

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HORTON KIRBY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Horton Kirby, Dartford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118861

Headteacher: Mr M Say

Lead inspector: Mrs C Skinner

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 267078

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	282
School address:	Horton Road Horton Kirby Dartford Kent
Postcode:	DA4 9BN
Telephone number:	01322 863278
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body, Horton Kirby CE Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Hood
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Horton Kirby CE Primary School is larger than the average size for primary schools. There are 282 pupils on roll. Seventeen children in the Reception year attend full time in a class which also has eight pupils from Year 1. Twenty-five children attend part-time in the other Reception class. Seven pupils (two per cent) are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is broadly average. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. There are 70 pupils (25 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs, which is higher than the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Three pupils have statements of special educational need. The turnover of pupils is relatively low. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds. The school received an Achievement Award in 2003

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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23160	Carole Skinner	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology (ICT)
9977	Fran Luke	Lay inspector	
19897	Arthur Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, physical education (PE).
14596	Tony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Science, religious education (RE), design and technology (DT), special educational needs (SEN).
19142	Audrey Quinnell	Team Inspector	Art, history, music, the Foundation Stage curriculum.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Horton Kirby CE Primary School is a good school with some very good features.** Overall, pupils' achievement is good and they reach above average standards by the time they leave the school. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The leadership and management of the school are good and it gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in Year 6 are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and promotes good progress.
- Assessment procedures are good but the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent.
- Strong leadership ensures a clear focus on high standards in all areas of school life.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 are not as strong as in Years 3 to 6.
- The school improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement but does not include sufficient detail.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their personal development is very good.
- The school provides a well planned curriculum but is at an early stage of developing more innovative and creative approaches to learning.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).
- Pupils receive very good support and guidance and develop very good relationships.
- The school works well in partnership with parents, other schools and the community.

The school has made a good improvement since it was inspected in 1999. Standards in Year 6 have risen and pupils now make better progress. Standards are lower than they were in Year 2 in reading and writing. The quality of teaching and learning is significantly higher and the professional development of teachers and appraisal of their work is greatly improved. There have been very good improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and geography which have resulted in higher standards. Governors are more involved in checking how well the school is doing and curriculum co-ordinators have a greater impact on raising standards. The school development plan still lacks some details.

### 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	C	B
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	A	A	B	B

*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.*

**Achievement is good.** In Reception, children achieve well and are on course to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the year in personal, social, emotional and physical development and meet them in all other areas of learning. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are above average in ICT and geography, and in line with expectations in PE and RE. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and reach above average standards in English, mathematics, science, ICT, geography and PE by the time they leave the school. Standards are in line with expectations in RE.

**Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is good. Attendance is average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and apply themselves very well to their work. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They enjoy taking responsibility and show concern and respect for adults and each other.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good.** A very good feature is the way teachers engage pupils in learning by making lessons interesting and enjoyable. Pupils are managed very well which creates a good working atmosphere in all lessons. Assessment information is used well to plan suitable work for pupils but teachers' marking does not always show pupils clearly what they need to do to improve their work. The curriculum is well planned and enriched by a good range of sporting activities, clubs, visits and visitors. However, the school has not yet taken the opportunity to adopt some more creative approaches to making links between subjects. Pupils with SEN are supported well and make good progress. All pupils receive very good support and guidance, with close monitoring of their progress. The school has good relationships with parents, other schools and the local community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher leads the school well with a clear focus on raising standards. There is a strong team spirit amongst staff, who all contribute effectively to the management of the curriculum. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, although satisfactory, are recognised by the school as areas requiring further development. Governors meet all statutory requirements and have a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan outlines where improvements are to be made but does not show clearly enough how these are to be achieved or how their impact will be assessed. Good financial management ensures that the school is well staffed and resourced.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents think highly of the school and have great respect for the headteacher and staff. They appreciate all that the school offers their children. Pupils enjoy school and take part with enthusiasm in all of the activities that it provides. They are keen to take responsibility and older pupils show great concern and care for younger ones.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Implement consistent procedures for marking pupils' work, which show them clearly what they need to do to improve or to reach their targets and involve them in checking their own progress.
- Increase the effectiveness and raise the profile of the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.
- Further refine the school development plan to show how curriculum objectives will be met and how their impact will be measured.
- Explore ways to increase pupils' enjoyment of the curriculum through meaningful links between subjects and more innovative approaches.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Overall, achievement is good. In Reception, achievement is good and standards are similar to those expected for the children's age. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and standards are average in Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is good. Standards in Year 6 are above average.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enter the school with below average attainment and leave it at above average standards.
- Throughout the school pupils achieve well because teachers make learning stimulating and enjoyable.
- Achievement in literacy and numeracy is good because teachers use a good variety of strategies to help pupils learn.
- Standards in ICT have risen since the last inspection and are now above average.
- Pupils reach high standards in geography throughout the school.
- Standards in PE are above average in Year 6.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the Reception classes achieve well because the quality of teaching they receive is good and meets their needs effectively. Overall, children's attainment on entry to the school is below average. Indications are that, by the end of the Reception year, they are on course to exceed expected standards in physical development and in personal, social and emotional development. In all other areas of learning, standards are in line with those expected for children of this age. They progress well because the curriculum is carefully planned and there are good opportunities to learn through play and to develop independence.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.3 (16.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.1 (14.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.8 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. In the end of Year 2 national assessments in 2004, standards were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, they were well below average in reading and writing and in the lowest five per cent of schools in mathematics. These results were the lowest over a five year period, during which the general trend had been upward. The reason for the dip in standards was that this year group contained an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs (40 per cent). The percentage of pupils who achieved above average standards (Level 3) was good in reading and broadly average in writing and science, but there were quite a few pupils who did not reach the national expectation. In science, standards were well below average at Level 2, but above average at Level 3. Over the past three years, girls have performed better than boys, particularly in reading and mathematics.

3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in the current Year 2 are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. These judgements are similar to the findings of the last



inspection, except in English, where they are lower. They are higher than the results of the 2004 assessments and more in keeping with the school's usual performance. In ICT and geography, standards are above average because pupils make good progress in acquiring and using a wide range of skills. In these two subjects, standards have risen because of good teaching and improvements in the curriculum. Standards in PE and RE are in line with those expected for seven year olds. Compared to the findings of the 1999 inspection, standards in PE are lower than they were, while those in RE remain the same. Overall, achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 because the quality of teaching and learning is good and the curriculum is well planned.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.5 (28.3)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	28.8 (29.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.6 (30.5)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. In the national tests in 2004, standards in Year 6 were well above the national average in mathematics, above average in science and similar to the national average in English. Compared with schools whose pupils performed similarly in Year 2, standards were above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Comparisons with all schools nationally show that the relative progress made by pupils between Year 2 and Year 6 is much higher in this school than the national average. The upward trend in the school's results over a five year period is higher than the national trend.

5. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Slight differences between the inspection findings and the results of the 2004 tests can be attributed to variations in the range of ability within the two year groups. Standards are higher than they were in 1999 in English and science and similar in mathematics. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 because the quality of teaching is good and work is suitably challenging for pupils of all capabilities. Standards in Year 6 are also above average in ICT, geography and PE. Standards in RE are in line with expectations for 11 year olds. These findings are higher than those of the previous inspection in ICT and geography, and similar in PE and RE. Standards in ICT have improved because teachers ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to learn and practise skills. Standards in geography are higher because the curriculum has been developed well so that it now provides a good framework of skills and knowledge as pupils move through the school.

6. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed well throughout the school, both in specific lessons and through other subjects. Speaking and listening skills are improved through class, group and paired discussions. Reading skills are developed through regular practice and opportunities to read for both pleasure and purpose, such as searching Internet websites for information in history and RE lessons. There are good opportunities for pupils to write at length, both in literacy lessons and in a variety of other subjects. Numeracy skills are developed well in mathematics lessons and in subjects such as science, art and geography.

7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school. They make good progress towards their targets. Their results are very carefully tracked and recorded so that progress can be seen easily. The targets set for them in individual education plans are very well linked to their needs and reviewed frequently. They do well when receiving extra support and teaching which is appropriately matched to their needs. More able pupils also achieve well because teachers set tasks that challenge them and extend their learning. There are currently no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls because teachers are aware of issues when they arise and address them promptly. In all of the lessons observed, boys and girls were equally engaged and interested in learning. Discussions with pupils showed that they thought they were

making good progress and that the work was pitched at the right level for them. Parents also feel that their children make good progress and that the school has high expectations of them.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes to school are very good; their behaviour is good. The level of attendance and punctuality to school is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have a high level of interest in the activities provided for them.
- Pupils form very good relationships with each other and with adults.
- Moral and social development is very good.
- Pupils are free from harassment and as a result feel safe and secure.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take on additional responsibility.
- Pupils have a high level of confidence and self esteem
- Behaviour is good throughout the school.

### **Commentary**

8. Pupils' very good attitudes to school and their eagerness to learn in lessons contribute to a positive and productive atmosphere in the school. Teachers work hard to engage pupils, which they do very well and, as a result, pupils are interested in their work; they are attentive and concentrate which leads to good achievement. Pupils work sensibly and co-operate with each other, in lessons they share ideas and learn from each other. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and as a result there is a calm atmosphere and good behaviour throughout the school.

#### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

9. The level of attendance is broadly in line with the national median and is therefore satisfactory. The school encourages pupils to come to school and to arrive on time, and this means that pupils are generally punctual to school. There was one fixed period exclusion in the school year prior to the inspection.

#### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

#### **Exclusions in the last school year**

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
217	1	
2		
3		
1		
1		
1		
1		
10		

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

10. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies and religious education provide good opportunities for them to think about beliefs and to understand the values and faith of other people. The ethos of the school is very good and pupils are taught to respect others' views and opinions well. There are good links with the local church, and assemblies are successfully linked to religious education lessons. When Christian festivals occur, children follow the themes in classes and in their worship.

11. Pupils are polite and courteous and show a high level of respect for each other and for all adults in the school. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Racial harmony is evident throughout the school and there are effective procedures in place to deal with any harassment; consequently pupils are all confident that little bullying takes place and say that any issues are dealt with very quickly by any member of staff. As a result pupils feel safe and happy in school. Pupils with SEN who have behavioural difficulties are managed very well and have a clear idea of the school's expectations, which helps them to form positive relationships with other pupils and adults.

12. Pupils understand very clearly what is right and what is wrong. Teachers set high expectations for attitudes and behaviour and provide good role models for the pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and to take responsibilities. For example, older pupils help younger ones at lunchtime and in their reading. They each look after a table in the dining area, and in the reading sessions they keep good records of what is achieved. As large numbers of pupils move about the school some are appointed as doorkeepers so that everyone can move more easily as they hold open all the corridor doors. In addition, in Year 6, jobs are shared among the pupils, such as library monitors, helping with the equipment for assembly and looking after registers. Pupils respond well to these opportunities, which together with the very good provision for PSHE, offer very good opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

13. Pupils are given many opportunities for experiencing and understanding western culture through art, history, music and literature. They write poems, paint pictures in the style of famous artists and study ancient cultures such as that of the Greeks. Visits to museums, galleries and festivals all add to pupils' cultural development well. However, their awareness of cultural diversity is less well developed and there are few visits or visitors to enhance this aspect.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils apply themselves well to their work and have a good capacity to work both independently and collaboratively. The curriculum is good and it is enriched by a good range of additional activities, but the school has not yet taken full account of recent national initiatives or innovative approaches to curriculum development. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is very good. The school works well in partnership with parents and the local community.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good throughout the school.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers engage pupils in learning very skilfully through a range of different approaches.
- Very good relationships between adults and pupils underpin the high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- All teachers have high expectations of the pupils and plan work that is challenging, interesting and enjoyable.
- Good teaching for Reception children gets them off to a good start in learning.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a very good capacity to work both independently and collaboratively because teachers provide many opportunities for them to do so.

- Good teaching for pupils with SEN enables them to progress well as they move through the school.
- Good assessment procedures ensure that work is planned effectively to meet individual pupils' needs, but the quality of marking is inconsistent.

## Commentary

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Reception, in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. The proportion of good teaching was highest in Years 3 to 6, where 92 per cent of the lessons observed were good and 40 per cent were very good. Overall, approximately 35 per cent of the teaching seen was very good. This represents a very good improvement in the overall quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. The weaknesses that were identified at that time have all been addressed very well. Lessons are planned more effectively with clear objectives and a variety of teaching methods and resources. Teachers' expectations are higher and they take better account of individual pupils' differing needs. Teachers and assistants work well together to promote effective learning in all lessons. Both parents and pupils express positive views of the teaching.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16 (35%)	23 (50%)	7 (15%)	0	0	0

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

15. One of the strongest features of the teaching throughout the school is the way teachers engage pupils in learning. They present ideas and activities to the pupils in interesting ways, and they involve pupils fully in learning through discussion, practical investigation, research and problem solving. Teachers also make effective use of ICT as a tool for learning in many subjects, which pupils enjoy. In every lesson observed, teachers created a good working atmosphere where pupils applied themselves conscientiously to the tasks set and were evidently enjoying learning.

16. Teachers and assistants form supportive and helpful relationships with their pupils which help to create mutual trust and respect. There is a strong emphasis on self-discipline and high expectations of sensible behaviour which underpin the teachers' effective management of the pupils in lessons. As a result, teachers are able to focus on learning rather than on behaviour and this ensures profitable use of time in each lesson.

17. The teachers in the Reception classes provide a wide range of good experiences which interest the children. The children respond well to the teachers' very good, positive expectations of high standards of behaviour. The teachers understand well how young children learn, which helps them to feel secure and happy. The teachers and assistants form an effective team. A good range of activities is provided, which enable the children to work and play both independently and collaboratively. This enables them to acquire new skills and develop their capacity for concentration. The classrooms are used well. However, due to building work to extend and develop the outside area for the children, it was not possible for it to be used during the inspection. There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring the children's achievement on a day-to-day basis and the information is used well to provide appropriate work for the different abilities within the classes.

