

INSPECTION REPORT

MEECHING VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newhaven

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114440

Headteacher: Mrs Chris Gascoyne

Lead inspector: Miss Margaret Coussins

Dates of inspection: 31st January – 2nd February 2005

Inspection number: 271084

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	185
School address:	Valley Road Newhaven East Sussex
Postcode:	BN9 9UT
Telephone number:	01273 514300
Fax number:	01273 514300
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	6 th December 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Meeching Valley is an average-sized primary school for boys and girls who are 4-11 years old. It has 183 pupils organised in seven classes. The school is situated in Newhaven and draws most of its pupils from the surrounding area. It serves families from a range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are less favourable than the national picture. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is below that expected for their age. Fifty-nine pupils, an above average proportion, have been identified as having special educational needs. These needs are largely for speech or communication and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Four pupils have a statement to outline particular special needs. The great majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds. There are four pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. In 2002, the school gained a Schools Achievement Award for improved results in national tests and a Healthy Schools Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16084	Margaret Coussins	Lead inspector	English, geography, history, religious education, English as an additional language
19653	Libby Dickson	Lay inspector	
10226	Sue Senior	Team inspector	Science, art and design, music, Foundation Stage
30244	Roger Tapley	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education, special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Limited

Langshaw
Pastens Road
Oxted
Surrey
RH8 0RE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Meeching Valley is an improving school whose current effectiveness is satisfactory.

The headteacher's good leadership is strengthening the quality of teaching and the staff have created a positive environment for learning in which standards are improving. Pupils have good attitudes to school and work hard. Achievement is good in the reception class and satisfactory throughout the rest of the school. By the end of Year 6, standards are average overall. The quality of teaching, leadership and management is satisfactory and improving, despite recent difficulties with staff absences. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Children get a good start to school in the reception class
- The headteacher has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve pupils' learning further
- Standards in mathematics are not high enough
- The school is working effectively to raise standards in writing
- In some lessons, work is not matched well enough to challenge pupils of all abilities
- Pupils are happy and confident in their work because the school cares for them effectively
- The range of activities outside of lessons is good and supports the school's work in promoting pupils' good personal development

Since the school was inspected in 1999, improvement has been good. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have improved in English and science. In mathematics, standards have been maintained. The school has dealt with the key issues from the previous inspection with particular success in improving unsatisfactory teaching, financial planning and resources for science.

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	E	D	D
mathematics	D	E*	E	E
science	D	D	D	D

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When children start school, overall attainment is below that expected for their ages and well below expectations in writing. In the reception class, children achieve well because of good teaching, good liaison with parents and good leadership and management. Most children are on track to reach the goals expected nationally by the time they join Year 1, except in writing. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily in English and mathematics and, by the end of Year 2, standards are average. Pupils' achieve well in writing to reach average standards by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 6, standards in English and science are average and, although standards in mathematics are below average, they are improving. Current standards are better than the results shown in the table above because the school has overcome recent difficulties in staffing and there is now more consistency in teaching approaches. Standards are average in other subjects inspected. In

most lessons, pupils from all backgrounds and of all abilities achieve equally well, but in some lessons pupils of differing abilities are not given work which challenges them effectively. The targets set for pupils with special educational needs do not always identify skills that need to be improved. Whilst these pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, it is not good enough in some lessons.

Considering their starting points, aspects of pupils' achievement are good, largely owing to the good start they get in the reception class. Although achievement in Years 1 to 6 has improved recently, it is still satisfactory in most lessons.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are fostered well. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to school, they are interested in their work and keen to learn. Their behaviour is satisfactory and relationships between pupils and with adults are good. The school provides lots of opportunities to develop pupils' social skills and there is a strong emphasis on learning about right and wrong. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the reception class, good teaching helps children to build successfully upon their existing skills and to acquire new ones. Activities are well planned to meet the needs of all children and staff provide very good encouragement and support, which helps the children to make good progress. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is satisfactory overall. In around one third of lessons, teaching is good. Where teaching is good, resources are used well to interest and motivate pupils, teachers have good relationships with pupils and tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. In some lessons, although teaching was satisfactory, the pace of work was too slow or the activities were not challenging enough for some pupils. Suitable assessment systems are in place to check on pupils' progress, but teachers do not always use this information well enough to plan for the next stage in pupils' learning.

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of activities with a strong focus on teaching the core skills to develop greater competency in literacy and numeracy. There are good opportunities for enriching the curriculum. The school provides good care for its pupils and has created good links with its parents, the local community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership for the school with a strong focus on raising standards and improving behaviour. She has managed the difficulties of long-term staff absence well and made significant improvements to the school environment for pupils and staff. The leadership of subjects is satisfactory overall. Leadership in some subjects has not yet had a significant impact on raising standards because of the recent re-organisation of leadership roles. Governors fulfil their role satisfactorily and ensure that the school meets statutory requirements. They have a satisfactory grasp of the school's strengths and areas that need improvement and provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. Management systems are satisfactory. Good systems are in place for managing staff performance and for the induction of staff.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school. They are pleased that their children are happy at school, and feel that they are treated fairly. There are some concerns from parents about inappropriate behaviour and bullying at the school. Whilst there is a small element of unacceptable conduct in some lessons, most pupils behave well, and inspectors judged behaviour to be satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy coming to school, find lessons interesting

and are keen to learn. They enjoy taking part in the various activities provided during and after the school day.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Improve standards in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 6
- Continue to raise standards in writing across the school
- Ensure that work in lessons meets the needs of pupils of all levels of ability

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. In the reception class, children's achievement is good and, by the time they join Year 1, most reach the expected standards, except in writing. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily in English and mathematics and, by the end of Year 2, standards are close to those expected for their ages. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement in English and science is satisfactory and standards are average by the end of Year 6. Although achievement in mathematics is satisfactory overall, weaknesses in aspects of pupils' work result in standards by Year 6 that are below average. Pupils who have special educational needs, pupils who are identified as gifted and talented and those learning English as an additional language achieve as well as others. In most other subjects inspected, standards are as expected for pupils' ages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the reception class because the curriculum and the quality of teaching are good
- Based on their attainment when they start school, pupils achieve well in writing in Years 1 and 2 but, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, writing standards are not as good as those in reading
- Standards in mathematics are not high enough
- Standards in science are improving because of more opportunities to learn through practical investigations
- The presentation of pupils' work, including their handwriting, is not as good as it should be

Commentary

National test results

1. The results of the 2004 Year 2 national tests are better than those reported at the last inspection for reading and mathematics, and similar for writing. Over the past three years, the results have improved at a similar rate to most schools. The mathematics results were well above average and the reading results were above average. The writing results were below average. Overall, the results were better than those gained by pupils in similar schools.*

**Similar schools are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.4 (14.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.1 (13.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.7 (16.0)	16.2 (16.3)

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

2. The results of the 2004 Year 6 national tests are similar to those reported at the last inspection for English and science, but not as good for mathematics. Over the past three years, results have improved at a slower rate than for most schools. In 2004, they were below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. Pupils did not do as well as those in other schools who gained the same scores in the Year 2 tests, although the proportion of pupils who gained the higher Level 5 in English and science was about the same as in other schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (23.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.1 (22.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.0 (27.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Foundation stage (reception class)

- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. When they join the reception class, their attainment is below average overall and well below average in writing. Good teaching leads to good achievement so that most children are well prepared to join Year 1 in all areas of learning except writing. Staff support children's learning effectively and a good range of activities helps the children to build their skills well.

