

INSPECTION REPORT

RODMELL CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lewes

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114561

Headteacher: Mrs Julie Claxton

Lead inspector: Mrs Esme Pickford

Dates of inspection: 13th - 14th June 2005

Inspection number: 271622

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

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:	66
School address:	Rodmell Lewes East Sussex
Postcode:	BN7 3HF
Telephone number:	(01273) 473 916
Fax number:	(01273) 473 916
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd Geoffrey Daw
Date of previous inspection:	12 June 2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Rodmell Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School is situated in the South Downs village of Rodmell, near Lewes in East Sussex. The school currently has 66 pupils on roll, is much smaller than most primary schools, but is full to capacity. Although the area is advantaged, pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, half from outside the school's catchment area. The school is very popular and currently has a waiting list. Thirteen per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is in line with the national average. All the pupils speak English as their first language. Attainment on entry covers the full range of ability but is below average overall, as over one-third of pupils on roll have special educational needs, and this is a much higher proportion than is normally found. The proportion of these pupils with a statement of need is also well above average. Only three-quarters of the pupils in Year 6 joined the school in the Reception Year. Movement of pupils away from the school is higher than in most schools.

The school has received a number of awards since the last inspection, including a Schools Achievement Award and a Bishop's Commendation Award in 2002, and the Artsmark Gold in 2003. It is due to receive a Healthy Schools Award in July 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23128	Mrs Esme Pickford	Lead inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education English as an additional language
9092	Mr Ron Elam	Lay inspector	
21103	Mrs Val Ives	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English History Geography
18370	Mr Kevin Johnson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Information and communication technology Art and design Music

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal Education
1 - 4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637 833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9 - 14
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14 - 16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17 - 26
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school with a clear Christian ethos that is highly regarded by those who use it. Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes to learning. The high-quality teaching and very good use of assessment enable pupils of all capabilities to achieve very well. The school develops pupils' personal qualities very well by raising self-confidence and preparing them to integrate into a larger communities. Very good leadership and management have enabled the school to improve considerably since the last inspection. Although costs are high, the school provides **very good value for money** because all pupils achieve so well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership of the headteacher, key staff and governors ensures a strong commitment to achieving the highest possible standards in all areas of the school's work.
- Very good teaching, planning and assessment contribute to the very good achievement of pupils, whatever their ability.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are very high.
- The school addresses the needs of individuals very well and is highly inclusive.
- The curriculum is very broad and there are excellent opportunities for enrichment.
- The school has established excellent links with other schools, both locally and internationally.
- Relationships are very good at all levels within the very caring school community.

The school has made **very good** improvement since the last inspection in 2000 and has very successfully addressed the issues identified then. Strategies to improve ICT provision have been highly effective and the shortcomings eliminated; staff are highly skilled and standards now exceed expectations for pupils' ages. Accommodation has improved and the school has a new hall, three class bases and an administration area. Improvements have been made in the overall quality of teaching, learning and planning to meet the wide range of needs in the mixed-age classes.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is very good for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils. Attainment on entry to the Reception class spans the full range of ability but is below average overall. In the Reception Year, the children achieve well to reach the goals set nationally. The most able children exceed these goals in some of the six areas of learning (Personal, social and emotional development, Communication, language and literacy, Mathematical development, Knowledge and understanding of the world, Physical development and Creative development). With very small numbers of pupils in each year group, results in national tests fluctuate from year to year, and comparisons with national averages should be treated with caution. However, results in the 2004 national tests for Year 2 pupils were above average in reading, writing and mathematics and average in science. Test results for Year 6 pupils were above average in English, mathematics and science. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs have a significant impact on overall standards at ages seven and eleven. Even though these pupils make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment, they may not attain the expected standards for their age and this lowers overall results. Despite the increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs, the school continues to improve and standards in the current Years 2 and 6 are above average, with improvements showing in writing. Standards in science have improved in Year 2 and are above average, whilst in Year 6 they remain above average. More able pupils are regularly challenged and attain the higher levels in tests. Pupils' gifts and talents are very well catered for, mainly within the school. Very high standards are achieved in ICT and the arts due to the expertise and enthusiasm of the staff.

The **very good provision for pupils' personal development**, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enables them to become very caring, thoughtful, polite and responsible.

Their very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their learning and very good achievement. The school takes good account of pupils' views and acts on them. Levels of attendance are **satisfactory** and punctuality is **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** overall. There are instances of inspirational teaching. Lesson planning is excellent and takes full account of the assessments made to take learning forward in a structured way. Teachers have an excellent understanding of how their pupils learn best. An excellent range of strategies and resources are used to ensure that pupils' needs are very well catered for. Additional adults are used very effectively and have a strong impact on pupils' achievement, both in small groups and individually. Assessment is very good and used to track progress and teachers set targets to move learning on, but pupils could be more involved so that they develop a better understanding of the progress they are making and the next steps in their learning.

The curriculum is excellent in respect of its breadth and relevance, and teachers skilfully link subjects to provide good opportunities for investigation and applying basic skills to solve problems. Staff expertise is shared and used well, and has contributed to the excellence in ICT and mathematics. For such a small school, the opportunities for enrichment are excellent and enhanced by the excellent links with other schools. Although the school makes best use of its facilities, Reception pupils do not have enough opportunities to work outdoors. Pupils with special educational needs receive excellent teaching, assessment and support. **Very good** levels of care and guidance, combined with a **very good** partnership with parents and the local community, strengthen the ethos and climate for learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The headteacher, staff and governors work well as a team to ensure the best possible standards and achievement in all areas of the school's work. Teaching staff have demanding leadership roles, each managing several curriculum areas. Their very good monitoring and self-evaluation have contributed to the improved quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinators are very knowledgeable and strongly influence the development of their subject areas. Expertise and talent are shared very well. The school is very outward-looking and innovative. Governance is very good and governors make a significant contribution to the leadership of the school and its successes. They ensure that it fulfils all its statutory duties. Careful financial planning ensures that good levels of staffing and support are maintained and that improvements can be made to the accommodation.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly satisfied with the support the school gives to them and their children. They praise the wide range of additional activities offered by the school and the opportunities they are given to work and play in larger groups through linking with other schools. Pupils are very happy at school. They feel that they are valued and that their opinions are listened to, and are very comfortable about approaching staff if problems arise.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has no significant weaknesses. To make the school even better, the staff could:

- Improve the opportunities for Reception children to learn outdoors.
- Improve pupils' involvement in the target-setting process.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good overall. Overall standards are above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Achievement in ICT is very good and standards are well above expectations.
- There is regular challenge for the most able pupils which enables them to attain the higher levels in national tests.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and achieve very well.
- Pupils in the Reception class achieve well and most reach the nationally expected goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Commentary