18. Throughout the school, teachers develop in pupils a good capacity for learning, both when working independently and in pairs or small groups. This is done particularly well in Years 3 to 6. Teachers in the junior classes provide a very good range of activities which help pupils to work independently, on personal research, completing comprehension tasks or mathematical problems, using computers and writing stories, poems or factual accounts. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them and get on quietly with their work without relying on the teacher to keep them on track. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when many were over-reliant on the teacher. In other lessons, there is a strong focus on working co-operatively, such as carrying out

scientific investigations, discussing ideas with a partner or creating sequences of movements in groups in gymnastics.

19. Teaching and learning are good overall for pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers plan appropriate activities for them and assistants support them well in classes. For those who have special literacy or speech therapy sessions, the teaching is very good and carefully structured to meet their needs.

20. The school has further improved and refined its assessment procedures since the last inspection. There are good systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects. Procedures in English are very thorough and include termly assessments of writing against the expectations of the National Curriculum which inform teachers' planning. Pupils in Year 6 have a very good idea of how their writing is assessed and what they need to do to improve it in order to reach a given level. Teachers make effective use of assessment information to set whole school and individual targets and to identify any pupils who are not progressing as well as they should. The headteacher checks overall patterns of attainment throughout the school and tracks individual pupils' progress against the predictions which have been made for them. This is a significant improvement since the 1999 inspection. The quality of teachers' marking is variable. Some is detailed and helpful, showing pupils clearly what they need to do to reach higher standards. Some consists simply of ticks or words corrected and underlined. The best practice involves pupils in evaluating their own work and responding to the teachers' suggestions for improvement.

## **The curriculum**

The school offers a broad curriculum, which prepares the pupils well for the next stage of their education. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities. The accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is well planned to provide continuity from year to year and consistency between different classes in the same year group.
- There has been little curriculum innovation in recent times.
- A wide variety of extra-curricular activities enriches the pupils' learning.
- There is good provision for pupils with SEN.
- The accommodation is good.

## **Commentary**

21. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. Curricular planning has improved significantly since the last inspection, when there was no overall plan for what is taught in each class. There is a strong focus on the teaching of English and mathematics. In addition, there are good opportunities for the pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. There are opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to have flute and guitar tuition. However, music is generally under-emphasised in the curriculum. The school has not introduced any innovative approaches to curriculum development recently, such as developing a whole school response to the 'Excellence and Enjoyment' initiative. However, pupils in Year 6 have a weekly lesson of French.

22. The teachers plan carefully the work which the pupils will do each term and each week. Some subjects are planned on a two-year cycle, in order to meet the needs of the mixed age classes and to ensure continuity in learning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 6 are taught mathematics in ability sets and this enables the teachers to match work even more closely to the pupils' needs. The school fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and the school meets its obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship. Total weekly teaching time is in line with national recommendations for pupils of this age.

23. A wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs allows the pupils to pursue their interests outside lessons. These include gymnastics, football, netball, badminton, board games, disco dancing, drama and recorders. Sports matches are played against local schools, often with considerable success. Last year, the cross country team won the district tournament and the football team has done the same very recently. Learning is enriched further by visitors and by many visits to museums and galleries and to places such as Knole House, Eagle Heights, Lullingstone Villa, Battle Abbey and Rochester Cathedral. There is an annual residential visit to Eridge for pupils in Year 6.

24. Pupils who have special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school and have full access to the curriculum. Assistants and teachers make sure that pupils can understand what to do in lessons and extra help is offered in literacy sessions to those who need it. There is some very good provision for pupils in small groups. The school employs a speech therapist to work with a number of pupils on a regular basis.

25. There are sufficient well qualified and experienced teachers and classroom assistants to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. They are well supported by the school's administrative and premises staff. Although storage space is at a premium, the accommodation overall is good and eye-catching displays of pupils' work create a stimulating learning environment. Strengths include a good sized hall, a light and airy room for SEN work and a pleasant library. However, disabled access is difficult and there is no disabled toilet. There is adequate playground space, a large sports field and an exciting adventure playground. Further work on the outside environment is currently taking place. There is a good range of resources to support teaching and learning in all subjects. The library has a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Pupils' academic and personal development is tracked very well. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's very good support systems monitor pupils' development well as they progress through the school.
- Good levels of care for pupils, ensures that they feel well supported.
- Staff and governors are fully involved in health and safety reviews of the school.
- Good induction procedures for pupils entering the school ensure that they settle quickly.

### **Commentary**

26. The school has good health and safety procedures. Staff and governors are vigilant in ensuring that the environment is kept safe by routinely checking grounds, buildings and equipment. Any concerns are promptly addressed. Child protection procedures are firmly in place. The headteacher has been trained in the procedures and all staff are aware of the need to inform him should they have any concerns. Pupils who suffer minor accidents or who are feeling unwell are well looked after. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents confirmed that they are very happy with the level of care provided for their children.

27. There are good opportunities for the school to obtain pupils' views through the PSHE programme. Very good procedures to monitor pupils' academic and personal progress as they proceed through the school, together with very good relationships, mean that all adults in the school know the pupils extremely well and are quickly aware if something is wrong. As a result pupils feel valued. Pupils confirm that they are extremely happy that there is always someone they can turn to for help and advice. Good support for pupils with special educational needs and effective procedures for checking on their progress ensure that they make good progress.

28. Induction arrangements for children in the Reception classes are good. The children are visited in their nursery or playgroup so that they get to know the teachers before they start school. The teachers also visit the children in their home. The children are gradually integrated into school life by attending part-time. Very good relationships are quickly built up with the children's parents, which help them to know how well their children will be looked after in school. The good induction procedures enable the children to settle easily into school. If pupils start at the school in older year groups, they meet the headteacher who talks to them and organises an assigned 'buddy' to show them around and help them understand school procedures so they can fit in quickly and take an active part in school life.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- Information provided for parents about pupils progress, the school and the curriculum is good.
- Good links with other schools ensures that there is a smooth transfer for pupils when they move to secondary school.
- Links with the local community support learning

### **Commentary**

29. Parents regularly receive a good range of information, which lets them know what is happening in school. At the beginning of each term curriculum information is provided which parents find useful in showing them how they can help their children at home. Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed and returned to school. Written annual reports for parents are good. They inform parents what their children know, understand and can do and give some areas for further development so that parents can easily see the progress their children are making. There are good opportunities for parents to discuss pupils' progress informally at the beginning and end of the school day, as well as at formal consultation evenings.

30. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are kept well informed and are involved in their children's education well. There are good opportunities to talk to staff and follow their children's progress. Individual plans provide suggestions for parents in helping their children's education at home.

31. The school works hard to deal with parents' concerns or complaints. As a result, parents are very happy with the level of communication they have with the school. They say that the school's open door policy means they are always made to feel welcome. The parents' and friends' association is very supportive of the school and raises significant funds for it.

32. The school is supported well by its good links with the local community. Pupils' personal development is enhanced through regular fund raising for local and national charities. Links are being built with the local church and the Vicar has arranged to visit the school to take assembly. The use of local facilities, links with the local elderly community, regular visits from the Community Policeman and Fire Officer ensure that pupils receive a wide range of experiences.

