

INSPECTION REPORT

ST HELEN'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cliffe, Rochester

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118641

Headteacher: Mrs R A Rouse

Lead inspector: Dr T Simpson

Dates of inspection: 11th to 13th July 2005

Inspection number: 267790

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 181

School address: Church Street
Cliffe
Rochester
Kent
Postcode: ME3 7PU

Telephone number: 01634 220246
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs Anne Robinson
governors:

Date of previous June 2003
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Helen's is a smaller than average sized Church of England primary school serving the village of Cliffe near Rochester. The socio-economic status of the pupils is mixed. It is slightly below average overall but the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is also below average. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is below average overall. The number of pupils who enter and leave the school other than at the normal time is above average. There are very few pupils on roll from ethnic minority groups or for whom English is an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs - including those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs - is average. The needs of the pupils concerned are varied. There are about the same number of boys and girls on roll. The school was awarded Investors in People status in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10428	Dr Tom Simpson	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, music, physical education, history, geography, English as an additional language.
1311	Dr Barry Wood	Lay inspector	
16038	Mrs Jill Bavin	Team inspector	Mathematics, religious education, the Foundation Stage, special educational needs.
31838	Mr Martyn Williams	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, design and technology.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of this school is satisfactory and pupils achieve soundly. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The school is well led by the headteacher and other senior staff and management is satisfactory. It provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils are happy and very well cared for and relationships at all levels are very good.
- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Although satisfactory overall, the quality of teaching is too inconsistent – particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and this gives the children a good start to their schooling.
- Achievement in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is not good enough.
- Standards in investigative science in Years 3 to 6 are not good enough.
- The headteacher has a high level of clarity of vision, sense of purpose and aspiration for the school.
- There is good provision for extra-curricular activities.

The school's improvement since the last inspection – when it was taken out of special measures – has been good. Most of the key issues raised in the report have been addressed well. Standards are higher overall and there have been improvements in teaching – although these have not yet been sufficient. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is much better. Curriculum provision is now significantly better. The school is now more effective at monitoring and evaluating its performance. There have been no areas of significant decline.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	D	C	C
mathematics	E	E	C	C
Science	E	E	C	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.*

Overall achievement is satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, and is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Most children in the Foundation Stage will reach the goals they are expected to reach in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding. It was not possible to judge standards in physical development and creative

development. Current standards are average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2. In Year 6, they are average in English – partly as a result of extra literacy support for pupils with special educational needs. They are below average in science and well below average in mathematics. Standards in investigative science in Years 3 to 6 are not as strong as those in the more knowledge based elements of the subject. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average throughout the school, while standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. They relate very well to one another and to the adults in the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They behave well and have positive attitudes towards their work and the school. Attendance is satisfactory and most pupils are punctual.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. They are good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. There are examples of good and very good teaching at all stages of education in the school. However, despite monitoring and support from the headteacher and other senior staff, some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching still remain. This is particularly the case in Years 3 to 6. Strengths within the teaching include the positive and effective way in which pupils are managed and encouraged. This means that relationships are very good at all levels and lessons proceed in an orderly fashion without interruption. Lesson content is often challenging and stimulating, but tasks set for older pupils are not always matched closely enough to their ability. The contribution of teaching assistants to lessons is too inconsistent. There are good systems in place for assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics. These are used well in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, but assessment is weaker elsewhere. Day to day marking is inconsistent. It often includes constructive comments but sometimes does not give pupils enough information on what to do next. Also, pupils are not involved enough in setting their own targets for improvement.

A satisfactory breadth of curricular opportunities is provided and there is a sound range of enrichment activities. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good. The pupils are very well cared for and their views are well sought and valued. Partnerships with the parents, the community and other schools are all good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The governing body is supportive and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and other senior staff provide good leadership and have a clear vision for the forward development of the school. They have a good level of commitment to inclusion and the promotion of equality. The headteacher and other senior managers carry out regular monitoring and self evaluation and put the results to good use. The role of some senior staff, however, is underdeveloped. Performance management strategies are in place. The school has due regard for the principles of best value and all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents have a very good level of regard for the school. They particularly like the fact that staff expect their children to work hard. Their children are also positive. Most also consider that they have to work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the consistency of teaching – particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve standards and achievement in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, and investigative science in Years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are average in the Foundation Stage and in Year 2 but are below average overall in Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, but there are weaknesses in achievement in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in their early years of schooling.
- Achievement in mathematics is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6.
- Some good and very good teaching is already impacting well on standards.
- The lack of focus on investigative science is holding back standards in the subject.

Commentary

1. Results in the 2004 National Curriculum assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. They were also around average overall in the science teacher assessments. In the tests of pupils at the end of Year 6 (SATs), the results were average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools – a measure related to the pupils' prior attainment in Year 2 – the results were again average in all three subjects. The school's trend in improvement in SAT results is above the national trend.
2. Standards do vary from year to year with different groups of pupils – especially in smaller schools. While current standards are still average in English, mathematics and science at Year 2, and improving, they are now well below average in mathematics and below average in science in Year 6 – although still around average in English. There are a number of reasons for this. For example, the current Year 6 includes an above average number of pupils with special educational needs. Also, a significant number entered the school other than at the normal time – 35% in the past two years – and had the bulk of their schooling elsewhere. However, inspection evidence indicates that in mathematics in particular, a significant number of pupils are underachieving in Years 3 to 6. In science, standards are stronger in the more knowledge based elements of the subject than in investigative science because the school still does not emphasise the latter element of the subject enough. Most children will reach the goals they are expected to reach by the time they enter Year 1 in all the areas of learning that were inspected in detail. Standards in ICT are average in both Year 2 and Year 6, while standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus throughout the school.
3. Pupils enter the school with attainment which is below average overall. They leave with average attainment in some subjects and below average attainment in others. This – along with the evidence of lessons observed during the inspection – indicates that their overall achievement is satisfactory. However, achievement is not consistent throughout the school. Positive contributors to achievement include the developing assessment systems in the key subjects of English and mathematics. These, however, are still too much in their infancy to have fully impacted. The school's senior leadership is very