Pupils in Years 1 and Year 2

- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. The achievement of pupils in the current Year 2 has been hampered by the lack of a permanent teacher and inconsistency in teaching approaches as a result of this. The class now has a permanent teacher who started at the school three weeks prior to the inspection and, whilst standards are average, they are improving. The disruption to learning is the reason why standards seen during the inspection were not as high as the 2004 test results in reading and mathematics. In writing, pupils make good progress, despite the disruption to their learning, and by Year 2, standards are average. This is because of management's rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning in writing, which was identified as a weakness from the 2004 test results.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is satisfactory. Teachers convey an enthusiasm for stories through the books they share with the class and pupils learn the skills needed to tackle unknown words and develop an enjoyment of reading. Younger pupils who are still developing early reading skills are supported well and all pupils benefit from a good range of reading material. In writing, pupils achieve well given their starting point. They are given sufficient opportunities to write for a range of purposes and convey their ideas appropriately in sentences, often using correct punctuation to help make their meaning clear. In mathematics, good teaching makes learning interesting and enjoyable and ensures that achievement, which had faltered during the period of temporary teachers, has improved and is now satisfactory. In science, a greater focus on teaching subject content through practical investigations is improving standards because pupils are more involved in their learning and their achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils in Years 3 to 6

- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards seen during the inspection were better than the 2004 national test results in English, mathematics and science. This is because, the school had significant problems with long term staff absences which impeded pupils' achievement leading up to the tests. At the time of the inspection, a more stable staffing situation and the drive of the headteacher to raise standards has led to the improvements seen.

7. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in English. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and writing although more pupils reach the higher Level 5 in reading than they do in writing, because overall, teaching of reading is more effective than it is in writing. Well taught guided reading sessions and shared class novels, particularly in Years 5 and 6 effectively develop pupils' understanding of more complex texts and although pupils' story writing is imaginative and structured well, their technical writing is weaker. In mathematics, pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 is not always checked on carefully enough, which is why achievement, although satisfactory, is less secure in mathematics than in other subjects and, by Year 6, standards are below average. In science, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and good when they carry out practical investigations that teachers have structured carefully to make sure the pupils are successful. In ICT, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but there are too few opportunities for working on tasks to develop independence and, as a result, the more able are insufficiently challenged to reach higher standards.

Pupils with special educational needs

8. Pupils who have special educational needs generally achieve as well as others and, given their starting points, achievement is sometimes good. However, when individual education plans lack clear and specific targets, the teaching does not always meet individual needs and pupils' progress is less secure. The school welcomes all pupils, whatever their special educational needs and makes sure that they are fully involved in all aspects of school life.
9. At the previous inspection, pupils' achievement was satisfactory overall with weaknesses in the progress made by some pupils in Years 3 to 6 because of unsatisfactory teaching. Across all subjects, although teaching is at least satisfactory, in some lessons there are examples of pupils tackling the same work regardless of their ability, which means there is sometimes insufficient challenge for the average and more able pupils, resulting in limited achievement. Overall, however, satisfactory achievement has been maintained despite significant staffing issues, standards are improving and the school is well placed, under the good leadership of the headteacher, to improve standards further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are good, and their behaviour is satisfactory overall. The rate of attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils behave well around the school and at lunchtime
- Relationships throughout the school are good, and pupils work and play together well
- A minority of pupils do not behave well enough in lessons
- Pupils' personal development is fostered well through the range of activities, visits and responsibilities provided for them

Commentary

10. Pupils enjoy coming to school and taking part in the various activities provided during and after the school day. They arrive sensibly into school in the morning and the great majority are punctual for the start of their lessons. The level of attendance is satisfactory, as it was at the time of last inspection.
11. Overall, pupils' attitudes to the school and to their studies are good and better than reported in the last inspection. They are interested in their work and keen to learn. Their enthusiasm helps their learning and contributes to the progress they make. Where the teaching is good and captures pupils' interest, they are co-operative, work purposefully and are keen to do well. There is a close match between standards of teaching and pupils' attitudes; attitudes

to learning are at their best when teaching is stimulating and captures pupils' interest. There are a number of pupils who have social and behavioural difficulties. Although most teachers manage them well and they cause minimal disruption in lessons, inconsistencies in applying the school's behaviour policy can sometimes confuse these pupils and consequently exacerbate their misbehaviour.

12. Around the school, most pupils behave well and there have been no exclusions over the past year. Lunchtimes are well organised and orderly. Pupils are friendly and courteous to visitors, and those given responsibilities around the school carry out their duties willingly and with confidence. They particularly appreciate and support the various after-school activities which the school provides.
13. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Spiritual development is promoted through well-planned assemblies and displays of pupils' work. Recent work shows pupils have written thought provoking poetry on the effects of the tsunami disaster. The school's focus on moral and social development is effective. Class rules, rewards and the consequences of unsatisfactory behaviour are discussed with pupils and displayed in each classroom. Pupils are given appropriate responsibilities and become increasingly mature and responsible throughout their time in school. For example, older pupils look after the reception desk at lunchtimes, act as 'buddies' to younger pupils and as 'peer mediators' to help resolve disputes. The school council, the range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities, encourage pupils to develop socially and morally. Pupils' cultural development is promoted through visits to the theatre and places of local interest such as Preston Manor and Michelham Priory and the school recently gave pupils the experience of a 'Victorian Day'. Pupils gain an understanding of other cultures through subjects such as art, geography and religious education, and through studying texts from other cultures in literacy lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	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 school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and often good. The curriculum is good for children in the reception class and satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Appropriate systems are in place for checking on pupils' attainment over time, but assessment information about what pupils already know and can do is not always used well enough to plan the next steps in their learning. Pupils are cared for well. The school works well with its parents and has good links with the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good teaching for children in the reception class gives them a good start to learning at school. Throughout the rest of the school, teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching seen in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection in spite of recent disruptions due to staff absences.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their pupils well and make most lessons relevant to pupils' experiences, using resources well to motivate them

- Work is not always planned well enough meet the needs of all pupils or to challenge them
- In some lessons, although teaching is satisfactory, the pace of lessons is slow and the work lacks challenge, pupils do not always sustain their concentration which, in some cases, leads to unsatisfactory behaviour
- The pupils' ability to work well together in pairs and groups is a good feature of many lessons
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils
- Assessment information is not always used effectively to plan for future learning

