

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Brede Primary School**

Broad Oak, nr Rye

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114389

Headteacher: Mr M J Dixon

Reporting inspector: Mr B Wilkinson  
5408

Dates of inspection: 27 –30 March 2000

Inspection number: 191044

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Udimore Road  
Broad Oak  
Brede  
East Sussex

Postcode: TN 31 6DG

Telephone number: 01424 882393

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Fletcher

Date of previous inspection: 17 June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Brian Wilkinson	Registered inspector	Design and Technology, Information Technology	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Belinda Price	Lay inspector	Equal Opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Lesley Robins	Team inspector	English, Mathematics, Science, Art, Geography, History, Music, Physical Education, Religious Education, Special Educational Needs, and Under Fives.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This small school, serving three villages, has a roll of 122 pupils, aged 4 to 11 years, from a variety of social backgrounds. The baseline assessments show that the children's attainment on entry to the reception class is above average, though their personal and social development is about average. Approximately 18 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, broadly in line with the national average, with one pupil awaiting statutory assessment. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The majority of children in the reception class previously attended a nursery in a neighbouring village.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Brede Primary School is an effective school fostering in its pupils very good attitudes and positive values. Standards by age 11 are above the national average in English and mathematics and in gymnastics are good. There is consistently sound teaching, with much of it good or better, and a well established, good climate for learning. There are good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and the headteacher, governors, staff and parents work hard to achieve the school's aims. The school is providing satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in reading, and speaking and listening, are good
- The quality of most pupils' learning is good, reflecting the quality of teaching
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- The adults in the school provide very positive role models: pupils are keen to learn, have very good attitudes to school, behave well, and relate positively to each other
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good
- The provision for pupils' personal and social education is good and all staff care well for the pupils
- The overwhelming majority of parents have very positive views about the school

#### **What could be improved**

- Achievement in science, religious education and design and technology is not high enough
- There are weaknesses in pupils' spelling, punctuation and presentation of their work
- The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is not sufficiently developed
- The management role of the headteacher and subject co-ordinators is not sufficiently well developed
- Assessment information is used inconsistently when planning the curriculum and lessons
- Some of the school's non-teaching accommodation is poorly maintained

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the last inspection in 1996, there has been an improvement to standards in mathematics. Pupils' speaking and listening skills, and the quality of their writing across the curriculum have improved, as has their achievement in art, geography, history and information technology. Achievement in science and design and technology is still not high enough, and in religious education, it has declined and is barely satisfactory. The school's combined average points score for English, mathematics and science has stayed level, unlike the national trend which is upward and improving. Attendance has improved and there have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

In the last inspection, the school had serious weaknesses and provided unsatisfactory value for money. The governing body and headteacher took immediate and appropriate action to begin to address the key issues. However, overall progress has been unsatisfactory, hampered by the long term absence of both the headteacher in 1997 and, more recently, the former deputy headteacher. Of the seven key issues, three have now been fully addressed, two have been addressed in part and two, although begun, need further significant work. These are to improve the monitoring procedures used to assess standards, teaching and management planning, and to make better use of pupils' assessments to inform curricular planning and monitor progress.

Reasonable progress has been made to improve management by defining a strategic focus and by enhancing the governors' oversight of the curriculum. Curriculum planning has been strengthened in geography, history and information technology, leading to improvements in provision. The quality of reporting pupils' achievements has improved and the health and safety requirements have been met. The quality of satisfactory teaching has improved since the last inspection from 75 per cent to 100 per cent. There has been sufficient progress in standards in mathematics, the curriculum, assessment, and leadership and management to judge that the school now no longer has serious weaknesses.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	C	A	B	B	Well above average      A average above average      B
Mathematics	A	C	B	C	Average      C Below average      D
Science	B	E	C	D	Well below average      E

The information shown in the chart shows that in the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds, the school achieved above national average standards in English and mathematics and average standards in science. Compared with similar schools, it was above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. Results for the three subjects over the last three years show wide variation, mainly because of the small numbers in each year group.

Based on pupils' work and lessons seen, by the age of 11 standards are above average in English in reading, and speaking and listening, and in mathematics. Although standards in science are around the national average, the pupils could do much better. Pupils' achievement in gymnastics is above average, whilst their achievement in art, geography, history, information technology and music is average. Achievement is unsatisfactory in design and technology, and in religious education only just meets the expectation for the East Sussex religious education syllabus.

