

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hartfield

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114553

Headteacher: Mrs S M Boniface

Lead inspector: Mrs S J M Lacey

Dates of inspection: 17th - 19th May 2005

Inspection number: 267865

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 aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	123
School address:	High Street Hartfield East Sussex
Postcode:	TN7 4AA
Telephone number:	(01892) 770 221
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Paul Brice
Date of previous inspection:	15 th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary the Virgin Church of England Primary School is a small village school on the edge of the Ashdown Forest. It caters for pupils between the ages of four and eleven. The school has five classes, but in the mornings pupils are taught in seven separate year groups. Pupils come from a wide range of social, economic and academic backgrounds. Four per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average and reflects the advantaged background of many of the pupils. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with only three per cent from other ethnic backgrounds. Three pupils are bilingual. When pupils start school in the Reception class, their skills, knowledge and understanding are very wide-ranging, with some pupils exceeding the levels expected for their age overall and others not reaching these levels. In most years the overall profile of the group is broadly in line with expected levels. Twenty per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is a little above the national average. These pupils have a range of physical, learning and behavioural difficulties. Three of these pupils have a statement of special educational need. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school last year, other than at the usual points of entry or transfer, was broadly average. The school has won several awards for its work. These include Activemark and a Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2004, and Artsmark Gold in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3764	Mrs Stephanie Lacey	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English Art and design Music English as an additional language
14756	Mr John Lovell	Lay inspector	
24019	Mr Ken Parry	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education
30618	Mr Paul Story	Team inspector	Science Information communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well as a consequence of good teaching, with many pupils exceeding the levels expected for their age. Leadership and management are sound and the headteacher provides a clear lead for a hardworking and committed staff team. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Most pupils make good progress and standards are generally well above average by the time pupils leave in Year 6.
- Good teaching underpins pupils' good achievements.
- Pupils are nurtured well in a family atmosphere, with individuals supported effectively in small classes.
- The staff are approachable and work well together.
- Work planned in different subjects is interesting and captivates pupils' imaginations.
- Teachers keep a close check on pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, but pupils do not always understand how well they are doing or how they can improve.
- Most pupils behave well, but a small minority disrupt the learning of others, particularly in Year 4, although the school's tracking shows that these pupils are making steady progress.
- There are very good links with the local community.

The school has made steady progress since its last inspection in 1999 and has maintained the good quality of education noted at that time. Standards have improved in reading throughout the school. In Year 6 national tests, over the last few years, standards have risen more than in most schools. There have been great strides forward in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The school has tackled the areas noted for improvement by the last inspection. These were related to raising standards in reading and ICT, assessment, behaviour management and recording and reporting on attendance. Work is planned to improve assessment and behaviour management further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	A	A	A
mathematics	C	A	A	B
science	E	A	C	E

*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.*

Most pupils achieve well. This includes higher attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and bilingual pupils. When children start in the Reception class, their skills, knowledge and understanding are very wide ranging. In most years, there is a group of children working beyond the levels expected for their age and another group who have not yet reached these levels. The proportion of higher and lower attaining children varies year on year. This year, most children are well set to reach the goals expected by the end of Reception, with some doing better, although the overall profile of the group is in line with levels expected. In small schools like St Mary the Virgin, standards in national tests can

vary year on year because of the impact of the performance of one or two pupils. In Year 2 tests last year, standards were well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and average in writing. The inspection found that standards are above the levels expected in reading, in line with levels expected in writing and below in mathematics. This apparent drop is related to the make up of the year group. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, doing particularly well in Year 1 because of very good teaching. As the table on the page 4 shows, in Year 6 national tests last year, standards were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Pupils did better than those in similar schools in English, and mathematics. The school recognises the relative weakness in science, which it is tackling. The inspection found that this year standards in Year 6 are well above the levels expected in English and broadly in line with those expected in mathematics and science. Pupils meet the levels expected for their age in ICT throughout the school.

Pupils' personal development is good. Most pupils are developing as well rounded citizens, whose spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most behave well and are positive about school, but the inappropriate behaviour of a small minority of pupils with special educational needs has a negative impact on the learning of others, especially in Year 4. However, the school's tracking of how well pupils are achieving shows that they are making steady progress. Attendance is good and most pupils are punctual at the start of the day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality education. Teaching and learning are good, and are especially strong in Years 1 and 3. Good planning and organisation mean that pupils are focused on learning and work hard. However, teachers do not always make it clear to pupils how well they have done or what they need to do to improve. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT is at an early stage. Work planned in different subjects is interesting and enriched by a range of visits, visitors, projects and links with the community. Individual pupils are given good care and support and there is a good partnership with parents in relation to their children's learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are sound. The headteacher provides a clear educational lead and has the full support of the committed staff team. Senior staff and subject leaders manage their responsibilities competently, although the monitoring and analysis of work in different subjects is not as developed as other aspects of school provision. The governing body provide good support, with individual governors making significant contributions. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with all that the school does for their children. They particularly like the approachable staff and headteacher and the after school activities. A few are concerned about the behaviour of a few of the pupils and the music provision. Most pupils enjoy school. They like their teachers and the support that they are given. Some felt that other children were not always well behaved. The inspection found that the behaviour of a few pupils does adversely affect the learning of others and that music provision is satisfactory, but not as strong as work in other subjects.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop procedures to check pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects and help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that the inappropriate behaviour of a few pupils does not affect the learning of others.

The school has already identified both of these as areas for development.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Most pupils achieve well, with pupils in Years 1 and 3 doing very well. Standards are broadly in line with the levels expected in most subjects, with standards in reading above the levels expected in most year groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 national tests have been well above average for the last two years.
- Standards in work seen were broadly in line with expected levels, with higher standards in reading and writing in some year groups.
- Pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 3 achieve particularly well.
- The inappropriate behaviour of a very small minority of pupils is having an adverse impact on these pupils' achievement.

COMMENTARY

Standards in Year 6 national tests have been well above average for the last two years.

1. In small schools, standards in national tests can vary from year to year because of the impact of the performance of one or two pupils on the overall result. These swings from year to year also have an impact on the trend in the school's results over time. In Year 6, this has been above the national improvement trend and standards in English and mathematics have been well above average for the last two years. This reflects pupils' good achievement, good teaching and a high proportion of higher attaining pupils in each year group. The results for 2004 are shown in the following table.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (29.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.3 (28.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.7 (30.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. As the table below shows, standards in Year 2 national tests last year were well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and average in writing. This is also a consequence of good teaching and learning, with pupils making good progress from entry. In some previous years, standards have not been so high and this is related to higher proportions of pupils with special educational needs in these year groups. As a consequence of this, improvement in the school's results over time has been below the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.2 (15.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.6 (14.1)	14.6 (14.6)

mathematics	17.0 (16.5)	16.2 (16.3)
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There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Standards in national tests in 2004 were similar to those at the time of the last inspection. On average, boys have done better than girls in Year 6 national tests over the last three years, but the inspection found nothing in the school's provision to account for this difference.