focused on raising standards while still maintaining a good quality of education for the pupils. Recent improvements in the school's provision for special educational needs have begun to impact positively on achievement in literacy – although the impact has yet to be felt on numeracy. Conversely, achievement is adversely affected by the high mobility of pupils in and out of the school. This is inevitably unsettling for them and affects their learning. Some of the variation in achievement at the school, however, is related to inconsistencies in the teaching, which – despite quite extensive monitoring from the headteacher and other senior staff – still varies from unsatisfactory to very good. Also there is an unusually high mobility of teachers which is related to a number of factors – including the school's recent history and recruitment difficulties. All current class teachers have been appointed during the past three years. In the best lessons seen during the inspection, the pupils were effectively challenged and helped to reach their full potential. In others, however, some pupils were not challenged enough and the work set was not stimulating enough. This has particularly impacted on achievement in mathematics. However, the good, very good and occasionally excellent teaching now taking place in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is already impacting positively on pupils' achievement and bodes well for the future, and standards in mathematics in Years 3 to 5 are higher than those in the current Year 6. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall as a result of the recent introduction of special literacy programmes and the development of the role of the teaching assistants.

4. Examples of the standards being reached in literacy include a very good lesson in the Foundation Stage. The teacher's imaginative methods included cutting up a sentence written on a piece of card, jumbling up the words and getting the children to put them back in the correct order. The children were enthusiastic about the task and made good progress in learning about several aspects of sentence construction. In a very good Year 1 science lesson, the teacher's creative approach and stimulating methods, as well as very good relationships at all levels, effectively supported the pupils' development as independent learners and led to very good achievement in the development of their scientific knowledge and understanding.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.1 (14.9)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.8 (12.5)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.3 (15.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 32 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	27.0 (25.9)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.3 (25.1)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.5 (27.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They behave well in the classroom and very well around the school.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. These contribute to pupils' good moral and social development.
- Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is also good because of the ethos of the school and the positive steps taken to ensure that pupils experience the traditions of a range of cultures as well as their own.

Commentary

5. Pupils show good attitudes to learning in most lessons. Nearly all listen attentively, answer questions and undertake tasks willingly. They are better at answering questions than taking the initiative in conversation but the school is well aware of this and is exploring ways of raising their self confidence. Pupils still work well together in groups and participate in discussions because they know their views are respected. Adults give a positive lead in engendering good relationships by giving praise and encouragement and by acting as good role models. Where teachers maintain a high level of interest and set appropriately challenging tasks, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are often very good. Even when teaching is less effectively focused, pupils still behave well because very good relationships are firmly established.
6. Parents consider that pupils behave well and pupils confirmed that any suspicion of bullying or harassment is dealt with swiftly and effectively. No signs of aggressive behaviour were seen. There have been no exclusions in the past year. Attendance and punctuality are now broadly average thanks to effective monitoring and rapid response at the first sign of absence, although some parents still do not co-operate as well as others. Pupils are happy to come to school. Standards of behaviour are very good around the school because pupils are aware of the school rules and of the high standards expected by all adults.
7. The caring ethos of the school based on its Christian values results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing consideration for others. Pupils learn to take on responsibility; for example as prefects, and work well together. The 'Red Cap' scheme where older pupils offer friendship and support to younger schoolmates builds constructive relationships. Regular fundraising for local, national and international charities is another example of pupils' willingness to give as well as receive.
8. The school listens to its pupils and values what they have to say. Two representatives from each class serve on the school council. Pupils play together harmoniously - partly because they were involved through the school council in improving resources for the school playgrounds and so have a sense of ownership of these.
9. Pupils' studies in religious education and personal, social and health education, and the opportunities they have for reflection and worship in assemblies help to promote spiritual development. Acts as simple as regular grace at the end of the morning session mean that prayer is not something strange but is a part of a normal experience in which pupils participate, or not, as they feel able. The school ensures that pupils experience the traditions of their own and other cultures through the normal curriculum

and through the contributions of visitors and visits, including those to a Mosque and a Gurdwara. Members of staff from different parts of the world also bring a unique contribution to this area of learning.

10. The personal, social and emotional development of children in the Foundation Stage is broadly typical.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.3
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is sound overall and a good range of extra-curricular activities is provided. Pupils are very well cared for and have very good and trusting relationships with the adults in the school. There are good links with the parents, the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall. They are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage give pupils a secure start.
- Teachers manage classes well, thanks to positive relationships with pupils.
- Tasks for pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not always matched well enough to their ability, and the contribution of teaching assistants is inconsistent.
- Good systems for assessing pupils’ progress in English and mathematics are used well in Years 1 and 2 but assessment is less precisely focused elsewhere.
- Not enough is done to help pupils understand how they can improve.
- Pupils are encouraged to do well.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	5 (16%)	10 (31%)	14 (44%)	2 (6%)	0	0