Standards achieved by pupils aged seven in 1999 were above average in reading. Standards in writing and mathematics were broadly in line with national averages, but below in science. In mathematics, the small proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was below average. The proportion achieving level 3 in science was average. Based on pupils' work and lessons seen, standards in reading, speaking and listening, mathematics, science and gymnastics are good and satisfactory in all other subjects except design and technology.

The children under five, though reaching the standards expected nationally, could achieve more highly, given a broader range of learning opportunities. Pupils throughout the school with special educational needs make good progress. The school has set realistic and challenging targets in literacy and numeracy of 92 per cent of its pupils aged 11 in summer 2000 to reach at least average standards.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show very good enthusiasm for school, and are very interested and involved in activities, resulting in very positive attitudes towards learning.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in classes and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils work co-operatively together, showing good respect for each other's views and ideas. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection.

Overall, pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good and are a strength of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with the strengths outweighing the weaknesses. During the inspection, teaching was 100 per cent satisfactory or better. In 49 per cent of lessons teaching was good or better and in 17 per cent it was very good or better. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and are effective in teaching basic skills. The overall quality of the teaching of literacy is satisfactory and in numeracy is good. Other strengths are the high expectations for behaviour and pupil participation. Teachers demonstrate effective methods which demand, from the majority of pupils, very good intellectual, physical and creative effort. Teachers manage pupils well, enabling them to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in a good climate of interest and concentration. Homework is appropriately set, particularly for the older pupils.

There is a lack of effectiveness in a minority of teachers' planning, use of time and resources. Some unsatisfactory use of assessment and marking results in pupils affected having insufficient knowledge of their progress in learning. The school meets the learning needs of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, except for some higher attaining pupils whose learning does not always reach the standards they should.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum has been improved due to the new emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information technology. The children under five have insufficient opportunities to learn through well structured play. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, and is good for personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good throughout the school. There has been improvement to the administration and management of special educational needs since the last inspection.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good for pupils' spiritual and moral development, and very good for pupils' social development. There is insufficient emphasis on raising pupils' awareness of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The very good support by teachers and assistants makes a positive impact on pupils' learning. Assessment is not used effectively to inform future curricular planning. Child protection arrangements are sound. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour.

The school's partnership with parents is very good, creating and maintaining very good links, providing appropriate and regular information and good opportunities to meet in school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management effectively reflect the school's aims to create a caring and supportive environment. There is an insufficient focus on school improvement and raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have links with all the areas of the curriculum and actively monitor the work of the school; they play a key role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The governors and the headteacher, have a developing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but subject co-ordinators do not yet have a sufficient grasp of the issues affecting the raising of standards and achievement in their subjects. Monitoring of teaching and of test results are not used enough to help to improve standards.
The strategic use of resources	The governors make well informed decisions based on regular financial reports. The budget plan is linked to the school long term management and improvement plans.

There are sufficient, appropriately qualified, teaching and support staff. Teachers attend appropriate in-service training for the development of literacy, numeracy and information technology. The classroom accommodation is adequate, though the hall is of limited size for physical education. The entrance to the building is not well signposted, and the first floor landing and adjoining resource rooms and staff cloakroom are shabby and badly maintained. The governors and Friends of Brede School have a scheme to improve the first floor accommodation, the library and hall. The school uses its resources soundly. Though satisfactory overall, there is inadequate library stock and insufficient practical activity equipment for the under fives.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children like the school</li> <li>• The children make good progress</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• Teachers know the pupils well</li> <li>• Parents feel the school is approachable</li> <li>• Behaviour is good</li> <li>• There is a strong sense of community</li> <li>• Standards have improved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils being allowed to take reading scheme books home in the reception and Year 1 class</li> <li>• A reduction in the size of some classes</li> <li>• Closer working with parents</li> <li>• The management and leadership of the school</li> <li>• The development in pupils of a greater sense of responsibility</li> <li>• homework</li> </ul>

