minority of pupils have weaknesses in their active listening and learning skills. Their attendance is good. Overall, pupils' cultural development is satisfactory but the opportunities for them to develop their awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity in British society are not planned systematically.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Examples of very good lessons were seen in each class. Whole-class teaching is brisk, clear and involves all pupils so they learn well. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards effectively in all lessons. Their use makes the sharing of learning objectives with pupils more efficient at the starts of lessons as well as helping pupils to review their learning during and at the ends of lessons. Teaching assistants have good levels of expertise and work closely with teachers in helping pupils to learn throughout lessons. Pupils are normally challenged by the work they are set, especially in English and mathematics.

Pupils with SEN benefit from work that is well planned for them in lessons and from the very good support they receive in class. The school collects much assessment information for English, mathematics and the Reception class. Very good use is made of this data to help improve pupils' learning and to provide individual pupils with targets for improvement. The quality of the curriculum is good with a number of very good features. Specialists from local secondary schools provide teaching for French, dance and a range of sports, and provide very good enrichment of the curriculum. Since the last inspection the school has continued to improve its accommodation. Teachers overcome most of the difficulties associated with the two temporary classrooms, which sometimes become very hot in summer. The stock of books in the library is inadequate and this limits the development of pupils' research skills with books. The partnership with parents is very good; for example, parents run all of the after-school clubs and organise sporting fixtures.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good with a number of very good features. The work of the governing body is effective and all statutory requirements are met. Leadership is good and all staff work as a coherent team towards school improvement. Despite the staff changes, leadership of subjects has developed well since the last inspection. The good management is supportive of staff with a strong focus on raising standards. Because of the recent staff changes, the headteacher has taken a very heavy load of responsibilities. Innovative practice is encouraged; for example, ICT is used in the teaching of all lessons, and in the assessment and tracking of pupils in the Reception class and for English and mathematics. Also, the school has an excellent website and pupils often use ICT to help their learning in other subjects.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is highly regarded by the parents. Pupils are very content with the school's provision, and they suggest few areas where they think improvement is needed.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- continue to develop pupils' active listening and learning skills;
- develop the whole-school assessment systems for subjects other than English and mathematics;
- continue to improve the library;
- plan systematically for pupils to learn about the richness and diversity of other cultures.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, the achievement of all groups of pupils is good throughout the school. In Year 6, pupils' standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are rising because teaching and learning are now good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The reading and writing standards of Year 2 pupils are above national averages.
- Year 6 standards are rising in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils achieve well in ICT.
- Sometimes, the achievement of a minority of pupils is held back by weaknesses in their learning skills.

Commentary

1. *Standards* are the levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils reach compared with pupils of the same age nationally. *Achievement* is an assessment of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to their capability, and it is a judgement about whether pupils are doing as well as they should.

2. In 2002, the school's inspection reported serious weaknesses in its provision for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and this resulted in pupils' underachievement and low standards. Since then, the causes of the serious weaknesses have been remedied, and teaching and pupils' achievement are now good although these improvements have not yet been in place long enough to have a full effect on pupils' standards.

3. The attainment of children on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year but is broadly average. The good teaching is enabling the Reception children to achieve well and they are on track to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the start of Year 1 in their personal social and emotional development, in their communication, language and literacy, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are on track to reach the expected standards in their mathematical and physical development.

4. In the national tests in 2003, the Year 2 pupils' results were above the national averages for all schools in reading and writing and below average for mathematics. In comparison with similar schools nationally, results were average for reading, below average for writing and well below average for mathematics. Comparisons with national averages have to be interpreted with caution because of the small number of pupils in Year 2 so that the performance of just one pupil has a significant impact on the school's overall results. Comparative data are not yet available for the 2004 results but the average result per pupil did rise. Between 1999 and 2003, the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score per pupil was above the national trend of improvement.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.3 (25.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.6 (25.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (26.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. The results of Year 6 pupils in the national tests in 2003 were well below the national average in English for all and similar schools, and the results for science were below national averages for all and similar schools. For mathematics, results matched the national average for all schools and were below average for similar schools. Comparisons with national averages have to be interpreted with caution because of the small number of pupils in Year 6. Comparative data are not yet available for the 2004 results but the average result per pupil did rise in English and mathematics, and remained the same in science. Between 1999 and 2003, the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score per pupil was similar to the national trend of improvement.

6. The achievement of the current Year 2 pupils is good. They are on track to continue to achieve above-average standards in reading and writing, and average standards in mathematics and science. Most pupils are rapidly developing their readings skills and use a good range of strategies to help them read unknown words. As a result of good teaching, pupils understand what they are reading. They are encouraged consistently to write more complex and longer sentences, and the target-setting for each pupil supports this improvement. Since the last inspection, standards in Year 2 have risen in religious education and geography and are now above expectations. Standards have been maintained at national expectations in science, ICT, history and physical education.

7. In 2004, the school achieved its targets for the proportions of Year 6 pupils reaching and exceeding the expected standards in English, mathematics and science. The school's value-added measure for the gains that Year 6 pupils in 2003 made from their Year 2 results was below average. The value-added measure for the Year 6 pupils in 2004 was average.

8. The achievement of the current Year 6 pupils is good and the pupils are on track to reach higher standards in the summer of 2005 in English, mathematics and science than were reported by the previous inspection in 2002. Pupils are on course to reach average standards in these subjects. This improvement is the result of improved teaching, a better curriculum and the effective use of assessment to help raise pupils' standards. Standards in several other subjects have also improved and they now match national expectations in ICT, history, religious education and physical education.

9. All pupils achieve well in ICT because they are motivated to do their best by the work, they quickly learn new skills that are taught effectively using the interactive whiteboards, and they are set challenging tasks to use and apply these skills. Some of the work they complete is above the expected standard for their ages.

10. The achievement of boys and girls is similar. The achievement of most pupils from Traveller backgrounds is good; a few underachieve and this is usually linked to their rates of attendance. Pupils on the special needs register make good progress in their learning and achieve well. This results from the good learning support provided by the school. Gifted and talented pupils are identified in the school's tracking system and the achievement of these pupils is good.

11. In nine of the 29 lessons seen during the inspection, a small minority of pupils did not achieve as well as they should because of weaknesses in their active listening skills and their commitment to doing their best. The school is taking steps to improve these aspects of pupils' personal development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their attendance is good. Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral and social development is good; their cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships throughout the school are good.
- There are good arrangements to promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- Provision to promote pupils' awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity in British society is not planned systematically.

