

INSPECTION REPORT

RYARSH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ryarsh, West Malling

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118310

Headteacher: Mrs T Wright

Lead inspector: Douglas Hayward

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd September 2004

Inspection number: 267608

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	127
School address:	Birling Road Ryarsh West Malling Kent
Postcode:	ME19 5LS
Telephone number:	01732 870600
Fax number:	01732 870600
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Carmel Sutton
Date of previous inspection:	February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ryarsh Primary is a small school located in the village of Ryarsh, near West Malling in Kent. Pupils who attend come from not only the village, but the wider surrounding area. The school is very popular and is regularly oversubscribed. Almost all the pupils are white and speak English as their home language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average as is the number of pupils identified with special educational needs. In the past two years there has been significant staff change at all levels, with the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher as well as several class teachers.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21234	Douglas Hayward	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Art and design Modern foreign language (French) Special educational needs English as an additional language
9173	Sarah McDermott	Lay inspector	
26945	Sylvia Gatehouse	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Music Physical education
24137	Gail Robertson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education Citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Inspections Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Ryarsh Primary is a **very effective** and **very popular** school where pupils achieve **very high results** in national tests and have done so over a number of years. The school's costs are average and it provides **very good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Seven and eleven-year-old pupils attain results in English, mathematics and science tests that are above, and often well above, those attained by other pupils nationally.
- The headteacher leads and manages the school very well.
- Governors and parents work very hard to support the school and correctly believe it does a very good job.
- Teaching is good overall and in a third of lessons it is very good.
- Children make a very good start to school in the reception class.
- Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to their work.
- The school has a very strong ethos. It provides a caring, supportive environment where pupils thrive and mature.
- Record keeping and administrative details for pupils with special educational needs are not thorough enough.
- Monitoring of some subjects by co-ordinators is not rigorous enough.
- The range and scope of pupils' artwork are too narrow.

The school was last inspected in 1999 when it was judged to provide good value for money. It has become **much more effective**. All areas for development identified in that report have been successfully addressed, with the exception of speeding up pupils' progress in art. National standards for infants have remained very high and those for juniors have improved significantly. Classroom accommodation is much improved thanks to a recent major building project jointly funded by parents, the education authority and local benefactors.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

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.

Infant and junior pupils achieve **very well**. Many start school with social and academic skills that are above average and the school is very good at making the most of their talents to help them to attain consistently **very high standards**. Infants invariably attain results that are in the top 5 per cent nationally. Although national comparisons for the 2004 tests have not been confirmed, provisional results show that infants once again attained test results that are well above those of other pupils of the same age. The 2003 comparisons for similar schools

suggest that junior pupils did not do as well as they might in mathematics and science. A scrutiny of those pupils' books by the inspection team confirms that they did not underachieve. In fact, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science in 2003 was well above the national average. Children in the reception class make a very good start and their standards are above those expected by the time they reach Year 1. They mature quickly and become very confident, enthusiastic learners. In religious education and those foundation subjects where judgements were made, **standards are in line** with those expected, except in ICT where they are **higher** and art and design where they are **lower**. The few pupils with special educational needs attain similar standards to those of other pupils and achieve very well. They receive good support in class and when working in small groups, but the organisation of that support and reviewing their progress is not planned well enough. Boys and girls work well together and achieve similar standards in lessons throughout the school.

The school makes **very good** provision overall for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies make a **good** contribution to their spiritual awareness. Pupils value the many opportunities they have to take responsibility. Visits and visitors play an important part in developing pupils' awareness of the world around them. Pupils' attendance is **satisfactory**. Their attitudes to their work are **very good**. They enjoy their work and have high expectations. Their behaviour is **very good** in lessons and around the school. They are polite, friendly and work and play together very well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** education. Teaching is **good** and in almost a third of lessons it is **very good**. There are **very good** relationships and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers use modern technology, such as interactive whiteboards, very well to capture pupils' interest. The curriculum is **good**. Pupils' skills in literacy are used very well in other subjects and the school is beginning to use information and communication technology effectively across the curriculum. Pupils have **excellent** opportunities to become involved in sports and compete successfully against other schools. The school is a **caring** place. Pupils like it very much, they are well looked after and they feel safe and secure. There is no evidence of any bullying.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **very good** leadership and management and is very well regarded by pupils, staff and parents. The headteacher and management team have introduced effective change. School governance is **good**. Governors are very supportive and are playing an increasingly decisive part in the running of the school. Subject management is **satisfactory**. Co-ordinators have started to monitor their subjects, but in the foundation subjects this has not been in enough detail to have a significant impact on standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parental support for the school is **very good**. They are very positive about the progress that their children make and what the school has to offer, including a wide range of clubs. Parents say that they are made very welcome in school and feel they are encouraged to play a part in their children's education. Pupils like their teachers and rightly say that Ryarsh is a very friendly place.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve standards, the range of work and pupils' progress in art and design;
- improve the administration of records and targets for pupils with special educational needs;
- develop the work of co-ordinators by improving the monitoring of subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve **very well** overall. Infants consistently reach standards that are well above those of many other pupils at the age of seven in reading, writing and mathematics. Junior pupils' results have improved significantly over the last three years. In the most recent tests, their attainment overall in the core subjects was in the top 5 per cent in the country. Boys and girls throughout the school do equally well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good literacy skills, which are used effectively in other subjects.
- The school is very good at making the most of pupils' skills and expertise in different areas.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve results that are similar to those of other pupils in their year groups, but their individual education plans are not always up to date.

Commentary

1. Children in the reception class come from a range of backgrounds, but generally start school with skills and abilities that are above those expected nationally. Children achieve well and some achieve very well. By the end of the reception year, almost all children reach standards in line with the early learning goals¹ and a significant number exceed them.
2. Infant pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. The school's results in national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds show that they have traditionally achieved very high standards. Their results in reading, writing and mathematics dipped alarmingly in 2003 as a result of changes of teachers and staff illness during the year which hindered continuity and affected standards. The results of the 2004 tests show that high standards have been achieved once again.