Commentary

14. Good teaching for children in the reception class is planned and organised well to develop all aspects of their learning. Staff provide good encouragement and support, which helps the children feel secure and make good progress. Throughout the rest of the school, many lessons are planned to relate to pupils' experiences and interests, with particularly good use of the local environment and community involvement. Teachers make good use of resources to motivate and encourage pupils to learn. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, individual whiteboards and markers enabled pupils to 'have a go' with their writing, which helped them be more adventurous and creative. Pupils' good attitudes help them learn well and they know they have to work hard.
15. Where teaching is good, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs, challenging and planned well, which ensures that the pupils work hard and learn a lot. In some lessons, although teaching is satisfactory, the pace of work is too slow or the activities are not challenging enough for some pupils. When the teaching lacks pace and pupils are not challenged enough, some lose interest, become restless and chatty, and do not concentrate as well as they might. At times, this results in some pupils not responding appropriately to their teacher's requests for co-operation, and this impedes their learning.
16. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage learning effectively. As a result, pupils learn confidently and work well on their own or in small groups. This was very evident in a Year 5 English lesson when the class split into groups to play a card game to learn about homophones. The noise level increased, but only with purposeful on-task talking and all pupils, including those with significant behaviour problems, learned well and enjoyed the activity. Teaching was good because the teacher had the confidence and skill to manage the class well, which led to a good response from the pupils who then happily applied their learning to their individual writing task.
17. Teaching assistants help pupils well in class lessons and when they work with pupils out of lessons. They are most effective when very actively involved in whole-class sessions, either helping to engage pupils who may find it difficult to understand, or observing and recording the involvement and participation of individual pupils. Teaching assistants work calmly and unobtrusively in class with pupils who need one-to-one support to enable them to participate in all activities.
18. Assessment systems are in place to check on pupils' attainment over time, but teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to plan for the next stage in pupils' learning. Marking is effective in some classes but not in others. At best, teachers use marking effectively to share points for improvement with pupils. In some classes, this is helping pupils to understand what they need to do to work towards a higher level of attainment. In other cases, marking is cursory and is not supporting pupils' learning effectively.
19. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well in class. When work is well planned to help them take the next step in their learning, they make satisfactory, and

sometimes good progress. Where individual education plans lack clear and specific targets, the teaching does not always meet individual needs and pupils' achievement is less secure.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	1 (3%)	12 (36%)	20 (61%)			

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.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and with a similar balance of strengths and weaknesses as reported at the last inspection. There is a good and varied curriculum in the reception class. A good range of extra learning opportunities enriches the curriculum effectively. Accommodation is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Resources for learning are good and have improved in science since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) makes a positive contribution to pupils' abilities to work collaboratively
- A good range of visits and extra-curricular clubs enriches pupils' learning effectively
- Curriculum planning in some subjects does not provide a clear progression in skills as pupils move through the school, particularly for pupils with special educational needs
- Good improvements to the accommodation have had a beneficial impact on the quality of pupils' learning

Commentary

20. The school makes appropriate provision for the interests of its pupils by providing a broad curriculum in which there is a strong focus upon teaching the core skills to develop greater competency in literacy and numeracy. This has led to some improvement in standards in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Statutory requirements are met and the curriculum has been planned so that sufficient time is allocated to each subject. An effective Foundation Stage (reception class) curriculum and the good use of the outside classroom ensure that the youngest children make good progress in all six areas of learning. An activity called 'Brain Gym' is well used to develop pupils' concentration. PSHE has a high profile and is taught in combination with citizenship skills. Pupils have had increased involvement in deciding upon their class rules. Their developing personal skills are seen in friendliness to visitors, caring approaches to others in difficulty, and in collaborative group work. The energy put into the initiatives to support literacy and numeracy has meant that the school is at the early stages of developing creative approaches to the curriculum through focus weeks, such as the Victorian Week.
21. The school provides good opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum. Educational visits to places such as Piddinghoe, Michelham Priory and the Brighton Toy Museum make good links between information learned in class and the real world. Pupils develop self-confidence because they are encouraged to take part in drama and music through school productions and performances. All junior pupils learn to play the recorder and have good quality experiences through Glyndebourne seminars, visiting musicians and visits to the theatre. Most parents agree that there is a good range of after school activities such as Seagulls, sport, ICT, art, drama and model club, which are interesting and enjoyable. Clubs are open to all junior-aged pupils. Some clubs, such as Seagulls and art club, are also open to younger pupils.
22. Procedures for the move from Year 2 to Year 3 are under review. A re-organisation of subject leadership to take in all year groups, is beginning to provide more progression and continuity in learning. This initiative is very recent and has also had to take into account changes from planning for mixed age classes to planning for single year groups. As a result, skills are not always built on in a systematic way as pupils move through the school, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum effectively prepares

pupils in Year 6 to move onto their next school. The school takes part in joint science/design and technology projects and has art, sporting and cross-country links with Tideway School.

23. Good improvements to the accommodation since the last inspection have made the school more accessible to pupils with physical disabilities and made better use of space. The newly-created teaching bays which offer teaching assistants and visiting specialist teachers a working space for groups outside the classroom, are conducive to learning. The new surface and resources in the reception outside play area have made significant improvements to the quality of provision for physical, creative and imaginative play.

Care, guidance and support

The care and welfare of pupils are good. The school provides satisfactory support, advice and guidance for pupils. Through the work of the school council, pupils have an effective voice in promoting improvements in the school's facilities and day-to-day life.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes good care of its pupils, who feel they are well supported and that there is always someone to go to if they have any problems or need assistance
- The monitoring of pupils' progress is not rigorous enough and so pupils do not have a clear idea about what they can do to improve their work
- There are effective arrangements for settling pupils into school

Commentary

24. The care and welfare of pupils are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The induction arrangements for children entering the reception year are well organised. Staff from the reception class make home visits, which help everyone to get to know each other before the children start school. There is a close relationship with the playgroup based on site, and so children are used to the environment and settle quickly into school when they first join. Health and safety arrangements are good overall, as are those surrounding child protection procedures. If pupils become ill or require first aid during the school day, they are well cared for and staff are aware of those with specific health problems. The school has received a Healthy Schools Award and, at break time, pupils are encouraged to eat snacks such as fruit and buttered toast. Pupils are well supervised at lunchtime and playtimes and enjoy playing and socialising with one another. The constructive relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils have the confidence to approach an adult if worried or concerned. Several pupils spoken to during the inspection said they would not hesitate to talk to the headteacher if they had a problem.
25. The personal and academic support and guidance offered to pupils is satisfactory. The school acknowledges pupils' efforts and achievements at a weekly celebration assembly. Pupils are well supported academically, but teachers do not yet analyse their work well enough to identify the next steps in learning. Consequently, pupils do not have a clear idea about what they need to do to improve their work. The implementation of target setting is at an early stage and has not yet made an impact on raising pupils' attainment.
26. The school council is elected each term by pupils and meets with the headteacher every fortnight for a formal meeting regarding school issues. Council representatives consult other pupils about things they would like to see in the school. Pupils say this has led to improvements in the playground equipment and plans for additional after-school clubs. Pupils feel their views are valued, and feel involved in their daily school life.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents' and pupils' satisfaction with the school is good. The school has established good links with parents, other schools and the community.