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

11. Good and sometimes very good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in acquiring their early skills.

12. Teachers have established very good relationships with pupils so that in general pupils are polite and relate very well to adults and to each other. Teachers' good expectations of behaviour mean that lessons proceed in an orderly way, without disruption. This enables pupils to work constructively together and contributes to their satisfactory achievement.
13. The best lessons are characterised by teachers' very good subject knowledge, challenging tasks and especially effective questioning. This makes pupils fully involved in what they are doing. Constructive feedback helps them see how well they are doing. In Years 1 and 2 teachers consistently plan well, taking into account pupils' ages and abilities. They are generally supported well by teaching assistants, who help to provide a good match of tasks to needs. This means that all groups of pupils build up their skills at a good rate and achieve well.
14. In Years 3 to 6 there were several examples of good teaching but there were also unsatisfactory lessons where, in particular, teachers did not pitch work at the right level. The teaching of literacy is better developed than that of numeracy so that by Year 6 pupils reach broadly average standards in English but well below average standards in mathematics. Where tasks in lessons were mundane, pupils added little to their skills; where work was too difficult, they became confused. In either case, although their relationships with teachers meant that they were still attentive, pupils did not achieve as well as they should have done. In the better lessons, knowledgeable and well-briefed teaching assistants work in partnership with teachers so pupils receive good support. At times, assistants lack sufficient knowledge and skills so they contribute little, and on rare occasions, teaching and learning are limited for lack of effective support. Overall, however, pupils are encouraged to do well throughout the school.
15. There are significant strengths in teaching in the separate literacy sessions provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator. This is because the work is very carefully tailored to the needs of individual pupils, relationships are very good and the sessions proceed at a skilful pace. However, support for pupils with special educational needs in class, both from teachers and from teaching assistants, is inconsistent.
16. The school has recently reviewed assessment procedures. Good systems in English and mathematics are beginning to help teachers define clearly individual progress and needs. Their positive impact is consequently more evident in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6. Satisfactory procedures in other subjects are gradually being reviewed so that more precise information may be obtained to help meet pupils' needs more effectively. Although the school plans to introduce self-assessment in the autumn term, at present pupils are not involved in setting their own targets. The quality of day to day marking lacks consistency. The better marking generally includes constructive comments to recognise success but overall marking varies unduly in identifying ways to improve. Few pupils have really clear information about what they need to do next. The variable use of assessment information contributes to the inconsistent match of tasks to ability found in some lessons and means that some pupils are not always doing as well as they should.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Enrichment opportunities are satisfactory overall. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has improved significantly recently and the entire National Curriculum is now successfully provided.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is now good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs has developed well this year, and is now satisfactory.
- The headteacher has a clear view of how the curriculum needs to develop further and is in the process of steering the school through well chosen initiatives.
- There is a good variety of lunchtime and after school clubs.

Commentary

17. The school now successfully plans for the entire National Curriculum and religious education. The headteacher has presided over many initiatives, successfully ensuring that all pupils receive the full National Curriculum to which they are entitled. The curriculum for children in the reception class has radically improved since the previous inspection. As a result there are well-planned opportunities for children to work with adults and to learn through play, both in the classroom and when using the outside areas. The quality of accommodation for children in the reception class is good with easy access to outdoors. The strengths in curriculum and the learning environment make a significant contribution to children's good achievement in this class.
18. The newly appointed part time special educational needs co-ordinator has successfully introduced several initiatives to support pupils with special educational needs. Developments have been suitably prioritised and provision is now satisfactory. As a result of this strategic approach pupils are beginning to benefit from specific language and literacy work and from the support of teaching assistants in lessons. However, there has not been time for the full impact of the teaching assistants' increased responsibilities to benefit pupils fully. The special educational needs co-ordinator, headteacher and mathematics co-ordinator share a clear and accurate understanding that the next step is to provide specialised mathematics programmes and develop the role of teaching assistants further.
19. Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is supported well on a day to day basis through the strong relationships between pupils and staff, and the school's good provision for pupils' moral development. Suitable planning is in place for specific lessons focussing on this element of pupils' development. However, their implementation has been inconsistent between Years 3 and 6. In order to improve the consistency and quality of provision, the headteacher has committed the school to a pilot project from the beginning of next term which will ensure a more structured and dependable approach.
20. The headteacher is firmly committed to continuing improvement and development, with a vision of a curriculum characterised by 'inspiration and sparkle'. Her strategic approach is to place a high, but not exclusive emphasis upon the creative arts. Consequently, there have been an increased number of educational visits and visitors that add enjoyment and enhance pupils' experience. For example, opera, music and drama specialists have contributed effectively to pupils' creative learning over the last eighteen months. There is now a good choice of after school and lunchtime clubs contributing to pupils' learning in music and dance, and other activities such as chess, cooking and gardening.

21. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The school benefits from a new spacious library and a large ICT suite. However, the only hall is a thoroughfare and some classrooms are cramped and only accessible through other rooms. Resources are satisfactory overall, but there is a good supply of religious artefacts to support pupils learning about the major world religions.

Care, guidance and support

The school is very effective in ensuring pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. It provides pupils with satisfactory support, advice and guidance and involves them effectively in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and staff nurture all pupils very well so that they have a positive approach to school.
- The headteacher and staff have a very good understanding of each pupil's needs, and offer them high quality pastoral care with help from outside professional agencies.
- The headteacher, staff, and governors are very aware of protecting pupils from dangers inside and outside the school, so that they feel secure.
- Academic and personal development targets are not agreed with pupils, which limits their ability to improve their own performance.
- Pupils are soon made to feel part of the school family through very good induction procedures.
- The school makes determined efforts to listen to pupils and values their views in its development.

Commentary

22. The headteacher's vision for giving a very high priority to the care of pupils is supported well by her staff. Since starting her headteacher role, she has strengthened the care and welfare agenda to a well above average level in response to the stresses in the local community and within the school. Pupil's care is underpinned by a wide range of clearly written policies, which are consistently implemented by well-trained staff. Pupils feel well cared for and secure, helping them to develop healthy minds in healthy bodies. Parents are increasingly approving of the skills that the school has in helping pupils with problems, whether these are physical, emotional or learning difficulties. All pupils are effectively integrated into the school's widening range of activities and can focus on building their confidence, self esteem and enjoyment of school.
23. The headteacher and staff give the highest priority to the pastoral care of all pupils, and older pupils are encouraged to care for younger pupils. Although a declining minority of pupils indicate from questionnaires that there is not an adult they would go to if they had a problem, there is a very strong mutual trust between adults and most pupils, and they know that they can trust their teachers and other staff to listen sympathetically to their problems and anxieties. Pupils show an obvious happiness in their school life and feel that they can undertake a learning adventure in a safe environment without distractions. The school welcomes the good support of outside professional agencies in implementing the care agenda, including a school counsellor.
24. Both child protection and health and safety procedures are well supported by a governor and are highly effective. Child protection procedures conform to local educational authority guidelines. Staff awareness is continuously updated and pupils are enabled to protect themselves through the display of the 'Childline' telephone number. The school's very good