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.4 (19.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (17.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.4 (19.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The school places great importance on teaching the basics well. It capitalises well on the skills of those pupils who already have a firm grounding in literacy when they start school. The percentage of more able pupils achieving Level 3 in reading, writing, mathematics

¹ Early learning goals – these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning; for example, in language and literacy children should be able to write their own name and begin to write simple sentences.

and science has been high for a number of years, indicating that the school 'pushes' those pupils to do well. The most recent results for 2004 show that this is, once again, the case. After less than three weeks it was too early in the school year to judge what standards pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 would achieve in nine months when they were at the end of their time in the infants and juniors. Consequently the inspectors' scrutiny of standards of work in pupils' books was carried out on the work completed in the previous academic year by those pupils, as well as assessing the progress other pupils make as they move through the school and whether they achieve as well as they should.

4. Junior pupils continue the rate of progress they make as infants and achieve very well. Their results in national tests have improved in the last few years. Although they were generally above average, the school has worked hard to improve them to consistently well above average, or very high. Two years ago the school identified that its results in mathematics were not usually as high as those in English, so it changed its class organisation and results have improved. The pupils' results for 2003, compared with other schools and based on their results when they were seven years of age, appear disappointing in mathematics and science. This is not the complete picture, however. In comparison with those in other schools in the lowest free school meal category, results at Ryarsh were very high. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 in those subjects was well above average in mathematics and above average in science. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 in both subjects was well above average. These results suggest that the school did challenge pupils of all abilities to do well. Additionally, pupils attained the average points scores in mathematics and science which are also the threshold to higher grades than those awarded.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.6 (29.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.5 (29.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.4 (30.0)	28.6 (28.3)

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

5. Pupils use their literacy skills very well in a range of subjects which has a positive impact on the quality of their work. Many pupils have very well developed skills in writing that help them to present ideas and arguments persuasively and attractively. Books written by the current Year 6 pupils during the summer holiday show how well their literacy skills can be applied. Pupils' skills in numeracy are also applied well, but not to the same extent or consistency as those in literacy. Their skills in ICT are usually applied well in tasks that require word-processing or an emphasis on presentation, but are less well applied in other subjects such as data handling in mathematics and control technology in science. In religious education and those other subjects where judgements are made, standards are as expected, although they are lower than expected in art and design because pupils do not cover a wide enough range of work.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make the same rate of progress as their peers. Results in national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds show that this is so and that they achieve very well. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional

language. They make very good progress in English, as well as being encouraged to develop skills in another language spoken occasionally or regularly at home by one parent. Boys and girls work well together and do equally well in lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attendance of the pupils is **satisfactory** and their punctuality is **good**. Pupils have **very good** attitudes to learning and their behaviour is also **very good**. The school promotes the personal development of the pupils **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils really enjoy coming to school and make the most of their learning.
- The school is very effective in teaching right from wrong, resulting in very well behaved and polite pupils.
- The school has a real sense of community where pupils look after each other very well.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to appreciate the wealth of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds within the United Kingdom.

Commentary

7. The attendance of the pupils is satisfactory and remains in line with the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is minimal because parents are very conscientious in letting the office staff know why their children are missing school. However, authorised absence is higher than normal. Despite clear messages from the headteacher to parents to avoid taking their children out of school in term time, a significant number of holidays are recorded in the registers. Parents know that routines at the beginning of the day are punctual so they make every effort to get their children to school on time. Regular attendance and good time keeping help towards the high achievement of the pupils.
8. Pupils are still very positive about school and the activities on offer. The school is an inspiring and vibrant place in which to learn. Since the last inspection the school has worked very effectively in improving the promotion of spiritual development. Assemblies are very well planned to give pupils a chance to explore their feelings and to extend their empathy for others. Pupils grow in self-esteem and are encouraged to have pride in their talents. In lessons, pupils are keen to contribute, enjoy finding out more and so achieve very well.
9. The behaviour of the pupils is very good as it was at the time of the last inspection. There have been no exclusions. The school has a very good range of systems to promote good behaviour, founded on consistently high expectations of their conduct. Pupils are very clear about the house system and look forward to the award of the weekly house points. Although a few parents were concerned about bullying, there is no evidence of any unpleasantness amongst the pupils. Pupils are very courteous, with a strong awareness of those around them. The very good discipline makes for a calm and safe school where pupils can learn very effectively.
10. The school is impressive in its promotion of pupils' social development. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility, whether as house captains, class monitors or helping in assembly. Relationships are excellent. Older and younger pupils

get on extremely well, chatting happily at lunchtime and playing well together in breaks. Older pupils will take the initiative in helping younger ones without being asked. Not only are pupils encouraged to support international and national charities, but also they willingly organise fund raising events for the school themselves. The Eco Council comprises pupils from each of the year groups. It is very effective in encouraging the pupils to look after their environment and to think of ways to make the school and local community a better and more pleasant place for all. The Eco Council has recently won a national award for its work. Every class has a weekly slot for personal, social and health education, with a chance to discuss topical issues and further their personal and social development.

11. The promotion of cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The very few families from backgrounds other than white UK heritage are fully included in a forthcoming multi cultural day. Throughout the school there is evidence of interest in other nations and cultural traditions. A productive link with Uganda has extended the pupils' knowledge of the plight of those less well off in other parts of the world. However, the pupils do not have enough first hand experience of the rich diversity of other faiths and cultures nearer to home in the United Kingdom, as noted at the last inspection. Overall the cultivation of pupils' personal development is now very good and has much improved since the last inspection.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.7	School data:	0.1
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
118		
3		
1		
7		

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education which helps pupils to achieve very well, especially in the basics. The curriculum is varied and **well planned** and all pupils are fully included in every aspect of the school's work. Opportunities for enriching the curriculum are **very good**. Assessment is **good** and helps pupils to achieve their best work. The care and support the school provides is **good**. There are **very good** links with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in the reception class and consistently good in the infants and juniors.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils.
- Teachers plan work at just the right level.
- The organisation of single age groups is very effective.
- Teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards.
- Computers are not used often enough to support learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	5	11	8			

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.

