INSPECTION REPORT

Little Common School

Bexhill-on-Sea

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114429

Headteacher: Mr D J Pratt

Lead inspector: Mr J Francis

Dates of inspection: $11^{th} - 14^{th}$ October 2004

Inspection number: 267214

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number on roll: 625

School address: Shepherds Close

Bexhill-on-Sea

East Sussex

Postcode: TN39 4SQ

Telephone number: 01424 842297 Fax number: 01424 846697

Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs L Dewhurst

Date of previous inspection: 15th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This large primary school in Bexhill has 625 pupils on roll in 21 classes (three in each age group), with an almost equal number of boys and girls. There are 90 children in the reception classes, 60 of these part-time for mornings only until the term of their fifth birthday. The school has grown by more than 160 pupils since the last inspection, with over 100 arriving since 2001. The majority of pupils live in the immediate area, which is mainly private housing. A major building programme over the last two years has created excellent facilities for the reception classes. Attainment on entry is just above the level expected for children of this age, particularly in their language skills. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal (4.8 per cent) is below average. There are around 40 pupils from minority ethnic groups, mainly Asian or mixed heritage. A small number of pupils have English as an additional language but do not require any additional help with their English. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (10 per cent) is below average. These are mainly for moderate learning difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils who have statements of special educational needs (1.1 per cent) is also below average.

The number of pupils entering or leaving the school at other than the normal starting and finishing times is generally low. With the increase in pupil numbers several new teachers have been appointed over the last two years, including four newly qualified teachers in September 2004.

The school recently achieved the Active Mark Gold Award for physical education.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities	
17976	Mr J Francis	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology	
			Art and design	
			Design and technology	
			English as an additional language	
11096	Mrs M Davie	Lay inspector		
24678	Mrs A Bowyer	Team inspector	English	
			Music	
			Religious education	
30144	Mr E Hastings	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	
			Mathematics	
			Physical education	
32262	Mr J Jones	Team inspector	Science	
			Geography	
			History	
			Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Wessex Education Limited

3 Greenacres Puddletown Dorchester Dorset DT2 8GF

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school and gives very good value for money. Pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards. The curriculum is excellent. The headteacher provides exceptional educational direction to the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- very good achievement seen throughout the school is giving well above average standards in English, mathematics and science at seven and eleven;
- the school is very well led and its management is excellent;
- the governing body play a very influential role in the school's development;
- teaching is very good throughout the school;
- there are very good assessment systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress;
- pupils' personal development is excellent:
- the school provides an excellent curriculum;
- the support and guidance for pupils and their involvement in the school is excellent;
- there are very good relationships with parents and the community and excellent relationships with other schools.

Since the inspection of March 1999 the school has made good progress. Following a fall in results, the high standards that were seen at that inspection have been restored. The teaching has improved, with a much higher proportion of very good teaching. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved. The curriculum is even better, as is the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall achievement is very good. Currently, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Standards in ICT, religious education (RE), design and technology (DT) and art are above those expected by seven and eleven, and standards in geography well above. High attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve very well because the work is well matched to their needs.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the		similar schools		
end of Year 6 , compared with:	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	С	С	Α	С
Mathematics	С	С	A	A
Science	A	С	A*	A

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

The decline in results (to only average) between 2002 and 2003 had a number of causes including disruption to teaching arrangements and a large number of pupils joining the school during those years, particularly in year 6. There was a quick and successful response to arrest this. The most recent results in 2004 (as yet un-validated), and current work, show pupils in year 6 are again achieving very high standards, particularly in science, which is in the top five per cent of schools nationally. The rate of improvement for eleven year olds has been faster than in other schools.

Results for seven year olds have remained high in reading and well above average in mathematics. In writing results are just above average, which represents a fall from the higher results of the past two years. Over the last four years, results for seven year olds overall have improved at a similar rate to other schools.

Children enter the school with levels of attainment just above those normally found for this age. They achieve very well and most will exceed the expected levels by the time they go into Year 1.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are very good. Attendance is above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good education. Teaching and learning are very good. An exceptional range of activities, visits and visitors enriches an excellent curriculum. The school is currently modifying the curriculum to improve links between subjects and further raise standards. Very good planning meets the individual needs of pupils well. Systems to track pupils' progress through the school are very good, are used effectively and have had a positive impact on raising standards but some marking is not as effective in targeting individual weaknesses.

There are very good links with parents and very good procedures for children starting school. Links with the community are very good and there are excellent links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school at all levels is **very good** and management is **excellent**. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other key staff. Detailed analysis and evaluation of test and other assessment data has enabled the school to identify areas for further improvement in writing and address these well. There is very good teamwork and a strong commitment to continued improvement. Governance is very good; governors are very knowledgeable and heavily involved in all aspects of the school's development. However, there are some minor omissions to the information they should supply to parents.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think very highly of the school, find staff very approachable and receive very good information on their children's progress. Pupils have very good relationships with staff and are confident there will be someone to turn to if they need support: they like school, find it interesting and feel they learn a lot.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further improve the precision of individual target setting through the marking of pupils' work;
- extend the successful creative learning projects that have begun in the school so that standards are further raised through cross-curricular working, particularly in English.