focus on health and safety issues is ensured through regular reviews of the school premises, and risk assessments are completed. The school is a safe place, as indicated by the below average minor accident rate. Accident procedures are thoroughly implemented, accompanied by a little tender loving care, and parents are encouraged to dispense medicines to their children. The school deals very effectively with any form of bullying or harassment so that pupils feel safe whilst at school. Good behaviour procedures in the classroom ensure that pupils are not distracted from their work.

25. Support and guidance based on monitoring the individual child are satisfactory overall. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in academic subjects are good for pupils up to seven years of age and satisfactory thereafter. The tracking of pupil's personal development relies on the teacher's individual knowledge and is informal, although there is a very good understanding of pupils with problems through staff meetings. Academic and personal development targets are not agreed individually with pupils and consequently their understanding of how they might improve their work is only adequate. The identification of pupils with special educational needs has improved since the employment of a part-time special educational needs co-ordinator. Good individual educational plans, which are now being communicated to parents, are focusing teacher's efforts on improving pupil's literacy achievements in particular.
26. Children new to the Foundation Stage are quickly and very effectively integrated through the caring and sensitive actions of staff and the good relationships with their pre-schools. When parents and pupils relocate from another school, they are sympathetically welcomed by the headteacher and allocated a friend. Most parents and pupils soon realise that their decision on the choice of school was correct.
27. The school is trying hard to consult with pupils on wider school issues that affect them, and put their less ambitious ideas into practice. Pupils have completed annual questionnaires on their views during the last two years and elect representatives to the recently established school council where they discuss real issues. Their views on the toilets have led to major expenditure, and Year 3 pupils sell fruit as part of a healthy eating initiative. The school is now routinely listening to pupil's views through personal, social and health education lessons, where pupils learn to support and understand each other.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents are very satisfied with the school and the education it provides. The school's links with parents are good. The school's links with the community are good and its links with other schools are effective. The education and support programmes for parents are moderately effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school tries hard to give parents an understanding of their children's progress and life in the school.
- All pupils benefit from the school's good relationships with the local community.
- The school's good relationships with local schools help pupils to settle well at the time of transfer to the next stage of education.
- The partnership with parents does not contribute significantly to the achievement of many pupils.

Commentary

28. The headteacher understands well the stresses in the local community and parental concerns about the school's quality of education during the last few years. She gives a high priority to relationships with all parents, and communications with them confirm the need to work together in partnership. Although only one in three parents replied to the Ofsted questionnaire, these indicate that parents are increasingly approving of the headteacher's and staff's efforts to improve the quality of their children's education. Parents are particularly pleased that their children are encouraged to work hard and do their best, and that they are happy at school. The school is an improving school and is now increasingly successful in gaining parents' trust. Staff are improving many aspects of school life for the pupils and show confidence when dealing with parents. The inspection team confirms the parents' positive views.
29. Dissatisfaction levels have halved to a low level since the last inspection, and there are no areas of significant dissatisfaction. However, some parents have concerns about being well informed on their children's progress. The inspection team does not substantiate this area of concern. As a result of effective strategies to engage proactively with parents, very few of these dissatisfactions have transferred into complaints, which are at a minimal level.
30. Despite the school's unstinting efforts to change the parent culture, too many parents are content to be passive partners with the school and are not a positive influence in their children's education. A minority are apathetic to the school's efforts, whilst other parents do not have high aspirations for their children's education. Although parents have signed the home-school agreement, one in ten pupils has poor attendance. An increasing majority of parents help pupils with homework. The school has a small core of parent volunteers, and some parent governor roles remain unfilled. There is a small core of parents running the friends association and performances involving pupils are well supported. The school tries hard to gain the views of parents through questionnaires, but there has been a limited response to the parents' forum initiative.
31. From the initial entry of parents and children into the school, the headteacher and staff try to give parents an encouraging view of school life. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents contain all relevant information for parents, although the prospectus does not represent the vitality of the school. The monthly newsletter is informative and represents the character of the school. Other written communications with parents are good quality, the parents' role is valued and respected and they are given sufficient time to react to events. Annual reports to parents are satisfactory as they give informative statements of what children can do in all National Curriculum subjects. They do not inform parents of pupils' progress against past targets or identify future targets. There is no expectation that pupils contribute to the reports. However, most parents feel comfortable with the feedback opportunities they have with the school on their children's progress.
32. The school is an essential part of the village community and it actively supports events so that pupils build pride in their local community and contribute as good citizens. The school is used

well by village clubs and the local football team develops the skills of the school football team. Local business contributes to school finances. The school uses the extended local community well for a diverse range of visits, which increase the life experiences of all pupils.

33. The school has good links with other schools. The good relationship with the pre-schools ensures that parents and children make a happy start to their school lives. Relationships with other local primary schools support continuous professional development for staff and sport initiatives for pupils. The relationship with the secondary school has enabled Year 5 pupils to gain increased experience of art, drama, ICT and music, the latter recently culminating in a multi-cultural 'Bollywood' production. Parents are given good information prior to the transfer of pupils to secondary or grammar school and pupils make a mostly anxiety free transition.
34. The school tries hard to develop programmes of learning for parents through the Medway Adult Education Services, but these are variably supported. The programmes are soundly focused on supporting children in the home by raising parents' skills in numeracy and literacy, but they do not always stimulate the interest of parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. The headteacher and other key staff provide good leadership. They have a clear vision for the forward development of the school and provide good role models for the pupils and other staff. Management is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations for the future development of the school.
- The management role of some other senior staff is insufficient.
- Strategic planning reflects the school's needs well.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses – but their role in the strategic monitoring of the curriculum is still underdeveloped.