1. When children start school in the Reception Year, assessment data shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding are very wide ranging, but below expectations overall. Most have attended playgroups and nurseries, and the information provided by these groups is used as a starting point for planning. Children are regularly assessed and targets set to move their learning forward in a structured way. This results in almost all of the Reception children reaching the national goals by the end of the year. The current group of Reception children are making good progress and most are on track to reach the expected levels for their age. Higher-attaining children are working on the earliest stages of the National Curriculum in some areas. Although the children make satisfactory progress in their physical development, the opportunities to work outdoors are limited by the lack of a secure area for their regular use.
2. Standards in national tests in Year 2 and Year 6 have varied from year to year but in 2004 were above average in English, mathematics and science. The main reason for these annual variations is the small size of the cohorts of pupils who attend the school. The small numbers of pupils in each year group, usually less than ten, affects comparisons of the school's performance, both with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Standards overall have risen since the last inspection, despite the increase in pupils with special educational needs, because of the high quality of teaching and planning. Data shows that Year 6 pupils achieve very well in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2, due to the very good quality of teaching and the use of assessment to move learning forward. There are significant variations in the ratio of boys to girls in some year groups, which also affects results, for example in writing, where boys often do less well than girls. With such small numbers taking the test each year, results can fluctuate widely from year to year and it is difficult to identify any trends.
3. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs within each intake varies. Over a third of the pupils currently on roll have special educational needs (SEN). This is a higher proportion than found in most schools and is increasing. Pupils with SEN make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Although these pupils make very good progress in relation to their capabilities, most do not reach the expected standards by the ages of seven and eleven, and this lowers the school's overall test results.
4. Pupils' language and literacy skills in Years 2 and 6 are above national expectations and their progress is very good. This year the school identified writing as an area for improvement because it considered that there was some underachievement, especially by more able pupils.

The staff have worked hard to address this by adapting their teaching methods and use of resources. These measures are proving successful: improvements in pupils' writing were seen during the inspection. Pupils are given very good opportunities to use and develop their literacy skills in a number of cross-curricular activities, which contribute to the above-average standards attained. Presentation of work has improved since the last inspection. Standards of handwriting are now satisfactory overall because it is practised regularly but some pupils take some time to develop a clear flowing style to use in their written work. Good use is made of the library and the Internet to carry out research, and high levels of independence are achieved from an early age as a result.

5. In mathematics, standards in the current Years 2 and 6 were found to be above those expected as a result of the high-quality teaching and very good support given. In science, standards were found to be above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and show improvement from the previous year.
6. Throughout the school, pupils were found to be highly competent in their use of ICT. The highly-skilled staff enable pupils to attain standards that are well above expectations for their age. There has been an excellent improvement in standards since the last inspection, as a result of high quality teaching. The limited evidence gathered suggests that high standards in dance and the arts have been maintained due to the considerable talents of the staff in this area. This is nationally recognised through the Artsmark Gold Award which the school received.
7. Pupils of all capabilities achieve very well because teaching is very good and expectations are high. Very good assessment systems contribute significantly to the above-average standards achieved because teachers use them so well when planning for a wide range of needs. Very good challenge is provided for the higher-attaining pupils. As a result, they also achieve very well. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and their talents are extended where the school has the facilities to do so. If not, alternatives are suggested. Average-attaining pupils are motivated by the challenges set for the most able. This often results in rapid progress as they aspire to work at a higher level and many exceed the targets set for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The great majority of pupils behave very well, have very positive attitudes to work and enjoy being at school.
- The school's very good provision for social development leads to very good relationships around the school.

Commentary

8. The table below shows the attendance figures for the school. The level of attendance is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. The number of holidays in term time was a concern at the last inspection, but, because of the school's actions, they are less frequent now. Nearly all pupils come to school on time, even though some travel from a distance. The good arrangements for the start of the day lead to pupils settling quickly and ensure a prompt start to learning.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year [%]

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.1
National data:	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.2
National data:	0.4

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

9. Pupils are interested in what happens in school and say they enjoy lessons. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and settle quickly to the tasks given. They are eager to answer questions and are confident to contribute their ideas. These positive attitudes reflect the high quality of teaching and the variety of interesting activities built into the lessons. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy learning because of the good support they receive in the classroom which gives them the confidence to overcome difficulties.
10. The school, although small, provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. They interact with classmates in group work and paired discussions tasks within each class. The school council and school clubs enable pupils of all ages to work together. Pupils show maturity when undertaking the different duties around the school. These include being 'buddies' who are trained to help other pupils in the playground, and the older pupils sitting with the younger ones at lunchtime. Pupils' understanding of the wider world is good and enhanced by the wide range of visitors, inter-school sports matches and talks by representatives of charities. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit and sample a range of team-building outdoor activities. Pupils' relationships with their peers and with adults are harmonious and similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. This contributes to the quality of work and very good progress made. Pupils' very good behaviour means that no pupils have been excluded.
11. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness are very good. School assemblies help pupils feel a sense of belonging to a whole school community, and an appreciation of the contributions and achievements of others. Discussions about feelings in circle time and personal, social and health education lessons enable pupils to relate to and understand the views of other people. Pupils' cultural development is very good. Various subjects provide them with a fuller understanding of the world around them with, for example, art and music developing aesthetic awareness. Pupils have a very good appreciation of the Western cultural background from history and studies of European artists and composers. Non-Western culture is introduced by, for example, African stories in literacy lessons and studying other locations in geography. The school has established links with schools in Berlin and Egypt, which provide pupils with valuable insight into issues in the wider world. The school makes very good use of visitors such as Indian drummers and dancers to introduce pupils to other cultures in Britain.
12. Pupils respond well to the moral guidance from the school and have a very good understanding of right and wrong, which contributes to the good relationships within the school and their good behaviour. They move around the school sensibly and with an awareness of others' needs. The school uses a variety of positive strategies to encourage good behaviour which are used consistently by all the staff. Pupils respond well to these high expectations. Pupils with special behavioural needs are well supported by the staff. Both parents and pupils confirm that bullying is rare but dealt with quickly and effectively if it does occur.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The curriculum is excellent in respect of its breadth, relevance and enrichment. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. Very good levels of care and guidance, combined with a very good partnership with parents, strengthen the ethos and climate for learning.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall and a significant number of lessons are inspirational.
- Teachers' planning is outstanding, ensuring that pupils of all ages and capabilities are able to learn very well.
- Teaching assistants and other adults who reinforce and support learning are extremely well allocated and contribute significantly to pupils' very good achievement.
- Teachers make excellent use of information and communication technology in their lessons.
- Assessment is very thorough and used very effectively to track pupils' progress.
- Not all pupils are sufficiently involved in setting their learning targets.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching is very good across the school. During the inspection, all the lessons observed were at least good and five excellent lessons were seen. As a result, pupils in all year groups and of all levels of prior attainment make very good progress in their learning in most areas of the curriculum. The improvement is the result of thorough monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and sharing expertise and ideas to improve pupils' learning within the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5	7	7	0	0	0	0