In order to meet statutory requirements governors must address the omissions to the required information in the governors' annual report to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall pupils achieve very well and reach high standards. The arrangements for teaching mathematics and science in year 6 enable higher attaining pupils to do particularly well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- standards at year 2 and 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science;
- standards are very high in geography and high in ICT, RE, DT and art;
- children in the reception classes achieve very well and attain above average standards;
- higher attaining pupils achieve very well as do those identified as having special educational needs.

Commentary

Results in national tests

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (17.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.1 (16.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.3 (18.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 90 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (26.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	30.0 (27.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	31.5 (29.1)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 70 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 1. At year 2, the most recent, but as yet un-validated, results (2004) show attainment in reading to be above average, and mathematics to be well above average, maintaining the standards. Writing is in line with the average, which represents a drop in standards following several years of improvement. Those weaknesses which where identified from these test results have already begun to be addressed and current standards are back up to previous levels.
- 2. The results at year 6 have been variable over time, particularly in English and mathematics, which had only been in line with the national average. With significant disruption to teaching in year 6, the changes to organisation and the large increase in numbers during this time, the school was aware that these results were going to represent poor progress taking account of how well these pupils did when they were in year 2. Changes introduced since then, such as specialist teaching in science and setting in mathematics, have proved very effective in raising attainment.

- 3. The most recent results, (2004), again un-validated, indicate that pupils in year 6 achieved well above average, particularly in science where they were in the top five per cent nationally. The changes to organisation were very effective in raising boys' attainment and they achieved slightly higher standards than girls in all three subjects. Higher attaining pupils, including those identified as gifted and talented, performed very well with 56 per cent of pupils gaining the above average levels in mathematics and 77 per cent in science, both very high in comparison with the national averages. Thirty-two per cent attained the higher level in English; also above the national average.
- 4. Current standards in English are high although reading is slightly stronger than writing. In mathematics and science standards are well above average and similar to those seen at the last inspection. Pupils are achieving very well. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well and most attain average standards. In ICT, RE, DT, art and in PE at year 2, pupils achieve well and are above the expected standards; standards in geography are well above the expected levels. There was not enough evidence to make firm judgments about standards in other subjects. Currently there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- 5. Children in the reception classes achieve very well and standards are on course to be above the expected levels for most children in all of the areas of learning by the time they go into year 1.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. Their personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- very good behaviour and attitudes enhance pupils' learning;
- high quality relationships effectively promote an excellent ethos and an enjoyment of learning;
- pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent overall and there is outstanding provision for their moral and social development;
- attendance is above average.

- 6. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. All adults have very high expectations to which the pupils respond positively. As a result, pupils are happy, courteous and co-operative and show an excellent interest in school life. There have been few incidents of bullying and there have been no recent exclusions. This very good behaviour means lessons are generally very productive.
- 7. Pupils of all ages have very good relationships with their teachers and each other. Their very good speaking and listening skills allow them to help one another and learn from their mistakes. Learning in lessons is therefore usually at a very high rate. Year 6 pupils, for example, successfully modified their work in an RE lesson as a result of discussions with their talking partners' and then confidently presented it to the class. They enjoyed doing this so much that they didn't want to stop when it was time to move on. Children in reception remembered a list of articles to take on a trip very well; because they enjoyed the way their teacher put the words into a song.
- 8. A wide range of opportunities and initiatives supports pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about life in other cultures through links with different countries

¹ These are in the areas of learning that include personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development and physical development that children are expected to achieve by the end of reception year.

- around the world. They learn to count in French, learn about aboriginal art and what clothes children in India wear to school. The pupils in year 4 marvel at the magnificence of the universe where their shared area has been turned into a high quality display about space. Class stories like 'The Selfish Giant' give them a strong foundation on which to build their own spiritual development.
- 9. Social and moral development is particularly outstanding and has a very significant part to play in the good relationships and very positive ethos within the school. Rules drawn up by the whole school community are taken seriously and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. Golden time (when they are rewarded with time to pursue an activity of their own choice) is used effectively to help pupils take responsibility for their actions. Assemblies usually have moral themes, enhanced by stories from around the world such as fables. The school's approach to bullying allows any incidents to be sorted out quickly and 'red caps' (trained peer mediators) help to resolve minor disagreements by using a method that shows children there are always two sides to an argument. Staff provide very good role models showing pupils how to behave by example and creating very supportive ethos in their classrooms. Year 5 pupils really wanted to do their best in an English lesson because their teacher constantly looked for praiseworthy achievements and was quick to reward these.
- 10. Pupils' enterprise is very well demonstrated by their work on the school council. During the inspection they behaved impeccably during a meeting with the local recycling officer, asked well thought out questions and gave a good deal of sensible thought to environmental issues. Jobs such as setting up for assembly, helping in the dining hall or litter picking, which benefit the whole school community, are carried out conscientiously.