12. Teaching is better than in the last inspection. Although the overall grade for teaching then was the same as it is now, the percentage of good teaching in the current inspection is much higher than previously. Teaching which was good or better was found in 50 per cent of lessons observed, compared with 70 per cent now. Very good teaching was found then in 18 per cent of lessons, compared with 27 per cent now. Teaching was consistently very good, and occasionally excellent, in the reception class and has a significant impact on the speed with which children settle and their enthusiasm to learn. The monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the school in the past two years has become much better focused and has formed part of the professional development programme for the senior management team. This, together with new staff appointments, has helped to improve teaching. All parents who returned their questionnaires quite rightly considered that teaching is good.
13. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils have a positive impact on pupils' learning. There is a climate where teachers expect pupils to get down to work quickly and this means that little time is lost and pupils get a good deal of work done. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them because teachers make clear the learning intention of the lesson and how long they have to complete their work. Pupils concentrate well during lesson introductions so the teacher can introduce new ideas quickly and assess whether or not pupils understand. Teachers are positive towards pupils, so their comments about work or behaviour concentrate on the positive aspects rather than any negatives. This raises pupils' confidence and self-esteem, helps to get the most out of them and makes them better learners. Teachers trust pupils to work well together, so that when opportunities arise for investigative or collaborative work they can allow them important time to discuss their ideas with others. This is especially important when planning investigative work in mathematics and science.

14. Teachers plan work thoroughly. The decision to teach numeracy to single age groups, and literacy to Years 1 and 2, in single age classes is very effective. Teachers can concentrate on a narrower ability range and a smaller number of pupils. Their planning often includes the use of interactive whiteboards. During the inspection they were used very effectively in a range of subjects such as English, science and mathematics. Used well, they capture the pupils' interest, especially when pupils themselves can use the boards during lesson introductions. They make learning more exciting, for example by offering a range of possible answers which can be revealed one by one. Unfortunately, the use of computers and other forms of ICT by pupils during the inspection was limited. It is clear from a scrutiny of books that pupils are adept at word processing, but rarely use data handling or control programs. Work for pupils with special educational needs is well planned in classes and in small groups or individually where they receive regular support. However, the administration of that support is not well organised. For example, pupils' individual education plans are not easily available for teachers and other adults to check and make comments on. Targets for improvement are often too broad and the systems for assessing progress towards them does not encourage short-term reviews.
15. Teachers' marking in English and in written work in other subjects is often very good and consistent across the school. Pupils' writing is carefully analysed. Teachers' comments refer specifically to what the pupil was meant to learn. They are constructive and helpful, often referring to a particular sentence or paragraph that the teacher feels could be improved. Subsequent efforts to re-write sections show that the teachers' comments and advice have been acted upon by the pupils and that work has improved. Marking in other subjects such as mathematics or science is less detailed and is often limited to a single word or phrase.
16. Several parents indicated in their questionnaires that they thought homework was too much of a burden. At the pre-inspection meeting, all parents said that they knew when homework was set and when it should be returned, but sometimes this did not happen. The pupils themselves are quite clear about homework expectations and, in the view of the team, homework was not excessive and supported the work pupils were doing in school. A specific homework task for the current Year 6 pupils was to be carried out during the holiday. Parents were fully involved by the school and the care with which pupils completed their tasks indicates a real pride in their work.
17. The quality of assessment is good. Teachers have access to a wide variety of good quality assessment systems. Marking of pupils' work is mainly thorough, positive and is designed to help pupils recognise the quality of their work and effort, giving ideas to improve. Pupils have begun to evaluate their own efforts, reflecting on how difficult or easy they found the tasks. Pupils' achievements are noted and tracked so teachers have access to a wide variety of assessment information. This helps teachers to identify the right level of work in lessons and recognise specific patterns of learning. The assessment information also ensures accuracy in setting targets for pupils to achieve in future.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum. Pupils have **excellent** opportunities to be involved in sports. The way in which the curriculum is enriched is **very good**. The planned programme for personal, health and sex education is **very good**. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The activities that pupils are involved with are interesting and promote good quality learning for all.
- Pupils compete successfully in sport against other schools.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in classes and achieve well.
- There are good links made between subjects, ensuring learning is a coherent experience.
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music and mathematics. These are popular and well attended.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of personal, health and sex education.

Commentary

18. The school has improved its curriculum provision since the last inspection. It provides a curriculum that meets all statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education and personal, health and sex education. French is also taught throughout the school and has become a favourite subject of many pupils. The sporting activities are excellent. Pupils are enthusiastic team players of rugby, rounders, netball, football, cricket, swimming and athletics. The school teams have successfully competed in many tournaments.
19. Pupils have a rich curricular experience that is broad and well matched to their needs. It is well planned and staff make pupils' learning interesting and full of fun. The curriculum is heavily biased towards English and mathematics. These subjects are taught in the mornings because of staff and accommodation constraints, whilst the rest of the curriculum is delivered in the afternoon. The school ensures that pupils' literacy skills are well used in the other subjects. The pupils' expertise in information and communication technology is slowly being developed across the curriculum. Numeracy skills across the curriculum are not used as widely as those in literacy. The school is sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and teachers are committed to ensuring all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are involved in all that the school offers.
20. The school's emphasis on promoting personal, health and sex education and its teaching about the importance of living and working together successfully reflect its values. Visitors to the school help pupils to develop greater awareness of the world in which they live. Health-related issues also form a regular part of the curriculum and of the pupils' work in science. Pupils have regular, planned opportunities to develop greater self-awareness and confidence by talking over a wide range of general issues, including those they face in everyday life. These arrangements successfully encourage pupils' positive attitudes and very good behaviour.
21. A very good range of visits and visitors successfully promotes pupils' interest, learning and enthusiasm for school. Visits include a residential journey for pupils in Years 5 and 6 which makes a valuable contribution to their personal education, as well as extending learning in subjects such as geography, history, physical education and religious education. A very good range of after-school clubs further enhances the curriculum. These are invariably oversubscribed because pupils enjoy the activities offered. Parents agree that the school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
22. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. Since the previous inspection three bright, spacious new classrooms have been built to accommodate the reception and infant children. The hall is of adequate size, but cluttered with physical education equipment and