Main strengths

- Parents are generally pleased with the work of the school and the communication between home and school is good
- Links with the community and with other schools are used well to broaden pupils' learning experience and to secure support for them

Commentary

27. In their views expressed both at the pre-inspection meeting and through the questionnaire, parents are largely positive about the work of the school. They are pleased that their children are happy at school, and feel that they are treated fairly. There are some concerns from parents about unsatisfactory behaviour and bullying at the school. Whilst there is a small element of inappropriate conduct in some lessons, most pupils behave well, and inspectors judged behaviour to be satisfactory overall.
28. The school makes a good effort to encourage parental involvement in the life of the school and their children's education. A number of parents help at school on a voluntary basis or on educational visits. The school is well supported by an active Parents, Teachers and Friends Association, which organises regular fundraising and social events that not only help to provide extra materials and equipment for the school, but also raise considerable amounts for charitable causes.
29. The quality of much of the information provided for parents is good. Frequent newsletters and the prospectus give parents useful information about the school and its organisation and keep them up to date with any changes in day-to-day arrangements. Parents are consulted; for example their views were sought about the school's approach to equal opportunities and its plans to introduce after school care. Through regular meetings and the annual reports on pupils' work, parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. The meetings are well attended, and the school follows up those who do not attend. Annual reports give parents a clear picture of pupils' attainment in most subjects, although reporting in some subjects tends to focus solely on descriptions of the work which has been covered throughout the year, rather than making clear the standard children have reached and what they can do to improve further.
30. The school's links with the community and its partnership with other schools are good. There are many visits and visitors, which help pupils to get to know their own area. Representatives from the Newhaven Fraternity of churches regularly lead assemblies at the school and open their churches for the school to visit. Pupils take part in events held in the local town, such as Lifeboat Day and Book Week and a number of local businesses support the school through sponsorship or donations. The school's grounds are regularly used by a number of local sports teams, and the local police liaison officer visits to talk to pupils about road and personal safety.

31. The school is a member of a network of local schools and this provides regular opportunities for joint discussion and training for staff and governors. Pupils take part in sporting fixtures with other schools. The good links established with the local secondary school to which most pupils go ensure that they are well prepared for transfer into Year 7. There is a good exchange of information and pupils have opportunities to visit the secondary school while still in Year 6.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The organisation and implementation of the role of the subject leaders is satisfactory, but some areas need improvement. Management systems are satisfactory, as is the governance of the school. These findings are similar to those reported in the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since her appointment just over a year ago, the headteacher has made a good start in improving aspects of the school's work
- The leadership of English and ICT is good, but difficulties with the appointment of staff have restricted development in some subjects
- There are good procedures for the induction of staff and, as a result, they settle quickly to new routines
- Monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs is not rigorous enough
- Governors manage the school finances well

Commentary

32. The determination of the headteacher provides a clear focus for effective improvement. Her vision is to raise standards of attainment throughout the whole school and to improve behaviour. In just over a year, she has made significant changes to deal with poor teaching in the past. Good systems are in place for managing staff performance. These procedures mean that all staff are clear about their personal and professional targets and feel valued by the school. As a consequence, the school continues to improve, despite the barriers of long-term staff absence. In recent years, the school has experienced difficulties in attracting and retaining teachers. The headteacher has managed to overcome these difficulties by effective planning and by appointing experienced staff to positions of responsibility within the school. The good working relationship between the headteacher and senior staff are beginning to take effect and to move the school forward.
33. The management of the school is satisfactory overall. Most subject co-ordinators are new to their role, following a review of responsibilities in September 2004. They fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. All co-ordinators have undertaken a review of provision in their subject and have provided plans for improvement that feed into the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan outlines the school's priorities for improvement, but the targets set do not focus rigorously enough on improving pupils' skills in order to raise standards. The plan is not linked closely enough to school finances. Management is good in ICT and in English because of the priority given to the subject by the senior management team. It is unsatisfactory in mathematics for pupils in Years 3 to 6 where some initiatives aimed at improvement have not yet been implemented consistently. There is a long-term plan covering school development into 2008, which provides the school with a good blueprint for strategic planning.
34. The school day runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and they are generally followed. Staff work well together, assisting one another. The school has good systems for the induction of staff. Newly-qualified teachers are supported well in their professional development so that

they are increasingly effective within the classroom. Lessons are regularly observed and issues are identified for improvement and then checked to ensure that teaching has improved. For example, a recently appointed teacher was given the opportunity to observe good teaching in another school and, as a result, has managed a class with difficult behaviour well.

35. The management and leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Since the special educational needs co-ordinator left the school, however, the post has been difficult to fill. The headteacher manages provision until better arrangements can be made. Staff have received extra training to ensure support for pupils with special educational needs is maintained. Within the headteacher's heavy workload, limited time is available to monitor and review provision accurately. As a result, there are some weaknesses in assessments. Targets set for improvement are not always clear enough about what pupils need to learn next, and so progress is difficult to measure. In some classes, records are kept monitoring the behaviour of pupils during lessons but do not record the skills that have been learnt, or what needs to be done so that they can improve. As a result, some pupils make less progress than they should.
36. Governors are supportive of the school. Their monitoring of the school's finances is effective. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Due to astute financial planning, they have managed to avoid making redundancies in a severe financial environment caused by the smaller numbers of pupils being admitted to the school each year. During the period of disruption to staffing, they have given good support to the headteacher to ensure staffing levels have been maintained. They visit the school, spend time in lessons and discuss school policies. They have a satisfactory grasp of the school's strengths and areas that need improvement. They do not accept without question all that the headteacher proposes. They provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge so that the school is accountable for the standard of education it provides. Many governors are new to their role and, therefore, have not yet had time to support and influence school development.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	483,797
Total expenditure	478,995
Expenditure per pupil	2,407

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30,141
Balance carried forward to the next	34,943

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. Provision for learning in the reception class is good overall. Good teaching leads to good achievement and children successfully build upon their existing skills and acquire new ones. Attainment on entry is below average overall, but writing skills, particularly in matching sounds to letters, are well below expectations. Most children, apart from those with special learning needs, are on course to meet the standards expected by the time they join Year 1, except in writing. Good liaison with parents, playgroups and the Happy Valley Playschool contribute to the success of the assessment process in deciding each child's next step for learning. Teachers carry out good assessments of how children respond to learning and make progress and these assessments are used to plan effectively. Teaching takes into account the learning needs of all children through the use of a combination of visual, auditory and signed instructions. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good because the job-share partners have the same teaching ethos and manage their team effectively to give a seamless change from one teacher to another. The good provision seen at the last inspection has been maintained. Better resources and accommodation have improved the learning environment.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is good.