33. Good links with other schools, particularly with other secondary schools, which include a planned programme of visits prior to transfer, help pupils when transferring to secondary school at the end of Year 6. Curriculum links with local primary schools support the school well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is good. Leadership of the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The management of the school is good. The school's governance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership by the headteacher results in a clear focus on achieving high standards.
- Good leadership of the curriculum is a key factor in bringing about improvement.
- The leadership of the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is less well developed than in Years 3 to 6.
- Governors provide good support to the headteacher and staff; their involvement in strategic planning is satisfactory, as is their role as a critical friend.
- Some parts of the school development plan contain insufficient detail.
- The priorities in the school development plan are reflected in the targets set for teachers and in the arrangements for their continuing professional development.
- Good financial management ensures that the school makes effective use of its resources to improve the pupils' education.

### **Commentary**

34. During his time at the school, the headteacher has established a very good ethos which is appreciated by governors, pupils, staff and parents. His strong commitment to the school and clear vision for its future development ensure that there is a continuing drive to achieve high standards in all areas of school life. He is supported well by the deputy head, governors and all staff, who work together effectively as a team to address the priorities identified for improvement.

35. Teachers with subject leadership responsibilities have had a good impact on the development of the curriculum since the last inspection, at which time their roles were underdeveloped. There are particular strengths in the leadership in English, science and ICT which have contributed significantly to raising standards and improving the quality of provision in those subjects. Teachers have developed these roles well since 1999 and are fully involved in checking the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum, and the pupils' achievement in their subjects. The co-ordinator for SEN leads and manages the provision very well. She has done a great deal of work in the two terms she has been in post, and has organised a very comprehensive system for this aspect of the school's life. She is fully involved in professional development both for herself and for the staff in general. The analysis and tracking of pupils' progress are very good.

36. The leadership and management of the school are particularly strong in Years 3 to 6, where there has been a greater focus on improvement since the last inspection. A new co-ordinator has been appointed to lead developments in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, and the school has acknowledged the need to raise the profile of this part of the school and focus more closely on improving the provision for the younger pupils. This has already led to a decision to improve the outdoor play area and facilities for the Reception children; work was underway on this project during the inspection. The newly appointed co-ordinator for this part of the school has not yet had the opportunity to carry out a detailed review of provision in order to identify further priorities for improvement.

37. Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to the school and support the headteacher and staff well. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are kept well informed of all developments by the headteacher. Governors visit the school to observe lessons and talk to staff and pupils, but they do not have specific areas of responsibility such as subjects or classes. They are now involved more effectively in contributing to the school development plan than at the time of the last inspection. However, the plan lacks the details necessary to enable governors to measure the success of different initiatives. Consequently, they rely on the headteacher to inform them of the progress that has been made and this limits the effectiveness of their role as critical friends. The previous inspection found that governors' sub-committees did not have a clear enough view of the school's strategic direction. This has been



addressed well and these committees are now more effective in their role. Governors are now meeting their statutory obligations in full.

38. The teachers are also more actively involved in creating and reviewing the school development plan than they were in 1999. They discuss and contribute ideas for the improvement of the curriculum which are then incorporated in the overall plan. However, the plan does not contain costings or measurable targets by which to judge its success, particularly in terms of the curriculum and pupils' achievement. On the other hand, measurable targets are set for the headteacher and teachers to achieve as part of the school's procedures for performance management. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. For example, governors set a whole school target for the headteacher for 80 per cent of the pupils in each class to reach a certain level in an aspect of ICT by the end of the year. This is reflected in each teacher's targets and is monitored through the school's good assessment procedures. Teachers' professional development has been closely linked with this in order to enable them to increase their own and the pupils' expertise. The impact of these actions can be clearly seen in the standards of work currently being achieved by all pupils.

39. Raising standards in ICT has also been a priority for the headteacher and governors when allocating the school's budget. Although the development plan does not include costings, these are carried out in detail separately and the headteacher, governors and finance officer ensure that the school's finances are checked and monitored rigorously. Budget cuts in the previous financial year were managed well to avoid reductions in staffing, and strategic planning takes a variety of factors into consideration, such as the implications of a possible falling roll. The small overspend at the end of the year has been eradicated in the current year's spending plans.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	685950	Balance from previous year	15865
Total expenditure	703682	Balance carried forward to the next year	(1867)
Expenditure per pupil	2944		

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

40. At the time of this inspection, seventeen children in their Reception year attend full time in a class with eight pupils in Year 1 and twenty-five children attend part-time in the other Reception class. There are good arrangements for introducing the children to school. This means that most are happy to leave their parents and quickly get used to school routines. The quality of teaching is good and most children make good progress. Although attainment on entry is mainly below that seen in most schools, indications are that children are likely to exceed expectations in their personal, social and emotional development and physical development and to achieve the expected standards for this age group in all other areas of learning by the end of their Reception year. The two teachers, the learning support assistant and the teaching assistants form a very effective team. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and good standards have been maintained.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good progress in personal and social development.
- Good progress in communication and language skills.
- Good progress in mathematical development.
- Children are provided with a good range of experiences to explore and observe.
- Outdoor area is being developed.

41. Provision for **personal, social and emotional development** is **very good** and the children make very good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. On entry to school, the pattern for the day is quickly established, which helps the children to feel secure and to grow in confidence. They are given many opportunities to choose activities for themselves, which extends their independent learning. They quickly learn to take turns and to share with others. Children are given valuable help to establish boundaries for acceptable behaviour through the very good relationships which are quickly established between them and the adults within the department. Children are helped to understand the importance of telling the truth through stories with a moral. They behave very well and respond positively when they are asked to stop their activities and to be ready to listen. Many children are likely to achieve higher than the expected level by the end of their Reception year.

42. Teaching and learning are **good** for **communication, language and literacy**, which enables the children to make good progress in developing these skills. Many children start school below the expected level of attainment for their age in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Adults speak clearly and provide very good role models for the children. The teachers make learning fun, such as when the children were asked to create words by changing just one letter. Three or four children at a time held up large individual letters to create words, such as *chip* and eagerly took turns to change one letter to make *chop* or *shop*. Children listen attentively to stories and make a good attempt join in with repetition, such as in the story *We're going on a bear hunt*. The teacher enabled the children to see the link between spoken and written language very well by pointing to the text as she read the story expressively to them. Most children are at an early stage of reading. They confidently handle books correctly and use the pictures to 'read' the stories. Many opportunities are provided for the children to write, such as when working in the 'office' and writing their name and the title on the front cover for their individual zigzag books to show the sequence of a seed growing into a flower. Children's own mark making and emergent writing are encouraged and this helps them to feel confident to write.

43. Teaching and learning in **mathematical development** are **good**. The teachers use many opportunities to reinforce the children's learning about numbers, such as counting the number of

children at school or how many are having school lunch compared with those having packed lunch. Some of the children use the terms 'more than' and 'less than', when explaining the difference between two numbers. The children are encouraged to count by playing games and singing number songs. They enjoy counting along with the teacher, as they count up to one hundred on the large number grid. Children develop their ideas well through practical experiences, such as putting a given number of counters in a pot and matching this with a printed numeral. Adults question the children well while they are engaged in these activities, always trying to draw out and encourage mathematical thinking. A few more able children have a good understanding of numbers to twenty and can record their answers of simple addition and subtraction to ten. The children benefit from many practical activities to reinforce their mathematical development. Their understanding of measurement is greatly enhanced by comparing their own height with others and with objects, such as a teddy bear. They use paper shapes to make a rocket, a flower, a garden and a man and can name the shapes triangle, square, circle and rectangle.