Commentary

35. Governance at the school is satisfactory. The governing body is supportive and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It fulfils its statutory duties and is prepared to challenge the school management when it considers this to be necessary. Individual governors bring a wide range of skills to the role – including among their number, for example, people with backgrounds in the clergy, local government, business management, the legal profession and computer technology. Each is linked to a curriculum subject or an aspect of the school. Several visit the school from time to time to meet teachers and observe the occasional lesson. The chair in particular is actively involved in school life and has developed a positive and constructive relationship with senior staff. Under her knowledgeable direction, the governors – several of whom are recent appointments - are currently re-examining their role and committee structure in line with national moves in educational strategy, including a commitment to the philosophy of 'Every Child Matters'. At present, however, the governing body's role in the strategic monitoring of the curriculum is still at a fairly early stage.
36. The headteacher has a very clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school. Since her appointment – while the school was still under special measures –

she has had a major impact on its improvement. She is well regarded by all parties, including the parents, and leads both curriculum development and teaching well. She has a strong commitment to raising academic standards while maintaining a good quality of education for the pupils. There is a senior management team (SMT) comprising the headteacher and the two phase leaders. This meets regularly to discuss strategic and emergent issues and acts as a valuable two-way vehicle for communication. The management role of the individual members of the SMT is, however, insufficient and, especially as there is no deputy, needs now to be developed further in order to support the headteacher more efficiently. All managers at the school have a significant part to play in the school's good level of commitment to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals. The school improvement plan is a practical working document and a good reflection of the school's current needs.

37. The newly appointed, part time special educational needs co-ordinator is leading and managing the provision well. She has a good understanding of the areas for further development and firm plans in place to implement them. Her work has already had a substantial impact on the school. New, and much needed, arrangements and resources for developing pupils' literacy skills are now in place. However, it is too soon for the full effect of these to be felt. The school meets its statutory requirements to provide individual education plans for pupils, although the special educational needs co-ordinator is already evaluating these and rightly seeking to improve them even further.
38. The school evaluates its performance well and there are various procedures in place for analysing data and monitoring planning and teaching. There is a monitoring cycle in place which involves different members of staff at appropriate stages. The headteacher formally observes all teachers at least termly and provides targets for improvement. Subject co-ordinators generally have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. All monitor pupils' work and see planning. Some - such as the co-ordinators of the key subjects English and mathematics - have a key role in the school's overall monitoring process. Others - including the co-ordinator for art and design - are proactive in promoting and developing their subjects. The co-ordinators of English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education produce subject action plans which contribute to the overall school improvement plan. Overall, however, there is some inconsistency in the monitoring role of subject managers, particularly in monitoring teaching. Although this is not having a significant impact on standards, opportunities for professional development are being missed. Staff development procedures are satisfactory and routine administration is effective. Performance management procedures are fully in place for teachers and the school plans to develop this further for support staff. Suitable procedures are in place for inducting new teachers - including those who are newly qualified.
39. Procedures for financial planning and monitoring are satisfactory and involve the governing body appropriately. The budget is spent in line with the needs identified in the school improvement plan. The slightly high carry forward in the table below is appropriately intended to fund extra specialist staffing in the next academic year. The school has due regard for the principles of best value and uses its available resources appropriately. Management of the recruitment, retention and workload of staff is satisfactory. Most parents consider that the school is well led and managed.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	512782
Total expenditure	525058
Expenditure per pupil	2966

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	73516
Balance carried forward to the next	61240

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

40. Provision for children in the reception class is good. Most children join the reception class with fewer speaking and social skills and less curiosity than is expected for their age. This clearly has a detrimental effect on their attainment in most areas of their learning. They achieve well because teaching is good and they enjoy a wide range of well planned and stimulating activities both in the classrooms and outside. Consequently most children reach the goals they are expected to reach in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language, and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. During the inspection there were limited opportunities to observe teaching and learning for creative and physical development and overall judgements about provision have not been made in these areas. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and the current quality of provision represents good improvement since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in working harmoniously together and in conforming to the class and school rules.
- Adults have good expectations of children's behaviour and levels of independence.
- There are occasions when adults leading sessions miss opportunities for pupils to make choices.

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning in this area of learning are good. Adults are patient and sensitive with children. They forge good relationships with them, successfully establishing a secure learning environment. They regularly praise children's efforts and encourage them successfully, thereby enhancing their self-esteem. Consequently most children settle quickly into the school routines and expectations and are increasingly ready to learn. They share resources, space and adult attention peacefully for the most part, tolerant of each other and their differences.
42. Adults have consistently good expectations of children's independence. Consequently children have daily opportunities to select what they want to do from the wide range of activities available. The result of these strengths is demonstrated when children welcome visitors confidently either by offering an inspector a 'guided tour' of their activities, or by exercising enormous care in helping a pre-school visiting child to put on a painting apron. However, there are occasions when there is little choice for children within an adult led activity which limits the opportunities for children to learn through taking greater responsibility. An example was when children were given one directed way to record information about objects that float or sink rather than a chance to consider different ways and make a choice.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in early reading and writing skills because adults successfully promote their interest in books.
- Adults place a good emphasis upon teaching children to identify letter sounds.
- There are missed opportunities to promote children's learning when they are working at an activity of their choice.