Standards in work seen were broadly in line with expected levels, with higher standards in reading and writing in some year groups.

- In all year groups standards in work seen were wide-ranging, with some pupils working above expected levels, some in line and some below. Most children in the Foundation Stage are well set to reach the goals expected of them in all areas of learning by the end of their Reception year. A few pupils have already reached these goals. In mathematics, science and ICT the overall profile of each year group is broadly in line with expected levels. In some year groups, pupils do better in reading and writing and this reflects the hard work that staff have put into raising standards in these areas. In Year 2, standards are broadly in line with levels expected in reading and writing and below these in mathematics. In Year 6, standards are well above levels expected in English and broadly in line in mathematics, science and ICT. The difference in attainment in different subjects and the apparent drop from last year is related to the make-up of this particular year group.

Pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress, with pupils in Years 1 and 3 achieving particularly well.

- The measure of the school's success is the good progress that pupils' make. The school's own tracking of pupils' progress in English and mathematics and pupils' work give a clear indication of the good progress made. Throughout the school pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs. These pupils are identified early. They progress well due to the setting of short-term targets for learning, good planning and the good support that they receive. Higher attaining pupils also do well because they are challenged effectively. In Years 1 and 3, where the teaching is particularly strong, pupils move forward very well.

The inappropriate behaviour of a very small minority of pupils is having an adverse impact on their achievement.

- A few pupils, with particular behavioural and emotional difficulties, find it hard to concentrate and apply themselves. They are not achieving as well as they should in lessons and this inevitably has a detrimental effect on their progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are satisfactory. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Levels of attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils behave well, but a small minority of pupils, mainly boys in Year 4, behave in a silly and immature manner and on occasions disrupt the learning of others.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good.
- Pupils' personal development is good overall.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good and procedures to promote, monitor and record attendance meet statutory requirements.

Commentary

Most pupils behave well, but a small minority of pupils, mainly boys in Year 4, behave in a silly and immature manner and on occasions disrupt the learning of others.

7. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous, and respond well to the high expectations of the staff. In most lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good and pupils are very well behaved in younger classes. However, a minority of pupils behave in a silly and immature manner, display challenging behaviour and, on occasions, disrupt the learning of others. This is particularly the case when the challenge and pace of the lesson fails to engage all pupils. Parents identified concerns with behaviour as an area of anxiety and the school is working closely with external agencies to resolve the problems and support these pupils who have special behavioural and emotional needs.

Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good.

8. Most pupils relate well to each other and to staff. These relationships benefit from good collaborative working and a readiness to respond positively to encouragement and support from adults. A minority of pupils do not consider the needs of other pupils sufficiently. Generally, pupils get on well with each other and play together happily at playtimes. Very occasionally pupils fall out. There were no incidents of harassment or racism in the last year. There is no evidence of systematic bullying or harassment and isolated incidents are addressed quickly and effectively. During the last year, there have been no formal exclusions. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils' personal development is good overall.

9. Pupils' spirituality is promoted well through opportunities for reflection, assemblies and the celebration of art and the natural world throughout the school. Pupils have a sound and often good or better understanding of right and wrong, which is promoted throughout the school, and they benefit from the good role models set by adults. Pupils are encouraged to be honest, trustworthy and courteous and to respect and value other people's feelings, values and beliefs and this is exemplified through the support that most pupils give to each other in lessons and at play. Pupils are involved in reviewing the rules that regulate their behaviour and have opportunities to reflect on the consequences of bullying, which aids their understanding.
10. There are good opportunities throughout the school for pupils to enhance their social development, through undertaking responsibility as a member of the class or School Council and through a range of extra-curricular activities, visits and residential experiences. There is a very good level of participation in these activities and tasks are undertaken with commitment and pride. Pupils develop a good understanding of the needs of others, through visiting speakers and activities to support a range of charities.
11. Subjects such as history, music and art, and work with visitors such as artists and musicians promote a satisfactory understanding of pupils' own heritage and other, predominantly Western, cultures. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is promoted satisfactorily, for example through history, when pupils learn about the Egyptians. The school is developing opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of other cultures through looking at world citizenship and has worked successfully towards addressing the issue of preparing pupils for life in a multicultural society that was identified at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good and procedures to promote, monitor and record attendance meet statutory requirements.

12. Attendance in the 2003/4 academic year was above the national average. Pupils' punctuality is good. This shows a good improvement on the situation found at the time of the last inspection, when statutory requirements were not being met in respect of promoting, recording and monitoring attendance. The school has good procedures to monitor attendance and works in an effective partnership with parents and the education welfare officer to promote good attendance and punctuality. The Local Education Authority has advised schools that in future, requests for holidays during term time should not be authorised other than in very exceptional circumstances and parental support is being sought to avoid an increase in levels of unauthorised absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	School data	0.5
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 school provides a good quality education. Teaching is good, although pupils are not always clear about what they have to do to improve. Work is interesting and enhanced by very good links with the community.

Teaching and learning

Throughout the school pupils are taught well and consequently learn effectively. There are satisfactory procedures for checking how well pupils are doing.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching is good overall, with very strong teaching in Years 1 and 3.
- Lessons are planned and prepared carefully.
- Work is interesting and engages pupils in learning effectively.
- Pupils are organised well and benefit from working in small classes.
- Teachers keep a careful check on how pupils are doing in English, mathematics, science and ICT, but pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.
- Procedures for checking how well pupils are progressing in other subjects are unsatisfactory.
- The inappropriate behaviour of a very small minority of pupils in Year 4 has a negative impact on their learning.

Commentary

Teaching is good overall, with very strong teaching in Years 1 and 3.

13. Teaching is good overall and this ensures that pupils learn effectively. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. As the table below shows, most lessons were of good quality. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 3 are of a consistently high quality, with pupils achieving very well as a consequence of very good teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	5	13	4	1	0	0

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

Lessons are planned and prepared carefully.

14. Lessons are planned and prepared well and this helps them to move at a good pace, with little time wasted on organising equipment and materials. Teachers' planning shows that they have clear learning objectives for each lesson, but these are not always shared with pupils at the start. This means that sometimes pupils are not clear about the purpose of the lesson. Teachers make sure that there is a good balance between time spent listening to the teacher, discussing ideas, recording work and working on practical activities.

Work is interesting and engages pupils in learning effectively.

15. In all classes, teachers make the work interesting and so pupils are caught up in the enjoyment of learning. There is a good emphasis on helping pupils to learn new skills and acquire knowledge and understanding by engaging in interesting activities. A good example of this was the way that Year 4 and 5 pupils learnt about persuasive writing, by writing letters to their local Member of Parliament. Homework is used effectively to enhance pupils' learning.

Pupils are organised well and benefit from working in small classes.