44. Teaching and learning in **knowledge and understanding of the world** are **good**. The children have planted runner bean seeds and eagerly helped a visitor to plant seed potatoes in a large tub, which is enabling them to learn about the conditions needed for seeds to grow. They use their close observation skills well when they use magnifying glasses to look at seeds. They test a range of different materials with a magnet to find out which are attracted and which the magnets repel. They use a good range of commercial construction kits to explore and make models. The teaching of ICT skills is good, which is enabling the children to make good progress. They can use the cassette player on their own to listen to story tapes and enjoy using computers. They are learning to use the arrow keys and the mouse to control the cursor. They have sorted a wide range of materials into groups, such as metal, paper, cotton and plastic. A visit to the Hop Farm at Yalding helps the children to learn about hop growing in their own village. Their understanding about the wider world is enhanced through stories, such as *Emeka's Gift* and *Handa's Surprise*. The children learn about Christian celebrations for Easter in Britain and about Easter customs in the Ukraine.

45. Teaching and learning for **physical development** are **good**. The children are provided with a good range of experiences to develop their hand control, such as cutting and sticking different materials. Most children are likely to achieve above the expected level in their physical development by the end of the Reception year. There is a very good range of high quality climbing and clambering apparatus and large wheeled toys for outdoor use. However, during the inspection, it was not possible for these to be used due to the construction work to develop the outside area. In a very good physical development lesson in the hall, the children enjoyed moving freely and most had good body control. They efficiently helped to put out the large mats before undertaking forward rolls and star jumps. The teacher explained and modelled these very well, so that the children knew how to control their bodies.

46. Teaching and learning for **creative development** are **good**. The children enjoy playing in the Giant's and Jack's house. They enjoy dressing up as characters in the story *Jack and the Beanstalk*. They play well together and their imaginative play is enhanced when an adult works with them, as this helps to extend their vocabulary and learning about story structure. The children listened attentively to the teacher's clear explanation of how to use wax resist technique. They enjoyed using this skill to create camouflage pictures of animals, such as a zebra in the long grass. They have made three-dimensional *snowmen* pictures and many of their paintings are good for their age, such as those of Jack and the beanstalk and Mummy and a flower.

47. At present, it is not possible for the children to use the outdoor area, due to the on-going building work to extend it and to incorporate a covered area, which will enable the children to have greater use of it. There is a very good range of climbing and clambering apparatus, which the local community is able to use out of school hours.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

## ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by Year 6.
- Lessons are planned effectively to combine the teaching of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers use a variety of methods and resources to make learning interesting and enjoyable.
- Rigorous procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and checking their progress help teachers to plan suitable work for pupils of all abilities.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in quality.
- Very good leadership in the subject contributes to its continuing improvement.
- Literacy skills are developed very well in other subjects.

### Commentary

48. Overall, standards in Year 2 are average, while those in Year 6 are above average. In Year 2, national test results remained at average levels between 2000 and 2003. In 2004, they fell to below average because of the high proportion of pupils with SEN in the year group. In Year 6, standards have been more variable since 2000, ranging from below average in 2001 to well above average in 2002. National test results were average in 2004, but very close to the above average level. Pupils achieve well in all aspects of English and literacy because teachers make work interesting and match activities well to pupils' differing needs and capabilities. Pupils with SEN achieve very well because work is planned effectively to help them overcome their difficulties and they receive good support, both in whole class lessons and when taught in small groups.

49. Standards in speaking and listening are average in Year 2. Most pupils have good listening skills, though a few tend to call out and talk when the teacher is speaking to the whole class. Pupils speak with increasing confidence when answering questions and more able pupils use a good range of vocabulary. Less able pupils speak in short sentences or give one word answers using a limited range of vocabulary. In Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are above average. Listening skills are good and help pupils to respond appropriately to others' ideas. Most speak confidently and articulately, and are able to express their ideas clearly, although a few still use mainly colloquial language and simple grammatical structures in their speech. Teachers plan a good range of activities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, such as role play, 'hot seating' and class discussions.

50. Standards in reading are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. The teaching of phonics is effective and this helps pupils to work out unfamiliar words for themselves. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to read together as a class, in small groups and as individuals. In a very good Year 1 lesson, pupils learned to read with good expression as they read a playscript with the teacher, using a variety of voices for the different characters. Pupils in Year 2 are paired with Year 5 pupils for weekly 'buddy reading sessions'. Both younger and older pupils benefit from and enjoy the sessions. Pupils in Year 6 read a wide range of books independently and in group reading sessions. They also use and develop their reading skills by searching for information on the Internet. They show understanding of the main themes and characters in a story and are able to draw inferences from the text.

51. Standards in writing are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. In Year 2, pupils write stories using knowledge about settings and characters which they have acquired from reading examples of different types of fiction. Most pupils use apt and interesting vocabulary to convey their ideas and write sequences of sentences with simple words spelt correctly. In Year 6, pupils' writing is varied and interesting in style, and is often enhanced by imaginative and adventurous choices of vocabulary. The Year 6 poems about the weather provided very good examples of pupils using similes and metaphors to enrich their writing. At the time of the last inspection, poetry writing was

identified as a weakness: it is now taught well throughout the school. In their fiction writing, pupils strike a good balance between narrative and conversation and make effective use of paragraphs and speech marks. Non-fiction writing, such as persuasive letters and historical accounts, makes good use of appropriately powerful language and vocabulary which is suited to the subject matter.

52. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of English because teachers plan a series of lessons which incorporate reading, writing, speaking and listening around a central theme. For example, in a very good lesson for pupils in the Year 4/5 class, they read and discussed *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* and the differences between literal and figurative language before reading and answering questions about other traditional poems and then planning and writing their own. The teacher had clearly established high expectations of good listening and prompted pupils to explain their ideas and opinions through skilful questioning about different aspects of the text.

53. Teachers also use a variety of approaches and methods to gain pupils' interest and make learning interesting. In a very good Year 3 lesson, pupils responded very well to using an Internet website which reinforced their understanding of how some non-fiction texts are organised with sub-headings, a contents page and a glossary. In Year 1, pupils asked questions of the main character in a story, *Foolish Ray*, as one pupil sat in the 'hot seat' and pretended to be him. In Year 2, pupils read rhyming couplets from A A Milne's poem *Waiting at the Window*, firstly with a partner and then as a whole class, while the teacher recorded their performance to play back to them later.

54. Work is planned effectively to meet pupils' differing needs because teachers make good use of a range of assessment information to ensure that work is suitably challenging for all pupils. Regular reading and writing assessments are recorded in a way that enables teachers to track pupils' progress and set meaningful targets for each to attain. A relative weakness in the assessment of pupils' attainment is the day to day marking of their work, which varies considerably between teachers. Some is rigorous in evaluating what pupils do well and what they need to do to improve, giving clear pointers that enable pupils to rectify weaknesses in their work, but not all examples are of the same high quality. The school has identified the need to introduce a more coherent strategy for marking and teachers are currently working towards achieving this.