Attendance

11. Attendance is good and above the national average.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence			
School data 4.2			
National data	5.1		

Unauthorised absence		
School data 1.3		
National data	0.4	

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The very good teaching and learning throughout the school is the key factor in the school's return to high standards. Very good assessment procedures support teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- teaching overall is very good and teachers have high expectations of standards of work and behaviour;
- lessons are very well planned to take account of the full range of pupils' abilities and very good links are made between subjects;
- assessment procedures are very good;
- teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear explanations and question pupils well.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	24 (44%)	23 (42%)	8 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

- 12. Very good, well-focussed teaching is seen in all year groups. Specialist teaching in science and setting for mathematics in year 6 has made a significant impact on raising pupils' attainment. Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations. In all lessons, there are very good relationships and a good working atmosphere, which produces ideal conditions for teaching and learning. Given the size of the school there is a great sense of calm and order.
- 13. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in how they approach different subjects. This helps to give lessons a brisk pace and ensures that they are productive. Teachers' introductions and instructions are very clear and their good questioning makes sure that all pupils understand new ideas. Planning makes good links between subjects, which helps to reinforce the skills being taught and help pupils see their relevance. For instance in year 2, both science and ICT skills were used to enhance the quality of pupils' artwork. Good use is made of ICT by all teachers to make lessons interesting and informative and extend pupils' subject knowledge.
- 14. There are very good assessment systems. Pupils are regularly assessed to ensure that teachers know how well they are doing. These judgements are compared within the year groups and across the school to ensure consistency. The information from these assessments is very well used to plan the next stages in learning. However, the quality of teachers' marking is more variable. While it is regular and supportive it is not always as helpful as it might be in involving pupils in evaluating their own work or telling pupils on a day-to-day basis what they need to do to improve.
- 15. Work for the higher attaining pupils is suitably demanding and ensures they achieve all that they should. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is also very effective and enables most of these pupils to make very good progress and achieve average standards.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is excellent and an excellent range of additional opportunities further advances pupils' learning. Personal, social and health education are very good, the accommodation is excellent as is the quality, range and quantity of the school's resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- excellent breadth, variety and access to the curriculum lead to very good achievement;
- effective links between subjects enable pupils to gain a deeper understanding of their work;
- curricular enrichment and extra-curricular activities are excellent;
- the provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good;

- 16. The very good broad and well-balanced curriculum evident at the last inspection has been further improved and continues to meet all statutory requirements. Curriculum provision is enhanced by careful analysis, planning and timetabling and supported by excellent documentation. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have equal access to all activities.
- 17. The school is working successfully to enhance pupils' learning and boost their achievement, particularly in English, by imaginatively linking the teaching of subjects. In year 4, pupils' high level of interest is matched by very good learning when studying a project on the Solar System and Space, which combines aspects of literacy, numeracy, science, ICT, DT, and personal, social and health education (PSHE).

- 18. The school provides excellent enrichment opportunities. A very good programme of additional activities stimulates the thinking of more able pupils. After-school activities include a wide range of sports for boys and girls. Pupils participate in the Bexhill Music Festival and local sporting events. There is excellent support for learning outside the school day. The well-organised support includes a Breakfast and After School Club and a well-established Holiday Club.
- 19. There is very good provision for those pupils who have special educational needs and the special needs co-ordinator (SENCo) and senior staff provide very good guidance for pupils, teachers and parents. The most recent Code of Practice is fully implemented and pupils with statements of special need receive their entitlement. Learning activities are carefully planned to address pupils' challenging but attainable targets. Procedures for consultation and the exchange of information with parents are exemplary.
- 20. The accommodation is outstanding and the recently opened, very well planned additional classrooms and teaching areas add to pupils' learning opportunities. These are bright, spacious, stimulating, and excellently resourced, re-affirming the school's very high expectations. The rich learning environment helps pupils to achieve very well. Outdoors, clearly designated and well resourced play and adventure areas, swimming facilities and apparatus for very young pupils provide very good support for learning and play.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are very well looked after and given excellent support and guidance. The procedures for taking pupils' views into account in the work of the school are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- very good systems to ensure pupils' health and welfare result in happy and confident pupils;
- excellent records ensure high quality support for pupils' personal and academic development;
- pupils' involvement in the work of the school, through a very effective school council, is excellent.

- 21. Pupils feel happy in school. Recent building work to accommodate the growth of the school has resulted in a safe, spacious and stimulating learning environment for pupils of all ages. Health and safety is taken very seriously and all staff are aware of how to deal with any child protection issues. Innovative building design provides very good access for pupils with physical disabilities enabling them to be fully included in all aspects of school life. Arrangements for children and their parents to familiarise themselves with the school and teachers on starting in the reception classes are extremely thorough and the children are treated with a very high level of care and sensitivity. This is helping them to make a very successful start to their education.
- 22. A good deal of thought has gone into playtime arrangements in order to maximise the benefit. Meals supervisors have been extensively trained in playground management and their relationships with the children are extremely supportive. Healthy eating is high on the school's list of priorities; pupils can purchase home-baked biscuits or fruit at morning playtime. An excellent range of activities organised for lunchtime ensures pupils keep themselves fully occupied. As well as playing games or chatting with their friends they can keep fit by taking part in aerobics or skipping sessions, or spend a quiet time in the library.
- 23. Excellent record keeping systems are used to ensure that personal and academic development is closely monitored. Each pupil has a personal profile that is regularly updated. These help teachers to spot if there are any recurring problems or trends that need attention. Improved systems for collecting and analysing data about academic performance are used very well to make sure pupils are all doing as well as they should. One of the positive results of these very good systems is the additional help being given, by senior teachers, to pupils who are felt to be underachieving, in order to try to help them reach their full potential.