16. Pupils are organised well so that all receive appropriate support. Four mornings a week pupils are taught in separate year groups. This helps teachers to focus particularly on helping pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils benefit from working in these small classes because the teachers and support assistants have the opportunity to work with individuals and small groups. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons. Their teachers and the well-briefed teaching assistants focus well on their particular needs helping them meet their individual targets. The good support provided by teaching assistants is a significant factor in the good progress made by most of these pupils. In most sessions, higher attaining pupils are challenged effectively, although this was not the case in one or two of the satisfactory lessons seen.

Teachers keep a careful check on how pupils are doing in English, mathematics, science and ICT, but pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

17. Teachers track pupils' progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT carefully and use a range of assessment opportunities to evaluate how well they are doing. Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve. In some classes pupils have targets set, which they find helpful. However, pupils are not clear about

the levels they have reached, or what they need to do to reach the next level. Marking is not as helpful as it could be. In some classes, teachers provide helpful comments and let the pupils know whether they have learnt what they were intended to in particular lessons, but in other classes, this is not the case.

Procedures for checking how well pupils are progressing in other subjects are unsatisfactory.

18. Currently there are no clear recording systems to chart pupils' attainment and progress in other subjects. Teachers know the pupils well and know who is reaching expected levels, who is doing better and who is a little behind. However this information is not recorded systematically, or passed on to the pupils' new teacher at the end of the academic year.

The inappropriate behaviour of a very small minority of pupils in Year 4 has a negative impact on their learning.

19. A small number of pupils have particular emotional and behavioural difficulties. They receive appropriate support for these special educational needs. Several of these pupils are now in Year 4 and are finding it increasingly hard to match the expectations set by staff for good behaviour. This affects their own learning adversely and, at times, disrupts the learning of the rest of the class. Staff have sensible strategies in place to overcome this problem, some of which are very recent.

The curriculum

Work planned for pupils in different areas of learning and subjects is good. It is broad, balanced and interesting. It is enriched effectively by a good range of activities outside lessons. The school is generously staffed by well-qualified teachers and assistants. The accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work planned is broad and varied with suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy.
- Good links are made between subjects.
- There are interesting activities and a good range of visits, visitors, events and out of lesson clubs.
- There is good provision for pupils' personal development and for ensuring that all, including those with special educational needs, enjoy equality of access and opportunity.
- The school is well-staffed and resourced and makes good use of its accommodation.

Commentary

Work planned is broad and varied with suitable emphasis on numeracy and literacy.

20. Since the last inspection, the school has adapted national guidance and commercial schemes well to develop a varied and exciting curriculum. This is firmly based on the National Curriculum and national areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. It prepares pupils well for the next stages in learning. Teachers make good use of the National Strategies for Numeracy and Literacy to plan work. A Basic Skills quality mark has been awarded for the school's success in these subjects. Statutory requirements are met.

21. The school is continuing to develop a more innovative curriculum. The last inspection's concerns about planning for ICT have been addressed. A variety of approaches are being tried, taking greater account of learning styles and developing a more creative approach. A three-year planning cycle has ensured that pupils cover the work that they should, despite annual changes in class composition. The school has recognised the need to ensure that pupils' skills in different subject areas are developed systematically. Staff are aware that the design of the current timetable means that some subjects, such as science, are not taught every week and are evaluating the impact of this.

Good links are made between subjects.

22. Subjects are often linked together through common themes across the whole school. This term, for example, pupils are looking at the Global Community. Class topics are also used effectively to engage pupils' interest. Literacy lessons are regularly linked to work in other subjects. Increasing use is made of ICT to support and develop learning. Care is taken to ensure subject-specific skills are not lost in this approach.

There are interesting activities and a good range of visits, visitors, events and out of lesson clubs.

23. Practical activities are used well to provide interest and pupils describe their experiences with enthusiasm. There is a wide range of visitors, a strong programme of visits and good use of the locality, with a very good range of clubs and sporting activities. These capture pupils' interest, develop their understanding and make learning relevant.

There is good provision for pupils' personal development and for ensuring that all, including those with special educational needs, enjoy equality of access and opportunity.

24. A well-developed programme of personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development. There is good commitment to ensuring all pupils well enjoy equality of access and opportunity in all areas. Support in lessons, withdrawal for specific activities and grouping by age for English and mathematics meets the needs of all pupils well, including the able and talented and those with special educational needs. There is regular review of the well-written and managed individual action plans, that clearly highlight the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs. This ensures they are well supported in accessing the same curriculum as their peers.

The school is well-staffed and resourced and makes good use of its accommodation.

25. The well-qualified and experienced teachers and teaching assistants are deployed effectively to ensure the best use of their expertise. The purchase of a commercial musical scheme and provision of instrumental tuition partly overcomes the lack of musical expertise amongst the staff. The school is investigating further ways of addressing this. Resources have been developed and improved since the last inspection and are good overall. Those for the Foundation Stage, literacy, science, numeracy, music, and ICT in particular, have benefited from addition and replacement.

26. Good use is made of the bright, well cared for accommodation and well-maintained grounds. Small teaching and study areas have been imaginatively created from unused space. However, the shape and poor acoustics of the library and Year 5 work area are not ideal for group teaching. The large hall and good-sized classrooms are all used well. Good use is made of the nearby village field and pavilion for physical education to overcome the limitations of the school grounds.

Care, guidance and support

The good care for pupils' well-being and health and safety, that was found at the time of the last inspection, has been maintained. Pupils are given sound support, advice and guidance. The school has very good procedures for actively involving pupils in the development of the school community for the benefit of all of its members.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements are good and form the basis of the good relationships that most pupils enjoy with staff.
- Children, particularly up to the age of seven, receive good encouragement and are involved well in their learning.
- Pupils' views are valued and they are involved very well in considering how to improve the school for the benefit of the whole school community.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety.

Commentary

Induction arrangements are good and form the basis of the good relationships which most pupils enjoy with staff.

27. The good relationships between staff and pupils begin when children first start school and parents are very positive about the support that their children receive to help them settle in. Parents and pupils are generally positive about the guidance and support that staff provide for pupils' personal development and very positive about the support and guidance given to children up to the oldest pupils. Staff know the pupils and their families well and work hard to ensure that the best interests of pupils are met. Staff respond well to pupils' developing personal and social needs. Staff provide good role models. Most pupils turn confidently to their teachers, or other adults working in the school and the good and trusting relationships, which most pupils enjoy with staff, give them confidence to share their news or concerns with their teachers.

Children, particularly up to the age of seven, receive good encouragement and are involved well in their learning.

28. Staff know pupils well and, as a consequence, have an awareness of those factors that might affect their progress at school. Assessment is satisfactory and pupils' personal development and learning is monitored satisfactorily. Sound support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is provided with good individual support and encouragement, particularly for the youngest pupils. The headteacher and staff are alert to the needs of individuals and identify pupils with special educational needs early in their school lives. Good provision is made in Reception and they continue to receive good support throughout the school. Individual learning plans are reviewed and updated regularly. Teachers and support staff keep a close watch on progress. They know these pupils well and have a clear view of their strengths and weaknesses. Pupils are encouraged to comment on progress towards their agreed targets.