Commentary

43. Most children achieve well and are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach in reading and writing. This is because staff in the reception class are successful in stimulating their interest in books and writing. For example, children relish sharing their 'special book' which records their various activities photographically and their adult scribed opinions over their time in the reception class. They willingly demonstrate their growing reading skills, their recognition of vocabulary and their knowledge of letter sounds with considerable and justifiable pride. It is to the credit of reception class staff that children of all abilities have the confidence to readily 'have a go' at writing a sentence using their emerging understanding of letter sounds to do so. This is an outcome of the high emphasis that adults place on matching letters and sounds throughout the day in various activities.
44. Teaching and learning for this area of learning are good overall. During the inspection a very good lesson was seen when imaginative and creative methods involved children in a game of sorting out jumbled up words. This was highly successful in harnessing their attention and enthusiasm. It also helped them to make very good gains in structuring a sentence and recognising the sounds attached to combinations of letters such as 'st' and 'oo'. There has been a suitably high emphasis upon encouraging children's speaking skills. However, staff are not deployed enough to circulate and prompt children's speaking and thinking when they are working at activities of their own choice. The school rightly recognises this as a key area for development when they have another member of staff in the autumn term.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults successfully provide pupils with practical mathematical activities throughout the day and in other areas of learning.
- Adults successfully stimulate children's interest in number and shape.
- Occasionally, opportunities to extend children's mathematical language are missed.

Commentary

45. Teaching and learning are good because adults have good expectations of children's understanding of shape and number and plan a wide range of practical activities. For example, children learn about recording data on charts involving practical early science work. Similarly, adults guide children well to use spoken and written mathematical language in work describing animals, such as a parrot having 'round' eyes or a giraffe 'big ears and a long neck'. During the inspection an example of successful practical teaching was seen when children used mathematical language spontaneously. Children were highly excited by testing their model boats for floatability and of their own volition identified the need for 'one more' piece of material.
46. The result of the good emphasis upon practical experience is that children are interested in ideas related to number and shape. They willingly identify shapes in their environment. All children find round and square shapes in one of their rooms, identifying objects such as hoops or the patterns on a quilt. Most children distinguish between a square and a 'squashed square', naming the latter as a rectangle. The most able children confidently name three-dimensional shapes. The vast majority of children begin to solve mathematical problems, and compare size and shape to the extent expected for their age. A few children exceed expectations for their age in number work. As already mentioned above, the school recognises the value of accelerating learning further by deploying an adult to promote mathematical ideas on an individual basis when children are working at an activity of their own choice.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in their use of computers, and in early science work.
- This large area of learning is well planned to ensure breadth and balance.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are good because adults have a good understanding of the breadth of this area. Careful planning ensures that children's experience is broadened both in the classrooms and outside. Adults place a suitably high emphasis upon children working at computers. During the inspection good teaching and learning was helped by the well resourced ICT suite where children used computer software to design, draw and decorate their own boats. They used the computer mouse, keyboard and on screen icons to develop their designs with very individual results, and an appropriate level of skill.
48. A similarly high emphasis is placed upon early science work. Children have good access to rabbits, chicks, guinea pigs and tadpoles. They are very interested in the growth of these creatures and have a secure understanding of how tadpoles develop into frogs. Their understanding of the passing of time is commensurate with their age. They know, for example, that they were once babies who could not read and talk. However, the precise language of time is challenging for some. For example, two children discussed how long the chicks had been out of their eggs and could not decide whether it was 6, 7 or 8 years!

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

49. No specific movement lessons were seen. However, informal observation of children moving around their classrooms and the school indicate that they do so with the level of co-ordination and control expected for their age. The breadth of suitable activities available throughout the day means that children are constantly developing their skills in manipulating tools and equipment to an appropriate level.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

50. No lessons with a specific creative focus were seen during the inspection, and no secure overall judgement of the quality of provision can be made. However, evidence is available from planning, assessment and photographs of children's work, as well as the organisation of the rooms. Children clearly have regular access to a variety of imaginative play. During the inspection there was a play house and a play train. The latter included a 'ticket office' with paper and pencils and so gave children suitable opportunity to develop independent writing. However, children played alongside each other in the 'house' and did not share a developing story. Teachers' plans did not include an adult to support this element of their learning. There are good links between creative development and other areas of learning. For example, in lessons in the hall children develop their movement while imaginatively pretending to be frogs.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 thanks to good teaching, but teaching and learning are less consistent in Years 3 to 6.
- Revised assessment systems are helping to raise attainment, but information is used more effectively in earlier years.
- Subject leadership is good and contributes to rising standards.

Commentary

51. National Curriculum assessments for 2004 showed that pupils in Years 2 and 6 reached average standards. Standards were also average when compared with similar schools. Pupils currently in Year 2 reach broadly average standards. Their achievement is good since they entered the school with below average skills in communication, language and literacy. Pupils in the current Year 6 also reach broadly average standards. Their achievement is satisfactory since relatively few reach the higher National Curriculum levels. Spellings especially are frequently insecure. Although ideas may be effectively linked in narratives, they are not often developed imaginatively. Standards in Years 6 were below average at the last inspection so improvement has been good.
52. The main reason for these outcomes is the quality of teaching and learning. There were examples of good lessons throughout the school but teaching is more consistently good in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6. Teaching overall is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge shows itself in planning which takes into account the differing needs of groups and individuals. Tasks, therefore, keep them fully engaged and help develop the different language skills. Building on this, questioning probes the extent of what pupils can do, with regular interaction and feedback to help them see how well they are doing and what they need to do next. This approach led to pupils in Year 1 talking and writing competently about a visit by firemen, using good vocabulary to engage interest.
53. Where lessons are less successful the pace is usually slower and the match of task to need not as close, so pupils are not challenged as much and do not achieve so well.
54. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs has focused particularly on the development of literacy and all groups of pupils now achieve as well as each other. In several lessons, teaching assistants worked constructively in partnership with teachers but on occasions their work lacked focus and, therefore, was of less benefit to pupils.
55. Assessment has been revised so that pupils' progress may be tracked better. Its positive impact is working through the school, but at present assessment is used more effectively in Years 1 and 2 than in later years where marking too is less precise and does not give as much support or guidance as it should. Although pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a reasonable idea of the levels at which they are working, there are not enough

opportunities for them to be involved in setting their own targets to encourage them to think harder about whether they could do better.