24. The school council gives excellent opportunities for pupils to have a say in how their school is run and develops a strong sense of community spirit. Elected members (from years 4, 5 and 6) take their roles extremely seriously and are each linked with a younger year group to ensure all of the children have an input into the decisions that are made. Their ideas have been instrumental in bringing about helpful changes; for example, to the dinner ticket system and the development of the 'red hats' who help fellow pupils resolve minor disagreements. All teachers set aside time for pupils to deal with council issues.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are very good and contribute significantly to pupils' very good achievements. Links with partner schools are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- information for parents about the school and their child's progress is very good, however, some required details are missing from the prospectus and governors' annual report;
- parents are very satisfied with the school and give it very good support;
- extended care provided at the start and end of the day for the pupils is excellent;
- links with other local schools are excellent.

- 25. Parents are provided with very good information that keeps them up to date with school life and how well their child is doing. Newsletters and curriculum information are sent home regularly and are also posted on the school's very well produced and informative web site. The school's prospectus is on the web site and parents can take a 'virtual tour' of the accommodation. The three annual parent/teacher consultations allow parents to see their child's work and the 'open door' session in the summer term, which enables them to meet their child's new teacher, are very popular.
- 26. Curriculum evenings based on 'Keeping Up With the Children' are well attended and help to build parents' confidence in supporting their child with school work. Year-end reports are very good because they give parents a clear idea about the progress their child has made over the year and what needs to be done next. The prospectus and governors' annual report are both high quality documents. However, the governors' annual report omits some of the required details. The governors fail to mention the current facilities in place to assist access to the school by pupils with disabilities or the impact on teaching and learning of staff training.
- 27. Parents are very happy with the school. A recent survey conducted by an independent marketing agency showed they had very few concerns. Their responses have nonetheless been thoroughly analysed and the school is contemplating ways of addressing any issues. The parent teacher association raises significant additional funds and has helped pupils' development considerably by contributing toward the new school library and providing outdoor play equipment for children in reception.
- 28. The 'walking bus' in the morning and the afternoon escorts children to and from school. Care is also available in the school holidays. Parents of reception age children who have used the holiday play scheme in the summer before their child starts, say this has benefited their child's settling in enormously.
- 29. Links with other local schools are excellent and impact significantly on pupils' achievements. Close ties with the pre-school ensure that children are well known when they arrive and get off to a very good start. The local schools consortium, which comprises primary, secondary and a special school are all working together to try to improve standards for all children in the area. Their partnership is very innovative and is clearly focused on sharing, managing and directing expertise and resources to where they are most needed. For example, a specialist teacher has

been appointed to work with dyslexic pupils and the education welfare officer who works for the local high school and has a good understanding of the needs of the local community, is used in all the partner schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is very good and management is excellent. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- the vision and expectations of the headteacher and the senior management team are very good;
- the school has very good systems of self-evaluation;
- the monitoring of performance data and setting targets are very good;
- the overall leadership and management of subjects and special educational needs is very good;
- the deployment of support staff across the school is very good;
- financial management procedures are very good and monies from local and national initiatives are used well.

Commentary

- 30. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and communicates this to the governors, staff and parents. With such a large staff good communication and shared vision is vital. All staff with leadership roles carry these out diligently and very good management teams have been created which bring together expertise from all parts of the school. There is very good commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils.
- 31. Having gone through a long period of disruption that resulted in a drop in standards at year 6, the headteacher and senior staff have worked hard to put into place effective measures to address these issues. It is to their credit that as a result, standards over the last 18 months have been raised back to their previous high levels.
- 32. Using a wide range of data and other information, the senior management of the school conduct rigorous evaluations to identify both strengths and areas for development. There are now very good systems in place for recording, tracking and monitoring pupils' progress. From all of this information they are able to set up appropriate priorities for the school's development and link these clearly to the performance management of all staff. This information is also used well to provide very good training for staff using a wide range of provision. The monitoring of teaching and learning is regular and rigorous. There is a very good system for managing key subjects and aspects across the school. Procedures for the induction of new staff are very good.
- 33. The governing body is very knowledgeable and has been very effective in helping to shape the vision and the direction of the school. They are directly involved in the formulation and monitoring of policies. Through good quality information, links with co-ordinators, attendance at curricular meetings and regular visits, governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum provision, and the standards achieved. They challenge and support the school very well in their role as a critical friend. The governing body applies best value principles very well, always considering the school's best interests. Individual governors fulfil their roles very well and keep in close contact with the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)		
Total income 1,140,626		Balance from previous year	44,628	

Total expenditure	1,082,201
Expenditure per pupil	1,786

Balance carried forward to the	58,425
next	

34. Financial planning is very good and both the headteacher and the governing body have managed the numerous monies from local and national initiatives well. The school provides very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children in the reception year are admitted to full time education at the start of the term they become five although some children only attend in the mornings. An excellent range of curricular opportunities is provided, and the co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. The teaching is very good and ensures that children learn very well. Children's learning is regularly assessed and progress is closely monitored.

The new accommodation and outdoor play area provide a secure, bright, welcoming and stimulating environment. Good relationships have been established with parents, who are kept well informed, and so are able to provide good support for their children at home. A number of parents voluntarily help out in the classroom. Learning support assistants provide very good support in helping to meet children's needs. It is the exceptionally high quality of relationships that underpins the ethos of the foundation stage. The majority of children enter school with good skills, and most are on course to exceed the expected levels in all six areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- most children are very confident and are developing good social skills;
- children are becoming independent, show keen interest and good levels of concentration in all activities.