Pupils' views are valued and they are involved very well in considering how to improve the school for the benefit of the whole school community.

29. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute to the development of the school through regular surveys to gain pupils' views, class councils and the elected School Council. These meet very regularly and pupils feel that their contributions are valued and that they have had a significant and beneficial impact on aspects of school

life ranging from a review of the anti-bullying policy and behaviour code to the choice of equipment in the playground.

The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety.

30. There are good arrangements to promote safe practice on a day-to-day basis, in lessons and on visits. Equipment is checked regularly, evacuation procedures practised and regular safety audits are completed. The school has a good portfolio of risk assessments that is reviewed and updated. Assessments include those for visits and activities and the school has a designated, and trained, visits co-ordinator. The school does not have a policy for the use of restraint in those circumstances when a child is in danger of harming himself or herself or another person. First aid provision is good, because within this small school, there are five members of staff who have undertaken first aid training. They have good knowledge of individual pupils' needs and there is good availability of trained first aiders at all times when the site is being used for school purposes. The school's child protection arrangements are based on those procedures issued by the Local Area Protection Committee and meet requirements. The headteacher, who co-ordinates this area of activity, is fully trained in child protection. She attends regular update sessions to ensure that she is conversant with best practice and all staff are provided with clear guidance on how to respond to any concerns. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between school and home is good and parents are pleased with what the school does for their children. Links with the community are very good and those with other schools are good. These links enrich the curriculum and learning opportunities as well as underpinning good transfer arrangements for pupils at the age of 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are pleased with the high expectations of staff, the quality of teaching, the progress that pupils make and the arrangements to support children settling in to school.
- The school makes good provision for the involvement of parents in their children's learning and involves them in the development of the school.
- Parents are very well informed about children's progress and the school makes good provision for the development of links with parents.
- The school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA) provides very valuable support for the work of the school, which benefits pupils significantly.
- The school has good links with other schools and very good links with the community.
- Transfer arrangements for pupils at the age of 11 are good.

Commentary

Parents are pleased with the high expectations of staff, the quality of teaching, the progress that pupils make and, the arrangements to support children settling in to school.

31. Parental perceptions of the school have generally improved since the last inspection with a very significant improvement in parental satisfaction with arrangements for homework and the information provided about children's progress, although a small minority still have some concerns about the information they receive. A small minority of parents, which exceeds the proportion found at the time of the last inspection, have

some concerns about standards of behaviour and bullying. Inspectors broadly support the positive views of parents and found that teaching was good overall. They found that although most pupils behaved well, a small minority did not, particularly in Year 4. The overall quality of information provided to parents about pupils' progress was judged to be very good.

The school makes good provision for the involvement of parents in their children's learning and involves them in the development of the school.

32. The school seeks to ensure that all parents become involved in supporting their children's learning, by encouraging children to complete their homework and supporting the school in addressing any concerns which might affect a child's learning. Most parents are supportive in these respects and pupils benefit from their encouragement and support. Most parents provide good support and encouragement for their children.

33. The school has good strategies to involve parents each year in the process of reviewing and developing the school improvement plan. Parents are surveyed each year to ascertain their levels of satisfaction and identify areas of concern. In addition, there is a consultative element in the termly 'education exchange evening' which primarily informs parents about curriculum issues but is also used to seek their views. All of this information contributes effectively to the school planning process. In addition, the school usually resolves any individual concerns of parents informally and this was the case throughout the last year. However, in the event that a parent should wish to make a formal complaint, there is an appropriate complaints procedure.

Parents are very well informed about children's progress and the school makes good provision for the development of links with parents.

34. Information provided to parents about their children's progress is very good. Reports are very clearly written, without jargon, and provide very clear individual targets, which enable parents to understand how to support their children and move to the next stage of their learning. Staff are readily accessible to parents and consultation meetings in the autumn term focus on targets. In the spring term, parents receive a written report. In the summer term, a further consultation meeting provides the opportunity to review progress against individual targets. Consultation evenings are very well attended. The school provides good curriculum information to parents each term and regular newsletters about the life and work of the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully consulted in the process of reviewing and agreeing their child's individual action plans. They are kept well informed about progress towards the agreed targets and often help their child to achieve these.

The school's PTA provides very valuable support for the work of the school which benefits pupils significantly.

35. A small but hardworking committee runs the school's PTA. The PTA raises funds to support the work of the school and provides valuable additional resources and facilities such as outdoor play equipment, a mini trim trail and support with transport costs, which widens access to learning opportunities. In addition, a number of parents and other 'friends' provide practical support, within classrooms. The support of these parents and the 'friends' is greatly appreciated by pupils and staff and benefits pupils' learning.

The school has good links with other schools and very good links with the community.

36. The good links with the local secondary school benefit pupils' learning through access to its swimming pool, the provision for talented and able pupils in Year 5 of 'master classes', and involvement in initiatives such as the rural dance project for pupils up to the age of seven. Strong links with the village playgroup help children when they first start school because they have become familiar with it through visits and shared activities.
37. Very good links with the community benefit pupils in many ways. They contribute to work in most subjects, to pupils' understanding of local culture and heritage, to their appreciation of the needs of others and to the resources available to them. For example, visiting artists and theatre groups have contributed to pupils' work in history and geography and links with a supermarket supported a project to develop their understanding of 'healthy eating and living'. Local residents act as oral witnesses and bring their personal experiences to enrich areas of the curriculum such as history. Involvement in the village's May Festival and the church's May celebration of village life assist in developing an appreciation of village culture; the support of the local cricket club benefits physical education; fundraising by the local pub provides welcome additional facilities and entertaining local senior citizens and supporting local, national and international charities helps children to understand the needs of others. The local area and facilities such as the museum are well used as resources to support learning.

Transfer arrangements for pupils at the age of 11 are good.

38. Pupils are familiar with the secondary school, to which they transfer at the age of 11, through their use of facilities such as the swimming pool and organised visits leading up to transfer. These benefit their confidence. Arrangements for transfer are supported well by close liaison regarding individual pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher is a good leader. She has developed a united teaching team who provide good support and together with key staff make a sound contribution to leadership and management of the school. Management, including financial management is satisfactory. Governors contribute well to the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's good leadership provides a clear focus and direction for the school's work.
- There is a hard-working and committed team of teachers and support staff who work well together in a caring and supportive manner.
- Staff and governors have good strategies to monitor how well the school is doing, but do not always use their findings to bring about improvements.
- Governors are supportive and well informed.

Commentary

The headteacher's good leadership provides a clear focus and direction for the school's work.