Commentary

12. Children in the Reception class achieve well personally, socially and emotionally and make good progress in these aspects of their learning. They are developing positive relationships well, and work within small groups in very co-operative ways. They listen quietly while the teacher is talking to the class and are developing the confidence to talk about their own ideas.

13. All pupils in Years 1 to 6 are fully included in all aspects of the school's life. Pupils have positive attitudes and this reflects improvement since the last inspection. For the most part, pupils work hard and take a lively interest in their work. After-school clubs are popular and well supported by pupils. Nearly all pupils listen carefully to their teachers and ask and answer questions readily. However, there is a tendency for a few pupils to be inattentive and passive for a part of their lessons. The school is tackling this weakness in the learning skills of a significant minority, and teachers and teaching assistants promote active listening strategies at every opportunity.

14. Pupils' good behaviour has been maintained since the last inspection. Their good moral development results in an orderly community with a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and are reminded about school rules on a regular basis. Teachers have high expectations regarding behaviour. Pupils look forward to being rewarded for hard work and good effort at the weekly awards assembly. Both parents and pupils are pleased with the quality of behaviour; they agree that bullying is rare and any isolated incidents are resolved quickly. There were 14 fixed-term exclusions over the past reporting year, and these involved a very small number of pupils. They were fully justified. There have been no exclusions this term.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
96	14	0
1	0	0

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

15. Pupils with SEN are almost always interested in the work planned for them because it is closely matched to their needs. The help and support provided by well-trained teaching assistants promote their enthusiasm and good progress.

16. The good relationships found within the school are reflected in the positive way that pupils treat each other. Pupils' social development is promoted well and older pupils help younger ones in the playground during lunchtime and morning playtime. The headteacher plays a leading role in helping to organise planned activities for older pupils to act responsibly and independently. The school council meets regularly and members are elected by their peers. This is a successful forum where pupils voice their opinions and influence the improvement of the school. Pupils with SEN are treated in a warm, helpful and respectful manner by their classmates. Parents are very pleased that the school is helping their children to become mature.

17. Provision for spiritual development has improved since the last inspection. There is a good range of planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and consider the needs of others. Worthwhile assemblies with relevant themes allow pupils to consider issues that relate to

them, such as friends, family and Christian teaching. Pupils explore the meaning of poetry and are respectful and attentive during collective worship and prayers at the end of the school day. Pupils display empathy for those less fortunate by raising funds for local and international charities.

18. There is a sound programme of visitors, class trips and school events to provide pupils with a satisfactory understanding of British and foreign cultures. Subjects such as religious education, art and music appropriately contribute to pupils' cultural awareness, as do special events such as the art and design and technology multi-cultural week. Pupils from Year 3 onwards have a weekly lesson in French, and last term pupils from Years 4 to 6 visited Boulogne. However, the school is not taking advantage of its proximity to many important historical sites. As at the last inspection, the opportunities for cultural development are not planned systematically and so the school is not providing pupils with sufficiently comprehensive opportunities to develop an awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity in British society. As a consequence, there are some weaknesses in pupils' awareness of other cultures.

19. Pupils' attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now above the national average. Pupils arrive promptly each morning and parents are regularly reminded about the importance of punctuality and regular attendance. Despite the school's best efforts to dissuade them, some parents continue to take family holidays during term-time. The headteacher communicates regularly with families from Traveller backgrounds to encourage regular attendance and most respond well.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.2
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. This good provision is found throughout the school from Reception to Year 6. Teaching is effective in Reception and Years 1 to 6. The quality of assessment is very good for Reception, English and mathematics but unsatisfactory for science, ICT, design and technology, physical education and religious education. The curriculum effectively caters for the needs and interests of all pupils.

Teaching and learning

Good teaching is ensuring that all pupils learn well. The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whole-class teaching is clear, brisk and involves the pupils.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively in many lessons.
- The teaching assistants are well trained and effective.
- Pupils know what they need to do to improve their work in English and mathematics.
- There are no whole-school systems for the assessment of other subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
-	5	16	8	-	-	-

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; percentages are not given as less than 30 lessons were seen.

20. The good quality of teaching in Reception enables the children to learn effectively because they are interested and enthusiastic about the carefully planned activities. There is a good emphasis on speaking and listening, and the teacher and teaching assistant use correct grammar and a varied vocabulary. When pupils are working in groups or on their own, the adults monitor their progress well and help the children to extend their thinking and learning. Both class teacher and teaching assistant regularly observe each child closely and ask carefully phrased questions to assess the extent of children's developing knowledge, skills and understanding. The resulting assessments are used to plan the next step in each child's learning. Regular assessments of each child in each area of learning are recorded on a computer spreadsheet so that their progress can be carefully monitored. Assessment and record keeping are very good in Reception. There are occasional weaknesses in teaching such as insufficient modelling of movements during a physical education lesson and not involving boys and girls fully in the plenary sessions at the ends of lessons.

21. In Years 1 to 6, common features of the good teaching and learning include:

- * Teaching assistants are used effectively, they work closely with the class teachers and are involved in helping pupils learn during all parts of lessons. For example, teaching assistants work with targeted groups of pupils during whole-class teaching, and help pupils concentrate, understand and respond to the teaching. In some lessons, teaching assistants share the use of the interactive whiteboard and computer so that the teacher can focus on teaching and assessing the pupils' responses. Teaching assistants have good levels of expertise and so, for example, staff lessons in the ICT suite and provide support to parents over homework activities for their children.
- * Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils at the starts of lessons, often using the interactive whiteboard for this, and then their progress against these is reviewed at the ends of lessons. In the best lessons, teachers use questions to ensure that pupils understand the learning objectives fully and return to them during the lesson to remind pupils what they should be learning.
- * Whole-class teaching has a good pace so that there is no wasted learning time. This teaching provides step-by-step explanation and instructions that involve the pupils so that pupils learn well. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson about regular and irregular polygons, the teaching built on pupils' existing knowledge and involved them in a series of practical activities that extended their learning rapidly. The teacher corrected pupils' misconceptions carefully and ensured that all understood the key ideas. The tasks were time-limited to give a very good rate of learning.
- * There is an interactive whiteboard linked to a computer in each classroom, and all teachers use these effectively. For example, during the concluding plenary session in a science lesson on friction, the teaching assistant used a digital microscope to project images of the different materials that pupils had used onto the interactive whiteboard. The teacher used these images to help pupils review what they had learnt and to answer the key question they had been set at the start of the lesson.
- * In English and mathematics, work is set at different levels so that the tasks are well matched to pupils' differing learning needs. Consequently, all pupils are challenged by the tasks they are set. In addition, while pupils are working in groups, some groups receive focused teaching from the class teacher and teaching assistant.
- * Teachers use question and answer sessions effectively to check pupils' knowledge and understanding and to build on this by advancing their learning. For example, in a religious education lesson for older pupils, the teacher used questions very effectively to help pupils to recall and structure their knowledge about the Israelites in Egypt so that the

background to the Passover was clearly understood. In a lesson for younger pupils, questions were used very effectively to help pupils analyse 'thank you' and 'asking' prayers.