Commentary

35. The welcoming and secure ethos of the foundation stage is developing children's self-esteem and their confidence is growing rapidly. They are happy to speak out in whole class activities, and are equally at home in conversation with adults and children. Children listen politely to their teacher or when other children are speaking, and take turns to speak or share equipment. They happily work together, for example when using the computer, when in the role-play areas, or in the outdoor garden area. Well-established routines are followed and support children's developing independence. Good concentration and interest is shown in lessons, and they are confident in choosing activities and looking after their own personal belongings.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- the language rich environment is advancing children's speaking skills;
- an enjoyable programme linking sounds and letters is ensuring reading skills develop well;
- good progress is being made in the development of writing skills.

Commentary

36. Speaking skills develop well through the regular interaction with the many skilled adults who provide rich language experiences, as well as the opportunities to interact in role-play in the home or garden areas. Many children use well-constructed sentences during their group, or

whole class play activities. The children enjoy learning letter sounds and this is contributing to their reading skills. The use of a 'big book' for whole class reading is effective in allowing children to use their knowledge of letter sounds for word building, as well as sentence construction. Regular reading to adults, including parent helpers, is a strong feature of the reading programme, as well as regular home reading. There are frequent opportunities for children to write independently, and to carry out many activities to support their development. Writing is systematically taught, and adults model writing using the school's own style. In preparation for a visit to a local park children wrote, with adult support, lists of clothing they needed to take.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is very good.

early number skills are developing very well.

Commentary

37. Daily routines of counting the number of children present, counting the days of the week, and singing counting songs all help to reinforce children's counting and number recognition skills. Most are competent at ordering and counting numbers to 10 and many to 20 and beyond. The older reception children count to 100. They make comparisons between two numbers indicating which is 'more' or 'less'. Children recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes, and recognise them in other contexts. Reinforcement comes through games, matching sets and activities including shape cutting and printing.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

- interesting activities provide opportunities to develop skills in science, DT, and geography;
- children are developing good ICT skills.

Commentary

- 38. The school environment is used well to provide useful learning experiences for children. They observe insects in the garden and plant seeds. They use their knowledge from visits to local playgrounds, to design and make their own models using card, paper, wood and play-dough. They make biscuits, noting the changes made to the ingredients when they are mixed together and then baked.
- 39. Children have regular access to computers in the classroom and to the new computer suite. They are very confident in their use of this technology and display great dexterity in using the mouse to pick up and drag items across the screen to complete a picture. Art programs enable them to create interesting and attractive pictures using tools to draw and paint. Initial visits to the new ICT suite have enabled children to learn how to log on using the mouse and to enter a password.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- children have good physical control and co-ordination;
- good skills in finer movements enables children to use a variety of tools effectively.

Commentary

40. The outdoor area allows children opportunities to use a range of wheeled vehicles and climbing equipment with a good sense balance and control. In their regular PE lessons in the hall children demonstrate a good level of co-ordination. They make good use of space, travel in different directions and move well in time to given signals. Confidence and control are developing well. Regular activities of cutting, sticking, drawing, painting and modelling ensure that children's finer control skills are developing well. They skilfully handle pencils for writing and drawing and small tools for painting and modelling.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

creative skills are developing well.

Commentary

41. There are very good opportunities for children to develop their creative skills using a variety of different media. This is very much in evidence in displays of children's work in all three classrooms. Regular opportunities allow children to express their ideas through paint, including programs on the computer. They are developing good levels of skills in using paper to create artistic effect through folding, bending and ribbing. Printing using a variety of objects, and creating collages carefully choosing a selection of materials to good effect, extend their skill development. Role-play in the home corner and outside garden area extends children's development through creating imaginative scenes, such as organising a picnic. Children use a variety of un-tuned percussion instruments, turning and shaking rhythmically to accompany their singing.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- the quality of teaching and learning are good and often very good, leading to very good achievement;
- speaking skill are promoted effectively;
- leadership and management of the subject are very good;
- marking is not sufficiently focused on how work can be improved.

- 42. The majority of pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make very good progress. Work seen during the inspection shows that, at the end of year 2 and year 6, standards are well above average and achievement is very good.
- 43. Pupils throughout the school speak confidently and express themselves clearly. They listen attentively, both to their teachers and to each other. Skilful teaching creates many opportunities for speaking and listening and enables pupils to practise these skills in a range of lessons across many different subjects. This is supported well by the good quality of teachers' questions. Pupils respond maturely. A good example of this was seen in year 2 where pupils discussed how a

bean might feel when it was planted in the ground. Pupils in year 6 discussed maturely, events that were important in their life and how it made them feel.

- 44. Pupils read well and with fluency. They read aloud confidently and with expression. Standards in reading are slightly higher than those in writing but the school has put much emphasis on improving pupils' writing skills. Through careful analysis of data and evaluation of test results, the school has identified the areas of weaknesses in writing, particularly for the higher attainers. Since then, the strong focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and, in particular, the wider use of English skills across all subjects is showing continued improvement to standards. Pupils writing is varied and well promoted across the curriculum. For instance, in history, a study of the Tudors is used creatively to stimulate writing for different purposes and audiences. The presentation of work and handwriting is very good across the school, although for some pupils, poor pencil grip slows their work down.
- 45. Teaching and learning are good overall and often very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of English, reflected in the range of methods they use. Planning of lessons is thorough and detailed. Clear objectives are used to focus learning and assess pupils' achievement at the end of lessons. A distinctive strength of teaching is the use of 'talking partners' to enable pupils to exchange ideas and to promote speaking and listening skills. This was reflected in a year 1 lesson where pupils discussed sentences to describe models they had made before writing their own caption. Teachers use questions imaginatively to assess how well pupils have understood what is being taught.
- 46. One area where teaching is less consistent and effective is in the marking of pupils' work. While pupils know about their targets and receive good oral feedback, they are not always supported with written guidance in helping them to know how to improve their work.
- 47. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinators have a very good knowledge of the subject and evaluate standards and progress well in order to further improve the quality of provision. They have a clear overview of the subject. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Literacy across the curriculum

48. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted well across the curriculum. There is a strong emphasis in the curriculum given to linking literacy to different areas of learning and the prominence given to promoting speaking and listening skills. Class, paired or group discussions are common features of many lessons. Opportunities for pupils to collaborate are well promoted and they respond to these in a positive way.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- there is very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs;
- teaching and learning are both very good;
- subject co-ordination is very effective.

Commentary

49. Standards at the end of year 2 have been consistently high for most of the time since the previous inspection, and are well above the nationally expected level. At year 6 standards are much improved on those seen over the last three years and pupils are now attaining well above average standards in line with those seen at the last inspection. All pupils are now achieving very

- well throughout the school. This is due to the way in which the National Numeracy Strategy is being used to support the development of mental skills, the skilful teaching of number and strategies to assist pupils in tackling problem solving.
- 50. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good quality support from the learning support assistants, and benefit from the setting arrangements in years 5 and 6. The very good quality of teaching ensures that they make very good progress. Pupils are highly motivated through the high quality of relationships and consequently show a strong desire to learn.
- 51. Teaching of mathematics is carried out confidently showing very good subject knowledge. Teachers use the start of the lesson effectively with rapid-fire questions to check the accuracy and speed of pupils' mathematical thinking and calculation. The main part of lessons focus on a clear learning objective, with resources being used very effectively to reinforce and extend pupils' understanding. All lessons ensure that pupils of all abilities are well catered for through the careful match of work, and they are fully included in the lesson. Good behaviour is always evident in lessons with pupils showing a keen interest, striving to do well and making very good progress.
- 52. Subject leadership is very good; the two subject co-ordinators work well in tandem to secure high standards. The very effective tracking and assessment procedures give them a very clear view of standards across the school, and enable them to target specific areas of weakness as well as extend the more able. The setting arrangements have been particularly successful with the provision of an extra teacher to reduce the overall size of teaching groups, thus giving a boost to those pupils who most need it. Both subject co-ordinators have worked extremely successfully to raise the profile of mathematics through staff training, booster sessions, and mathematical events involving both pupils and parents.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Pupils use mathematics regularly as part of their work in other subjects; for example, in science they record and interpret data to support their work on insulation. They use line graphs to record and interpret what happens to the temperature of water when ice is added. In ICT, younger pupils read information from a pictogram to find answers to questions, and older pupils use spreadsheets to amend and combine information, using formulae to calculate.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- teaching is very good and teachers have good subject knowledge;
- good links are made with other subjects;
- pupils show enthusiasm for the subject;
- subject co-ordination is very good.

- 54. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in science are well above national expectations in years 2 and 6 and this represents good achievement. Pupils of all abilities achieve well during their time in school. Pupils achieve well because the teaching is very good. Pupils understand what they are expected to do and what they will learn. Since the last inspection standards at the end of year 2 have improved and the high standards in year 6 have been maintained.
- 55. Examples of very good teaching are seen in lessons throughout the school. Teachers who have very good subject knowledge plan a range of teaching strategies to extend pupils' understanding. Pupils enjoy finding things out for themselves and there is a strong emphasis on investigative

work. Year 2 pupils name parts of a flowering plant and explain how they support its growth. Year 4 pupils investigate and accurately match facts that they record about the sun, earth and moon. Year 6 pupils, who benefit from the expertise of a specialist science teacher, use scientific terminology accurately to explain how reversible changes such as condensation and evaporation occur. Homework effectively supports pupils' learning and there are good links with neighbouring secondary schools.

- 56. Pupils enjoy science and they are keen to discuss their learning. When working in groups they collaborate well and respect the views of others. In year 2, correct terminology is used to explain scientific processes and a pupil comments, "Science is when you try out things and see what happens." Year 6 pupils say they enjoy science because they do lots of experiments and the teaching is interesting. They know how to set up a fair test and understand that you can learn even when things go wrong!
- 57. Leadership and management in science are very good and the newly appointed co-ordinators monitor the subject well and are alert to any areas they feel need further improvement. A comprehensive science curriculum overview is in place. There is accurate information on standards and pupils' progress. Very good assessment procedures quickly spot any potential areas of underachievement and this information is used well to modify teachers' planning. The two co-ordinators use rigorous monitoring procedures to check provision and the quality of teaching and learning. They believe that science is a vibrant subject that pupils enjoy but are by no means complacent and seek further opportunities to deliver staff training.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