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

14. Teachers have excellent knowledge and a very good understanding of many curriculum areas. Although there are only five teachers, there is a wide range of subject knowledge and talent within the staff, which is shared effectively. The basic skills of literacy are very well taught and this is the basis of pupils' very good achievement. The interests and enthusiasms of the staff are reflected in the above-average standards in art and design, information and communication technology and dance. Expertise is sought from outside the school in those areas where it is felt that further improvements could be made. Staff have very good opportunities to attend courses and to visit other schools. This enables the school, although small, to be outward-looking and ensure that it provides the best possible learning opportunities for its pupils. Teachers also develop a good understanding of how the pupils compare with their peers in larger schools. Teachers are enthusiastic and have an excellent understanding of how children's learning skills develop, and use this when planning. Their planning is outstanding and well structured, and makes excellent use of assessment and evaluation to match lessons to pupils' needs. Teachers are able to prepare stimulating lessons which are enjoyable and relevant to the needs of all pupils. Very good links are made between subject areas so that, for example, skills learnt in mathematics and literacy are applied and developed in a meaningful way. There is a high level of challenge for the most able pupils and excellent support for pupils with SEN. All additional adults know exactly what is required of them in all parts of the lesson and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

15. Pupils respond well in lessons and maintain concentration as a result of teachers' high expectations and effective use of different strategies to ensure that lessons move at a good pace. There is an insistence on high standards of behaviour throughout the school. Resources are used well to ensure that there is a variety of activity and challenge in lessons. Imaginative planning helps to overcome any limitations imposed by the size of some classrooms and outdoor play areas. Homework is regularly set and contributes to the very good progress pupils make.
16. Highly effective teaching has driven up standards in ICT, which are now well above those expected for pupils' age. Outstanding improvement has been made here since the last inspection. Teachers are now highly skilled as a result of the initiatives introduced and have shared their expertise and trained the support staff. As a result, ICT has become embedded in the curriculum and is a strength of the school. The school's expertise is now shared at training conferences.
17. The teaching and support for pupils with SEN are excellent. Teachers take full account of pupils' needs when planning lessons. Consistent liaison with support staff makes sure that tasks are always tailored to next steps in learning. Pupils are normally integrated in full classes with targeted help. Occasionally, individuals and groups are withdrawn for specific help to boost basic skills. All staff know their pupils very well and maintain high expectations of them. Support assistants have the flexibility to adjust pupils' 'small step' targets for pupils with SEN, if they consider it necessary to help progress.
18. Overall, the teaching of children in the Reception class is good. It has a clear impact on their learning and helps them to achieve well. The planning is very good and the themes link well with the work of Years 1 and 2 whilst meeting the requirements for children of this age. Most of the group activities, planned with the class teacher, are led by the nursery nurse and take place outside the class base. Children are given good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills, quickly showing a good level of independence and self-confidence. An emphasis is placed on giving children the opportunity to talk both to adults and their peers. In this way they develop their vocabulary and learn to articulate their ideas. Basic skills are introduced in a structured way and taught well. Children use ICT equipment very confidently, for example making their own videos and recording a sound track. Opportunities to plan regular outdoor learning experiences are limited by the lack of secure space and accommodation for this age group. Teachers make the best use of the available facilities to ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. Assessment is very thorough and is used effectively to plan for progress towards the early learning goals.
19. Assessment is very thorough throughout the school. There is an excellent tracking system which monitors pupils' progress in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and information and communication technology as they move through the school. Very good records are also kept of skill development in physical education, and progress in other subjects is monitored and reported to parents at the end of the year. Work is marked very well and pupils say that they are clear about any improvements they need to make in a particular piece of work. They regularly evaluate their own learning against the focus of the lesson. Teachers know their pupils very well and set clear termly targets for the next steps in their learning in relation to National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and science. These targets are not made clear to pupils and many are vague about what they need to do to move their learning up to the next level. There is scope to involve pupils more when targets are being set so that they can measure their successes and have better understanding of their learning. The high-quality annual reports do not summarise targets and so pupils and parents are not clear about the most important things which need to be improved.
20. Excellent use is made of assessments to inform individual education programmes (IEP' s) for pupils with SEN. As a result, these pupils have a very clear view of what they need to do to move on and make very good progress as a result of the structure planning and co-operation amongst all the adults involved in their learning. Pupils' needs are identified at the earliest possible stage and appropriate assessment scales are applied where pupils have not reached

National Curriculum levels. These allow small targets to be set to promote step-by-step learning. Targets are followed through in IEPs and well-structured teaching support programmes. Half-termly reviews mean that there is regular discussion of progress, and termly action plans are arranged with outside agents to agree levels of future support. Teaching assistants liaise daily with teachers and have the flexibility to modify steps where such intervention is needed. These strategies are supported by a wide range of intervention programmes in order to boost basic reading skills. Data from national tests and interim non-statutory test assessments in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT provide a very clear analysis of pupils' progress and achievement in relation to that of other pupils, as well as a sound basis for setting future targets.

The curriculum

The breadth of the curriculum and the opportunities for enrichment and inclusion are excellent. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides an excellent range of exciting learning opportunities for its pupils.
- The school's curriculum is enriched by the very many opportunities that are provided for the pupils.
- There is excellent provision that takes account of the needs of all the pupils, including their personal, social and special educational needs.
- There is an excellent match of skilled support staff to the needs of the curriculum.
- The outdoor curriculum for the Reception class is limited by lack of space.

Commentary

21. The work the pupils are given to do is excellent, not only in its range and richness, but also in the knowledge of how children's learning skills develop that underpins it. The school ensures that all pupils have an excellent quality and range of learning opportunities to widen their experiences. Subjects are often inter-linked so that learning is made meaningful for pupils. Carefully planned programmes ensure that pupils build effectively on their previous learning as they move through the school, and contribute to the very good achievement made. The curriculum is constantly reviewed to ensure that it evolves to meet the changing interests of pupils and staff. For example, teachers regularly evaluate their planning and adjust it in the light of their assessment of pupils' needs, to provide continual challenge and a relevant and stimulating curriculum that has a significant impact on pupils' achievement.
22. The curriculum for information and communication technology has greatly improved since the time of the last inspection. This is mainly due to the high level of expertise within the teaching staff, and the introduction of more computers, laptops, digital cameras and interactive whiteboards into the classrooms. The school has made a training video about 'Role Play in the Foundation Stage', and its use by other local schools demonstrates that this expertise is valued by the wider community.
23. The school has an excellent working relationship with local secondary schools through sharing resources and expertise, for example, in art, dance drama, music, physical education (PE) and science. This has a considerable influence on pupils' learning. The award to the school of a gold Artsmark highlights its dedication to providing considerable experiences in the arts. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by additional activities outside the school day and a wide variety of visits and visitors to the school. Physical education is significantly enriched by the partnership with a local college and the expertise of a PE specialist in swimming and sports from a local secondary school. The collaboration with other small schools in the locality creates further opportunities for the pupils to participate in more team games, which enable them to develop socially and take part in competitive sport.