Overwhelmingly parents and carers have very positive views of the school and very few raised issues of concern. The features which please parents are mainly endorsed by the inspectors, although not all children make the progress they should and standards in science and religious education could be higher. Although the Year 2/3 class has 37 pupils, for much of the week the pupils are taught appropriately in smaller groups. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop social responsibility. The school works hard to maintain effective links with parents. Homework is appropriate. There are some issues concerning the quality of leadership and management and these are addressed in this report.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The children in the reception class are on course to achieve the expected standards for five year olds. The baseline assessment scores for the current reception year show above average skills and knowledge in language, literacy and numeracy. Their social and personal development on entry are less well developed and this is reflected, to an extent, in their attitude to learning, and they could be achieving more highly. Although they are progressing satisfactorily in their areas of learning, their creative development and their writing, though satisfactory, are limited by rather narrow learning opportunities.
2. Standards achieved by the seven year olds in English and science are above average and are about average in mathematics. The school's individual results for English and mathematics over the last four years show a similar picture. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics achieved by pupils aged seven in 1999 were broadly in line with national averages and for similar schools. Standards were below average in mathematics in the small number achieving the higher level 3. In science, pupils were average or above in their investigative skills and in their knowledge of life and living processes, but the majority were below average in their knowledge of materials and physical processes.
3. The standards achieved by the 11 year olds in the 1999 national tests in English and mathematics were above the national average and average in science. In the 1999 tests, compared with similar schools, standards were above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. The school's individual results for the three subjects over the last three years show wide variation, largely because the Year 6 group is small each year. However, the results for science have tended to be lower than for English and mathematics. Based on pupils' work and lessons seen, the school does not place sufficient emphasis on developing the skills of higher attaining pupils in science, and this shows in the below average proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5. Overall, there are elements of underachievement by a minority of high attaining junior boys and girls, and since 1996, the school's combined average points score for English, mathematics and science has stayed broadly level, unlike the national trend which is upward and improving.
4. Strengths of achievement in the school are pupils' reading and speaking and listening skills. Their standards in speaking and listening are better overall and more consistent than those found in the last inspection. Standards of writing have also improved and are average by the time pupils are seven and are above average by the time they are 11. However, throughout the school, there are weaknesses in pupils' spelling, presentation and accuracy of their work.
5. Since the last inspection there has been a noticeable improvement to standards in both infants and juniors in mathematics and some improvement to standards in art, geography, history and information technology.
6. Both infant and junior pupils' achievement in gymnastics is above average, whilst their achievement in art, geography, history, and information technology is average. Standards in design and technology are below the national expectation, and standards for religious education have declined and just meet the expectation for the East Sussex religious education syllabus.

7. Pupils throughout the school with special educational needs make good progress and some achieve well in art.
8. The school has set realistic and challenging targets in literacy and numeracy for 92 per cent of its 11 year olds to achieve at least average standards in summer 2000, but has not set internal targets for level 3 and level 5.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Overall pupils' attitudes are very good, and their behaviour, values and personal development are good and, as in the last inspection, are a strength of the school. The pupils' attitude to work and to the life of the school is very good, and this has a very positive effect on learning as very little time is ever wasted between lessons, and pupils are able to maintain a good learning momentum. In most lessons pupils are very interested and involved in the tasks they are set. They approach their work with very good enthusiasm and enjoy talking about what they are doing. They have good concentration and can persevere with a task. Parents are pleased that in classrooms there is a calm, industrious atmosphere with pupils working well together. A strong feature is the way pupils co-operate with and support each other when working in groups, such as when they devise a sequence of movements in physical education. They are keen to improve their work following constructive comments given by other pupils and the teacher. For example, in gymnastics, they use these comments to improve their cartwheels and back rolls. They trust each other to catch them when they do handstands. Parents feel that the school aims, which are set out in the home-school agreement, are very well met. The governing body and staff are rightly proud that the aims and values of the school are widely reflected.
10. Behaviour is good in classes and around the school. The expectation for good behaviour in lessons is usually very clear. Pupils celebrate their achievements in work, effort and behaviour at the weekly sharing assembly when they are keen to show their work to others. Pupils try to behave well at lunchtime and encourage others on their tables to do so in order to receive reward cards from the lunch time supervisors which means that pupils on their table can benefit from extra playtime.
11. Pupils show they respect the values and beliefs of pupils, although they have only limited opportunities to learn about and value people of other faiths and cultural traditions. In art they respect and value each other's interpretation of what they have observed and sketched. They are keen to take on responsibilities such as leading warm-ups in physical education or issuing books in the library. Most receive opportunities to show they can sensibly take responsibility in daily routines as register monitors or in getting out equipment for the class. Pupils show a good response to opportunities in circle time (when pupils all sit quietly in a circle for sharing ideas and feelings with each other and their teacher) to give serious consideration of the consequences of their actions on other pupils. They are keen to work co-operatively together. One younger pupil thoughtfully noticed another pupils' shoelaces were undone and used his initiative to tie them up. Older pupils volunteer for fund raising activities such as undertaking car washing for Friends of Brede. Pupils are well able to work independently, given suitable opportunities, when for example, they undertake research tasks in a history lesson to find out about the Romans.
12. The pupils in Year 6 set a good example to other pupils in the school and reflect the good personal development they have acquired. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils, including those with special educational needs, are very good and make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. Teachers are seen as friendly, caring and willing to help. There is a strong sense of community as older pupils care for