56. Subject co-ordination is good. Standards are already rising faster than the national trend because areas for development are systematically identified and addressed. The recent focus on guided reading has helped bring the different language skills into balance. A focus on speaking is to follow, but more because many pupils lack self-confidence than because they have particular difficulties in communication.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. The attention given to the development of pupils' literacy skills throughout the curriculum is broadly typical. Word-processing is a regular part of pupils' learning because classes use the new ICT suite regularly. Examples of instructional writing were seen in design and technology, reviews of places and events in geography and history, and longer accounts in religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are well below average and pupils have made insufficient progress.
- Because of good teaching, pupils make good progress between the reception year and Year 2, and standards in Year 2 are average.
- The subject co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses.

Commentary

58. Results in last year's National Curriculum tests for mathematics were average in both Year 2 and Year 6. However, current standards - while still average in Year 2 - are well below average in Year 6. This reflects unsatisfactory achievement for these pupils. There are several reasons for pupils' low standards and underachievement at the top end of the school, but for many pupils it is the result of weak teaching in the past and inconsistencies in teaching now. There is a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 with special educational needs, many of whom have joined the school recently. In spite of good improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs over the last year, there has been an understandably higher focus on developing extra help in literacy than in mathematics initially.
59. Overall teaching is satisfactory. An analysis of pupils' work and progress indicates that younger pupils achieve well. Teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good overall because teachers have consistently high aspirations for pupils and successfully modify work to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. During the inspection excellent teaching was seen with younger pupils who achieved very well and reached high standards in problem solving. Creative teaching methods and resources suited the young age of the pupils extremely well by capturing their imaginations. As a result, higher attaining pupils multiplied and other pupils added, to solve challenging

calculation problems concerning crabs, seagulls and starfish with an impressive level of independence.

60. In the middle of the school there is an equal balance of good and satisfactory teaching. When teaching is good, pupils in Year 3, for example, are highly motivated to learn. They make good gains in learning the 3, 4 and 6 times tables because there is a skilful mix of teacher direction and opportunities for pupils to learn through their own discovery. However, teaching of older pupils while satisfactory overall, is inconsistent. There are occasions when higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged throughout the lesson and when pupils with special educational needs do not receive enough support and guidance. On these occasions teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.
61. It has taken good subject leadership, management and development to ensure good progress for younger pupils and satisfactory but improving progress for pupils in the middle of the school, in a relatively short period of time. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of where the strengths and weaknesses in the subject lie and what to do about them. Much sensible action has already successfully halted the underachievement of most pupils. There is a clear focus on raising standards through increasing the expertise of teachers and lifting their expectations where teaching needs it most. The strengths and weaknesses in the subject reflect a picture that is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. However, this masks the considerable analysis of the subject that has taken place and the resulting well chosen intervention that has supported colleagues and improved pupils' experience of the subject overall.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Numeracy is used satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 use their mathematical skills to calculate average pulse rates in a scientific investigation. Nevertheless, planning for increased useful links between subjects is an area that the headteacher has rightly identified for further development.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Younger pupils are achieving standards which are above average – which bodes well for the future.
- Overall standards in investigative science are not as high as those in the more knowledge based elements of the subject.
- Although teaching in science is good overall, pupils do not have enough say over the design of their investigations and work set is not always closely enough matched to the needs of pupils with different levels of attainment.

Commentary

63. In the 2004 teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2, results were above average in terms of the percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 2 but below average in terms of those gaining the higher Level 3. In the same year's tests of pupils at the end of Year 6, (SATs) standards were average overall. Standards vary from year

to year with different groups of pupils and while current standards in Year 2 are still broadly average, standards in Year 6 - a group of pupils which includes an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and which has suffered from a high level of mobility in and out of the school - are below average. These judgements are substantiated by preliminary results from the 2005 National Curriculum assessments. Standards in investigative science are not as high as those in the more knowledge based elements of the subject as the school does not focus enough on this aspect yet. Current standards in science are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Children enter the school with slightly below average attainment in knowledge and understanding and overall achievement is satisfactory.

64. Year 1 pupils can produce a good range of hypotheses about which materials would be best for blocking light, have a good idea of the need for fair testing in an investigation and are reaching standards which are higher than expected for their age. Most Year 2 pupils who are exploring the relationship between different body parts provide a number of relevant research questions – but some find this concept difficult. By Year 5, most of the pupils have a good understanding of the function of different parts of the heart. Year 6 pupils who are investigating the effect of air resistance on the movement of wheeled vehicles have a sound idea of the need to change only one variable at a time. Most – but not all – are able to measure and record their findings accurately. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to predict a relationship between the distances travelled by their vehicles and the level of air resistance influencing this. Several, however, find it difficult to transfer previously gained scientific knowledge to a new concept. As younger pupils are reaching standards in science which are above average, this bodes well for the future.
65. Most pupils enjoy their science lessons and have positive attitudes towards them. They are often enthusiastic – particularly about the practical aspects. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching varied from satisfactory to very good but was good overall. Strengths in the teaching include challenging questioning which encourages the pupils to think deeply about their work and interesting methods which help maintain their interest. Behaviour management is usually positive and effective. Pupils are involved in the construction of research questions and investigations to solve these. Conversely, in other lessons, the pupils do not have enough say over the design of their investigations, which detracts from the development of their investigative skills. Also, the scrutiny of previous work indicates that tasks set are not always matched closely enough to the needs of pupils with different levels of attainment in some lessons.
66. Planning is appropriately based on national guidelines and ICT is used to some extent to support the subject. There are assessment strategies in place, but these do not always extend to investigative science – a factor which could well be contributing to the relative weaknesses in that element. Leadership and management of science are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new computer suite has a positive impact on teaching and learning.