other furniture, none of which was used during the inspection. The staff room is very cramped and offers extremely limited space for work or relaxation. The library space is in the corridor and, although accessible for the pupils, does not provide an area where pupils can sit or discuss with others. The school is clean and well maintained internally. Its appearance is important in helping to promote pupils' creative, aesthetic and spiritual awareness as well as their pride. Staffing levels are good and resources in all subjects are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are **good**. Pupils are provided with **good** levels of support and guidance. Pupils play a **very important** part in running their school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pastoral needs of each individual pupil are very well met.
- Pupils are very well involved in the community life of the school.
- New pupils are settled in very effectively to their new school life.

Commentary

23. Pupils are safe and secure whilst at Ryarsh School. Health and safety systems are well established and ensure pupils are free from danger. Child protection guidelines are carefully followed. All staff are regularly updated and know what to do in the event of suspicion of child abuse. First aid is effective. Currently there is only one member of staff with a full first aid certificate. The headteacher is aware the school needs a further qualified first aider in the case of absence. Also, the recording of accidents is not sufficiently secure in a loose leaf file. Staff are vigilant in ensuring all pupils are carefully supervised and pay careful attention when all the school is out playing on the large recreation field. The practical care of the pupils is good and has improved since the last inspection.
24. The support and guidance provided to pupils are good. In particular the pastoral care of pupils is very strong. The small size of the school means adults know the needs of the pupils very well. A few parents were worried that their children are not brave enough to confide in adults in the school if they are anxious or upset. However, all pupils spoken to say that they have no qualms about approaching staff or finding a supportive friend when in need. Staff are quick to notice if any pupil is not as happy and settled as he or she should be. The school moves effectively to find the right support and work with the family, so the pupil is soon back on track and enjoying learning. There are well-managed assessment procedures to track pupils' progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics, but not as detailed in other subjects.
25. Pupils play a very valuable role in the life of the school. A wide range of responsibilities means that they grow in maturity and know that they are helping their community. The Eco Council gives pupils a very good chance to develop their roles as good citizens. The school values the councillors' views and gives them scope to develop their own ideas for the good of the school. Although the formal survey of children's views is not routine, pupils regularly have a chance to have their say in lessons and have recently been asked by their Eco councillors for their opinions about new play equipment. Pupils take personal responsibility for their learning via their literacy and numeracy targets and regularly assess their own progress.

26. New pupils settle into school life very effectively. In the summer term before they start, parents and children have the chance to become familiar with the staff and routines. The new reception children benefit from morning-only attendance at first to prevent them becoming too tired and losing their interest in school. Soon these younger pupils are happy to leave their parents at the main door and make their way to their class under the careful eye of the helpful junior pupils. Pupils who arrive higher up the school are also introduced to Ryarsh very effectively and settle to the new learning routines well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very strong rapport between parents and school ensures pupils achieve very well.
- Strong links with the local community help to extend the pupils' learning and personal development.
- The school works very well with other schools to provide sporting competition for the pupils and professional development for the staff.
- Reports do not give parents sufficient information on how their children have progressed in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Commentary

27. Parents are keen to see their children achieve well. Apart from a few who take family holidays in term time, they continue to work very closely and effectively with the school to support their children's learning. The school provides the parents with good levels of information to keep them up to date on school events and learning techniques. Regular newsletters give a very good flavour of the school. The parent-teacher consultations at the beginning of the academic year are very useful in setting expectations, explaining routines and informing parents about the curriculum. Parents support their children's homework very well because they are clear about the timetable and can track progress via the returned work. The welcome involvement of parents in the recent curriculum weeks on the themes of mathematics and science has led to a greater understanding of the learning methods employed. Annual reports give a good overview of personal development and achievement in English and mathematics, but lack some detail about progress in the other subjects of the curriculum. The fund raising success of the parents is impressive. Parents have significantly improved learning resources by contributing to the financing of the new playground and new classrooms. The close interest that parents have in the school means a lot to their children and contributes significantly to high achievement.
28. The school has very good liaison with the local community, which has improved further since the last inspection. The curriculum and learning are enhanced for the pupils with visits from local people to talk about history or to demonstrate art and craft. Although not a foundation school, there is a strong link with the local church. The vicar comes in each week to lead assembly and contribute to the pupils' personal development. Compassion for the less fortunate is encouraged when harvest produce is collected for the homeless in Maidstone. The school plays an important part in village life and takes part enthusiastically in local events such as the produce show. The strong relationship with the

local community sets a very good example for the pupils as they grow up to become citizens themselves.

29. The school is keen to interact with other schools. It makes the most of links with other primary schools to promote competitive sport. Pupils have the chance to take part in netball, cricket and football tournaments to extend their physical education and sense of fair play. The school is an active participant in the local schools group and benefits from collective professional development and the sharing of expertise. Even though pupils transfer to a wide range of selective and non-selective secondary schools, Ryarsh maintains a very good, professional dialogue with them all to ensure the Year 6 pupils move on confidently to the next stage of education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher are **very good**.

The governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a very clear sense of direction for the school's development.
- Governors make a positive contribution towards the school's effectiveness.
- The senior management team works closely with the headteacher and shares her vision for improvement.
- Procedures for managing special educational needs are not consistently well managed.
- Subject co-ordinators do not consistently monitor work in the foundation subjects.