younger ones, and staff provide good role models.

13. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection and is now over 95 per cent. Pupils usually come into the classrooms and begin morning numeracy activities ten minutes before registration so there is very little lateness. However, some parents take their children on family holidays during term time, and this has an adverse effect on the attendance rate. There have been no exclusions during the last year.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

14. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with the strengths outweighing the weaknesses. In lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was 100 per cent satisfactory or better. In 49 per cent, teaching was good or better and in 17 per cent it was very good or better. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was 75 per cent satisfactory teaching. The positive contribution of classroom and learning support assistants, both in special educational needs provision, their approach to care and welfare, and in the teaching and assessment of small groups of pupils remain a strength, as previously identified. They are well prepared and guided by the deputy headteacher so the criticism the previous inspection of undue responsibility being given to them no longer applies.
15. Most teachers have good knowledge of the subjects of the curriculum and are effective in gaining the interest and motivation of pupils. The teaching of the skills of literacy and information technology are satisfactory and the teaching of numeracy is good. Overall, teachers' expectations are good and their teaching methods and management of pupils are effective. There is good use of homework.
16. The quality of teaching in the reception class for the under fives and Year 1 pupils is satisfactory overall with at least good planning, expectations for achievement and use of homework. There is inconsistency in the quality of management of learning activities for the pupils. The under fives do not have sufficient opportunities to exercise independence in their choice of activities, including writing, and the resources they use for learning as in construction work, and brick play in mathematics. This, together with some slow pace in lessons, results in a frequent resort to control measures to overcome the restlessness of the children.
17. Teaching for the older infants and younger juniors is marked by very good planning, expectations, and teaching methods, whilst the use of time, support staff and resources, and the quality and use of on-going assessment, are satisfactory.
18. In classes for the older pupils, the teaching of basic skills, expectations, use of time, support staff and resources, and on-going assessment are satisfactory, though there is some inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work, both in the quality and consistency of written records. While the management of pupils is very good, some lesson planning is unsatisfactory and does not provide sufficient challenge for the broad range of attainment and experience of pupils.
19. Most teachers have high expectations for behaviour and participation by pupils, as evidenced by the teaching and learning in physical education. Teachers demonstrate effective teaching methods which challenge and inspire the majority of pupils to make a very good intellectual, physical and creative effort. Most teachers manage pupils well, using open-ended questions, as in a well-led discussion of local land use in geography, enabling them to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding well, in a good climate of interest and

concentration. The daily routines of pupils of all ages beginning the day with numeracy practice while the morning registration and other administrative duties are undertaken by the teacher, ensures that pupils quickly focus on work. Computers are usually switched on and ready for use and pairs of pupils are always ready and willing to adapt their lesson activities to information technology based tasks when directed by their teachers. However, the one-to-one approach when supervising pupils using computers does not effectively serve to assist the progress in information technology of other pupils in the class.

20. Across the school as a whole, pupils' learning is good. For the under fives, learning is satisfactory and elsewhere it is good. The majority of pupils make good progress, aided by their positive levels of interest, concentration and independence. Time after time, in a range of lessons, pupils are willing to exert very good intellectual, physical or creative effort. The school adequately meets the learning needs of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, in an appropriate way. However, as reported in the last inspection, some higher attaining pupils are still not challenged sufficiently to make progress fast enough and to learn in ways which match their prior achievement. Also, as in the last inspection, the unsatisfactory use of on-going assessment results in some pupils having insufficient knowledge of their progress. Pupils with special educational needs demonstrate good progress, largely due to the support they receive and their own, positive attitudes.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