55. The English co-ordinator is an Advanced Skills Teacher with considerable expertise in the subject, which she uses very well to support colleagues and plan improvements. She checks on the quality of teaching throughout the school and samples pupils' work in order to monitor progress and standards across the school. Her analysis of test results and other assessment information helps the school to identify priorities for improvement in the drive to maintain high standards.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

56. Teachers ensure that language and literacy skills are used and developed very well in most other subjects. As well as ensuring that pupils acquire and use the vocabulary specific to each subject, they provide numerous opportunities for pupils to write in a variety of styles and for a range of purposes. For example, pupils write factual reports of science investigations, instructions for designing and making objects in DT and imaginative accounts of life in different times in history, as when Year 6 pupils write about what it might have been like to be a child who was evacuated during World War 2.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and this is leading to effective learning by all groups of pupils
- Achievement by Year 6 is very good.
- There are inconsistencies in teachers' marking.
- Subject leadership is strong and is a major factor in provision.
- There is much cross-curricular use of mathematics.

## **Commentary**

57. In Year 2, standards in basic numeracy and in other areas of mathematics are broadly average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Achievement is good. In Year 6, standards are above average. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection and represents very good achievement. Pupils with SEN receive good support and they progress well. In Year 6, higher attaining pupils achieve particularly well. There is currently no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.

58. Teaching overall is good and this is leading to effective learning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was satisfactory. There are many examples of very good teaching. The teachers use a variety of strategies to help the pupils make quick mental recall of number facts. These include 'choose the number' games and 'happy families', which make learning fun as well as effective. The teachers encourage the pupils to explain their strategies, so that they really understand the process. The teachers place a strong emphasis on developing problem solving skills and on understanding which number operations are required. This was very apparent in a Year 6 lesson, where higher attaining pupils were challenged well to solve two-stage, real life problems involving percentage discounts and deposits. Teachers encourage the use of correct mathematical terms and units of measurement and this aids understanding. This helped pupils in a Year 4 lesson to use a formula to calculate the area of regular and irregular shapes. The pupils are expected to present their work neatly as an aid to preventing careless mistakes.

59. Teachers match tasks well to the pupils' widely varying needs. They deploy classroom assistants effectively and this is a major factor in the good achievement of lower attaining pupils. There is plenty of practical apparatus for these pupils. In a Year 2 lesson, this helped in the understanding of division. Teachers also make good use of ICT to enhance learning. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, lower attaining pupils made effective use of a computer program to generate accurate bar charts of their favourite pop stars and in a Year 2 lesson, higher attaining pupils used the computers to extend their knowledge of multiplication and division. In a lesson for pupils in Year 4/5, the teacher made very effective use of a digital projector to enhance the teaching of angles and the use of a protractor.

60. The teachers mark the pupils' work regularly and positively, although the use of written comments to suggest ways of improvement is inconsistent. Regular homework for pupils in Years 3 to 6 consolidates and extends classroom learning.

61. Subject leadership is good and is a significant factor in provision. The co-ordinator monitors standards by sampling pupils' work and by checking the quality of teaching. She has led training for colleagues. There are good procedures for assessing and tracking the pupils' progress and for using this information to plan the next steps in learning. The co-ordinator analyses the results of national tests, in order to highlight areas of weakness and to focus teaching on these.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

62. There are lots of opportunities for the pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. Pupils in Year 2, for example, combine mathematics with art work on patterns and printing

and with geography work on directions and routes. In geography, Year 6 pupils use coordinates accurately to locate map features. They use computer generated graphs to record data and they make effective use of spreadsheets to enter and analyse data. Pupils in Year 4 generate computer images to depict reflective symmetry. In science, pupils in Year 6 draw accurate line graphs of thermal insulation and the effects of friction on movement. Pupils in Year 3 produce accurate computer generated bar charts of the absorbency of different materials. Pupils in Year 2 carefully measure the length of various fabrics before and after stretching and they draw satisfactory block graphs of the distance travelled by toy cars in work on forces. In design and technology, pupils in Year 6 make accurate, scale measurements as they design and make shelters. In food technology, pupils in Year 5 carefully weigh and measure ingredients in bread making lessons.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in Year 6
- Pupils make good progress.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The use of ICT is not sufficiently developed.

### **Commentary**

63. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is average. This is a good improvement since the results of the teachers' assessments for 2004. Pupils enter the school with below average standards and they make good progress and achieve well through Years 1 and 2. This includes all groups of pupils, such as those who have special educational needs. Pupils learn how to conduct simple investigations and record their findings. For example, they find which everyday metal objects are attracted by a magnet, and record how many paper clips can be attached to it.

64. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average and this is borne out by the above average results in the National Curriculum tests in 2004. Pupils of all abilities and groups make good progress and achieve well. They learn how to make predictions, carry out fair tests, and record and evaluate their investigations. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of topics such as magnetism and materials and use correctly terms such as 'attract' and 'repel'.

65. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some that is very good. Teachers plan well and provide good activities that match pupils' abilities and needs. For example, in a lesson for Year 4/5 pupils, the teacher gave them plenty of independence in their practical work. This suited them all, but especially the more able pupils. They all learnt very well. There were lively exchanges in the groups as they tested theories on each other. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils set up their own investigation about the strength of magnets. They made predictions and thought about how it would be a fair test. Pupils learnt well from this hands-on experience. A very good example of independent learning was seen in a Year 6 lesson, also about magnetism. The challenge and measure of independence given to them by the teacher were very good, and in this way they found out more than was planned. They discovered that using a magnet on a paper clip several times eventually turned the clip into a small magnet itself.

66. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. She is very experienced and has created very good schemes of work from sources available nationally. These schemes ensure that work is well planned to provide consistency and continuity for mixed year classes. All the outcomes and data for science, such as the results of the National Curriculum tests in Year 6, are very carefully and fully analysed. The result of this is that planning is very well informed and any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are addressed very efficiently. One area for development is the better use of ICT. However, the co-ordinator has identified this and has very good plans to

address the shortcoming.

67. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection. In particular, standards in Year 6 have improved; teaching is now good overall, with none that is unsatisfactory. Assessment, which was not well developed at the time of the last inspection, is now very good. The co-ordinator has a very clear picture of each pupil's progress over time and keeps very careful records.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve above average standards in Years 2 and 6.
- Good teaching and a well planned curriculum ensure that pupils achieve well.
- Very good leadership in the subject ensures a continuing focus on raising standards.
- The use of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects is particularly strong.

### **Commentary**

68. The previous inspection found that standards in ICT were average and pupils were making satisfactory progress. Standards are now above average and pupils make good progress. They achieve well throughout the school. There has been a whole school focus on improving pupils' learning in ICT over the past few years. Teachers have received good training, the school's resources have improved and curricular planning is more effective. Pupils acquire good skills in using the keyboard and mouse, and learn to find their way around a wide variety of programs. Word processing skills are good and pupils use these to present their ideas in interesting and imaginative ways, such as the electronic books of 'alternative' traditional tales produced by pupils in a Year 4/5 class using the Power Point program. Y6 pupils write and send e-mails with attachments and create multimedia presentations on different subjects, including buttons to link pages, recorded sounds and animations. Pupils also achieve good standards in data handling and control technology. Year 2 pupils collect data about their favourite fruit and ice cream and convert it into graphs. They program a floor robot to follow a path using instructions such as 'forward 3, left 1, back 3'. Year 6 pupils know how to create spreadsheets using formulae and write programs to control devices.