Commentary

30. The headteacher generates a sense of eager enthusiasm that pervades the entire school, inspiring and motivating staff. Her expectations are very high and she sets a very good role model through her own regular teaching. She engages all staff and governors in constructing and reviewing the school's improvement plan so everyone has a clear understanding of what needs doing, when and by whom. The school's finances effectively support its plans for premises and curriculum development and there are prudent measures accounting for its reasonable carry-forward.
31. The headteacher, staff and governors share a determination to ensure that the school successfully maintains its high academic record. They conscientiously evaluate its performance and unhesitatingly take any necessary action to sustain standards. At the same time, they consider changes that enrich the curriculum such as creative approaches embodied in the primary strategy 'Excellence and Enjoyment'. Through thorough planning, the deputy headteacher has successfully led its implementation in the infants. She is monitoring its success before introducing its principles to the rest of the school.
32. Being a small staff, subject leaders carry heavy responsibilities in curriculum development. Staff change has prevented the successful implementation of some planned initiatives. Co-ordinators have written detailed policy documents and have successfully evaluated work and teaching standards in the core subjects. This has had a major impact on maintaining high standards. Their monitoring of foundation subjects is less well developed and the school is considering different approaches to subject

leadership to make more efficient use of time and expertise. The paperwork and procedures that document the school's management of special educational needs are not meticulous enough, despite the often good practice in classrooms and groups.

33. The governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are conscientious and eager to fulfil their roles as effectively as possible in the best interests of the school. Financial management is astute. There is an efficient partnership between the chair of finance and the school's finance officer ensuring that expenditure is scrutinised and the principles of best value are applied wherever possible. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The governing body has great potential because of the high quality of its support, its determination to be as involved as possible in the life of the school and its increasing confidence in seeking clarification as critical friend.
34. New staff are welcomed warmly to the school and quickly made to feel valued members of the team. The deputy headteacher and their designated mentor support them very effectively. The contribution to pupils' learning made by support staff is good, for instance in dance, science and physical education lessons. Parents are welcomed in to classes and fully briefed about their tasks.
35. The main aids to further improvement are the very good leadership and management of the headteacher, the high quality of support from the senior management team and governors, and the strong spirit of working together towards agreed goals that pervades the school. The school helps infant and junior pupils to achieve very high standards in national tests. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good and the school provides a good quality of education. There are very good links with parents and the headteacher provides very good leadership and management. The cost of educating each pupil is very slightly below the national average. The school provides very good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	387,872	Balance from previous year	9,525
Total expenditure	380,434	Balance carried forward to the next	16,963
Expenditure per pupil	2,587		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

Commentary

36. At the time of the inspection, children were just embarking on full-time attendance. Their attainment on entry is above average. There are very good admission arrangements, including meetings to explain the curriculum and how parents can help. Parents appreciate these meetings and say the school is very approachable. There is a very good buddy system linking Year 6 pupils with reception children to help them settle in. The quality of teaching is consistently very high and at times excellent. Teaching is lively and lessons are stimulating because of the teacher's enthusiasm. She has high expectations, very secure knowledge of the needs of this age group and very good organisational skills. She works closely with her support staff. Very good assessment procedures are used well. Children enjoy school, settle quickly into daily routines and their behaviour is very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher and her support staff promote a positive climate for working and playing.
- Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- The teacher takes every opportunity to encourage children to do their very best.

Commentary

37. The reception class has a delightful air of happy but purposeful activity. Children move sensibly from one activity to another, confidently recording their choices using an ingenious system of sticky name labels. They exercise their independence conscientiously, taking into account the class rules and the needs of other children. Children work alongside each other in groups or pairs, collaborating without fuss and helping each other voluntarily. They eagerly confirm what is good behaviour and what is not, and readily conform to the few class rules because they understand why they have them. For example, they know that they cannot talk to an adult when she is wearing a crown because 'she is writing assessments on what we're doing, so we go to someone else'. The quality of teaching is very good so children are eager to learn and sustain concentration in their activities. Children make very good progress and their achievement is very good. The majority have already reached the expected level of the early learning goals.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching, planning and assessment is consistently very good and often excellent.
- All support staff make a very good contribution to children's learning.
- Children get off to an extremely fast start in reading and writing.
- Opportunities for informal conversation are sometimes missed because of a lack of resources.

Commentary

38. Frequent opportunities for children to rehearse their speaking and listening skills occur throughout the day. They observe the conventions of conversation, taking turns and listening to each other in large groups and also in informal role play. They converse articulately and have a rich vocabulary, for instance in describing their sand ravine as 'crocodile-infested'. However, opportunities for informal conversation between children are limited by the lack of large wheeled toys and fixed apparatus outdoors. The teacher and her assistants conscientiously promote conversations through skilful questioning, taking care to include children with special needs. Children are encouraged to write their names and letter shapes correctly and have acquired the habit of taking books home daily to share with parents. Children enjoy stories very much because the teacher and her assistant make them very exciting. They are totally absorbed, listen hard and concentrate intensely. The majority achieve very well, making excellent progress due to excellent teaching. They are well on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is consistently very good and, at times, excellent.
- Children make rapid progress because their activities are fast paced and enjoyable.
- The teacher provides a supportive atmosphere for learning to take place.
- Very good links with other areas of learning make mathematics meaningful.

Commentary

39. Children enjoy mathematics because the teacher makes lessons fun and manages time very efficiently. She provides a good range of varied activities in quick succession so children are fully engaged and thoroughly motivated. She makes excellent use of a puppet to engage children's interest. They are completely riveted and join eagerly in counting games. The teacher puts her organisational skills to very good use and sets groups to work at different practical tasks. The more able children sort by colour, then by shape, and finally distinguish plastic bricks from wooden ones. They work with concentration and their behaviour is impeccable because they are sufficiently challenged and know exactly what is expected of them. Children make very good progress and achieve well because the quality of teaching is excellent and support is very good. The majority of children are well on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good and sometimes excellent teaching provides many opportunities for children to learn about the world around them.
- Very good use is made of local places of interest to broaden children's experiences.
- Children choose to work on computers freely and frequently.