24. Recognition of diversity and a commitment to the individual are at the heart of the school's work and make a major contribution to its success. Pupils with SEN are extremely well provided for so that they achieve very well. They receive very good support and, as a result, their needs are well met. They have full access to the curriculum. Class teachers and teaching assistants are very well aware of individual needs, and pupils who need extra help are identified early. The individual education plans for these pupils contribute to their very good achievement because they are well written; the targets are specific and measurable, and pupils' progress in achieving them is closely monitored. The school also provides very well for those pupils with particular gifts and talents; they are provided with activities and tasks that challenge them.
25. The excellent programme for the pupils' personal and social development, health and citizenship education helps to ensure that they understand the importance of staying safe and being healthy. It prepares them very well to make effective contributions to the community. The team of teaching assistants provides highly skilled support for pupils' learning throughout the school. All are very well briefed by teachers to ensure that the pupils use their time in school effectively. They make valued contributions to the overall quality of learning.
26. The local environment is used well to enhance learning, but the provision for outdoor activities for the Reception class is very limited, mainly due to the lack of space. The playground is a public walkway, which makes it unsuitable for the school to have available on a daily basis a good range of large toys and equipment, except in a limited way. It does not allow children to take risks appropriate to their age, such as those provided, for example, by a sandpit, climbing apparatus or balancing equipment. Some of this equipment is available in the hall, for which the Reception class is timetabled. However, children do not have access to this equipment on a daily basis and so planned activities that offer appropriate physical challenges are limited and learning is only satisfactory. The classroom currently used for the oldest pupils is very small and this restricts the range of practical activities that can be planned. Resources are good and sufficient in number to teach the planned curriculum. Storage is a real problem due to the lack of space, and many of the resources are stored at levels which are only accessible with the help of the caretaker. To some extent this prevents children developing independence and selecting their own equipment.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good. The school involves pupils in its work by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils trust the teachers and other staff, and know that there is always someone to whom they can turn.
- There are effective procedures for ensuring a healthy and safe environment.
- The adults in the school are very caring and know the pupils well.
- There are a variety of opportunities for pupils to express opinions about life in the school.

Commentary

27. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff show concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. In particular, parents agree that their children are very well supported when they first come into the school. This is because of the visits to the nursery schools by the staff and by Year 5 pupils who become the children's 'buddies' when they start in the Reception class. This enables them to make the best possible start. Pupils consider that they are guided very well by the staff and know whom they would go to if they needed help. They also consider that the teachers listen

to their ideas. This happens by means of questionnaires and, across the school, through the discussions in the school council and helps pupils to make decisions and plan improvements which are important to them.

28. The overall attention to health and safety is good. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as physical education and design and technology. Risk assessments are in place for trips out and in relation to activities around the school. The local education authority audits the school's procedures. The governors fulfil their statutory duty in this area by overseeing procedures in one of their committees and are aware of, and effectively deal with, any problems. A new fire-alarm system has been installed since the last inspection. The school follows the local procedures for child protection and ensures that all staff know how to deal with any concerns that may arise. The arrangements for first aid are good, with trained staff, records kept of treatment and parents notified of concerns. All these contribute to a safe and healthy environment.
29. The school has very good procedures for guiding pupils. The staff regularly assess progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. This information is used to group pupils so that they receive the appropriate support. Additional guidance is provided through the marking of pupils' work and by pupils making their own assessment of how well they learn in each lesson. However, pupils are not involved in setting their learning targets. The recording of pupils' personal development is less structured, although the staff have a good understanding of the pupils' attitudes to work and social skills. They consistently and appropriately use praise and rewards to raise pupils' self-esteem and to develop their personal qualities. These include the effective recognition of achievements in a weekly assembly.
30. Pupils with special educational needs are monitored carefully. Their progress is checked regularly and their individual education plans are reviewed at pre-determined dates to enable the best possible achievement over time.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are very good overall. Links with the local community and with other schools are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard and are pleased with what it provides.
- The parents' support at home and in school makes a very good contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The school provides parents with a wide range of information about what happens in school.
- The involvement of a number of organisations and people in the community extends opportunities for pupils' personal, social and academic development.

Commentary

31. In their response to the Ofsted questionnaire and at the meeting with the registered inspector, parents showed that they are very pleased with what the school provides. Their children like school, the staff expect their children to work hard and they make good progress. These views are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.
32. The school sends home regular news and other letters about general matters. The information provided includes a half-termly outline of what is to be taught and suggestions about how parents can help their children. The school also organises workshops and open days. Teachers are readily available at the end of the day, and even the start of the day provides an opportunity for a brief word with the headteacher. From the relaxed, informal conversations seen during the inspection it is apparent that parents are comfortable talking to the staff. The

good relationships with parents contribute to the positive attitudes pupils have towards the school. The annual reports on pupil progress in the summer term provide a very good summary of what they know and can do in each subject but does not summarise the overall targets for improvement to help parents understand the targets for the next year.

33. Several parents help regularly in the classroom or provide transport for the pupils, and others accompany trips out. The Parents' Association holds a variety of fund-raising and social events. Pupils confirm that their parents usually ensure that homework is completed. A working party of staff, governors and parents is reviewing homework. Each year, parents are asked to complete a questionnaire to help the school to include their ideas in its improvement plan.
34. The school is an important part of the village community, and excellent links are established. The school works closely with the parish council regarding the school grounds. Village events are supported and the local community has access to school facilities. Older people are invited in to see performances by the pupils. Villagers such as artists come in to work with the pupils or to talk about village life as it used to be. The church is an important partner, with the rector taking assembly, as well as pupils visiting the church for services. Pupils' understanding of society is also enhanced by the contact with charitable organisations and staff from public bodies such as the police and fire brigade. The mainstream curriculum is enhanced by visits to places in the local area and further afield.
35. The excellent links with other small schools enable staff to share expertise in mathematics and information and communication technology. They also enable pupils to take part in joint events such as music festivals and inter-school sports and enable their social skills to develop. The links with a Beacon primary school enhance the provision for arts, especially dance, music and drama. A secondary school extends opportunities for physical education, and the expertise of two special schools benefits pupils with special educational needs. The various links also ensure good social support for the transfer to secondary school. Links with the other schools and the community have been strengthened since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The leadership of the school by the headteacher and key staff is very good and their management is very effective. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and keen to ensure that it provides the best possible opportunities for pupils in all areas of its work.
- The governing body makes a major contribution to the leadership of the school and its successes.
- All staff work very well as a team, respecting each other and sharing their expertise.
- The very good leadership and management of subject areas by teachers provide a clear insight into the progress of different groups of pupils.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for the professional development of its staff.