69. The subject is taught well. Teachers ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are covered and that all pupils have opportunities to use computers as often as possible. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was satisfactory but did not encourage pupils to become independent users of ICT and computers were significantly underused. In every lesson where it was appropriate to do so, teachers incorporated opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning. Teaching is effective because skills are taught in a variety of contexts, not in isolation. For example, one of the strengths in a very good Year 2 RE lesson about the Easter story was the use of Internet resources which enhanced pupils' learning considerably. A good ICT lessons for Year 5 pupils illustrated how more advanced skills are taught in a clear and focused way. The teacher used a data projector to take pupils step by step through the procedures for programming traffic lights to come on and go off in the correct sequence. Skilful questioning prompted pupils to try and work things out for themselves and there was ample opportunity for them to practise the newly acquired skills.

70. One of the weaknesses identified by the last inspection was the lack of a whole school curriculum plan to ensure a gradual build-up of skills from year to year. This has been addressed very well and the school now has a well-planned curriculum which provides good progression from year to year and a balanced programme of skills teaching and development of ICT across a range of subjects.

71. The ICT co-ordinator has high levels of expertise and a clear vision for the future development of the subject. He checks teachers' planning and pupils' work and observes lessons.



Good assessment procedures help teachers to keep track of how well pupils are progressing. The most successful feature of the management of the subject is the way teachers have maximised learning by adopting a cross-curricular approach to teaching. This ensures that pupils learn to use ICT as a tool and understand its relevance to everyday life. The subject is well resourced. A recent decision to employ a teaching assistant specifically to support teachers and pupils with ICT is a good initiative.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

72. Every teacher looks for ways to incorporate ICT into other subjects in order to enhance pupils' learning and extend their skills. There are well planned opportunities for research in geography, history and RE, while, in science, pupils record the results of investigations. For example, Year 3 pupils carried out tests on the absorbency of different materials and produced graphs to show and explain their findings. However, the use of ICT in science is not fully developed throughout the school. In art, Year 2 pupils created eye-catching pictures in the style of Miro using a computer package.

### **HUMANITIES**

73. Only one **history** lesson was seen during the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to make judgements on teaching and learning and pupils' achievement over time. However, in the satisfactory lesson in a Year 5/6 class, pupils were able to use secondary information to extend their learning about the role of the theatre in the life of the Ancient Greeks. The teacher's list of key questions helped to focus pupils' learning to ensure that they covered all the different aspects of the theatre in Ancient Greece. The teacher provided good support by the use of open-ended questioning. Good links were made with other areas of the curriculum, such as the use of literacy skills to record a list of facts and with art and design, as some pupils started to design masks linked to their work on Ancient Greece for their forthcoming production of *Troy Story* in the summer term.

74. Pupils in Year 1 compare old and new toys. They have asked their parents and grandparents about the toys they used to play with and compared these with modern day toys. Pupils in Year 2 learn about famous people, such as Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale and compare homes from the time of the cavemen to present day housing. Pupils in Year 3 study the Ancient Egyptians, the Celts and the Romans. Pupils in Year 4 study the Anglo Saxons and the Tudors. Visits to places of historical interest extend pupils' learning well about the past. Pupils in Year 1 visit the Museum of Childhood, which enhances their learning about toys from the past. Visits to Ightham Mote, Lullingstone Villa, Battle Abbey and Knole House extend pupils' learning of invaders and settlers in Britain and of how people lived in the past. The visit to the Britain at War Museum enables pupils in Years 5 and 6 to gain well in learning about Britain during the Second World War.

### **GEOGRAPHY**

Provision in geography is **good** and has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and enables all groups of pupils to achieve well.
- There is a strong focus on topical issues, which makes the subject come alive.
- Standards are above average.

#### **Commentary**

75. In Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above average. Achievement is good and all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

76. Teaching is good and this is leading to effective learning. There is a strong focus on developing the pupils' map and atlas skills and on developing their ability to research information from a variety of sources, including the Internet. The teachers make geography real by focussing on topical issues, such as environmental pollution, earthquakes in Iran, the Asian tsunami and Ellen MacArthur's round the world voyage. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils talked about the effects of the closure of the South Darenth paper mill and how the building could be used in the future. The teachers focus strongly on contrasts between life in Horton Kirby and that in distant localities, such as a Scottish island and villages in Mexico and India. The subject is therefore making a positive contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.

77. The pupils make good use of their literacy skills in geography, for example in describing the courses and nature of some of the world's major rivers. The teachers also make useful links with mathematics where appropriate. For example, pupils in Year 1 make a class pictogram showing the different ways in which they come to school. They conduct a traffic survey, whilst investigating dangers on the local roads. In a Year 5/6 lesson, higher attaining pupils made accurate use of six-figure co-ordinates to locate map features.

78. Teachers make effective use of available resources, with a strong emphasis on the use of ICT. In work linked to literacy, younger pupils program a screen turtle to trace Little Red Riding Hood's route to her grandmother's house and to help Goldilocks reach her bed. They program a floor robot to move around a large scale town plan and this helps in the development of directional language.

79. Subject leadership is good and has ensured significant improvements in provision. The co-ordinator has successfully addressed the issues raised in the previous inspection. She monitors the quality of planning and samples of pupils' work and she has advised colleagues on the accurate assessment of pupils' work according to National Curriculum levels of attainment. She has not had the opportunity to check the quality of teaching. Learning is enriched by work within the locality, for example at the local environmental studies centre.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision for religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attainment is above average in one or two classes, but average overall.
- Pupils hear a good range of Bible stories.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils are taught well about Christian festivals.
- Assessment is not developed well enough.

### **Commentary**

80. In Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In one or two lessons, attainment was above average, but overall it is average across the school. This judgement includes some analysis of pupils' past work. Pupils of all groups make good progress and achieve well. They listen to, and write about stories from both the Old and New Testaments. For example, they have heard the stories of Joseph and his coat, and Moses, as well as some parables and miracles of Jesus.

81. Teaching and learning are generally good with some that is very good. Teachers make sure that pupils are actively involved in lessons and provide interesting activities for them. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher connected the laptop computer to the Internet and pupils helped her to navigate through the programme. They read the text aloud from the large screen, and saw pictures connected to the stories of Palm Sunday and those of Jesus in the last week of his life on earth. In Years 4/5, pupils took part in a very lively role-play of Jesus entering Jerusalem on a

donkey. The teacher had prepared very well, and each pupil was given a paper cut-out of a palm leaf to line the way with. They particularly enjoyed the action involving overturning the tables of the moneychangers. They entered into that very fully! In both of these lessons the pupils learnt very well because of the high levels of involvement and interest generated by the teachers. Attainment was above average in these lessons due to the very good teaching. In other lessons, all of which were good, some pupils learnt about Islam and the Qur'an, while others demonstrated their ability to look up Bible references. They were talking about Jesus and his healing stories and found stories such as the healing of the paralysed man, or blind Bartimeaus. They know how to find the Old or the New Testaments, and particular books in either section.