- * While pupils are working in groups or on their own, the teachers and teaching assistants monitor and support their learning well. For example, in a design and technology lesson, pupils improved their designs as a result of evaluative discussions with the teacher and teaching assistant.

22. Occasional weaknesses in lessons include: insufficient emphasis on improving pupils' skills in a physical education lesson; slack time that was not used for learning in an ICT lesson for pupils who had finished the task quickly; missed opportunities to add to learning by asking pupils to explain their answers in mathematics; insufficient guidance to support pupils' learning as they gathered evidence in preparation for an evaluation of Henry VIII's reign; and pitching the work at too demanding a level for a significant minority in an English lesson so that their learning suffered.

23. Teachers construct good quality individual education plans (IEPs) based on a careful assessment for pupils with SEN. The targets are measurable and achievable, and pupils' progress towards achieving these is continually checked. The work planned for pupils with SEN during lessons is matched very closely to their needs.

24. Assessment is very good for English and mathematics. Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and their marking includes clear comments about how pupils should improve their standards. Marking in other subjects is mostly satisfactory. For English and mathematics, the school uses a computerised system for tracking the progress of individual pupils towards their end-of-year National Curriculum Level targets. This information is used to identify pupils who are underachieving, and these pupils are then helped to make up any lost ground. Linked with this, targets are identified for each pupil to move their learning forward and each pupil is aware of what they need to do to improve their work in these two subjects. The progress of pupils towards their targets is monitored well. Whole-school systems for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress in other subjects have yet to be developed.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides good learning opportunities. There is good provision to enrich the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Reception, there is a good balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities.
- There is a very good match of teaching assistants to the needs of the curriculum.
- Links with local schools provide some very good opportunities for pupils.
- The school is adopting innovative approaches to improving the curriculum.

Commentary

25. The Foundation Stage teacher leads and manages the curriculum effectively and works closely with the experienced, effective teaching assistant. The curriculum is well planned to cover all of the required areas of learning. There is a good balance between the activities directed by the teacher and teaching assistant and those chosen by the children. So children choose their own pursuits from a range of planned activities and select materials they want to use when making items. However, the teacher directs children to specific activities to ensure they receive a balanced curriculum and also when she wants to ensure that they are being challenged sufficiently.

26. For Years 1 to 6, the school provides a curriculum that caters for the needs and interests of the pupils and meets National Curriculum requirements. There is some very good enrichment of the curriculum. For example, each term there is a special week that includes a focus on a particular

subject. For example, recent weeks have included those for personal, social and health education (PSHE), music and art and design. In addition, each half term there is an afternoon when pupils work in mixed-age classes on projects that link science with design and technology. Teachers often make valid links between pupils' work in different subjects, such as science and mathematics, English and religious education and art and ICT. There is little fieldwork to support pupils' learning in history and geography. Good progress has been made in improving the balance of the curriculum since the last inspection.

27. The school evaluates its curriculum well, and uses this information to make improvements. An example of a good response to this evaluation is the change that has been made in the first half of the autumn term to develop the independent learning skills of the Year 1 pupils. Assessment information has informed improvements to the curriculum for English and mathematics including the introduction of ICT based schemes to accelerate pupils' learning.

28. A local secondary school provides specialist French and dance teaching for the pupils, while another school has helped provide a very good range of additional sporting activities. Links with primary schools provide competitive matches in soccer and netball, and opportunities to take part in local music festivals. These links provide significant curriculum enrichment.

29. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to improve its accommodation. New rooms for the staff and learning resources have been built, and a new tennis court laid. The enclosed playground for Reception pupils has been modified and extended. Teachers overcome most of the difficulties associated with the two temporary classrooms but these do not include toilets and they are susceptible to extremes of temperature. The hall is too small for use for physical education by a full class of older pupils. Outdoor provision is very good and includes a large playing field. There is a well-trained teaching assistant for each class and they are well managed so that they are very effective in supporting the pastoral care and learning of the pupils. There are good learning resources for most subjects. A good ICT system is used to manage the library but its stock of books is inadequate, and this limits the development of pupils' research skills.

30. The curriculum provided for pupils with SEN is good. Those with learning needs are provided with a curriculum comprised of small steps in learning. Those with physical as well as learning needs are provided with a modified curriculum that enables them to achieve well.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The provision for support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils like school and are very well known by all members of the staff.
- Pupils' views are valued and they participate in the life of the school community.
- There are trusting relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils.

Commentary

31. This is a caring school where the safety and well-being of pupils have a high priority. The school fulfils its statutory requirements regarding health and safety. Risk assessments of the site are up to date and carried out regularly. Staff members complete risk assessments as part of their preparation in organising class trips. There is an ample number of staff trained to administer first aid and pupils who need it are treated with kindness. Pupils with allergies or ailments are also well cared for. Pupils are supervised well at all times. The headteacher is the named teacher responsible for child protection and the school follows the guidance in its own policy. Staff members are aware of procedures for this.

32. The small size of the school ensures that pupils are very well known by their teachers and teaching assistants. The headteacher knows each pupil really well. Pupils' personal development is recorded informally by class teachers and shared with parents during consultation meetings and in the end-of-year reports. There is very good monitoring of pupils' progress in English and mathematics, and pupils are well aware of their targets for improvement in these subjects. However, such provision in science and other subjects is not as well developed. Pupils are only given general guidance on how they can improve in these subjects.

33. Pupils with SEN, especially those with physical needs, are provided with very good care and support. Teaching assistants receive good quality training to support pupils and this is instrumental in enabling development and progress.