Commentary

36. The headteacher has been in post for just under two years and demonstrates her enthusiasm and ambition for high achievement in all areas of the school's work. She has quickly established herself in the school community and gained the respect of staff, parents and pupils. She is very outward-looking and ensures that teachers and pupils are not disadvantaged because the school is so small. Excellent links with other schools and colleges

have been developed to enable staff to share their talents beyond the school and gather new ideas. Pupils also benefit from working with teachers and pupils from other schools, and they are well prepared for moving to larger schools. The school is working within its cluster to improve provision for the most able. Under the headteacher's leadership, the school is gaining a high reputation in the area for the all-round education it provides for a wide range of abilities. Parents especially value her detailed knowledge of their children and her accessibility at the start and end of the day. There is a strong Christian ethos and the school is highly inclusive, promoting equality of opportunity and providing an excellent response to individual needs. The headteacher contributes to this by leading and co-ordinating the provision for SEN exceptionally well. All staff are aware of the particular needs of pupils, and relevant training for teaching and support staff is a feature of the school's professional development planning. Resources to help learning have improved, so staff use their skills more effectively. Liaison with local special schools and resulting outreach work and training have further strengthened the provision.

37. The headteacher is very ably supported by a senior teacher and the other teachers, who share her ambitions and vision for the school. All of the staff are responsible for leading and managing several subject areas. Staff take full responsibility for their subjects, monitoring planning, observing teaching, work sampling, analysing data and attending courses. All this information is used to generate action plans to make teaching and learning even more effective. Staff strongly influence the development of subject areas, and their very good leadership and management are reflected in the high quality of teaching and the very good achievement of all pupils. Two members of the teaching staff regularly share their expertise with other schools and at teacher-training conferences. The leadership of information and communication technology is excellent, and the level of expertise developed within the staff, along with pupils' high attainment, reflects this.
38. Governance of the school is very good. The governing body provides a high level of support, with specific skills used very well in such areas as the curriculum, special educational needs, premises, finance, pupils' personal and spiritual development, and health and safety. Governors work and communicate well as a team, fulfil their statutory duties and are very involved in development planning. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the challenges it faces regarding staff changes, the lack of space in some classes and whether they can sustain the excellent provision for the increasing number of pupils with special needs. Governors are well informed not only by the headteacher but also through their regular monitoring visits which have a specific focus. Many governors are experienced, well trained and able to act as 'critical friends' to the school to ensure the best possible use is made of funds and resources.
39. The school is very good at evaluating its progress and by gathering evidence from a number of sources. This evaluation is used as the basis for the school improvement plan, which has clear priorities and is focused on raising standards. Staff performance is managed very well and is effective in bringing about school improvement, for example raising standards in writing. Staff have very good opportunities for professional development and leadership training and this keeps them informed of current developments and enables them to introduce initiatives to raise standards. The school administrator and the caretaker make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school on a daily basis. The school contributes to teacher-training programmes and also supports nursery nurse and child-care students. The office manager keeps the governors' finance committee well informed with up-to-date information so that it can monitor the budget. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is used well to provide a high level of support and resources. Best-value principles are central to the management of the school, and good arrangements have been introduced to provide all teaching staff with regular management time next year. Staff expertise, including the teaching assistants, as well as other resources, are used very well. There is a higher-than-usual carry-forward figure because monies are earmarked for a classroom extension and development of the outdoor area. Although unit costs are high because the school is small, it nevertheless provides very good value for money taking into account pupils' attainment when joining the school and the standards achieved when they leave.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	237,361
Total expenditure	214,072
Expenditure per pupil	3,398

Balances (£)	
Budget adjustment from the previous year	2,038
Balance carried forward to the next year	23,289

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Reception class is good. It has been maintained since the last inspection. The children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. A wide variety of stimulating resources and the usually well-planned

provision of relevant activities that are clearly matched to the children's needs make a good contribution to their learning. The staff work well together, ably supporting each other. The accommodation for outdoor learning activities is very limited and there is no room for large apparatus and equipment or the regular use of sand and water.

The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed, staff work well as a team, children are assessed meticulously and their progress is carefully monitored. By the time children move from Reception to Year 1, they have made good progress and achieved well to reach the goals set nationally.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clearly-planned learning opportunities develop children's social skills.
- Very good behaviour management ensures that children know the rules in a climate where everyone is 'special'.
- Clear routines are established in which the children become secure, settled and happy.

Commentary

40. The very small number of children enter the school with a very wide range of social skills. The school has good strategies to develop these and, by the end of the Reception Year, all the children achieve the national goals. The good teaching has a clear impact on children's learning. The good use of appropriate praise is a key factor in helping children to improve.
41. All staff, including the nursery nurse and teaching assistants, create a calm, secure and purposeful environment in which the children become confident learners. New children are settled in thoughtfully and successfully, and are happy to come to school. With helpful encouragement and sensitive handling, they begin to form positive relationships with one another and with adults and interact well. Because routines are well established, children concentrate well and quickly learn to become independent.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff ask skilful questions and activities are clearly explained, helping the children to understand better.
- Resources are well chosen to stimulate interest and motivate learning.

Commentary

42. Children enter Reception with a reasonable ability to communicate. Most progress well and are on course to achieve the national goals by the end of Reception because they are well taught. A good emphasis is placed on speaking and listening from an early age, and all staff, including the nursery nurse and teaching assistants, provide ample opportunities for the children to develop these skills. For example, very skilful and clear questioning techniques help the children to think about what they are doing and to talk to each other and to adults.

Informal opportunities in the role-play area contribute well to their speaking and listening development. All of the other areas of learning benefit from this.

43. Writing is suitably promoted in the different areas in the classroom. An appropriate emphasis is made on the correct formation of letters and holding a pencil in the right way. Teachers provide many practical opportunities to develop the children's hand control and manipulation skills with, for example, a selection of different sized pencils, large and small paintbrushes and tools.
44. Very thoughtful stories are carefully chosen to increase the children's literacy skills and are suitably linked to the other areas of learning. For instance, a group of children enjoyed working together using information and communication technology to construct a slide show based on 'Handa's Surprise'. After presenting this to each other, they suggested helpful ways to improve it, such as making the slides slow down, as they changed too quickly. Regular checks of their progress are recorded and new targets are drawn up if required, particularly in reading, which promotes better progress.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned, with clear aims that are shared with the children.
- Very good adult involvement in all practical activities ensures that children make the best use of these opportunities.