39. The headteacher provides good leadership based on a determination to provide for pupils' all-round development. She has clear ideas about teaching and learning and the curriculum. She communicates these ideas well to colleagues. This effective, ongoing and often informal process of professional dialogue has resulted in staff and governors sharing common ambitions and goals for the school. There is a clear commitment to provide a stimulating and interesting learning environment in which pupils can develop as articulate and collaborative learners. The headteacher consults widely with parents and pupils and works effectively with governors and staff to create a school improvement plan that reflects these ambitions.
40. The deputy headteacher provides good support and works well with the headteacher on strategic planning and day-to-day management. Leadership of the curriculum by subject co-ordinators is sound overall. The Foundation stage leader manages the class well. Management of the school's provision for special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages and co-ordinates the programme well. She supports colleagues by assisting them in formulating and reviewing learning plans and works with pupils to help them to achieve their current targets.

There is a hard-working and committed team of teachers and support staff who work well together in a caring and supportive manner.

41. The headteacher knows the staff well and praises their achievements. She has developed a caring and supportive ethos in which teamwork is promoted strongly. All staff are good role models, particularly in relation to their subject responsibilities and in their readiness to provide advice and support for colleagues. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are good. The school's policy for performance management is being implemented satisfactorily. Teachers' targets reflect both whole-school priorities and individual needs and the headteacher actively encourages staff to take part in further training. This makes a significant contribution to the quality and range of opportunities offered to pupils. Formal arrangements for the performance management of teaching assistants and non-teaching staff are not established but there are sensible plans to put this right.

Staff and governors have good strategies to monitor how well the school is doing, but staff do not always use their findings to bring about improvements.

42. There is a good range of strategies in place to check on the school's work. The headteacher, subject leaders and governors observe lessons, talk to groups of pupils and examine samples of their work. All subjects are reviewed regularly as part of an established two-year rolling programme. Most subject co-ordinators have received additional training to support them in this aspect of their work. However, areas of concern are not always followed up systematically or with sufficient rigour to bring about improvement, for example the long-standing problems with the poor attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of pupils in the current Year 4. Although staff report that strategies to manage these pupils' behaviour had been successful when they were younger, the problem had not been fully resolved. Subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in the analysis of assessment data. As a result, they do not have sufficiently clear pictures of how well pupils are doing across the school and, consequently, are not in strong positions to target areas for improvement.

Financial management.

43. Financial planning is satisfactory. However, it does not always sufficiently take account of necessary expenditure, for example performance related pay rises for the

headteacher and deputy headteacher. Nonetheless, the school has successfully maintained small class sizes. The annual budget is debated rigorously at governors' meetings and the principles of best value are soundly applied. The school has operated with a deficit for the past two years but expects to balance the budget this year. Overall, it provides good value for money. The headteacher reports on the high quality support from the local education authority as well as the careful monitoring of spending by governors.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004 (the most recent year for which final figures are available)

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	269,673.00	Balance from previous year	-3799.52
Total expenditure	271,498.27	Balance carried forward to the next year	-5624.79
Expenditure per pupil	2137.16		

Governors are supportive and well-informed.

44. The governance of the school is good. In addition to the detailed reports provided by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators, governors are proactive in finding out for themselves how things are going. The school benefits greatly from the wide range of professional experience and expertise that key governors bring to their roles. Many are regular and welcome visitors. They observe lessons, help teachers and pupils in the classroom, talk to staff and report back to their governor colleagues on these activities. This ensures that they are well informed and well placed to ask challenging questions. The headteacher and chair of governors meet regularly to discuss school matters. However, the chair is a relatively new appointment and there is not yet the close partnership seen in most schools.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children in the Reception class are taught in a single year group. Sometimes they join with Year 1 pupils for physical education sessions. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well by the Reception class teacher. The classroom and outside area are organised and equipped well and provide an interesting and stimulating learning environment for the children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are excited about learning.
- Children behave very well.
- Children have a respect for the cultures and beliefs of others.
- Children have limited opportunities to plan and review activities that they work on independently.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age, with some exceeding these.
Achievement	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Other factors affecting achievement	Favourable child-adult ratio means that children are supported well.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

Children are excited about learning.

45. Children enjoy school and participate enthusiastically in the range of activities available. They are caught up in a love of learning because staff make work fun and provide good support.

Children behave very well.

46. Children clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and most respond very well to the staff's high expectations of good behaviour. They listen carefully to their teachers and are beginning to use the classroom conventions of putting up their hands to ask a question and lining up for activities like assembly.

Children have a respect for the cultures and beliefs of others.

47. This term the whole school is working on the theme of 'Global Citizenship' and children in the Reception class have been finding out about life in the Caribbean. Children are very interested in the differences and similarities between life in Hartfield and Jamaica and show respect for the different cultural traditions.

Children have limited opportunities to plan and review activities that they work on independently.

48. During the inspection, teachers, assistants and helpers directed most of the activities planned. As a result, children had limited opportunities to play and work independently. There is not currently an expectation that children plan their own activities for part of the day, or evaluate how well they have done.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very well equipped frequently used role-play area.
- Parents and helpers are involved very successfully in helping their children with reading.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age, with some exceeding these.
Achievement	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Other factors affecting achievement	Very good links with other areas of learning.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

There is a very well equipped frequently used role-play area.

49. Within the classroom there is a large role-play area, which is enjoyed tremendously by the children. It is altered on a regular basis to complement the class topic and is currently being used as a market stall. There are also opportunities for children to engage in role-play in the outside area. These opportunities help them to develop their speaking and listening skills effectively.

Parents and helpers are involved very successfully in helping their children with reading.

50. First thing in the morning, parents and carers are welcomed into the classroom to read with the children. This fosters children's enjoyment of books and stories very effectively and helps them to gain confidence in the early stages of reading.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work related to number is taught imaginatively.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age, with some exceeding these.
Achievement	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Other factors affecting achievement	Good links with other areas of learning.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

Work related to number is taught imaginatively.

51. As in all of the areas of learning, work related to mathematical development is planned very imaginatively so that children find it enjoyable and pick up new ideas quickly. Singing rhymes and songs are used regularly to help children to understand numbers. Their work shows that higher attaining pupils are working with numbers up to fifteen and that lower attaining children are familiar with numbers up to six.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities planned are interesting and stimulating.
- There is a strong focus on helping children to understand how people live in other countries.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age, with some exceeding these.
Achievement	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Other factors affecting achievement	Very good links made with other areas of learning.
Improvement since last inspection	Good.

Activities planned are interesting and stimulating.

52. Interesting activities are planned and this helps children to enjoy finding out about the world around them. Recently, for example, they experimented with different materials to see which would make the best umbrella. There is a good range of activities available, including access to the two class computers.

There is a strong focus on helping children to understand how people live in other countries.

53. Currently, children are finding out about the Caribbean. During the inspection they looked at different fruits and worked well together to make fruit salads. The teacher involved them very effectively by telling them about her recent visit to the Caribbean.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the village playing field.
- There are good opportunities for children to handle small tools and equipment.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age, with some exceeding these.
Achievement	Good.

Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Other factors affecting achievement	Good use is made of village playing field.
Improvement since last inspection	Good – resources and outside area improved.

Good use is made of the village playing field.

54. Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills in the outside area, with a range of games, wheeled toys and climbing apparatus available. The school also uses the village field (The Town Croft) and the Reception children have joint sessions with Year 1 pupils. In one session seen, Reception children showed the expected levels of control and co-ordination in their use of beanbags. They also controlled uni-hockey sticks with two hands, showing varying levels of success.

There are good opportunities for children to handle small tools and equipment.

55. Children have good opportunities to use small tools and equipment and handle these dexterously. They showed a good understanding of the importance of health and safety in one session, when, under supervision, they used knives to cut fruit.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children' observational drawing and painting is above the levels expected for their age.
- There are good opportunities for children to use their imaginations in role-play.

Commentary

Standards of attainment	Most children reach the levels expected for their age, with some exceeding these.
Achievement	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.
Other factors affecting achievement	Good links with other areas of learning.
Improvement since last inspection	Good provision has been maintained.

Children' observational drawing and painting are above the levels expected for their age.

56. Displays of children's pastel work and painting show that they use colour well. Some of their observations of flowers are of high quality. Their weaving shows great dexterity. Their work is displayed well and clearly celebrated by staff.

There are good opportunities for children to use their imaginations in role-play.

57. Mention has already been made of the very good role-play areas. These provide good opportunities for children to be imaginative and creative in their play. Recently these areas have been a hairdressers and a market stall.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been well above average in Year 6 national tests for the last two years.
- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.
- Planning for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is at the early stages.
- Parents make a very good contribution to pupils' reading development in their first years at school.
- The school has worked hard and successfully to raise standards in writing.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

COMMENTARY

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Standards of attainment	In line with expected levels in Year 2.	Well above expected levels in Year 6.
Achievement	Good.	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good leadership and satisfactory management.	Satisfactory.
Other factors affecting achievement	Good support from parents in sharing books with children.	
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory progress with good provision maintained.	

Standards have been well above average in Year 6 national tests for the last two years.

58. Although the small numbers in each year group can result in huge swings in standards in comparison with the national average, standards have been rising in English. For the last two years, standards have been well above average in Year 6 and much better than those in similar schools. There has also been some recent improvement in Year 2 tests, and last year standards were well above average in reading and average in writing. Currently, pupils' work in different year groups ranges from well above expected levels, as it is in Year 6, to in line with expected levels, as it is in Year 2. The differences are linked to the different proportions of higher and lower attaining pupils in each year group.

Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.

59. The key to the success of a school's provision, especially in small schools, is whether individual pupils make satisfactory or better progress. At St Mary's the Virgin, all groups of pupils do well, including higher attaining, bilingual pupils and those with special educational needs. The exception is a very small group of pupils with behavioural difficulties, many in Year 4, who are not achieving as well as they should. The school's tracking shows that most pupils in Year 4 have made good progress through the school.

60. Good teaching underpins pupils' good achievements. In the lessons seen, all the teaching was good or very good. It was particularly strong in Years 1 and Year 3. Strengths in the teaching include good planning and preparation, good support for groups and individuals, and interesting work. In the very good lessons, very high expectations helped pupils to do very well.

Planning for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is at the early stages.

61. Most pupils speak confidently. They listen well to their teachers and each other. In all lessons pupils have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills by engaging in question-and-answer sessions. Sometimes, they are asked to report back on what they have done at the end of lessons. Most manage this well. Occasionally, pupils

discuss their work with each other, but this is not a feature of work in all classes. Currently, there is no whole school plan to outline the development of speaking and listening skills year on year and no framework to outline the development of these skills in other subjects. Drama is not timetabled regularly, for example.

Parents make a very good contribution to pupils' reading development in their first years at school

62. Staff have worked successfully to raise standards in reading. One of the strategies adopted has been the encouragement of shared reading sessions in younger pupils' classes first thing in the morning. Pupils enjoy the support of their parents and carers at the start of the day and have developed very positive attitudes to reading. Other successful strategies that have had a positive impact on standards in reading are:

- Modification of the reading schemes used.
- A careful check on the books that pupils read.
- The introduction of 'story sacks' to interest pupils in reading.
- Regular book events.
- Thorough teaching of letter sounds.
- A well-stocked library.
- Good opportunities to use reading skills in other subjects.

The school has worked hard and successfully to raise standards in writing.

37. Raising standards in writing has been a recent focus for whole school improvement. Measures taken are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. The factors that are contributing to rising standards are:

- Interesting writing tasks, which appeal to boys as well as girls.
- Opportunities for extended writing.
- Good teaching of grammar and sentence structure.

In some classes teachers have very high expectations, but in others, staff do not set high enough expectations for the neat presentation of work or good handwriting.

Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

38. There is some inconsistency through the school in the way pupils' work is marked and the ways in which they are helped to improve. In the best examples of marking, teachers make it clear to pupils whether they have grasped the main point of the lesson. In some classes, teachers tick work without comment and highlight spelling errors. In some classes, pupils have individual targets for improvement, but few pupils know whether they have reached the levels expected for their age, or what they have to do to reach the next level.

39. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The subject co-ordinator is extremely well-organised and has a clear grip on provision in younger classes. She has had the opportunity to monitor the work throughout the school, but does not have a clear picture of teaching and learning in older pupils' classes.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Pupils have good opportunities to develop their language and literacy skills in other subjects. This is because work in the literacy hour is often planned in conjunction with the 'topic' for the term. Pupils use these skills in science and the humanities particularly well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in national tests vary year on year but most pupils make good progress.
- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good.
- All groups of pupils receive good support.
- Pupils are not always given clear guidance about how to improve.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in other subjects.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Standards of attainment	Below the expected level.	At the expected level.
Achievement	Good.	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.	Good.
Other factors affecting achievement	Pupils taught in year groups. Good opportunities to use mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects.	
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory.	

Standards in national tests vary year on year but most pupils make good progress.

37. Standards fluctuate in national tests because of differences in the make-up of the small year groups and the proportions of pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able. For the past two years, standards have been average or above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Currently, standards are below the expected levels in Year 2 and in line with the expected levels in Year 6. This masks a very wide range in the attainment of individual pupils. Pupils' work and other evidence seen during the inspection shows that most pupils make good progress overall and achieve well. Progress in mental mathematics is slower than other aspects of their work because pupils are not confident in using a range of strategies to work out problems. In some classes, pupils' work is poorly presented and does not reflect their good knowledge and understanding.

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good.

38. Teaching is good overall, although there are variations between the classes. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. Teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy and other support materials to prepare well for their lessons. Teaching assistants are well-briefed and their support helps to ensure that all groups achieve well. The school has worked on improving the quality of teachers' questioning and the positive impact of this is evident in the way that teachers target pupils carefully to extend their thinking. They plan interesting activities that build effectively on pupils' earlier experiences so that learning develops progressively. Most pupils are keen to learn and they persevere and concentrate well. The poor attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of pupils affects the pace of teaching and restricts their learning. In one or two classes, more use could be made

of practical aids to support learning, particularly when introducing new or challenging topics.