- Assessment is not always used well enough to help set appropriate tasks.

Commentary

67. Standards are average in both Year 2 and Year 6 - much the same as those found at the last inspection, so improvement has been satisfactory. By Years 2 and 6, all groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily but few of them are reaching the higher levels. This is largely because they have had relatively limited time to benefit from new resources, but also because some lessons are not sufficiently challenging for all pupils.
68. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but there were examples of good teaching in the computer suite. In the better lessons, features that promote good learning are teachers' planning, the consistent way they manage pupils' behaviour and the positive response from the pupils. These were seen to good effect in a lesson in Year 1 where all pupils, including several with special educational needs, sustained concentration to word-process effectively their accounts of a visit by the fire brigade. At times, however, challenges are not high enough when pupils have to explore or find things out for themselves. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 4, pupils did not develop their understanding of the need for careful framing of questions as much as they should have done because tasks were not sufficiently defined to help them reach the highest levels.
69. Assessment to inform future planning is an area for development that the school recognises. There are plans to explore a more detailed assessment system in the autumn but at present the outcomes of assessment are not always used as well as they should be. In a Year 6 lesson, previous assessments had shown that some pupils could use a publishing program well, yet they were set the same tasks as others in the class so did not extend their skills further.
70. The curriculum and resources are satisfactory. The ICT suite is spacious and up to date. There are enough stations for all pupils to work independently and the projector and interactive white board enhance presentations well. However, this provision has only been installed since Christmas so pupils and staff have had limited time to benefit. There are computers in all classrooms also, but these were not seen in use during the inspection because all classes have at least two lessons each week in the suite where pupils do not need to share equipment. Pupils regularly have opportunities to use ICT simulations and to control equipment or events but there are insufficient resources for pupils to use ICT to sense physical data such as temperature, light or movement. Subject management is satisfactory in identifying areas for development but the shortcomings remain to be properly addressed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. There is satisfactory use of ICT to help pupils develop the skills they have been taught through other subjects. Pupils use ICT competently for presentations in English and in subjects such as religious education, although these tend to involve word-processing and desktop publishing more than multimedia - including sound and graphics. Research opportunities using the internet and CD-ROMS feature, for example, in history. For younger pupils especially, painting programs add to experiences in art and design. Spreadsheets and graph programs are used to enhance understanding of mathematics. Limitations in resources such as sensors and data loggers mean that ICT is not used to support investigative science as much as it should be.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in detail and is reported on in full below. History and geography were sampled.

72. Scrutiny of planning and previous work and discussions with staff indicate that the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met in the case of both history and geography. For example, in **history**, Year 2 pupils have studied the Great Fire of London and understand the nature of the fire fighting equipment available at the time. They have also looked at the Crimean War and the role of Florence Nightingale. Year 6 pupils have examined life in the Victorian period – including the wide differences in life style between people from different social backgrounds. In **geography**, Year 2 pupils have explored various aspects of life on a fictitious Scottish island and compared these with those to be found in their own area, while Year 6 pupils have studied the formation and structure of rivers and have learned to interpret various weather statistics.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are examples of very good teaching for younger pupils.
- Not all teachers are confident with the subject.

Commentary

73. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a reasonable breadth of knowledge of the major world religions. They reach the expected level of knowledge and understanding as identified in the locally agreed syllabus. This represents satisfactory progress in the subject overall because teachers use the syllabus to ensure sufficient topics are covered at a suitable level. However, an analysis of pupils work indicates that older pupils seldom express what they are learning from religion, about spiritual values and ideas, on paper. The subject has been enhanced recently by the school's increased programme of visits, which have included a visit to the local Gurdwara.
74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The subject co-ordinator teaches the subject very well and so is in a position to set a very good example in teaching. This is potentially of enormous value because an audit of teachers' strengths and weaknesses in the subject indicates that some staff lack confidence in the extent of their knowledge and expertise. When teaching is very confident the lesson is very well planned to integrate both learning about and learning from, for example, New Testament parables. Teaching methods include drama - so pupils have really good opportunities to re-tell the story and to empathise with its key characters, and learn through harnessing their emotions. Occasionally, teachers' planning does not take sufficient account of the age and stage of the pupils in the class. In these lessons work fluctuates between being too sophisticated and too superficial and as a result teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.
75. Nevertheless, the subject co-ordinator is leading the subject satisfactorily. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and is meeting

with colleagues regularly to provide suitable support for them. The school is awaiting imminent new curriculum and assessment guidance, and the headteacher is heavily involved with this development. In the circumstances it is wise for the co-ordinator to continue to support colleagues but wait for the guidance before attempting further development in planning and assessment procedures.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were all sampled.

76. Discussion with co-ordinators, scrutiny of planning and previous work and a sampling of a small number of lessons indicate that the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met in the case of all four sampled subjects. In **art and design**, for example, Year 1 pupils create still life pictures of flowers in pastel. Year 5 pupils use computer generated images to create images of animals inspired by 'The Snail' by Matisse, while Year 6 pupils paint what are often effective portraits of each other. In **design and technology**, Year 2 pupils make a 'beanie baby mini-beast' after listing their design criteria and the resources they will need. They then evaluate their outcomes and make suggestions for improvements. Year 6 pupils design and produce various artefacts – including slippers, models of fairground rides and wheeled vehicles. In a successful **music** lesson that was sampled, Year 1 pupils showed a good understanding of how music can represent different effects and images when creating and performing a class composition reflecting different weather sounds. In a sampled Year 2 **physical education** lesson, the pupils practised a range of throwing and catching skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This curriculum area was sampled.

77. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are taught formally throughout the school. It was not possible to observe any lessons, however, as these were all timetabled for days outside the inspection period. Related issues, however, are also dealt with effectively in informal situations and through assemblies and science and religious education lessons.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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