Commentary

45. The children are on line to achieve the national goals in their mathematical development by the end of the Reception Year. Teaching in this area of learning is clear and precise so that the children know what is expected of them. Adults effectively build on what the children know, and provide many well-planned practical opportunities to enhance their learning.
46. Learning is effective because the children have worthwhile challenges to build on what they have learned. Good links are made with the other areas of learning, through the effective provision of stimulating activities, computer programs and interesting stories that are chosen. For example, an examination of the small amount of the children's past work shows that they are usefully introduced to counting using the spots on a ladybird and sequencing when considering the life cycle of a butterfly. The good collaboration between the teacher and the nursery nurse skilfully reinforce the children's learning. Regular checks of their progress are recorded and new targets are drawn up if required.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well-organised environment contributes well to children's good progress.
- Good adult involvement in all practical activities ensures that children make the best use of these opportunities.

- There are very good opportunities provided for information and communication technology.

Commentary

47. All of the children are on course to attain the national goals for early learning in this aspect by the end of the Reception Year. A few more able children are likely to exceed them. Teaching and learning are good and the children achieve well. The classroom environment is well organised and there are useful opportunities for children to use construction kits and to make models to develop their control of small objects. Computer programs are well chosen and they ably support the children's learning; children have regular opportunities to practise their skills in using a computer. They know how to operate the microscope, use the computer mouse to photograph, change the size of the display and print, and make good progress as a result of the confidence and skills they develop.
48. An examination of the children's past work in books and photographs shows that they are provided with a wide number of relevant experiences to enrich their learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Carefully-planned learning opportunities help to develop the children's skills.
- A wide range of activities is offered daily to encourage good physical development, with effective adult supervision and guidance.
- Limited space to provide adequate use of large apparatus and equipment.

Commentary

49. Provision is limited for the children's physical development, but they make satisfactory progress over time even though there is no outdoor dedicated play area for the Reception class to build on their physical skills, or regular access to large climbing apparatus. They achieve the national goals for the control and manipulation of small objects, such as pencils, construction apparatus, modelling tools, sewing needles, scissors and paint brushes, which they handle safely and competently.
50. Although only a small amount of outside space is available, good teaching and very good planning of a variety of activities mean that children make as much progress as possible given the limitations of the accommodation and achieve the goals expected for their age by the end of the year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

51. No overall judgement can be made about provision or standards in this areas of learning, but teachers' planning, photographic evidence and classroom displays indicate that children are given a good range of carefully-planned opportunities to use a range of materials such as paint and collage and develop their imagination through role-play activities.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well, so that standards are above average by the end of Year 6.
- The leadership and management of the subject is very good.
- Overall, there is very good teaching across the school.
- Lessons are very well planned, with clear aims that are shared with the pupils.
- Currently, pupils are not involved in setting their targets for improvement.

Commentary

52. Year-group cohorts, both in Year 2 and Year 6, are very small, usually below 10 in number. This means that National Curriculum test results vary annually by very wide margins. When the test results in 2004 are compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the standard of attainment in reading and writing is above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. There are a high number of pupils with special educational needs, which significantly affects the school's annual national test results. Inspection findings confirm that the standards of the current Year 6 pupils are above national expectations and pupils' progress is very good.
53. Pupils are very articulate and keen to offer contributions in lessons. They talk enthusiastically about their work. Standards in speaking and listening are above average because pupils are given good opportunities to speak and develop their vocabulary and imagination. In small group work, they collaborate very well together. Reading is greatly valued, and in this area all pupils are clear about the targets set by their teachers. They work hard to reach these and this contributes significantly to the high standards of achievement in reading. Very effective use is made of guided reading time to develop their understanding of texts.
54. The school has identified writing as an area for improvement and has worked hard to address this. Teaching methods are adapted to make writing more appealing, and story structure is broken down into component parts. As a result of adaptations made to teaching methods and resources, improvements were seen across the school. For example, an examination of pupils' work in books shows that in Year 5/6, pupils were regularly using metaphors in their writing to make it more interesting. Presentation of work has improved since the last inspection and handwriting is satisfactory. Handwriting is taught well on a regular basis although pupils find it difficult to develop a clear joined handwriting style to regularly use in their written work.
55. The overall quality of teaching is very good with some excellent features. This is a great improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be good. The overall very good teaching is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning and their very good achievement. For example, in the Year 1/2 class, teaching is very effective because of the thoughtful choice of resources carefully prepared prior to the lesson and the skilful use of the interactive whiteboard and the Internet. This leads to a high level of involvement from the pupils.
56. All the lessons are very well prepared and successfully match the learning needs of all the pupils and there is very effective reinforcement of skills already practised, as was seen in the Year 5/6 class. Another feature is the very good questioning skills that challenge and probe the pupils' understanding and provide practical opportunities for them to talk about their work. There is a very close link with information and communication technology that is used very skilfully to enhance the pupils' learning. For example, in the Year 3/4 class, pupils are skilful in their use of the interactive whiteboard and a camera as they make a group movie of an advertisement to show the kind of language and presentation that might be used to persuade people to buy their product. Valuable opportunities for improvement were provided. Teaching

assistants provide very effective support to groups of pupils. Marking consistently moves pupils on in their learning.

57. The co-ordinator provides very strong leadership. She monitors the quality of teaching and learning assiduously. Outstanding tracking systems enable the progress of each child to be followed. In addition, careful analysis of test results feed into the action plan and generate priorities for improvement, which ensures that the school moves forward. Assessment procedures are well developed. The marking of pupils' work is very good and does help them to progress. There is good evaluation of learning by pupils at the end of each lesson. Teachers do not involve pupils in the setting of termly targets to move learning up to the next level. This makes it difficult for pupils to measure their own improvement over time.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Good examples of literacy development were seen in pupils' writing on history in all classes. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to speak confidently and accurately and demonstrate a willingness to express themselves in discussion. In mathematics, pupils are encouraged to use precise terms well and vocabulary is displayed to help them. The scrutiny of the pupils' past work on display and in books shows, for example, that valuable opportunities are provided in information and communication technology, design and technology, science, history and religious education to record facts, word process, investigate and use of descriptive writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good, enabling all pupils to achieve very well and attain above average standards.
- The planning and organisation for teaching the mixed-age classes is outstanding.
- There is very good challenge for higher-attaining pupils and very good support for the least able.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning against the focus of the lesson and use this information very effectively to plan the next lesson.
- Subject leadership is very good.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in setting their learning targets.