Main strengths

- The high focus on personal and social development is successful in developing independent and confident learners
- Good organisation and routines ensure that the children feel safe and secure
- Children form good, caring relationships with adults and other children

Commentary

38. Children achieve well in this area of learning because teachers have high expectations. Children behave well and become increasingly independent in choosing resources, carrying equipment, completing tasks and tidying away. Good induction procedures help children settle very quickly into school and form good, trusting relationships with adults. Good organisation of classroom routines teaches children to understand what they should do and provides them with the security they need to be adventurous in their learning. Children work and play together well and develop caring relationships with each other. For example, one child working alongside another who was feeling tired, made a play dough dog to entertain her friend. Children sit and listen well. Adults provide good role models during circle time and during "fruit time" when they sit with children to eat and reinforce expected manners and behaviour.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

Main strengths

- Children learn letter sounds successfully through a wide range of teaching approaches
- Teaching assistants are used well to extend learning
- Parents support children's learning in reading effectively

Commentary

39. Achievement is good because of good teaching based on a good understanding and knowledge of how children learn. When children start at school, they talk happily with their

friends, but are not so confident when responding to questions or talking in a larger group. Teachers provide good opportunities for children so they can practise and successfully develop these skills. Children are beginning to learn the names and sounds of letters of the alphabet. Most can identify sounds such as 'l', 't' and 'd' and correctly identify pictures of objects starting with familiar letters. Multi-sensory approaches, such as making the sound accompanied by an action, drawing the letter in the air and drawing the letter shape on a partner's back, make learning interesting and interactive. Some children are beginning to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write simple words. Teaching assistants provide good support for children with weaker phonic skills who find these sessions more difficult. Parents play a significant part in their children's success in reading by sharing books with them and helping them learn new words.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is good.

Main strengths

- Teachers use questioning well to assess children's understanding
- Mathematical skills are continually reinforced during imaginative play
- Visual displays are well used as a resource

Commentary

40. Children achieve well in their mathematical development. Sessions are well planned so children have many opportunities to count and talk about numbers to 20 or beyond. Activities are interactive and lively and interest the children, who enjoy learning number rhymes and playing "finger games". Teachers use good questioning skills to assess children's understanding and plan appropriate follow up activities to extend or reinforce learning. Teaching assistants make good use of imaginative play activities to encourage pupils to count and use correct mathematical language, for example, paying fares and counting passengers on to a "train". Children who have special educational needs benefit from the use of a visual timetable to help them sequence the events of the day.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

Main strengths

- Exciting experiences stimulate curiosity and good interaction with adults extends learning
- Geography skills are very well taught and there are varied opportunities for using ICT
- Improvements in resources and to the outside classroom help the children to achieve well

Commentary

41. Children make good progress in learning about the world around them. They enter school with below average skills and by the end of the reception year most children meet expectations for their ages and some exceed them in geography, ICT and observation skills, because they have a range of exciting experiences, which stimulate curiosity. Scientific enquiry skills are developed through appropriate first-hand experiences where good questioning encourages children to notice cause and effect, such as discussing the changes to soap as it is used in water. Children look at maps of where they live and identify bridges and roads. Activities are well planned and many extend the stories children have listened to, such as making a train and animal homes out of cardboard boxes. Computers, tape recorders, digital cameras and robotic toys are used well to support children's learning in ICT.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is good.

Main strengths

- Children show imagination and muscular control in using the apparatus
- Lessons are planned well to meet the children's varying physical needs

Commentary

42. Children's achievement in physical development is good. PE lessons make a good contribution to personal and social skills because children are expected to dress and undress independently and arrange their clothing neatly in the classroom. All children help to carry equipment in preparation for the physical activities, which are at an appropriate level to sustain concentration and develop children's thinking about what happens to their body when they move around. Teachers encourage children to decide on different ways of moving by running, jumping, hopping, bunny hopping, sliding and kneeling along or over the apparatus. Large play equipment in the outside classroom is used well to develop body control skills such as climbing, balancing, weaving in and out and pedalling. Short bursts of 'Brain Gym' improve coordination. Clear planning identifies tracing, writing, making jigsaws and using scissors as means of developing the fine muscular control which is essential for handwriting.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is good.

Main strengths

- Creative activities are woven into all areas of learning
- Well-planned activities encourage children to experiment using their senses

Commentary

43. Children's achievement is good because well-planned activities support their ability to discover and explore through their senses and a range of materials. Creativity is interwoven with all areas of learning so that children can draw upon these experiences to develop their imagination. They are encouraged to act out their own experiences, as well as stories they have heard, in the role-play area. Children express their ideas through pictures, pattern making and the use of materials, musical instruments and singing. Children's creativity is encouraged by the teaching assistants who sensitively support children's ideas by appropriate interaction and do not dominate.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's focus on writing has helped to improve standards
- Teachers provide many opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills
- Standards in handwriting and presentation are below average
- Subject leadership, driven by the senior management team, is good and influencing improvements
- Work is not always planned to meet the needs of all pupils effectively

Commentary

44. The 2004 national test results for reading in Year 2 were above the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools. National test results for writing in Year 2 were below average. In Year 6, the 2004 national test results for English were below average. Standards seen during the inspection are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The difference between the Year 2 reading results and current standards is because of changes in staffing, which led to inconsistencies in teaching approaches. The more positive picture of standards in writing is because of the recent priority given to improving writing as a result of weaknesses identified in the tests.
45. Across the school, standards in speaking and listening are average, which is similar to the judgement in the previous inspection. Teachers provide many opportunities for speaking and listening and use a range of strategies. Most lessons begin with a whole-class session where pupils are encouraged to listen to instructions and information for their work. In lessons where paired discussions are encouraged, pupils know they are expected to participate, are more attentive and work together sensibly. 'Hot-seating' is used effectively to encourage pupils to pose questions and listen carefully to each other. This was seen in a good Year 5 lesson when pupils worked well in pairs to explore the moral issues of the tale 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf'. In a very good writing lesson, Year 6 pupils took on different roles to further their understanding of characters in a story. Teachers work very hard, giving constant reminders, to develop pupils' awareness of speaking in turn and listening to others, but some pupils find this difficult. Opportunities are sometimes missed to extend the vocabulary and speaking skills of more able pupils when they are given the same speaking tasks as the rest of the class. Overall, achievement is satisfactory.
46. Reading standards are average overall and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Well taught guided reading sessions and shared class novels, particularly in Years 5 and 6, develop pupils' understanding of more complex texts. Teachers convey an enthusiasm for stories through the books they share with the class and pupils learn the skills needed to tackle unknown words and develop an enjoyment of reading. Younger pupils who are still developing early reading skills are supported well. All pupils are expected to read at home and the school works hard to promote this through its good partnership with parents. Pupils enjoy the good range of fiction and non-fiction books and have opportunities to browse and choose from classroom collections and from the small but well stocked school library. More able readers in Year 6 read with great fluency and confidence and retrieve information from a variety of sources including the Internet. They talk with enthusiasm about favourite authors and express personal preferences and opinions on different styles and genre.
47. Recent improvements in writing have resulted in average standards. The school is currently focusing on raising standards as part of its school improvement plan and, given their starting point, this has led to good achievement by Year 2 because of effective monitoring by senior staff. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given sufficient opportunities to write for a range of purposes and convey their ideas appropriately in sentences, often using correct punctuation to help make their meaning clear. There are good examples of pupils organising their ideas well and using increasingly expressive language as they move through the school. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils' initial drafts for mystery stories were well written with sophisticated story lines and good use of grammatical features. Pupils in Year 3 made effective plans for writing a traditional tale. Although pupils' story writing is imaginative and structured well, their technical writing is weaker. The presentation of pupils' work and their handwriting are unsatisfactory. Many pupils are not learning to join their letters in a systematic, consistently taught way throughout the school. The presentation of some work is good, but too much untidy and careless presentation is accepted, so pupils are not always aware that they need to improve. Achievement by Year 6 is satisfactory, but improving. All teachers have performance management targets linked to improvements in pupils' writing and they have identified strengths and weaknesses

through shared assessment of pupils' work. As a result, teachers are providing more opportunities for writing for different purposes in all subjects and individual targets are set for all pupils.

48. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good teaching seen. Pupils achieve well in lessons which have a good pace with set time limits, interesting activities and where expectations of behaviour and of work are clear and insisted upon. In a good Year 5 lesson, the teacher planned a range of activities and moved from one to another at a good pace, which kept pupils interested and involved. An initial activity on homophones was played as a card game with pupils working in small groups. This generated much fun, enthusiasm and concentration, and achievement was good as a result. In a very good Year 6 lesson, regular reminders of the objectives for the lesson kept pupils on track and also gave them the opportunity to revise their writing to make improvements. Teachers make good use of resources to motivate and engage pupils. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the use of the giant 'apple tree' for helping to spell and identify common words, delighted the pupils who were keen to get the words right so they could 'pick the apple'. Some good use is made of 'smart boards', but computers are under-used in the classroom as a tool for literacy teaching. Teaching assistants provide effective support, particularly for pupils with special educational needs, who achieve as well as their peers. In some lessons, tasks are not planned well enough to challenge pupils of all abilities and, in these cases, it is often the pupils of average ability who are not given the scope to achieve as much as they might. Assessment shows the standards pupils have reached, but targets set for pupils are not always followed up in lessons or new ones set as a result of targets achieved.
49. The subject is well led and managed as senior management has a clear view about aspects of provision that are successful and what needs to improve. As writing is a school priority, monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place in all classes with support from the local education authority, which has contributed to improvements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. There are satisfactory opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills in subjects other than English. Speaking and listening opportunities are evident in most subjects, particularly through sessions at the end of lessons where pupils recall and share what they have learnt and when teachers give time for talking to partners and group discussions. Opportunities have improved recently for pupils to use and develop their writing skills in other subjects, such as writing recounts of visits for history and persuasive writing in geography. Planning and development of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects is not established well enough to make more than a satisfactory contribution to their abilities.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen since the last inspection but are still not high enough
- The quality of teaching is good in the infant classes
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils who have behavioural problems
- Presentation of work is not of a high enough quality and marking does not often inform pupils about how to improve their work
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory in the junior classes

Commentary

51. The 2004 national test results for Year 2 were well above the national average and very high compared with similar schools. During the last three years, results have been rising gradually, with a rapid increase in 2004. Standards in the current Year 2, however, are average. This is because there have been changes of teacher for the Year 2 class, which has had three teachers since September. This has meant a lack of consistency in the teaching methods being used in this class. Despite this, average standards have been maintained which represents satisfactory achievement overall.
52. In 2004, national test results for Year 6 pupils were well below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools. Trends over time show standards dropped to a very low point in 2003. This was due to the higher number of pupils with special educational needs being admitted to the school together with poor teaching in the past. Inspection findings show that standards in the current Year 6 are below average, but this still represents satisfactory achievement as pupils have begun to make progress again since 2003. Standards have risen since the last inspection.
53. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes. In the good lessons seen, pupils were challenged to work hard and learn well. Teachers develop good relationships with pupils and this helps to keep pupils focused and motivated. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher kept pupils' attention by asking them to clap their hands and pat their knees when counting from 30 to 50 and, as a result, the pupils enjoyed the lesson and quickly learned the number sequences. Where teaching was satisfactory but had weaknesses, the learning intentions were not shared clearly with the pupils. Many pupils were confused. Time was wasted as lessons had to be stopped and further explanation given. Not enough time is spent in the junior classes in checking what pupils have learnt or asking them to describe their learning activities at the end of lessons. A lack of further questioning, with opportunities for pupils to say what they have found easy or difficult, misses opportunities to evaluate learning and check progress. This is why pupils achieve less well in the junior classes. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with behavioural problems and, as a result, these pupils make satisfactory progress and do not disrupt learning. Satisfactory use is made of the National Numeracy Strategy to help pupils build on prior learning, although higher attaining pupils could be challenged further in

some lessons by being given opportunities to work independently. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Information is analysed thoroughly and weaknesses identified. The targets set for pupils with special educational needs do not always identify skills that need to be improved. This means that these pupils do not achieve well enough at times. Pupils' presentation skills vary between classes and there is not yet a consistency of expectation in how they should set out their work and in the use of rulers. Work can appear untidy and lack a sense of pride. The marking of pupils work is variable. In Years 5 and 6, there are good examples of challenging the higher attaining pupils to think carefully on how to achieve better results. This is inconsistent in other classes where pupils are not informed of the next steps in learning so as to improve their work.

54. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory for the infant classes. It is unsatisfactory in the junior classes because not enough time has been given to monitoring the development of teaching and to ensuring that the weakness identified have been improved. Therefore, leadership has had little effect upon the raising of standards. Recent changes have resulted in mathematics being managed on a whole-school basis, but insufficient opportunities have been given to ensure that this has been effective in the junior classes.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Pupils use and apply their mathematics satisfactorily in their work in other subjects. For example, pupils use their numeracy skills when recording their results in graphs and tables in science. ICT is used in the teaching of numeracy, such as the use of computer programs in the teaching of how to use protractors when measuring angles. Planning for the development of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects has only recently been established and has not yet had time make a strong contribution to extending their ability.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Scientific enquiry is used effectively to develop scientific knowledge
- Pupils have insufficient experience in presenting the results of their investigations in a variety of ways
- Pupils enjoy their learning and work well collaboratively during practical sessions
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively during the introductory stage of the lesson

Commentary

56. Results in the national tests have improved overall since the last inspection. In the 2004 Year 2 teacher assessments, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was well above the national average, but the proportion gaining the higher Level 3 was well below average. The Year 6 national test results were below average for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4, but average for the proportion gaining the higher Level 5. The school's analysis of the results identified a lack of challenge for the younger pupils to reach the higher levels and, for the older pupils, teaching which did not adequately meet the needs of average ability pupils and those with special educational needs.
57. Standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are average overall and have improved since the last inspection. In Years 3 to 6, standards are below average in some classes. The history of unsatisfactory teaching in some of these classes, and the resulting inconsistencies in the coverage of the curriculum and expectations of pupils' work, has had an effect upon the standards that pupils currently reach. A greater focus on teaching subject content through practical investigations is improving standards across the school

because pupils are more involved in their learning. The good teaching in Year 6 makes a strong impact upon the standards reached at the end of that year, owing to high expectations of behaviour and the very positive work ethos within the class. Standards in different aspects of science vary because the two-year rolling programme of work does not result in sufficient in-depth coverage of all aspects. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of forces and physical processes and have had in-depth coverage of life and living processes.

58. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. They show enthusiasm for science and work well in pairs or collaborative groups. They are introduced to new knowledge through discussion and practical investigations. The lack of consistent reinforcement of the use of scientific vocabulary limits pupils' ability to explain their thinking when discussing the outcomes of these investigations. Pupils achieve well when they have concrete experiences within a structured framework. For example, one class reached results which led to correct conclusions about the differences in the weight of objects in the water and in air because they were systematically applying the fair test procedures to their group investigation.
59. Teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school, and have improved recently. Teachers use learning objectives well to identify the purpose of the lesson. Clear introductions help pupils make connections with previous learning in science and other subjects. Pupils enjoy developing their investigative skills through practical experiences in collaborative groups or as a pair. Group support is well developed when teaching assistants reinforce learning and clarify pupils' misunderstanding through clear explanations. During the introductory sessions to lessons, teaching assistants are less effective because they do not have a clear role. Teachers in younger classes introduce pupils to a variety of ways to record their results. This is not systematically built upon as pupils progress through the school with the result that they are unable to decide independently upon the most appropriate recording methods. Teachers use end of unit assessments to check how much pupils have learned. This information does not yet lead to the planning of activities with different levels of challenge to meet the full range of learning needs.
60. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. A review of the science curriculum has been delayed because the school has justifiably made the development of writing skills a higher priority. There have been good improvements in resources since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT skills are taught consistently throughout the school, so pupils build on previous knowledge
- The new ICT suite has improved opportunities for pupils learn ICT skills
- More able pupils are insufficiently challenged so do not achieve as much as they could
- Although the subject is well lead and managed, recent changes have not yet had time to raise standards

Commentary

61. There has been satisfactory improvement in ICT since the last inspection. An ICT suite has been developed that enables all pupils to be taught the necessary skills. All pupils have a taught lesson each week, as well as other opportunities to use the suite. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have made postcards using a 'publisher' program and they have produced slide show presentations on 'ourselves'. Consistent teaching and the use of teaching assistants enable pupils to develop their skills in a systematic way. As there are

enough computers for each pupil, those with special educational needs learn to work independently and achieve similar standards as the rest of the class.

62. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards in line with national expectations. Their achievement is satisfactory. Year 6 pupils are also working at the expected level and their achievement is satisfactory. However, few attain standards above this level as limited opportunities are given for them to work on tasks that develop their independence. As a result, the more able are insufficiently challenged to reach higher standards in some lessons.
63. Teaching is satisfactory overall. All aspects of ICT are now covered in a systematic programme that is well planned. Pupils are given varied opportunities to study different aspects of the subject. For example, in a Year 2 class, activities were designed to show pupils how to work a microwave and pupils were then challenged to steer a robot along a planned route. After this they were taken into the playground and were directed to turn left and right and then find the correct positions to stand in using a grid painted on the playground. As a result, the pupils gained a sound understanding of the principles of 'programming'. Good use is made of the data projector to demonstrate to the class. For example, a teacher effectively showed pupils in a Year 6 class how to use a link button to the Internet. As a result, pupils found new information on how aid was being given to countries affected by the tsunami. Pupils work collaboratively and enjoy the lessons.
64. Leadership and management are good but comparatively new. Recent changes have been made and, as a result, the school is aware of the standards pupils are reaching. Assessment procedures have recently been established and planning follows national guidelines and helps ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered. Skills are being taught consistently. However, there has not yet been time for new initiatives to raise standards significantly.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects is satisfactory. Most ICT lessons are taught using content from other subjects, such as in Year 1 where pupils have used word banks to make sentences. During the inspection, a group of pupils had been sent to the computer suite with a teaching assistant to find information on the Internet on 'Zakat' in connection with their studies in religious education. However, opportunities were missed to use computers more fully in the mathematics lessons seen. Although plans are being made to identify opportunities to include ICT, this is not consistently embedded in lessons given each day.

HUMANITIES

66. No lessons were seen in history and only three lessons were seen in religious education. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in these subjects. Examples of pupils' work were available, however, from which to make judgements about standards and the quality of the curriculum. Inspectors also examined teachers' planning and talked to teachers and pupils.
67. In **history**, pupils' work indicates that, by Year 6, standards are as expected for their ages. This reflects the finding of the previous inspection. By Year 6, pupils show their ability to use a variety of historical sources to find out about the past, and they understand that sometimes events have been represented and interpreted in different ways. Pupils make effective use of their literacy skills to record their learning in a variety of ways, for example in reports and recounts of visits and informative captions for artefacts. A recent history week involved all classes in a study of the Victorians. The work generated by this project showed a good range and depth in pupils' historical knowledge. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 compared their toys with those from the past and learnt about the life and work of Florence Nightingale. Older pupils found out about children's lives in Victorian Britain and explored

the local area to discover evidence of Victorian architecture and how life has changed. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about their work and what they had learnt and the well-planned programme of visits and visitors to school enhanced their learning and involved the community. Good links were made with other subjects including, geography, music and art, for example, sketches of artefacts and architecture and a Victorian Music Hall performance. Leadership and management of the subject are good and, although there has not been the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning, plans are clearly focused on improvement showing a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

68. In **religious education**, the curriculum follows the locally Agreed Syllabus and standards in the lessons seen and in pupils' past work are in line with those expected for their ages. This reflects the finding of the previous inspection. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral and cultural development and pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and respect those of other people. Pupils are learning about stories from the life of Jesus and can relate the issues raised to their own lives. For example, in a good Year 5 lesson, the teacher drew on the story of Isaac to discuss making choices, following rules and showing respect and linked this to the class code. In Year 2, the story of The Lost Son provided the basis for a discussion on forgiveness where pupils related the idea to their own experiences. In both of these lessons, teachers asked thought provoking questions, promoting thinking skills, and pupils responded extremely well to the challenges presented to them. There are good links between religious education and other subjects, particularly with art and literacy. Visits from members of local churches enrich the curriculum and pupils are developing an understanding of the important festivals of different faiths. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were learning about the festival of Passover and the symbols used in Judaism. They looked at pictures and recalled what they had learnt about the Sedar meal before designing their own Matzah covers. The teacher knew the subject well and pupils worked with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of other religions. The leadership and management role for religious education is under review.

Geography

Provision in geography is satisfactory.