34. All pupils have at least one adult they can talk to if they have a concern. The results of the pupils' questionnaire and conversations with pupils confirm this. Pupils relate very comfortably with the headteacher; she maintains a high profile among them and helps the mid-day supervisor serve them lunch each day. Displays highlight pupils' own work and assemblies celebrate their best efforts. The school council enables pupils to express their opinions on how the school can improve. Their ideas are taken seriously and pupils discuss the practical arrangements connected to their suggestions. The school acts on their ideas, for example, about the school's environment; it now has a tennis court and is in the process of removing a disused oil tank from the grounds.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are very good. Links with the community are good, and with other schools they are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is popular with its parents.
- Almost all parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning at home and in school.
- There are very good links with local secondary schools.

Commentary

35. The good partnership between the school and the community has been maintained since the last inspection. The school is highly regarded by parents. The quality of information provided for parents is good and helps to support the partnership between home and school well. The prospectus and governors' annual reports contain all of the required information in a parent-friendly format. Pupils' end-of-year reports meet requirements and inform parents about their children's progress in each subject. Reporting on progress in English and mathematics is particularly informative and targets for improvement are clear. The school's excellent website helps to keep parents fully informed about all aspects of school life. Information regarding the curriculum for each class is distributed each half term.

36. The school values its link with parents and welcomes their opinions. The school surveys parents' views and considers them when making decisions. All members of staff are friendly and easy to approach. Questionnaire results confirm that parents are comfortable about approaching the school with questions and concerns. Parents of pupils with SEN are kept well informed about their children's progress although records of reviews of progress are not always sufficiently detailed. Parents are pro-active in support of the school and they enrich learning for all of the pupils very effectively. Their involvement in school life has increased since the last inspection. All of the after-school clubs are run by parents, and parents also contribute their time to organising sporting fixtures and providing transport to matches. Parents support homework and help their children with reading and projects. The Parent Teacher Friends Association (PTFA) is very active; its fundraising activities are successful and provide valuable extra resources. Most recently, it funded computers for the Reception class and playground games.

37. The school enjoys good support from the local community. The parish church is used for special services such as Harvest Festival, Christmas, Easter and the leavers' service. The vicar regularly leads assemblies and shares resources for lessons. Local businesses provide sponsorship for sports kits and contribute raffle prizes for the PTFA events.

38. There is a well-planned induction for Year 6 pupils in the summer term to prepare them for transferring to the nearby secondary school. This includes an induction week in the school towards the end of the summer term in Year 6. Pupils benefit from this good link throughout the year and have lessons with secondary school teachers in French, physical education and dance. Pupils also participate in music festivals and sporting competitions with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The well-respected headteacher provides good leadership, as do other key staff. Governance is good. Management systems are effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong partnership between the headteacher and the governing body.
- The headteacher has a very clear vision for improvement.
- The development of innovative practice is well encouraged.
- The school improvement plan is generally good but sometimes there is a lack of coherence between the priority, actions and success criteria.
- Good progress is being made in implementing the national requirements for teachers' workload.

Commentary

39. The headteacher's vision for the improvement of the school is being realised. It is strongly supported by the governing body. They work together effectively with a relentless drive for improvement. As a team, they have a very clear commitment to teaching the Christian faith and enhancing pupils' personal growth.

40. The governors are well informed about pupils' progress and play an active role in supporting the school. They have worked alongside the headteacher tirelessly to improve the ICT resources, the school grounds, the internal structure and appearance of the school, and to ensure pupils have a stable and good balance of teaching staff. They are currently looking to improve the school hall facilities to improve opportunities and arrangements for teaching physical education. The governors are very supportive of the school, know its strengths and weaknesses very well and are involved in holding it to account for its performance. The governing body complies fully with all of its statutory responsibilities.

41. The headteacher's clarity of vision and emphasis on improving teaching and learning are evident in the effective monitoring of teaching, and the well structured school improvement plan which outlines the school's priorities for development. The governors are aware of the priorities and were involved in drawing up the school improvement plan. Priorities are set following an analysis of evidence gathered by monitoring lessons, planning and pupils' work and the analysis of assessment data. However, occasionally the action and success criteria are recorded as being the same and the links between the priority and some of the actions are not explicit. The expected impact of actions on teaching and learning is not always clear.

42. The school's priorities reflect the headteacher's confident and inspirational approach towards developing an innovative curriculum aimed at improving pupils' investigative, independent learning and higher-level thinking skills. For example, the Year 1 pupils are spending the second half of each afternoon in Reception until half term to remedy weaknesses in their skills of independent

learning. During these sessions, they focus on independent investigations in order to develop their skills. The headteacher has also successfully led significant improvements in ICT. For example, the library uses biometric records rather than library cards and each classroom has an interactive whiteboard that is used effectively in lessons.

43. Pupils commented on how much they enjoyed the design and technology and science activity afternoons each half term. They work in mixed-age groups. This a further example of an initiative introduced by the headteacher to build on and develop pupils' problem-solving and thinking skills. She also provided guidance for Year 6 pupils to carry out independent research projects at home. These were impressive, covering a wide range of themes, such as pond life, Ancient Egyptians and even cottage garden design.

44. The management of staff's workload has been handled very well. The teaching assistants play a key role in supporting teaching and providing administrative support for teachers, such as carrying out registration duties, whilst the teachers make good use of time for teaching groups of pupils. Teaching assistants also guide pupils who are working in the ICT suite when they are applying the skills they have been taught in class using the electronic whiteboard. The headteacher has also ensured that each teacher has a laptop for curriculum planning and assessment, and has put into place arrangements for subject leaders to write medium-term plans for their subject which they e-mail to the other teachers. She has also put into place a planned programme of non-teaching time to support subject leaders in their monitoring and evaluation roles. Because of staff changes and the small size of the school, the headteacher carries a very heavy load of responsibilities.

45. Subject leaders are developing their expertise in monitoring and evaluation. Examples of good subject leadership are evident in English, mathematics and ICT. This is a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Provision for pupils with SEN is led satisfactorily but regular reviews of pupils' progress are not managed well because parents are often not invited to become involved.