Commentary

59. Attainment by the ages of 7 and 11 is above average and shows improvement since the last inspection. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average and targets set for this year group in the recent tests have been exceeded, with more pupils reaching the higher Level 3 than expected. In the current Year 6, standards are above average even though there is a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs than last year. More able pupils are regularly challenged through investigation and problem-solving and achieve very well. They can calculate mentally quickly and accurately. Tracking records show that pupils with SEN make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment in Year 2. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
60. There is a high level of expertise within the staff. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and a talent for planning lessons which interest and challenge the wide range of capabilities and within the mixed-age classes. Teaching is very good overall and results in enjoyment and very good achievement by pupils of all capabilities. A wide range of teaching methods and resources are used to stimulate interest. In Years 1 and 2, imaginative role-play was used very effectively to help pupils develop an understanding of multiplication and use it to calculate a

restaurant bill. All teachers encourage an investigative approach, which enables pupils to use and apply their knowledge to solve problems at a level matched to their learning needs.

61. In Years 3 and 4, pupils were observed investigating odd and even numbers. Very good questioning at the start of the lesson enabled the teacher to assess what pupils already knew and to extend this. Pupils were expected to use the correct mathematical terminology in their answers. Very good use was made of individual whiteboards to keep all pupils focused and involved in the lesson. A range of very well structured investigations followed, which challenged all abilities. The most able were able to test their ideas out and use what they knew to formulate general rules for adding and subtracting odd and even numbers. They could say how they would use this to check if answers were correct or not. Pupils with special educational needs worked with apparatus and developed a good visual understanding of odd and even.
62. Teachers have a talent for making tasks very relevant and interesting and so pupils achieve very well. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to evaluate their learning at the end of the lesson. There is a strong emphasis on developing mathematical vocabulary and encouraging pupils to use it in their explanations. Pupils in Year 5 and 6, when challenged to solve real-life problems involving money, show they have developed good mental strategies for calculating the cost of ten items. They can work out the cost of more items using a range of methods such as grids and partitioning. Pupils demonstrate their methods to the class confidently and talk through processes using mathematical vocabulary. Pupils also show that they are able to use a calculator accurately for solving money problems. The most able found that they could use their skills to work out the answer without the calculator and almost as quickly. Throughout the school, the available adults are very well allocated and used to give appropriate support, questioning pupils to develop their thinking. All teachers make excellent use of the resources available, especially information and communication technology, to develop skills and enable the best possible learning to take place.
63. Teachers set termly targets for improvement in mathematics in relation to National Curriculum levels and group targets are displayed in class. Although teachers are clear about what needs to be done, individual pupils, except for those with special educational needs, are not sufficiently involved in setting targets nor measuring their progress towards them. In this respect, they do not have the full impact on moving learning up to the next level. Pupils' work is thoroughly marked and comments are made which help them to improve. Most pupils present their work neatly, although there is not enough insistence that rulers are used to draw straight-sided shapes. This causes inaccuracy when measuring areas and perimeters. Homework is set on a weekly basis and usually links with class work. Tasks of a practical nature are often set and parents get involved and contribute to the very good levels of achievement. Most parents are very satisfied with the homework set.
64. Leadership and management of the subject are very good because the co-ordinator, although new to the school, has a clear knowledge of the strengths of the subject. From an audit, observations of teaching and work sampling, she has identified priorities for development and is already having an influence on subject development. Data is carefully analysed to identify any gaps to ensure improvements are made where needed and this is very effective in raising standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Mathematics is used very well in most curriculum subjects. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to use and develop their skills outside the numeracy lesson, which contributes to the above average standards achieved. Interactive teaching programmes are used on the class computers and whiteboards. In science and geography, pupils handle data, draw graphs and construct results tables. In athletics lessons, pupils measure distance and time. Accurate measurement of length and weight is often used in design and technology work.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved. Pupils throughout the school achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is very good. It has improved since the previous inspection.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Lack of space in the upper junior classroom restricts opportunities for independent practical investigations.

Commentary

66. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. National data shows fluctuating standards over the past four years, which is to be expected due to small numbers of pupils in the cohort. The school also provides for a considerable number of pupils who have additional learning needs. This accounts for the apparent difference between girls' and boys' achievement. However, over time there has been an upward trend in results.
67. Given pupils' below average levels on entry to the school, they achieve very well. This is due to the very good teaching and use of assessment systems to monitor and track individual achievement. There is a well-planned curriculum which embraces the principle of linking science with other subjects to make learning more meaningful. ICT is used very effectively to support learning.
68. The quality of teaching seen is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan very well to ensure very good pace to lessons. The importance of science enquiry skills is made clear and there are good opportunities for pupils to use their skills. The use of ICT is a very strong feature of most lessons. Relationships in lessons are very good; pupils work well in groups, exchanging ideas with each other and the adults. Pupils are co-operative and their behaviour at times is exemplary and this enables excellent learning to take place. Support for pupils who have specific learning needs is excellent. Teachers plan work for them very thoughtfully so they achieve as well as others. The quality of additional help provided by very skilful support staff is highly effective so that pupils integrate very well in lessons and benefit from the inclusive ethos.
69. Although high quality teaching and learning were evident during the inspection, Year 6 pupils did not demonstrate that they were confident to carry out independent investigations. Staff are aware that the limited teaching space restricts such activities. They ensure that they make the best use of museums and environmental centres in order to increase the opportunities for investigation.
70. The subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator ensures that science maintains a high profile in the school and that teachers plan all work as an effective team and this ensures that pupils progress very well as they move through the school. Due to her personal ICT expertise, its use is embedded across the science curriculum and provides additional opportunities for research and the collection and display of data. Since the previous inspection, there have been improvements in teaching quality, resources and curriculum provision. Science weeks in school, links with a Beacon school, visits to the Natural History Museum and to botanical gardens all help to enrich pupils' learning. Systems for monitoring and evaluating standards and provision are highly effective and have led to the improved standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been excellent improvement since the previous inspection.
- Achievement is very good and standards throughout the school are well above expectations.
- Teachers are highly skilled.
- Leadership and management are outstanding.