82. Analysis of pupils' work shows that when festivals such as Harvest, Christmas or Easter come round, children spend time studying these celebrations. For example, they have followed the course of events in the life of Jesus through Holy Week to Easter, and his encounters with the religious authorities of the day. These classroom activities are supplemented by stories and themes in the school's daily worship.

83. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator and the schemes of work are successfully linked to the locally agreed syllabus. Assessment is not yet fully in place. However, there are written plans to implement a scheme derived from the national initiatives and linked to the schemes of work. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have been maintained as before but teaching is better, with none that is unsatisfactory. The links to assemblies have been sustained and the subject continues to reflect the Christian ethos of this Church school well.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

84. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any **art and design** lessons and there is insufficient evidence to make judgements on teaching and learning and pupils' achievement over time. Sketchbooks are used for pupils to experiment with different ideas and to improve skills, such as for blending, shading and perspective. Pupils' artwork is of good quality, is attractively displayed around the school and enhances the learning environment well. The displays show that pupils experience a good range of different artwork as they progress through the school. Pupils in Year 1 collected their own natural materials for collages to represent their favourite place, such as shells and pebbles for a beach scene and pieces of fir tree and grasses for a countryside picture. After studying artwork by Andy Goldsworthy and Barbara Hepworth, pupils used willow weave and tissue paper to create abstract mobiles. Pupils in Year 4 used a pricked out daffodil design on squares of polystyrene for their daffodil prints. Pupils in the Year 5/6 classes used small prints of works of art by famous impressionist artists and used watercolours and inks very well to extend the prints in the same style. They used brush strokes well to create a similar effect.

85. Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 used ICT well to create artwork in the style of Joan Miro. As part of their history work, pupils in Year 1 used sepia coloured pencils washed over with water to represent colouring used for photographs in the early part of the twentieth century for their old bear pictures, while pupils in Year 4 used collage for their Tudor figures. Pupils in Year 3 use their art skills well to enhance their learning about the Ancient Egyptians. Pupils in the Year 5/6 classes used the Internet to download information about impressionist artists, such as Manet, Monet, Renoir and Cézanne, which helped to extend pupils' learning about their lives and the artists' use of light and shade to create the style known as Impressionism. Visits to the National Gallery and to the Tate Modern extend pupils' awareness of different styles of art and extends their learning well of famous artists.

86. In **DT** it was not possible to see any lessons. However, the indications from photographs, discussions, and looking at some displays are that standards are at least average across the school. Pupils are being taught to use a range of skills and materials. They learn how to cut, join, and decorate their work. They evaluate what they have made and try to recognise how it might be improved. They use an appropriate range of resources such as construction kits for the younger ones, and saws, scissors and glue later. Older pupils successfully link their work to science, making

toys that require knowledge of electrical circuits. Design and research are carried out, and sometimes computers are used.

87. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements on teaching and learning and pupils' achievement over time in **music**. In a good Year 1 lesson, pupils made good progress in developing the skill of handling musical instruments. The lesson was part of a series of lessons based on a published scheme of work. They tunefully sang *Choose an instrument you can play* before individual pupils chose from a good range of percussion instruments. Most know the names of the instruments, such as Indian bells, tambourine and claves. Most pupils responded well when they had to play and stop in response to traffic light signals of green or red. At the end of the lesson, the teacher reinforced their learning by reminding them of what they had learned in response to words and signals. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils enjoyed playing *Jamaquacks*, a game to extend pupils learning about how sounds can be graphically represented. They tunefully sang *Hairy Scary Castle* before working in groups to compose their own score for one of the rooms in the castle. They eagerly set to work and their very good behaviour enabled everyone to work together very well. They used pictures and symbols to represent the sounds for percussion musical instruments or their own voices. Each group performed their own composition to the class, which was recorded by the teacher. Each composition was played back, so that pupils could listen to and evaluate their own and others' performances. Pupils explained how they might change or extend their own work in order to further improve it. Their learning was greatly enhanced by the teacher's very good subject knowledge, which she used very well to inspire pupils.

88. Pupils listen to many different types of music, ranging from classical to rock and to modern day, which enhances and extends their learning well. In whole school assemblies, pupils sing with good diction. The Christmas carol service and the Nativity performance was greatly appreciated by parents and visitors to the school. Pupils in Year 6 take part in musical productions, such as *My Fair Lady*, for their leavers' concert at the end of the summer term. Extracurricular musical activities enhance pupils' learning well. Pupils are able to learn to play guitar, flutes and recorders. The recorder players are taking part in a recorder festival in April and the choir is taking part in a choral festival in July. Pupils who learn to play musical instruments both in and out of school took part in a school concert for instrumentalists at Christmas. Performing before an audience greatly enhances pupils' self-esteem and celebrates their achievements. Visiting musicians perform for pupils, which extends pupils' awareness of different types of music.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and is enabling all pupils to make good progress.
- By Year 6, standards are above average.
- Subject leadership is good and is a significant factor in provision.
- There is a wide range of sports clubs; school teams are very successful.

### Commentary

89. Standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. It was not possible to observe any games lessons.

90. Teaching overall is good and this leads to effective learning. The teachers manage changing sessions well and they ensure that all pupils are fully focussed on their tasks. They pay due attention to safety and to the correct handling of apparatus. Subject knowledge is good. Lessons begin with worthwhile warm-up sessions and finish with calming, cool-downs. In a Year 1 / 2 gymnastics lesson, the teacher gave effective demonstrations of movements and emphasised the need for control. This helped the pupils to improve their travelling and balancing skills on floor and

apparatus. The teachers provide opportunities for the pupils to observe the performance of others and this helps them to develop ideas of their own and to improve their own practice. In a Year 1 dance lesson, this impacted well on the pupils' ability to respond imaginatively to words and music on an Easter theme of ' The Great Egg Hunt '. The teachers make learning progressively more challenging. In a Year 5 / 6 gymnastics lesson, the pupils extended their synchronized movement sequences from the floor on to a variety of apparatus. Standards in swimming are good. By Year 6, the pupils are confident in the water and almost all can swim at least 25 metres unaided and with good technique.

91. Subject leadership is strong and is a significant factor in provision. The headteacher and one other teacher share the responsibility and ensure that the subject enjoys a high profile both in the curriculum and in extracurricular activities. The curriculum is enriched by a good number of sports clubs. School teams do well in local tournaments. The football team has just won the district trophy. There are opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities during a residential visit to Eridge. There is good accommodation for PE and there is a good range of apparatus and equipment, although storage space is at a premium.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

92. The co-ordinator has worked extremely hard to improve provision for PSHCE and this is now very good. There are regular opportunities for the pupils to discuss relevant issues, such as feelings, friendship, the need for rules, choices and relationships. The pupils develop social skills in clubs and school productions and during school visits. They can learn road safety skills on a cycling proficiency course. Older pupils exercise responsibility by carrying out tasks around the school. The pupils support a number of charities, including Guide Dogs for the Blinds and the recent Asian tsunami appeal. The pupils learn about healthy eating and the younger pupils participate in the National Fruit Scheme. They learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse. There is formal sex education for pupils in Year 6.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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