All groups of pupils receive good support.

39. For four days each week classes are split and pupils are taught in year groups. This results in smaller teaching groups and ensures that pupils of all abilities receive good levels of support. Teachers and assistants are better able to cater for individual needs and all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve equally well. Higher attaining pupils also do well. In Year 6, for example, a large proportion regularly exceeds the expected level as a result of the teacher's high expectations. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Pupils are not always given clear guidance about how to improve.

40. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. The co-ordinator has observed teaching and learning and, with the headteacher, has analysed assessment data and set individual targets for pupils. However, pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own progress and, as a result, do not have a clear view of which level they are working at and what they need to do to achieve the next level. The well-presented portfolio of samples of pupils' work is helpful for teachers, but does not indicate the levels pupils have achieved. This means that it is not as useful as it could be in helping teachers and pupils to gauge the levels that pupils are achieving.

Mathematics across the curriculum

41. Teachers make good use of opportunities for pupils to use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects as, for example, in the current whole-school study of Global Citizenship. The school is aware of the need to plan for these opportunities more systematically and to continue to develop the use of ICT to support pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

42. It is not possible to reach an overall judgement on the quality of provision in science as no lessons were observed during the inspection. It is possible, however, to reach conclusions about standards and certain aspects of teaching and learning from the school's assessment records, teachers' planning, pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils.

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Standards of attainment	In line with expected levels.	In line with expected levels.
Achievement	Sound progress made.	Sound progress made.
Quality of teaching and learning	Insufficient evidence.	Insufficient evidence.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory.	Satisfactory.
Other factors affecting achievement	Pupils have difficulty in applying previous learning to new situations. Strong emphasis on practical activities to develop pupils' investigative and observational skills. Increasing use made of ICT to support learning.	
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory.	

Standards have risen since the last inspection and pupils make sound progress.

43. Last year, standards in Year 6 national tests were average and teachers' assessment records suggest similar standards this year. This is a considerable improvement on the previous year when results were well below average. Teacher assessments in

Year 2 suggest that standards are broadly in line with expected levels. In all year groups, pupils' work shows them working at the level expected for their age. Pupils make sound progress and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve equally well. There is no difference, in the work seen, in the performance of boys or girls.

44. By Year 6, pupils can explain the principles of fair testing, are encouraged and supported in planning their own investigations, suggest outcomes and record observations with increasing refinement. They are developing scientific knowledge but often find difficulty applying previous learning to new situations. Staff have recognised that this may be one of the reasons that pupils do not always achieve as well as they might. They are looking at ways to overcome this. Staff have also noted that the current timetabling of science lessons means that there are often gaps of some weeks when pupils do not work on science tasks. They feel that this may also be a contributory factor in pupils' satisfactory, rather than good progress. Care has been taken to develop pupils' skills and knowledge over a three-year cycle to ensure all topics are covered. However, there are long periods before topics are revisited. The quality of work in pupils' books is very variable.

There are good opportunities for pupils to develop investigative and observational skills.

45. Pupils' work and conversations with pupils and teachers show a strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' investigative and observational skills. This has been a focus since the last inspection. These regular practical activities capture pupils' interest and are clearly remembered. Year 5 and 6 pupils recalled in detail investigating and recording the interaction of yeast, and Year 2 pupils how they pulled shoes across the floor to test friction. Written work shows good attention is paid by teachers to developing pupils' subject vocabulary and a structured approach to recording. Increasing use is being made of ICT with pupils in Years 5 and 6 using a digital microscope to observe mould and a digital camera to record stages in their yeast experiments.

Pupils do not have a clear enough view of how well they are doing or how to improve.

46. Assessment procedures have been improved and new 'end of unit' assessments have been recently introduced. Pupils' involvement in assessing their own learning is still at an early stage. Different approaches are being tried in different classes and a common approach is not yet consistently applied. Marking, although usually encouraging, is generally brief and does not often indicate to pupils how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

The subject has been led and managed satisfactorily.

47. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has made good use of personal expertise to improve the approach to observational and investigative work since the last inspection. Staff training, support for colleagues, lesson observations and a well-constructed action plan have all been central to this. Resources have been improved and a commercial scheme introduced to augment national guidance and provide support for non-specialists. Opportunities for the co-ordinator to analyse test results and evaluate teachers' assessments, or work alongside colleagues have been limited. As a teacher of younger pupils, this has meant that she has a restricted view of the quality of teaching and learning in the older classes. There is a useful portfolio of examples of pupils' work, but the work has not been attributed a National Curriculum level, which would make it more useful for staff.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been improvement in resources, staff confidence and expertise.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and achieve well.
- The subject is led and managed well, but there are few opportunities for the co-ordinator to work alongside colleagues or monitor work in the subject.
- There is increasing use made of ICT in other subjects.

Commentary

	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Standards of attainment	At least at level expected in work seen.	At least at level expected in work seen.
Achievement	Good.	Good.
Quality of teaching and learning	Good.	Good.
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good.	Good.
Other factors affecting achievement	Improved resources, staff confidence and expertise. Increasing use made of ICT in other subjects. ICT technician provides very good support. Technical problems with the wireless network cause frustration.	
Improvement since the last inspection	Good.	

48. During the inspection, pupils were regularly observed using computers individually or in small groups. They worked with teaching assistants, governors or teachers to complete tasks linked to work in other subjects. Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection in improving staff expertise, planning of work and equipment.

There has been improvement in resources, staff confidence and expertise.

49. Staff are confident, competent users of ICT. The introduction of the wireless network and purchase of laptop computers has provided more flexibility. However, there are problems with the wireless Reception in some rooms. In a Year 4 literacy session, for example, planned activities were not able to proceed as intended. Teachers are good at overcoming technical problems and make contingency plans to avoid the loss of learning opportunities. They are positive about using ICT to support teaching and looking forward to acquisition of an interactive whiteboard that will allow greater integration of ICT into their lessons. Pupils now have regular opportunities to use ICT and, consequently, attainment has risen.

Pupils are enthusiastic and achieve well.

50. Teachers' planning and conversations with pupils show the expected range of activities are now being taught. Most pupils' work is at the level expected for their age and a number go beyond this. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 are able to assemble, move and correct text, use ICT for research and manipulate images. By Year 6, pupils combine images and effects in multimedia slide presentations, copy, redraft and amend text and last year edited and assembled a short story video. Pupils talk enthusiastically about making greater use of ICT. Many pupils have access to computers at home and use these skills in

school. Small groups work with teachers on new tasks and pupils in Year 5 and 6 have been working with a governor to create spreadsheet formulae. No difference was seen in the performance of boys and girls and all groups including pupils with special educational needs achieve equally well.

The subject is led and managed well but there are few opportunities for the co-ordinator to work alongside colleagues or monitor work in the subject.