- the leadership of the subject is very good and the management is excellent;
- teaching is good and teachers have good personal skills;
- good use is made of ICT to support work in other subjects;
- 58. Pupils achieve well and attain standards above those expected for pupils at year 2 and year 6. Even pupils in year 1 already demonstrate skills beyond the level expected for that age. Pupils in year 3 are very confident about using a range of font styles and colours in their pamphlets to match the text and combine photographs and pictures. There are also some very good examples of using ICT for artwork where pupils create remembrance poppies in the style of Georgia O'Keefe and in year 4 where pupils make space pictures to print onto acetate sheets as a background for their shadow puppets. Good work in year 5 on spreadsheets shows pupils understanding of formulae and in year 6 pupils' multi-media presentations demonstrates their skills in combining pictures, movement and sound. The only weakness is in the limited keyboard skills of some pupils that slow down their work, particularly when word-processing.
- 59. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good understanding of the hardware and software and how it can be used to support the development of skills in many subjects. Lesson preparation is linked well to other subjects through the detailed planning. Teaching is confident and classes are well managed to make the best use of the time available. Teachers' make good use of the digital projectors for demonstrations and in plenary sessions at the end of lessons to review pupils' achievement.
- 60. The curriculum is very well planned for pupils to experience all aspects of the subject and often goes beyond the levels expected for the age groups. There is a good assessment system. Pupils' work is assessed each term and samples are discussed and standards agreed by teachers. The ICT suite is very well resourced and allows every pupil in the class to work at their own computer.

- 61. Subject leadership is very good and management, with the support of a full-time systems manager, is excellent. The two co-ordinators have very good personal knowledge and understanding and support other staff well. Teachers and pupils' needs are shared at regular meetings of a working party, which enables teachers from each year group to discuss cross-curricular links and themes for their future planning. Governor representation on the ICT working party and regular monitoring visits by assigned governors enable them to have a good understanding of the subject. The two co-ordinators and the network manager have provided good training for the staff.
- 62. The subject has made good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make better progress and standards have improved, particularly so in years 1 to 4. Shortcomings identified by the last report in aspects of the curriculum have been addressed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. This is a well developed across the school. Computers are used across a range of subjects and carefully planned into many lessons. For instance, work in a year 3 lesson linked well with a previous DT lesson where pupils made sunflowers. It also provided a good link to literacy where pupils designed a pamphlet and wrote detailed instructions on how to make the sunflowers. In year 4 there is a very good combination of science, DT and ICT in their topic on space. ICT is also well used in some aspects of the humanities, for example, in RE, where pupils take a virtual tour of a mosque or synagogue.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

- pupils benefit from very good teaching and an excellent curriculum;
- pupils enjoy the subject and have well informed opinions;
- leadership and management are effective.

- 64. Pupils achieve very well due to the very good quality teaching and learning opportunities in the detailed geography plans for year groups. Compared with the last inspection standards have risen and improvement is good.
- 65. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is well planned, learning objectives are clear, activities are well organised and teachers have good subject knowledge. Teachers and pupils share high expectations. Questioning is well used to check pupils' previous learning and to extend their thinking. In their responses pupils use geographical terminology accurately. Pupils are able to reflect on how changes in the local environment will impact on their community. Pupils are encouraged to look for similarities and differences, patterns and the impact of change, and they respond thoughtfully and with confidence. There are good examples of pupils' work around the school and teachers attach great importance to displaying work attractively.
- 66. Year 2 pupils compare differing localities and record journeys to and from school. Pupils in a year 3 class improve their speaking and listening skills while discussing how a family might combine several tasks on a single journey. Year 5 teachers very skilfully organise pupils to debate the impact of changes in local parking regulation on the local environment. Pupils produce well-constructed arguments and demonstrate very good learning in the way that they quickly understand and counter a different point of view.

67. The curriculum is excellent and enhanced by a range of local visits. Pupils enjoy their work in geography and talk about it with enthusiasm. Year 2 pupils enjoy learning about other countries. They know that weather at the equator is hot and that polar-regions are cold, and that maps provide useful information. Year 6 pupils believe geography is useful because they find out about different cultures, climates, landscapes and sources of food. They value the work on India during Arts Week and are concerned that pollution will harm the environment. Those leading the subject give very good direction to the learning of geography and have established a strong tradition in its teaching.

History

- 68. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in history because no teaching of history was observed during the inspection. However, the curriculum is well planned for all year groups with work carefully planned to meet the needs of various abilities. There is a strong focus on identifying cross-curricular links as illustrated by the emphasis placed on the teaching of reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills into the year 6 topic on the Tudors. Scrutiny of year 6 work shows that pupils have a good level of historical knowledge and understanding. The two co-ordinators, who are newly appointed to their roles, regard the development of their classroom observation skills as a priority. A good subject leaders file outlines the school policy, gives detail of an action plan and provides clear curricular guidelines. There are portfolios of work that give examples of expected levels linked to learning intentions.
- 69. The curriculum is enhanced by involvement in special events such as theme days and school trips, including the year 5 visit to York. Displays around the school show good evidence of pupils' achievements. In year 2, pictures show changes in time within the local community and in year 5 a Roman mosaic display includes good quality pupils' writing about the influence the 'Gods' had on the life of the Romans.

Religious education (RE)

Provision in RE is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- the subject promotes moral values well;
- leadership and management are good although the monitoring of teaching needs strengthening;
- there is good provision for the enrichment of the curriculum supported well by good resources.