46. The strategic use of resources is good. The bursar carries out day-to-day financial administration effectively. Governors have a good awareness of the school's financial management and of obtaining best value for expenditure. They are fully involved in evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of spending decisions. The headteacher is thorough about evaluating the effectiveness of staff deployment and makes good use of the performance management information and other data to guide her judgements on the benefits to pupils' achievements and personal development. She is skilful in obtaining and effectively using a range of educational grants and income.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	311,652.00
Total expenditure	320,193.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,246.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	16,552.00
Balance carried forward to the next	8,011.00

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The good quality of teaching is enabling the children to learn effectively because they are interested and enthusiastic about the activities planned for them. The children's overall level of attainment was very close to the average when they were first admitted to the school and they are on course to exceed the early learning goals in most of the areas of learning (see below) by the end of their time in the Reception class. The Foundation Stage teacher leads and manages the curriculum effectively and works closely with the experienced, effective teaching assistant. Both class teacher and teaching assistant regularly observe each child closely and ask carefully phrased questions to assess the extent of children's developing knowledge, skills and understanding. Children's progress in the different areas of learning is closely tracked using an ICT spreadsheet, and this tracking process includes setting targets for children during their year in Reception and when they start Year 1. The resulting assessments are used effectively to plan the next step in each child's learning. Since the last inspection, satisfactory improvements have been made to the provision in the Reception class.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to work independently and to work co-operatively in groups.
- Good strategies are used to ensure that children's self-esteem is raised.
- The girls do not willingly take part in class discussions and, as yet, are not sufficiently encouraged to make contributions.

Commentary

48. Children achieve well personally, socially and emotionally and make good progress in these aspects of their learning. They are on course to exceed expectations for attainment in this area of their learning. Children are provided with, and respond very well to, a wide range of good opportunities to develop positive relationships with others. The adults in the classroom improve children's self-esteem through relevant and frequent use of praise and by encouraging them to make their own decisions and choices. For example, children choose their own pursuits from a range of planned activities and select materials they want to use when making items. At the same time, the teacher directs children to specific activities to ensure they receive a balanced curriculum and also when she wants to ensure that they are being challenged sufficiently. Children listen quietly whilst the teacher is talking to the class and are quickly developing the confidence to explain to others and talk about their own ideas. However, there is a need to take positive action to encourage the girls in the class to participate more actively in class discussions. When making large models, such as robots, children work within small groups in a very co-operative way, helping each other, making suggestions and sharing the necessary tasks. Children dress and undress independently for physical education lessons and participate enthusiastically in walks around the school grounds to look for exciting items that arouse their feeling of awe.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
- Good teaching has ensured that children have made a good start to their learning of the fundamentals of reading and writing.

Commentary

49. The quality of teaching in this area is good and enables children to develop their speaking and listening skills, improve their vocabulary and begin to build a knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of reading and writing. They are achieving well. Children are invited to talk about their ideas during class discussions; for example, they respond verbally to digital photographs of their models and explain how they were constructed. In order to develop the opportunities further, the teacher often suggests that they turn to the child sitting nearest to them and share their ideas on different aspects, and this strategy involves boys and girls effectively. All such activities promote practice in clearly worded communication which also has an impact on the children's early learning of the sounds represented by letters or groups of letters in reading and writing. The class teacher reads stories regularly to the children and promotes their recognition of words as well as providing a variety of opportunities to learn different letter sounds. Children are familiar with the left to right directional approach to reading and are aware that printed words convey meaning. Most children have already learned how to write their own names and now include this on items of work they produce. After only a few weeks at school, children have made good progress in their learning and are clearly on course to attain overall levels in communication, language and literacy that will be above expectations by the time they move into Year 1. This maintains the above average level at the time of the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in developing their mathematical skills because adults take every opportunity to count and talk about numbers.
- Adults provide good opportunities for children to learn and use mathematical language.

Commentary

50. Good teaching and learning enable children to achieve well and reach the expected goals. The more-able children are on course to exceed the goals expected for them at the end of the Reception Year. After only five weeks in school, most of the children know off by heart a range of number rhymes. For example, they learn the sequence of numbers backwards and forwards by singing 'Five Little Frogs'. Children practise accurate counting skills by counting up to 10 items or objects in large pictures of, for instance, a quantity of eggs in a nest or the number of spots on a ladybird. They can sequence and recognise symbols reliably to at least 10. Most of the children in the Reception class can say which number is one more or one less than a number up to 10. The more-able children can already place different numbers of objects in two circles and state the appropriate 'number stories', for example, $3 + 2 = 5$. The teacher plans activities for different levels of attainment and provides activities that are appropriate for different levels of mathematical skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of first-hand opportunities successfully extends children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Children are required regularly to think about how to solve practical problems.

Commentary

51. Children have good opportunities to use a range of materials such as construction kits and computers to find out about everyday technology. They have easy access to the class interactive whiteboard, and are using the various facilities with growing confidence. Children learn about simple scientific principles whilst they play. For example, they play with a range of plastic pipes and observe toy vehicles moving down the slope they have constructed using a section of one of the pipes. They were each challenged by the teaching assistant to find ways of making the vehicles go faster and slower, and in so doing discovered that the steeper the slope the faster the speed. The teacher provides useful challenges that promote clear thinking and solving problems. For instance, when children were making large robots they were challenged to provide a noise that it might make and provide a means whereby the noise would be made internally. One pair of children devised a plastic container full of dried beans and secured it inside the body of the robot. Children are on course to exceed the expected level in understanding and knowing about the world by the time they leave the Reception class. They achieve well.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities is planned for both the classroom and secure outside area.

Commentary

52. As a result of the good teaching, most children achieve well and will reach the expected levels for their age by the end of the Reception Year. There are good opportunities for children to develop skills such as cutting, manipulating materials and using tools such as pencils, scissors and construction kits. For example, children develop skills in using scissors to cut out shapes such as diamonds to make a kite. Many Reception children hold pencils correctly and form recognisable letters. Children are provided with regular sessions when they use equipment such as pedalled vehicles on the playground. They control these vehicles with confidence and steer them with well-practised skill. During the period of the inspection, children had continuous access to a secure area outside of the classrooms and this enabled further opportunities for physical development. For example, children practise riding safely on tricycles and scooters and travel at fast or slow speeds on the playground surface.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

53. It was not possible to observe children working creatively during the inspection and therefore it is not possible to be make a judgement on provision in creative development. Children were observed for short periods participating in role-play activities on the theme of space travel but there was insufficient time available to draw conclusions. Children's paintings displayed on the wall show a developing awareness of colour and sense of design. Children sing number rhymes with enjoyment but a significant minority lack the confidence to sing enthusiastically.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading and writing standards are above average for the school's seven year olds.
- Standards in English have improved since the last inspection for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to speak at length and not all pupils listen carefully enough.
- The quality of teaching in literacy lessons is good.
- The subject is well led and managed by the headteacher.