51. Since the last inspection, the enthusiastic co-ordinator has made a significant contribution to the development of the subject. National grants and financial contributions from parents and the church have been used well to purchase equipment. There are plans in place for further acquisitions when funds allow. The subject action plan has provided a clear agenda for improvement with future plans more focused on developing pupils' learning. The employment of a part time ICT technician has provided valuable specialist expertise and ensured ongoing functioning of the system. There have been no opportunities for the co-ordinator to work alongside colleagues or monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The new assessment arrangements will provide opportunities to involve pupils in the process of recording what they have learnt and can do. There is a useful portfolio of examples of pupils' work, but the work has not been attributed a National Curriculum level, which would make it more useful for staff.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

Increasing use is made of ICT in other subjects.

52. ICT is often used to support or introduce work in other subjects with good use made of the digital projector as a teaching tool. Pupils have regular access to computers and make good use of them for research, to present and complete work and extend learning in other subjects. Planned development of resources will allow greater and more frequent use of ICT as a learning tool.

HUMANITIES

53. Work in **history and geography** was sampled, with three lessons seen. This is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about overall provision in these subjects. However, examination of pupils' work, scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils confirms that the range and depth of work in both subjects is good. This promotes pupils' factual knowledge effectively as well as developing their skills of historical and geographical enquiry.

54. Teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory in the geography lessons seen. In the most successful lesson, the teacher made very good use of pupils' existing knowledge to move their learning on. There was a strong emphasis on the development of skills and the use of geographical vocabulary. Pupils were encouraged to discuss the various combinations of transport required to travel to different holiday destinations. The teacher made very good use of posters, maps and globes to bring learning alive. In a less effective lesson, the teacher's expectations of pupils' behaviour and output were not high enough. Pupils' attitudes were poor and the pace of learning was slow. Although no lessons were observed in history it is clear that, as they move through the school, pupils acquire a developing sense of chronology through the use of dates and timelines and by considering and comparing different periods.

55. The whole-school study of Global Citizenship has motivated staff and pupils alike. Purposeful and relevant activities across the curriculum contribute well to pupils' personal development as well as raising their awareness of current environmental issues. In Year 6, for example pupils showed a good level of background knowledge about fair and ethical trading when investigating the cost of imported goods such as bananas and chocolate.
56. Leadership and management of these subjects are satisfactory. The co-ordinators have compiled portfolios of completed work that provide clear evidence of a broad range of interesting tasks with a strong links across subjects. However, these samples of work are not levelled or classified by age to guide teachers' planning and provide examples of expected standards. There are currently no formal arrangements for assessing pupils' progress and this is clearly unsatisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

37. Only three lessons were seen in creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects and so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision in these subjects.
38. One lesson was seen in **art and design** and inspectors also looked at the pupils' work which is very attractively displayed in classrooms and public areas. It is quite clear that art and design has a high profile in the school and during the inspection the school received notification of a 'Artsmark Gold' award. The previous weakness from the last inspection related to studying the work of artists has been very successfully tackled. Pupils have worked with a local artist to produce several very fine fabric wall hangings and last summer the whole school was involved in the 'Take one picture' project in association with the National Gallery.
39. Pupils' work shows that they are developing skills using a range of media. Sketchbooks are generally used well. Pupils' work shows that they are working at the levels expected for their age, with some doing better. In the lesson seen in Years 5 and 6, teaching and learning were good. This was an introductory lesson to work related to Aboriginal cultural traditions. Pupils showed respect for Aboriginal ideas and began to plan their own designs based on Aboriginal conventions. Two after-school clubs for younger and older pupils enhance work in lessons. These are very popular and work produced is of high quality. The subject leader provides a clear steer for the work in classrooms and is currently developing assessment procedures.
40. No lessons were seen in **design and technology**. Planning for the subject is based on national guidance and modified by the school to fit in to the school's 'topics'. Work is often linked to other subjects. For example, work on display in the corridor shows Year 3 and 4 pupils have constructed chassis with axles so that their Trojan Horse models were mobile.
41. Older pupils described how they examined examples of products, discussed and developed ideas, then designed and made their own. Pupils' work shows the design process is developed and the stages recorded in greater detail as they progress from year to year. Pupils explained how they planned and evaluated their finished work and suggested possible improvements. Pupils work on interesting projects. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils have investigated, compared and designed sunhats. Last year, in Years 3 and 4, they had planned, modified, made and evaluated moving toys and models of fairground rides they had been on in Brighton. Pupils are introduced to

a range of materials and techniques as they progress through the school. Year 1 pupils have used a template to shape a hand puppet, learnt how to stitch it and decorated it in their own style. Opportunities for food technology are more limited. There is little evidence of ICT being used to research, plan or model products and none of its use to control them.

42. Only one lesson was seen in **music**. This was planned well by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher, who worked hard to engage a group of pupils, which included several with behavioural difficulties. The quality of teaching was good, but learning was only satisfactory because a group of pupils disrupted the lesson. Pupils reached the levels expected for their age in composing a rhythm. Pupils sang tunefully in assemblies and again reached the levels expected for their age. Their singing in one assembly was enhanced by the skilful accompaniment of the choir of governors. Some pupils receive instrumental tuition from visiting specialists and learn to play a range of instruments, including the violin and guitar. This enhances the music provision for some pupils. The school has highlighted music as area for development and is working with the local education authority to enhance teachers' skills in this area. Developing multicultural links was an area highlighted for improvement by the last inspection. There has been some progress made in this area. Currently, there is not a music co-ordinator to lead the work in this subject.
43. In **physical education**, the curriculum is well planned to include all the expected strands of the subject including swimming, in which pupils achieve well. It is very well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and team activities that attract great interest from pupils throughout the school. Teachers and pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and this is reflected in the Activemark awarded in recognition of the school's commitment to promoting the benefits of school sport.
44. In the two lessons seen, teaching was good and very good. Four teachers were involved and they ensured that pupils sustained high levels of activity throughout. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed their lessons, followed instructions closely and practised hard to improve their techniques. As a result, in Year 1 they made good progress in developing basic games skills. In Years 5 and 6, pupils achieved very well in a dance lesson that also made a significant contribution to their personal development and global awareness.
45. The co-ordinator sets a good example for colleagues. She has a good overview of standards and provision across the school and has plans to introduce procedures to assess pupils' progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

46. The school has developed a strong, regular programme of personal, social and health education that supports pupils' personal development well. It is often linked to work in science and other subjects and includes work on diet, health, sex and the safe use of medicines. Good use is made of visitors, such as the school nurse, to bring learning alive. Discussion sessions are used to explore topics such as feelings, emotions and personal safety based on local authority guidance. Pupils report that these sessions provide good opportunities to explore issues and resolve conflicts. They regularly support others less fortunate than themselves by organising fundraising events, a recent example being the Tsunami appeal. The School Council provides good opportunities for pupils to contribute ideas and participate in the development of the

school community. Pupils described how class sessions provide opportunities to discuss and clarify ideas, relay outcomes of meetings and participate in the decision-making process.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).