- 70. Religious education is promoted well throughout the school and shows good improvement since the last inspection. All pupils achieve well and make good progress. Standards at year 6 are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils by the end of year 2 have learnt about how Christianity involves 'belonging' both to their own family and God's family. They have leant about the life of Jesus through miracles he did and stories he told.
- 71. By the end of year 6 pupils compare Christian beliefs and customs with those of other world religions such as the Creation Story from the bible and the Qu'ran. In a year 5 lesson pupils recognised why the Bible was important to Christians and the rules it gave them to live by. The difference between right and wrong was explored promoting moral values well. Visitors to school including the local vicar and parents from other faiths share their beliefs and festivals with the pupils.
- 72. Teaching is good overall. Good planning shows that teachers offer a range of learning activities and approaches and in discussion, pupils talk warmly of how interesting they find RE. Links with ICT are well structured. Year 5 pupils view the Lindesfarne Gospels using the British Museum

- website and year 3 used ICT for virtual tours of different places of worship when comparing them with the local church. Very good resources support the subject well. These are stored centrally and easily accessible to both staff and pupils.
- 73. The leadership and management by the subject co-ordinators are good. They provide good support for their colleagues. The action plan appropriately focuses on the monitoring of teaching.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is good.

- the quality of teaching is good;
- subject co-ordination is good;
- the curriculum is well planned to teach skills and to link with other subjects.
- 74. Standards across the school are above the levels normally expected for pupils of this age. There are particular strengths in observational drawing and painting, especially in years 5 and 6. Standards remain broadly the same as at the time of the last inspection.
- 75. Teaching is generally good with some very good. Teachers use a range of techniques, for example, to encourage close observation for their drawings of the inside of fruit they provide pupils with magnifying glasses. Where they are used, sketchbooks aid the development of pupils' skills and techniques and provide a good record of progress.
- 76. The curriculum is good and is integrated well into work in other subjects. For example, three-dimensional work in papier-mache to make Ancient Greek pots, the very detailed clay fruits in year 2 linked to work in science and geography and the shadow puppets in year 4 linked to their science topic.
- 77. The subject co-ordination is good and improved since the last inspection. Monitoring is planned to a regular cycle. There is a very good action plan and the portfolio of pupils' work is very thorough and a useful tool for tracking progress and exemplifying standards. The co-ordinators run a popular art club at which pupils produce high quality work. Pupils are also very keen on the regular arts weeks that take place throughout the year.

Design and technology (DT)

- 78. Only one lesson in DT was observed during the inspection so it was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or the quality of teaching. However, evidence from teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and pupils' previous work shows that pupils' attainment is above expectations at year 2 and year 6. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to plan and make their designs, to evaluate the finished article and think about how these could be improved. The curriculum is well planned to cover all aspects and has a suitably high status in school. Teaching the subject in blocks of time each term means that projects can be completed in a short time scale and skills reinforced.
- 79. The co-ordination of the subject is good. Planning, assessment and recording is good with work being evaluated regularly and moderated. The portfolio of retained work is a good resource for teachers in providing guidance on the levels expected.

Music

80. No lessons for music were observed during the inspection so it was not possible to make a judgement on provision.

81. A newly acquired programme for teaching, including lesson plans and pre-recorded accompaniments, provides a sound structure for music across the school. Although not seen during the inspection photographic evidence of musical productions and visiting musicians and performers suggests that music plays an important part in school life. Singing in the whole school assembly was tuneful and expressive and pupils were introduced to the 'Carnival of Animals' as part of their cross-curricular work. There are opportunities for pupils to learn musical instruments such as keyboard, flute, oboe and recorder. The school orchestra gives musical concerts and the choir sings in the community, especially at Christmas time. The school also joins with other schools in the area to produce an annual concert. There are regular opportunities for pupils and their families to go and see London West-end musicals.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **good.**

Main strengths and weakness

- the curriculum is very good;
- pupils are generally well co-ordinated and enjoy the subject;
- there is very good subject leadership.

Commentary

- 82. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and well supported by a good range of extra-curricular competitive team games and after school clubs. The school has been particularly successful in competitions with other schools in swimming, football and cross-country running. Good use is made of play times and lunchtimes for sporting and physical activity through the provision of aerobics, skipping and bat and ball games. Although the hard playground area is limited in size, it is used effectively and the adventure playground is a good resource in supporting physical development.
- 83. Insufficient lessons were seen to be able to make a firm judgement on standards at year 6. The greater majority of year 6 pupils are able to meet the required standard in swimming. In year 2 pupils also demonstrated, through a programme of outdoor adventurous activities, good levels of physical co-ordination as they travelled confidently following simple routes along the outdoor apparatus. In gymnastics, they are beginning to develop short sequences travelling over the floor in different ways and on different body parts. They work conscientiously and show some well thought out movements. Pupils in year 2 are achieving above average standards.
- 84. The subject co-ordinators have worked hard to provide a wide programme of physical activities that ensures the subject has a high profile throughout the school. They have ensured a smooth transition for pupils entering year 1 from the reception classes, provided training for lunchtime staff, and the school has recently achieved the prestigious Active Mark Gold Award for physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

85. This aspect of pupils' learning is given a very high priority throughout the school. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging healthy lifestyles by providing healthy snacks at break times and daily exercise sessions. Sex and drugs education are covered sensitively, as was shown in an assembly during the inspection when pupils in years 1 and 2 were warned of the dangers of playing with medicines. Pupils have good opportunities to become involved with the school council and jobs around the school provide excellent support for their personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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