Commentary

54. The good quality teaching throughout the school has enabled pupils to achieve well. The attainment levels of Year 6 pupils were below average at the time of the last inspection. Strategies have been introduced to improve pupils' attainments but these have not yet had sufficient time to make their full impact. However, current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach average standards by next summer.

55. The reading standards of seven year old pupils are on course to reach an above average level by the end of the school year. This maintains the level at the last inspection. Most have rapidly developing reading skills and can self-correct if they make a mistake when reading aloud by using the meaning of the sentence they are reading. They have been taught well and, as a result, understand clearly what they are reading. Higher-attaining Year 2 readers read fluently and use good expression when reading aloud.

56. Although the school has introduced an effective system to accelerate the acquisition of more advanced reading skills by the older pupils in the school, it is too early for the outcomes to show dramatic progress. However, reading standards among the school's Year 6 pupils are on course to show an improvement over the previous year's national test result and the pupils are on track to reach an average level for their age by the end of the school year. This is an improvement over the standards found at the time of the previous inspection. Most of the Year 6 pupils read fluently and are beginning to 'read between the lines' of narrative texts. However, their research skills are still below average because, when seeking information from non-fiction books, they do not use the index efficiently. This weakness is linked to the small stock of information books in the school's library which limits pupils' opportunities for research using books. The class teacher and classroom assistant support less-able readers very well and as a result these pupils are making quick progress.

57. Pupils in both key stages speak clearly but do not have sufficient opportunities to talk at length during lessons. Many Year 2 pupils tend to give single-word answers during whole-class question and answer sessions, and do not have enough opportunities to rehearse their answers mentally and to use these experiences to benefit their writing. In most classes, a small minority of pupils do not engage fully in lessons and their listening skills need improvement.

58. All pupils have their writing skills extended by the provision of challenging targets at which they can aim. These are written clearly by the teacher on the inside cover of their exercise books to make them easily accessible. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are encouraged consistently to write more complex and longer sentences using connective words as well as basic punctuation skills accurately. This has enabled their writing standards to remain at the same above-average level found at the time of the last inspection. Such good strategies enable more-able pupils to reach higher levels of writing attainment. Lower-attaining pupils are supported very well in their reading and writing by skilful teaching assistants who have been trained in the use of literacy programmes for less-able pupils. The skills that Year 6 pupils carry out in exercises are used and reinforced during their story writing, and this close link helps to improve the overall quality of their writing. Most pupils use speech marks accurately with an understanding of how to use paragraphs. They have a good understanding of spelling patterns and there is a developing awareness of the layout of written dialogue. Year 6 pupils are on track to reach average standards in writing by next summer.

59. The good quality literacy teaching uses strategies that successfully improve pupils' learning and raise standards. Consistently applied processes that are carried out regularly by teachers enhance writing throughout the school. For instance, examples of each pupil's writing is assessed and graded twice per term. Targets for improvement for every individual pupil are identified and communicated to the child. These are checked each time pupils write at length and new targets are provided when the teacher is satisfied the original targets have been met. Each pupil's progress is tracked carefully using the National Curriculum Levels awarded for each piece of assessed writing. If a pupil's progress is not consistent with his or her record of past performances, teachers identify what has caused the slowing of progress and set remedial action in motion.

60. Other aspects of teaching have been instrumental in improving standards. Teachers plan work for three differing levels of attainment and this enables pupils to work at their own level with sufficient challenge. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils' learning and to operate the interactive whiteboard to allow the teacher to be fully engaged with all pupils in the class. Pupils are made fully aware of how they can improve, they are encouraged consistently every time they succeed and the vast majority are interested in the work planned for them.

61. The English co-ordinator provides good leadership, giving the drive and direction for changes in strategy and in setting up the processes that have improved standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Writing is used effectively across the curriculum because pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities to write in a variety of forms in subjects other than English. Older pupils are encouraged to read historical novels and to interpret incidents in their own writing. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote imaginary entries in Samuel Pepys' diary and Year 6 wrote diary entries connected with school life in Victorian times. They also write for other purposes when, for example, they explain why their individual product, made during design and technology lessons, was successful or otherwise. In addition, pupils help to clarify their thoughts when considering and writing about moral issues that occur in stories they are currently reading. In geography lessons pupils are invited to write letters to members of the county council demanding the construction of a by-pass that would circle around High Halden. Amongst many other opportunities, they have chances to discuss bible stories, such as 'The Good Samaritan' and write about its relevance to their own lives.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good although there are times when a significant minority of pupils do not learn as much as they should because of weaknesses in their listening skills and motivation.
- Assessment is used very effectively to help pupils learn.
- Good leadership and management are helping to raise standards.
- Teaching assistants work very effectively to help pupils learn throughout lessons.

Commentary

63. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on track to achieve standards that match national averages by next summer. For example, many Year 6 pupils estimate and add numbers with decimals to one place and a smaller number of pupils work accurately with decimals to two places. A few Year 6 pupils are not confident with all of their times tables to 10 x10. Pupils' standards are rising but the improvements to teaching, assessment and the curriculum have not had long enough to make a full impact on standards.

64. All lessons include clear, step-by-step teaching that involves all pupils, and challenges them to work things out for themselves. The interactive whiteboards are used well as part of this teaching. Work is well planned for pupils' differing levels of ability and this helps to ensure that all pupils are stretched and achieve well. Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils, including during whole-class teaching, and almost always take the initiative in supporting pupils whose work and concentration are flagging. Pupils' work is always well marked and gives clear advice about how to improve standards. In each class, target-tracking software is used to record the progress of individual pupils towards their end-of-year National Curriculum targets. In addition, each pupil has short-term challenging targets that are fixed in the front of their mathematics books. Their progress against these targets is carefully monitored by teachers. There are occasional instances of weaknesses in teaching such as missing opportunities to ask pupils to explain their answers and not fully involving a few pupils in certain activities.

65. Although pupils' achievement is now good, there are times when a minority of pupils do not do as well as they should because there are weaknesses in pupils' active listening skills and they are not motivated to want to do their best. Occasionally, pupils do not respond to teachers' written comments in their books.