Commentary

40. The quality of teaching is very high so children make excellent progress and achieve very well. Many opportunities are planned to enrich children's experience of the wider world, such as visits to a local farm during the year. They study the five senses and choose activities to investigate their sense of touch, sight and smell for themselves, making very good use of magnifying glasses. They develop a clear understanding of taste through first-hand investigations that are extremely well organised. Very good links with speaking and listening provide opportunities for children to express their views. The teacher and her assistant make very good links with mathematics because they record the children's findings as charts. Children enjoy using computers and do so with increasing skill and accuracy, printing out their work for themselves. The majority are well on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many planned opportunities for children to develop their dexterity.
- Children enjoy physical education and their behaviour is impeccable.
- There are few large wheeled toys for children to use outdoors.
- There is no fixed climbing apparatus for children to use.

Commentary

41. Children enjoy many activities that enable them to practise their handling skills, for instance cutting and sticking, painting and printing. They use computer keyboards and the mouse with accuracy, clicking and dragging confidently, and they manage their own shoe and coat fastenings competently. Children pour water and sand from one container to another with increasing accuracy and use scissors and pencils carefully and with precision. In the hall they have very good opportunities to develop their skills using small apparatus, gaining experience in managing themselves and their equipment with regard for others' safety. The quality of this teaching is very high, with high expectations and excellent organisation and pace. The teaching assistant makes a very good contribution to the lesson, modelling warm-up activities and encouraging children to work hard. Opportunities to enhance children's physical and social development even further are being missed because of a lack of equipment. However, because the school compensates as best it can for this by using the hall and school field, children make very good progress and achieve well. The majority are well on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

42. During the inspection it was not possible to observe the teaching and learning in this area, but the displays of children's work indicate that standards are as expected. Regular opportunities for singing and listening, art activities and role-play are timetabled. There are good links with speaking and listening and with information and communication technology.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH and FRENCH

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of writing is very good. The school is very successful in helping its pupils to become enthusiastic, energetic and imaginative writers.
- The teaching of reading is very good. Pupils quickly develop confidence as readers and enjoy a rich diet of books at school.
- The school has a very clear picture of what must be done to sustain recent successes in English and works with commitment as a team.
- Very limited accommodation makes it difficult to present books in attractive and appealing areas.
- Subject leadership and management are good.

Commentary

43. Infant and junior pupils achieve very well. There is a strong tradition of very high standards at Ryarsh and pupils attain standards in English that are in the top 5 per cent nationally. Pupils have well developed speaking and listening, reading and writing skills when they start school. Their skills are consistently improved and extended as they move through school so that they are constantly achieving their best work. Boys and girls, and the very few pupils with English as an additional language, do very well. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve very well. Infant and junior pupils identified with special educational needs invariably attain the nationally expected levels in English.
44. Teaching during the inspection was good overall, with some very good lessons. Teachers' own interest in literacy is clear and this rubs off on the pupils themselves. There were several occasions during lessons when the teaching promoted a clear sense of 'awe and wonder' amongst pupils. Pupils of all ages enjoy writing and see themselves as successful authors. Because the teachers understand how children learn to write, standards in writing are very high at the end of both key stages, with pupils capable of extended pieces of considerable maturity. The school's focus on promoting the enjoyment of books and reading, together with high quality teaching, has also helped to maintain very high standards in reading at the end of both key stages. Although they retrieve non-fiction books easily for research, the inaccessibility of the library makes it almost impossible to spend a relaxing time there, making choices and developing a love of reading. The limited space available in classrooms for fiction collections prevents the construction of library corners where pupils can sit and make choices about what to read next for enjoyment or to support their learning across different subjects.
45. Teachers do very well to develop pupils' interest in literacy, extend their skills and maintain such high standards. The school's decision to teach Years 1 and 2 separately for literacy each morning is effective in helping teachers to focus specifically on the needs of a single age group.

46. High standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The subject is well managed and led by its co-ordinator who has identified the need to develop drama across the school. Under her leadership, teachers work very well as a team to improve pupils' chances in English which gives rise to high levels of consistency in both teaching and learning.
47. Only one French lesson was observed. Teaching was very good. The lively presentation ensured that pupils enjoyed it very much and helped them to become confident in speaking basic French. Pupils enjoy these weekly lessons that concentrate on developing their ability to converse in short sentences and to respond to questions. The impact of their lessons is apparent in the way that most have remembered a great deal from lessons before the long summer holiday.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The contribution of language and literacy across the curriculum is a particularly successful feature of the school. Pupils listen attentively in assemblies and lessons and speak confidently to others. By the time they leave the school pupils know how to write in many different forms. Pupils use their reading skills very well, for example accessing the Internet to research class and individual topics. They are very familiar with the idea of extracting quickly only the information they need from pages of text.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain very high standards.
- Teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school.
- Teachers use the interactive whiteboards very well to enhance the teaching and learning of mathematics.
- Pupils really enjoy their mathematics lessons.
- Pupils do not use ICT enough.

Commentary

49. Infant and junior pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well. They attain standards in national tests that are invariably well above national expectations. Infant pupils' results in mathematics dipped sharply in the 2003 tests because of staff absence and changes. The most recent tests results for 2004 show that once again high standards have been attained. Junior pupils' results have steadily improved. In 2003, the percentage of more able pupils attaining Level 5 was well above average.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with a significant number of very good lessons. High quality teaching is one of the main reasons why pupils achieve so well, because they are given well-planned activities that are matched to their abilities. Teachers' expectations are high. A demanding task in a lesson introduction required Year 6 pupils to carry out rapid calculations. Pupils rose to the challenge, accurately working out the answers. The school's decision to teach mathematics each morning in single age year groups rather than in class groups has had a positive impact on

standards attained. Teachers' planning is detailed. They question pupils well and involve them actively in all parts of the lesson. Teachers have become increasingly competent in the use of the interactive white board and it is used well to interest and motivate the pupils and to enhance teaching and learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and know their pupils well, setting targets that are appropriate and relevant. There are good opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems and to interpret data, which ensure standards in these aspects are really good.