Main strength and weakness

- The local area is used well to support pupils' learning and develop their enquiry skills
- Work is not always well matched to the needs of the pupils

Commentary

69. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are at the levels expected for pupils' ages and achievement is satisfactory. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. By Year 2, pupils locate places on a map of Great Britain and understand that it takes longer to travel to more distant locations. They do this by enthusiastically following the travels of Barnaby Bear. In a Year 2 lesson, the pupils responded well to the premise that Barnaby Bear had sent postcards from his travels and were keen to show all the places he had visited. The teacher ensured that pupils used correct geographical vocabulary and made good links with mathematical vocabulary to measure distances. Pupils in Year 4 looked at the issues surrounding the proposal to construct an incinerator in the local area. Through reading news reports, devising questions for a visitor and researching the area on the Internet, pupils gained an awareness of the advantages and disadvantages for the community and the potential changes to the local environment. In Year 5, pupils used weather forecasts to identify weather conditions and compare the weather in different locations. They had a satisfactory understanding of the weather conditions, which they could talk about with confidence, but were unable to record information satisfactorily because of their lack of ability to create graphs to show their findings. By Year 6, pupils' books show good map work using the local area and for investigating different environments and countries. All pupils participate in an 'Out and About' week to explore the local area, often linked to other subjects, for example looking at Victorian architecture and the river.
70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching includes the correct use of geographical vocabulary, and skilful questioning helps pupils understand geographical terms. Work is not always planned carefully enough to provide an appropriate degree of challenge to pupils with different abilities. An excessive amount of worksheets were seen in past work, which lacked interest and challenge and resulted in limited achievement for some pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work in books, but their comments, while encouraging pupils, focus too much on how pupils have presented the work. This gives pupils little indication as to what they should do to improve.
71. Recent changes in the organisation of subject leadership mean that leadership and management of the subject are at an early stage. There has not yet been the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning through observation of lessons, but there is a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses and appropriate plans to develop the subject in line with the school development plan.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. Only two lessons were seen in design and technology. No lessons were seen in music, art and design or physical education. As a result it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in any of these subjects.
73. In **art and design**, from discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils, scrutiny of samples of work and curriculum plans, it is clear that the subject is taught in blocks and alternates with design and technology. The art and design curriculum is currently under review as the school changes from a two-year rolling programme designed for mixed-age teaching to a one year programme for single age groups. The school is now using a nationally produced

scheme of work, which it intends to adapt to suit pupils' needs, as teachers become more familiar with this approach.

74. Samples of work and discussions indicate that the curriculum is planned to give pupils a range of stimuli to be creative. Pupils enjoy their lessons in which they experience a range of materials such as mod roc, clay, pastel, paint, textiles and natural materials. Techniques such as printing, pattern making, sewing and collage are also taught. Sewing is particularly enjoyed as it is seen, by pupils, as acquiring a completely new skill. The digital camera is well used to explore composition.

75. Good links are made with learning in other curricular areas such as history, science, design and technology and music, for example in the Year 6 end of year production. Good use is made of the local environment to explore form in buildings, to provide a context for collage, for example a visit to Michelham Priory, and to use natural materials to create environmental sculptures.
76. Links with other schools enhance the provision. Pupils benefited from a visit to Tideway School art exhibition to appreciate older pupils' ideas and techniques. A visit from Tideway School pupils to demonstrate their use of sketchbooks has stimulated further experimentation. Currently, sketchbooks are used to explore shading, form and colour tones, for example for painting self portraits. Pupils have a good understanding of techniques and media but do not readily recall the names of artists such as Salvador Dali and Marc Chagall whom they have recently tried to imitate in their surrealist viewpoints.
77. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Some information gathering observations of teaching in the younger classes have been made as co-ordinators are now taking a wider role across the whole school. This whole-school overview of the subject is an improvement since the last inspection.
78. In **design and technology**, based on discussions with pupils and an analysis of their work, standards by Years 2 and 6, are average. Two lessons were seen, and of these one was good and the other was satisfactory. In both lessons, planning was detailed and the teacher gave clear guidance. Business-like relationships between adults and pupils helped ensure that pupils had satisfactory attitudes and took notice of the advice and support given. Where teaching was good, extra support was given to pupils with special educational needs. For example, in a Year 6 class, the progress of pupils who were less confident in their work was checked consistently and they achieved well. Voluntary helpers were used well to support learning and, as a result, the pupils were able to cast off using a backstitch when making their slippers. The analysis of pupils' work shows that skills in design and making are satisfactory as are the evaluations of their work.
79. In **music**, it is clear from discussions with pupils that they enjoy making music through singing and playing because it is interesting and fun. All aspects of music are covered in the planned curriculum. All pupils enjoy making music with their voices, bodies and with musical instruments. They sing well and understand the need for rhythmical accuracy. They are confident when talking about music. Pupils have experience of composition and the use of a graphic score to record their compositions. They use the correct terminology to refer to beat, rhythm and pitch. They refer to tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments by name. Pupils are not so familiar with the names of composers. The listening and analysing aspect of music is not as well developed as performing skills. All junior-aged pupils have good experience and skill in performing because they learn to play the descant recorder and practise at home. Younger pupils are keen to learn this skill. They use their junior-aged brothers or sisters as tutors. The school intends to respond to this interest by providing a recorder club for the younger classes. Some Year 6 pupils extend their skills by playing the treble recorder. For others, the interest in music leads into learning to play the clarinet or trombone through the specialist music teachers who visit the school. Many pupils continue with their musical studies when they move into their next school. Visitors such as a guitar player, a marching band and a scat singer, stimulate pupils' desire to be more involved in music making. Visits to the theatre to see musical productions, links with other schools and particularly with Glyndebourne, provide an additional stimulus to learning in music. The evidence indicates that standards are similar to those seen in the last inspection.
80. In **physical education**, very little evidence was gathered because the subject was not a focus during the inspection, the subject co-ordinator was absent and planning documents were not available for scrutiny. However, discussions with pupils and staff show that this

subject has a high priority within the school. For example, the school sports teams are successful in inter-school sports, particularly football and cross-country running events. A variety of extra-curricular clubs give pupils added opportunities to develop skills. Opportunities are provided to teach gymnastics through other subjects. For example, 'keep fit' classes were taught during an environmental health week. Assemblies have been held to celebrate the learning of new skills, which has focused on skipping. Pupils are taught swimming in Years 5 and 6. Most are able to swim a distance of 25 metres by the time they leave the school. Pupils in Year 4 are taught orienteering and this is further developed in Year 6 on residential visits to the Isle of Wight.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

81. No lessons were seen in **personal, social and health education** (PSHE) and it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum section of this report evaluates provision for pupils' personal, social and health education as good. PSHE is woven into the overall caring ethos of the school and is generally in evidence across the curriculum. Lessons in most subjects are planned to include discussion times, which help develop pupils' awareness of the feelings and needs of others. All staff respond very well to personal and social issues as and when they arise.
82. **Citizenship** is taught as an integral part of PSHE. The operation of the school council makes a good contribution to learning in citizenship. A governor who is a local councillor attends school council meetings and draws comparisons between the work and operation of the local council and the school's council. Pupils are developing their understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community through studying the effects of their own behaviour and exploring their vision for the school. Pupils regularly collect for charities and have had visitors such as a representative from St Dunstons into school to talk about their work with blind people. Pupils have shown empathy and a good awareness of world situations by responding to the tsunami in South East Asia by raising money to send to the victim fund.

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	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
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	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	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	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).