66. A good range of actions are being taken to raise standards. During the summer term 2004, Year 5 pupils were given specific teaching to address weaknesses in their mathematical knowledge and skills. Since the start of this term, one lesson per week focuses on providing pupils with opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills. The monitoring of teaching and standards is done well although points for development are not identified clearly enough. The curriculum has been improved by identifying how pupils' skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division should improve year on year. In addition, a new mathematics programme to accelerate pupils' learning has been introduced for the first 20 minutes of each day, and this involves computer-based marking and assessment so that work is well matched to pupils' learning needs. Since the last inspection, good improvements have been made to mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Pupils make sound use of their numeracy skills in other subjects. They carry out a good range of measurement and data presentation in science, and are taught about the accuracy and reliability of this data. Pupils use spreadsheets and databases in science and, for example, interpret a variety of charts and diagrams. They are involved in much accurate measurement as part of their work in design and technology. In geography, Year 2 pupils collect data for a traffic survey and then use ICT to represent it in bar charts before they interpret the information.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The teaching of scientific process skills is good for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The range and use of assessment information on pupils' progress are underdeveloped and the marking of pupils' work is variable.
- Good links are made with design and technology.

Commentary

68. The teacher assessments for 2004 at the end of Year 2 were below average. The 2004 test results for pupils in Year 6 were similar to those of the previous year, which were below national averages. These below average results were due to the low number of pupils achieving the higher levels. There were no significant differences between boys and girls. The current pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on course to meet national averages by next summer. The improvement in standards is because teaching and learning are more effective, and pupils' achievement is generally good. However, there are still occasions when there is insufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Since the last inspection, the good improvements to teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 have taken place because there is now good, specialist teaching of science to the two classes of older pupils. This improved teaching has not been in place long enough to have a full impact on pupils' standards and achievement.

69. The very good and good lessons have the following features:
- * clear explanation of the learning intention and associated vocabulary;
 - * specific step-by-step questioning linked to the learning intention to check pupils' existing levels of knowledge and understanding, and then to build on and extend this;
 - * a very good focus on developing the skills to carry out scientific investigations;
 - * ensuring that pupils use reliable methods of measuring and collecting data.

70. There are some good uses of ICT to improve pupils' learning. For example, in an investigation about friction, an electronic microscope was used to display images of different materials on the interactive whiteboard. However, there is insufficient use of data logging.

71. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory, and the targets in the subject improvement plan are appropriate. The subject leader has had some opportunities to monitor teaching and pupils' work and the findings are shared with staff. The school's computer system to track pupils' progress is not yet applied to science. Pupils enjoy working in mixed-age groups once a term on science and design and technology projects. They are provided with a good range of opportunities to apply their scientific knowledge, understanding and skills to a variety of design-and-make tasks. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 designed and made lighthouses that included electrical circuits.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is now good and standards are rising.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well as part of everyday teaching.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well in several other subjects, in assemblies and the library.
- The leadership of ICT is very effective and innovative.

Commentary

72. In Years 2 and 6, pupils are on track to reach standards that match national expectations by next summer. Some aspects of pupils' work are above national expectations; for example, Year 2 pupils use a graphics package to produce art in the style of Mondrian and Year 6 pupils interpret the scientific data and question its plausibility as part of some work on air. Pupils throughout the school cover a good range of work in ICT.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Achievement is good because all pupils are motivated by the work to do their best, they are taught new skills effectively and quickly using the interactive whiteboards, and they are set challenging tasks to use and apply the skills for themselves. Examples of challenging tasks include Year 2 pupils completing an extended piece of writing using a word processor, and Year 5 pupils applying new skills as they create slides with presentation software including animation and the integration of text and graphics. Teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and ICT skills, and help pupils learn in their classrooms or in the ICT suite which is staffed by a teaching assistant. Occasionally, pupils working in the ICT suite complete tasks quickly and finish before the end of the lesson.

74. The subject leader has helped ensure that teaching and support staff are well trained and make effective use of the school's resources. Consequently, pupils' standards have risen since the last inspection and all of the weaknesses identified by that inspection have been remedied. Improvements have been made to the equipment; for example, a whole-school network was established at the start of this term and a biometric system introduced for pupils borrowing books from the library. A portfolio of pupils' work demonstrates the National Curriculum standards that the school expects although there is not yet a whole-school assessment system.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. Good use is made of ICT in the work of other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils used ICT to create bar charts of a traffic survey in geography, a database of minibeasts in science, and art in the style of Mondrian. In Year 6, pupils use the Internet for research in religious education, history and science, and a digital microscope and data handling in science. In addition, pupils follow ICT based courses in mathematics and reading.

HUMANITIES

76. Enough lessons were observed to complete full reports for history and religious education. However, no **geography** lessons were observed during the inspection. The main sources of inspection evidence were the scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work, including all work from the previous school year, and a discussion with the new subject leader. The indications are that the standards of Year 2 pupils are above national expectations. The pupils have good skills in

interpreting maps and aerial photographs, and in collecting information as from a traffic survey. The pupils make good comparisons of High Halden with the Scottish Island of Coll. In Year 6, pupils have a relatively small amount of recorded work and, for example, the comparison of High Halden and Clerkenwell is rather brief. The indications are that standards in Year 6 are below those expected nationally.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to research information.
- The history curriculum could be further enriched by the inclusion of multi-cultural activities and school visits.
- Good cross-curricular links are made with English.

Commentary

77. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they are on course to reach national expectations by the ends of Years 2 and 6. In Year 2, pupils are developing a sound sense of chronology as they create timelines as part of their work on old and new toys. In Year 6, pupils identify changes within and across different historical periods as when, for example, they compare Victorian life with life today.

78. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Strengths of the teaching included the use of the Internet as the pupils researched about whether Henry VIII was a 'superhero' or a cruel leader. Teaching assistants and class teachers provided effective support and guidance to pupils as they worked on tasks in groups or individually. Pupils work with a range of interesting resources including artefacts. However, there is insufficient emphasis on key vocabulary linked to historical enquiry, and at times there is too much use of worksheets.

79. Pupils have good opportunities to use their English skills in history, for example, when Year 2 pupils wrote in the style of Samuel Pepys' diary and pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote about Howard Carter's findings about Ancient Egypt in the style of newspaper articles. Links with other subjects are also made; for example, music is used as a historical source in work on the Victorians. In their marking of pupils' work, teachers generally provided insufficient guidance for pupils to improve their work.

80. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The monitoring of the subject has improved since the last inspection, and the findings have resulted in clearly identified areas for improvement. Steps have been taken to raise the profile of history throughout the school including a successful focus week, which involved performances by a theatre group that inspired pupils' written work on Samuel Pepys and Tutankhamen, and a day when pupils in Years 5 and 6 carried out a role play of a Victorian school. However, there is little evidence of wider enrichment activities such as visits and coverage of Black History month to broaden and enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of history.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' standards in Year 2 are above the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus.
- There is not yet a whole-school approach to assessment.

Commentary

81. Year 2 pupils have a good range of recorded work with good opportunities to use their English skills. They learn about and from religion as when, for example, they learnt about the parable of the Good Samaritan and its personal application. In a Year 2 lesson, the pupils wrote their own thoughtful 'thank you' and 'asking' prayers. Year 6 pupils are on track to match the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus by next summer. The pupils express their own views on religious and moral issues and are starting to give reasons for their opinions. In a lesson, they had a sound understanding of the events leading to the Israelites leaving Egypt and explained the symbolism of some of the food used in Passover meals.

82. The school has started to improve its scheme of work on which teachers base their lesson plans. This is helping to improve pupils' achievement as does the good teaching. In the lessons seen, pupils' achievement was good. Occasionally, the achievement of a minority of pupils is not as good as it should be because of weaknesses in their active listening and learning skills.

83. Strengths of teaching and learning are:

- * the provision of opportunities to learn from religions as, for example, when pupils write prayers in the role of Jews grateful for the Passover;
- * effective use of questioning to involve all pupils and ensure that they are developing their understanding of the work;
- * the provision of very good opportunities for speaking and listening;
- * very good resources to encourage pupils' learning including, for example, the foods that go onto the Seder plate.

84. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Teachers' plans have been monitored well, and good improvements have been made since the last inspection. However, the school has not yet established a system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in this subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. Owing to the arrangement of the school timetable during the inspection, it was not possible to observe enough **art and design** lessons in order to make a judgement on its provision. However, there was a range of pupils' current work displayed on classroom walls and in corridors. The present focus is on the development of pupils' skills linked with collages. Infant pupils have created a range of satisfactory collages using coloured paper on the theme of 'Wild Wood'. Junior pupils have produced a range of good collages on insects, sports bags and trainers, having first observed the forms of the different subjects carefully.

86. Only one lesson was observed for **design and technology** and so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. A good range of photographic evidence and pupils' completed products show that a good range of work is covered in the subject. For example, older pupil designed and made jewellery, shelters and musical instruments. There are good links with other subjects. For example, older pupils designed and made a pop-up book about Victorian history using

various lever mechanisms. Year 2 pupils generate ideas and plan what to do next, based on their experience of working with materials and components. Pupils in Year 6 identify what is working well and what needs to be improved. They are beginning to reflect on their designs as they develop, bearing in mind the way the product will be used. Pupils' evaluation skills are not as good as their designing and making skills. There is not yet a whole-school assessment system to show the progress of each pupil, but there is a useful profile of pupils' work that shows the expected standards in terms of National Curriculum Levels.

87. It was not possible to observe any **music** lessons during the inspection and, therefore, it is not possible to make a judgement on the provision in this subject. However, pupils' singing during collective acts of worship was above average in both key stages. Their tone was good and they sang well in tune. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 sang in two parts during each of the occasions and took an obvious pride in their choral work. The school arranges a good range of musical activities for the pupils. Both the infants and the juniors take part in separate area music festivals as well as having the opportunity to perform songs to parents. For example, pupils performed songs, on different occasions, from 'The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' and 'Papa Panov' as well as singing in Easter and Harvest Festival services. A recent successful music week was arranged on the theme of multi-cultural music, during which pupils took part in composition workshops.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils enjoy dance lessons but a minority are not always fully engaged.
- When visiting specialist teachers take lessons, pupils make good progress in developing skills.
- The school organises a wide range of sporting activities for the pupils.

Commentary

88. Owing to the arrangement of the school timetable during the inspection, it was only possible to observe physical education lessons in dance and games. There were no opportunities to see lessons in swimming, gymnastics and athletics. However, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in dance and games, and enables pupils to attain at the expected standards. This mirrors the judgement at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

89. Pupils enjoy physical education lessons and take part enthusiastically. Year 2 pupils work together satisfactorily in pairs and are able to mirror the movements of their partner who leads the two of them. Whilst these pupils are developing skills in synchronising their movements, their skills in moving to the pulse of the accompanying music are less developed. Year 6 pupils satisfactorily compose their own dances in small groups and, in so doing, work collaboratively together in an effective manner. However, a small minority of boys are not engaged fully in dance lessons and, as a result, do not make as much progress as they could.

90. The teaching encourages pupils to incorporate different series of movements at high, medium and low levels into their invented dances. Pupils coped with this element satisfactorily and also showed good starting and finishing positions to their compositions. Resources for dance lessons in one of the infant lessons were not used as well as they might have been.

91. A visiting specialist teacher provided a good lesson for Years 1 and 2 during a well-run games lesson on the school playground. Good demonstrations of how to kick a football accurately were provided. The lesson was well planned and involved 'on the spot' assessments of pupils' attainments as well as advice on how to improve skills. Resources were used well and enabled the pupils to make good progress in developing their kicking skills, and in allowing them to develop skills

in marking and finding spaces for themselves in a restricted space. The Year 2 pupils' skills were on course to be average by the end of the school year.

92. Pupils have opportunities to take part in organised games such as football, netball, rounders, short tennis, tag rugby and 'kwik' cricket. In addition, the school organises a sports day in which all pupils participate. Subject leadership is satisfactory. There is not a whole-school approach for assessment of pupils' progress in the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

93. Although not a focus for the inspection, information gathered from talking to pupils and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) co-ordinator and the observation of one lesson indicate that provision has improved well since the last inspection and is probably satisfactory. There is now a well planned curriculum that includes relationships and sex education, and education about the misuse of drugs. Weekly lessons are timetabled in each class. In an interesting lesson about the consequences of anti-social and aggressive behaviour, pupils' social skills and moral development were reinforced effectively. A PSHE activity week was held in the summer term of 2003 and included work on healthy eating, recycling and fire safety. This involved the contributions of a number of outside agencies and visitors, including the Mayor of Ashford. The school council meets regularly and provides an effective method for pupils to contribute to the running of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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