51. Leadership and management are both very good and have had a clear impact on standards, which have remained high since the previous inspection. Members of the senior management team carefully analyse information from tests and assessments, identifying where some pupils do not do so well. The subject co-ordinator monitors the teaching and learning and provides regular feedback, which motivates staff to discuss issues that need to be addressed so that improvements are made to the curriculum and teaching.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory use of their mathematical skills in science. For example, they read graphs, measure with thermometers, with rulers for growth of plants and record numerical data found in their experiments. Timelines were observed in historical displays. However, the very good skills the older pupils have are not fully exploited throughout the curriculum and only occasional use of information and communication technology was actually observed during the inspection, although software is available.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's high performance in science has been maintained.
- Children are enthusiastic about science and their attitudes are very good.
- Pupils make good progress because teaching is good with high expectations.
- There are consistently good links between literacy and science.
- Too little use is made of ICT to support and enrich the subject.
- Older pupils use too many worksheets.

Commentary

53. Standards in science are well above average for infants and juniors. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Additionally, the percentage of infants attaining the higher Level 3 has steadily increased since 1999. No differences are apparent between the performance of boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils because of the good support they receive in lessons.
54. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good. Good teaching makes objectives absolutely plain and sets a fast pace to reach them. Teachers generate a strong sense of purpose and confidently communicate their own enthusiasm and knowledge, with good organisation and deployment of supporting adults. Lessons are interesting so pupils enjoy their work and are eager to learn through investigations and first-hand activities. Some tasks for the more able pupils in Year 6 lacked sufficient challenge to ensure that they were 'pushed' to present information scientifically. Too much work generally for older pupils is recorded by means of worksheets that are not sufficiently scientifically demanding for pupils of this age. Where set, homework activities enrich pupils' classwork, requiring them to make good use of their reading and writing skills.
55. Good links with literacy in lessons and in pupils' work are consistently secure throughout the school. They write labels and descriptions clearly and use specific vocabulary accurately. Teachers provide many opportunities for speaking and listening and much work in science is achieved through discussions and practical activities. A good example of this is in Year 2 when pupils work at a wide range of investigations about their senses, recording their work on large charts to share in a whole class discussion later. Throughout the school, however, there are fewer links between ICT and science evident in lessons or pupils' work, although older pupils make good use of the interactive whiteboard in sharing their initial ideas about the constituents of a healthy diet.
56. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The leadership and management of the subject have been fragmented because of staff changes, but are currently satisfactory, although little monitoring of planning, teaching and learning has been achieved recently. However, a recent science week to promote the profile of the subject and inform parents and others about the work that pupils do was very successful.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

57. During the inspection little use was seen of ICT outside the direct teaching sessions, so it is not possible to make a firm overall judgement about the school's provision. There are strong indications, however, from discussions with pupils, looking at samples of work and gauging their response to the use of ICT by teachers during lessons, that standards in ICT for seven and eleven-year-olds are above expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection.
58. Most of the pupils at Ryarsh have access to a family computer at home, some have their own personal computer and many use computers on a regular basis for purposes other than playing games. They are adept at processes such as independently loading, retrieving information and printing it. Pupils use the Internet to find information to use on their school projects. Young juniors are learning how to e-mail children in another country.
59. Older pupils are very good at using word processors effectively and independently to present their writing in different styles. Although there is evidence of pupils using data handling and control programs, they are not used with the same frequency or impact as word processing. The purchase of new and reliable hardware has made pupils' access to computers much easier and the school is aware that it needs to develop their use across the curriculum.
60. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. Although pupils' standards are high, this is in part to do with their experience at home as much as their work in school. The patchy use of ICT across the curriculum is an indication that the monitoring of teachers' planning is not as thorough as it should be.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. The pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory overall, although in word processing it is good. Teachers' use of interactive whiteboards, seen to support four different subjects during the inspection, is very effective. ICT is used particularly well in writing, with pupils deciding themselves how different styles of presentation can enhance their work. It is also used well for researching various topics. In the case of older pupils this leads to detailed discussions about how best to scan the information and how to discard any that is not relevant. In mathematics and science there is less evidence of the use of different programs and confirms that it is not yet a regular and consistent feature of teachers' planning.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There is now a scheme of work firmly based on the current locally agreed syllabus.
- Resources are good.
- The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise the profile of the subject.
- There is too little emphasis on religions other than Christianity.

Commentary

62. Standards for infant and junior pupils are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils of all abilities are now secure in their knowledge and understanding. Their satisfactory achievement is a consequence of their positive approach to learning and interest in what they do, which is a product of the enthusiastic teaching and sound curriculum.
63. The school makes good use of the local church as a resource for festivals. Year 3 pupils recall the main features, such as 'the beautiful stained glass windows telling stories about Jesus'. The local vicar is a regular visitor to the school. Pupils recall other places of worship from different religions such as Sikhism, but have not had the rich experience of listening to a Sikh talking about his or her beliefs. There are many well-resourced, good quality displays of books and pictures in classrooms that ensure learning is interactive.
64. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject and raise its profile within the school and there has been good improvement in the provision since the last inspection. The provision is monitored through discussion and the co-ordinator ensures that there are good resources to teach the subject. The subject contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. So do assemblies, which are of a very good quality and are very spiritual occasions. They provide pupils with very good opportunities to think about important issues and time to reflect and respond to the well planned assembly theme.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from an enriched curriculum.
- Pupils have a real interest in the past and are keen to learn.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to use independent research in the topics taught.
- Subject monitoring is a weakness.