Commentary

71. Strategies to improve ICT provision in the school have been highly effective. Shortcomings identified previously have been completely eliminated and standards throughout the school now exceed expectations. ICT is embedded in the curriculum. Pupils routinely use computers, digital cameras, microscopes and movie cameras to record and enhance their work. Two of the three class teachers in school are 'hands on' specialists who support colleagues throughout the local authority. Consequently the sharing of skills in Rodmell School is part of everyday practice and has had a strong impact on the excellent improvement made. Interactive whiteboards and new laptops linked through a server provide greater flexibility and access to ICT so that pupils can research, record their experiences and communicate both within the class and with pupils in other schools.
72. Highly effective teaching has driven up standards. Teachers are very resourceful and have devised novel ways to teach pupils a wide range of skills so that they confidently apply what they know to their learning in other subjects. Pupils use a movie camera to record performance in PE to help them evaluate their performance and improve. They make animated films linked to science or literacy and create slideshows. They use a digital microscope and photograph the image for future observations. Software is carefully selected, providing access to interactive learning in literacy, numeracy, science and research. There are specific resources to help pupils who have special educational needs which contribute to the very good progress they make. Support staff benefit from in-house training and therefore provide strong support in lessons. Some pupils were very quickly put on the right track when they had difficulties with spreadsheet formulae, ensuring that they had kept pace with others in lessons. Learning for pupils in Years 3 and 4 was exceptional when they followed up a literacy lesson about persuasive language in advertising by using a range of skills to enhance the movie presentation of their advertisements for shampoo. The pictorial image was enhanced by a voice-over, imported special effects and music to assess how the language of advertising could be affected.
73. Outstanding leadership and management have steered the school towards its current provision and the high standards pupils reach. The co-ordinator has been very resourceful in establishing links with schools and other providers and this has enabled pupils to have access to a wide range of up-to-date equipment and opportunities to regularly use their skills. As a consequence, Rodmell has been a host school in a scheme to train headteachers nationwide, and staff share their practice at training conferences. This has set the climate for improvement through seeking new initiatives and influencing how teachers teach. Other adults have become enthusiastic and developed their own skills because they have seen the benefits this has brought to pupils' learning. Rigorous monitoring of provision and standards are firmly established within the ongoing evaluation programme. The school is always looking for ways to improve further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. The use of ICT across the curriculum is excellent because it is so naturally embedded in every aspect of pupils' learning and contributes to the improved standards in a number of subjects.

HUMANITIES

75. **Geography** and **history** were sampled. **Religious education** was subject to a separate inspection under Section 23 of the School Inspections Act 1966. Documentation seen in geography and history indicates that the curricular provision is very good.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

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

Art and design

76. A scrutiny of pupils' art and design work, particularly the school's Artsmark portfolio, provides evidence that standards are better than those seen typically at the end of Year 6. There is a very good emphasis on the teaching of art skills and good opportunities to develop these through the range of observational drawing and painting, collage and three-dimensional work. In the one art lesson seen, where teaching was very good, pupils in Years 5 and 6 explored texture in ink drawing by using line and tone. They then applied those skills to their drawing of natural objects, recalling their earlier experiences of sketching during a visit to the Natural History Museum. The initial experimental time at the beginning of the lesson gave them the confidence to tackle the main task and resulted in accurate and skilful drawing.

Music

77. In music, overall standards are broadly in line with expectations throughout the school. Pupils have good opportunities to perform music at local events and school performances. Violin and recorder tuition is available to extend pupils who show talent in this area. The co-ordinator recognises that pupils' skills would benefit from more opportunities to compose their own music.
78. Art and, to some extent, musical performance combined with dance and drama add significant breadth to the arts curriculum. Since gaining the Artsmark award, the school is now striving to retain it for a further three years. Pupils' involvement in arts projects has a very positive impact on their personal development and self-esteem, especially for some of the pupils with SEN.

Design and technology

79. One lesson of design and technology was observed during the inspection. Evidence in pupils' books and classroom displays shows that the subject is taught well on a regular basis and that pupils achieve above average standards by the age of 11. Not only are pupils' designing and evaluating skills found to be well developed, but pupils are able to produce objects with a high quality finish, such as the musical instruments seen on display. Much of the work in design and technology is linked with other subjects so that activities are very purposeful. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils were proud of the splendid animal costumes they made for the arts festival. This linked with work in science and a visit to the Natural History Museum which provided the inspiration for the designs and opportunities for group collaboration. Pupils added their own touches to the group designs, such as the stunning patterns on the butterfly wings. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 were observed experimenting with a range of tools used for preparing fruit. They learnt the names of unfamiliar tools and were also shown how to use them correctly and safely. They were able to use all their senses to record on a chart the changes observed. At the end of the lesson, they were able to decide which tools were the most appropriate to use with each fruit. Teaching was very good and health and safety aspects of food handling were highlighted. Some pupils had difficulty in using tools such as a peeler, but they persevered and improved their skills during the lesson. The lesson prepared pupils well for a cooking activity planned for the next lesson.

Physical education

80. The leadership and the management of physical education are very good. The physical education programme is very well organised to ensure that pupils have a very wide range of

opportunities and do not suffer because of the school's small size and restricted space. The school places strong emphasis on developing pupils' overall understanding of healthy living in the context of sport. There is a good range of enthusiasm and expertise among the staff which is extended through the very good links the secondary school. Secondary PE teachers run courses and after-school clubs for Rodmell pupils. Strong links are also established with other primary schools in the cluster to give pupils the opportunity to play team games and take part in competitions. Community expertise is used to provide coaching in cricket and football, which is open to both boys and girls. The building of the hall since the last inspection has improved provision for the subject, especially in dance and gymnastics. There are plans in hand to develop the play area at the back of the school in conjunction with the parish council to improve outdoor facilities. Good use is made of the nearby village cricket field for athletics, football and cricket so that pupils do not suffer from the lack of a school field.

81. During the inspection, one very good physical education lesson was observed. In this athletics lesson, the teacher showed excellent subject knowledge and coaching skills which enabled pupils to achieve very well. Pupils benefit from staff expertise in teaching dance which was demonstrated by the performance seen in preparation for a local arts festival. Standards seen here were above those expected for their age. Swimming takes place at a local leisure centre and pupils of all ages have the opportunity to take part in these lessons. There were only three pupils who could not swim at the time of the inspection. All pupils reach and most exceed the national standard by the end of Year 6. The school is very good at identifying those pupils with particular talents and making sure that they are given opportunities to develop their skills, for example in diving and competitive swimming. A very good assessment system is in place which tracks the development of pupils' physical skills as they move through the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship was sampled.

82. The programme of personal, social and health education is taught on a regular basis and pupils benefit from the opportunities to share their ideas and feelings during these lessons. Health and safety matters are stressed within subjects such as design and technology and science lessons. The school is working towards a Healthy Schools Award which it plans to complete by the end of the school year. There are plans for a 'walking bus' and safe pedestrian routes through the village to relieve congestion outside the school. The police, nurse and fire brigade are regular visitors to the school to highlight aspects of personal safety. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn about citizenship at a local level and to be involved in a variety of church and community events. The international links that have been developed provide pupils with a good insight into issues in the wider world.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3

Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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