Commentary

65. Standards for infants and juniors are in line with expectations. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily and they use their skills and general knowledge well to think about and explore people and activities of the past.
66. Teaching is good. The school plans a good range of visits that strongly contributes to what pupils learn. A visit to the Bethnal Green Toy Museum for infant pupils helped them to understand the differences between then and now. Pupils learn about the changes in materials from which toys are made and how differently children of yesterday played. Other pupils learn well when teachers act out the lives of historical characters such as a Victorian schoolteacher. Pupils are given good opportunities to apply their English skills, for example by writing a diary of an evacuee in the last war or completing empathetic writing about a specific period. History topics are thoroughly researched by the pupils. They are confident users of books, encyclopaedias and the Internet. They take great care in the presentation of their work.

67. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator is new to the post, but monitoring and evaluating the subject are at a very early stage. Resources in school are satisfactory, but supplemented well by the stimulation provided by visitors to school and visits to places of interest.

Geography

68. Work was sampled in geography, with only one lesson seen. Therefore it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision. There is every indication from discussions with pupils about the work that they have studied and a scrutiny of their books that standards are broadly average and maintained since the last inspection. Year 6 pupils talked enthusiastically and knowledgeably about rivers. They could name the main rivers of Britain and Europe. Pupils in Year 6 have also completed very good quality books during the holiday about countries of their choice. Many have written fascinating, detailed and very informative books, some of which provide information about places they visited themselves during the holiday.
69. The subject co-ordinator has been given responsibility for developing the subject but monitoring pupils' work and teaching is at an early stage and has yet to have an impact on the quality of provision.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of pupils' work is very limited.
- There is very little artwork on display around the school that promotes 'awe and wonder'.
- Teaching during the inspection was good.
- The subject is not well co-ordinated.

Commentary

70. Progress for juniors in art was identified as a weakness during the last inspection and this now applies to both infants and juniors. Although only two lessons were observed, the judgement is made additionally on the basis of discussions with pupils and teachers, a scrutiny of displays and pupils' sketchbooks. Standards are below expectations and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, do not cover a wide enough range of work to develop their skills in a range of media. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
71. Although classrooms are bright and welcoming, much of the display takes the form of teachers' work or pupils' illustrations that accompany, for example, written work. There is little evidence from the current or previous school year that pupils use a wide range of media. Their sketchbooks do not show a development of ideas. Pupils have few chances to work in three dimensions and have little knowledge of artists and their different styles.
72. Teaching in both lessons was good. Pupils were enthusiastic to learn about the different styles of contrasting artists and paid great attention to detail. Pupils were given opportunities to make their own decisions about choices of materials and media, although older pupils' basic sketching skills were not well developed.
73. Subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory. After the previous inspection there was a clear and successful focus on improving artwork in school. Two years ago an 'art week' with visiting artists provided a real boost to the profile of the subject around school and showed what high standards pupils were capable of. Since then interest and expertise in the subject have tailed off with a consequent fall in standards. Teachers themselves identify art and design as an area for development.

Music

74. No lessons were observed during the inspection in music, so no judgement on provision has been made. The whole school was heard singing tunefully and enthusiastically in assemblies. Visitors led assemblies using recorded accompaniments. Concerts and performances contribute well during the school year to pupils' overall musical experiences, as do visits from musicians from the Kent County Music service. Pupils reported that there used to be a recorder club and in discussion recalled the names of some famous composers. Opportunities are missed to develop their knowledge and understanding of music of other times and cultures when music is played at the beginning

and end of assemblies because no explanation is given of the pieces that are chosen. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

Physical education

75. Only one lesson in physical education was observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make secure judgements about provision. It is clear that the school works hard to overcome the limitations of its hall. From looking at planning and discussions with staff and pupils it is evident that all strands are taught during the school year. Standards in swimming are good and there are very good opportunities for pupils to enrich their experience through a wide selection of extra-curricular activities, ranging from dance to canoeing. The school has a very successful profile in local competitive sports tournaments. Very good links between physical education, literacy and ICT are evident in albums describing matches with other schools. Physical education makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal and social education and to their awareness of current affairs in the wider world when following the performance of England's football team in international competitions. Facilities for outdoor games are very good. Resources for gymnastics are satisfactory. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, although continuity has been difficult to maintain as a result of changes in staffing.

Design and technology

76. No lessons were planned during the inspection, so it is not possible to make secure judgements about the school's provision. A scrutiny of examples of pupils' completed articles and their planning and evaluations indicates that infants and juniors are attaining standards in line with expectations. They are achieving satisfactorily by gaining experience of a range of materials and techniques and developing the expected subject skills through designing and making a variety of products.
77. Design drawings for younger pupils' models of toys are detailed, indicating a good range of materials and suggesting realistic methods of joining them. Their evaluations are frank and some offer ideas about how they would improve their work next time. Older pupils' designs for purses show how well pupils' literacy skills are used in different forms of presenting their work. For instance, while some pupils have written lists of materials they require, others have chosen a bullet point list. Digital photographs of their finished items show a very close resemblance to their design drawings, although they have not evaluated their work.
78. Subject management and leadership are satisfactory. The co-ordinator keeps examples of work to demonstrate good practice and progression. She is aware that the evaluation process needs to be more carefully planned.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.
- The school is very good at raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupils have many very good opportunities to take on responsibility.

Commentary

79. The school places considerable emphasis on pupils' personal development. It is extremely good at making the most of pupils' well-developed social and personal skills when they start school and developing those even further. Throughout the school there are frequent opportunities for pupils to develop in confidence, to be motivated in their learning and to succeed in all they do. During the school day there are countless opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, which they do with great eagerness.
80. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and the consequences are that the pupils respect each other and they play and work together in harmony. There is a good programme for drugs and sex education firmly in place. The school has embarked on the Healthy Schools initiative. The school's Eco Council is working well. It grew from pupils' desire to see a litter-free school and a wish to become more involved in environmental care.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
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	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2

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	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).