21. The curriculum for the children under five is not explicitly based on the nationally expected learning outcomes for this age group, though the children's annual reports refer to them. Overall, the curriculum for these children, based on National Curriculum subjects, is sound. It is understandably difficult to cater for the needs of the under fives and Year 1 children in one class. Nevertheless, the current programme makes insufficient provision for children to learn through well structured play, limits opportunities for independent learning and has no provision for outdoor play. Given the constraints, the organisation of the teaching and learning areas both inside and outside the classroom could be more imaginative.
22. The curriculum for the infants and juniors is broad, and generally well planned. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Mathematics previously had insufficient time allocated to it but is now in better proportion. However, the time allocated to English is relatively high at 32 per cent and that for religious education is rather low at 2 to 3 per cent. The time being given to older pupils for extended writing is having a positive impact on standards of literacy, but standards in religious education are barely satisfactory. Statutory requirements, including those for religious education and collective worship, are met. The school makes good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), including sex education and attention to drug misuse. These last two issues are dealt with well in the science curriculum, when pupils consider the human life cycle and healthy lifestyles, as well as within the school's PSHE programme. Sensitive questions are provided with an honest and appropriate response, according to the age of the children. Overall, however, whilst the school lays great emphasis on inclusion, the needs of the higher attaining pupils are not always well met.
23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved from being satisfactory in the last inspection to being good now. The deployment of the school's three learning support assistants is reviewed each half term to ensure that the pupils with the greatest need are targeted for priority support. Class teachers plan lessons and activities very well for the learning support assistants, making clear whom they are to work with and how, and the assistants make careful, helpful notes on how well the special educational needs pupils

are doing.

24. Overall, the school makes good provision for the pupils' personal development and this is a strength the school has successfully sustained since its last inspection. Provision for the pupils' social development, based on the school's strong community ethic, is very good. The provision for pupils' moral and spiritual development is good. Cultural development, though satisfactory, does not seek sufficiently to develop pupils' appreciation of cultures other than their own.
25. Religious education lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to consider issues such as appreciation of God's creation, relationships, the concept of forgiveness, and important moments in their lives. The daily acts of collective worship provide regular opportunities for quiet reflection. The pupils are invited to focus on a lighted candle or some flowers and to listen to a prayer. The assemblies encourage pupils to participate in singing and discussion. The pupils' are encouraged to respond sensitively to art and music, and in one class, music was playing during the pupils' art lesson. Assemblies, circle time and the school's environment successfully promote the pupils' moral awareness. In one assembly, there was good discussion of responsibility for our neighbours in the wider world, as the pupils discussed the plight of peoples where natural disasters occur. In a circle time session, pupils considered moral choices and were able to give serious consideration to the consequences of actions. Activities such as these lead the pupils to a mature understanding of right and wrong and of personal responsibility. Each year, the school subscribes to a charity, and this focuses the pupils and promotes a feeling of success when relatively large sums of money are raised.
26. The good relationships fostered between pupils, and between pupils and adults, underpin the school's very good provision for the pupils' social development. All classes have their own classroom rules, to which the pupils respond well. Consistent commendations for good behaviour reinforce the school's clear expectations. Inappropriate behaviour is taken seriously and any concerns followed through carefully, but sensitively. There are good opportunities in lessons for pupils to work co-operatively. These were seen when pupils were working at the computer, on experimental work in science, working in groups in physical education, and devising percussion accompaniments together in groups. From the reception class onwards, the pupils are successfully encouraged to appreciate each other's achievements. Older pupils care for the younger ones at playtimes and lunchtimes, and pupils in all classes have opportunities to be monitors. By the age of 11, the pupils are mature, responsible and polite and are a credit to the school and to their parents.
27. Satisfactory provision for the pupils' cultural development includes opportunities to listen to music in assemblies and lessons. Some older pupils had written sensitive responses after listening to pieces of music. Library times, reading sessions and shared reading of texts strengthen the pupils' enjoyment and appreciation of books, stories and literature. In each class, there were anthologies of favourite poems the pupils had collected. Instrumental tuition, art and drama clubs and participation in concerts enrich the pupils' experiences. However, whilst the pupils do meet the work of other artists such as Van Gogh, and have participated in events such as the African festival last year, overall, the school pays insufficient attention to promoting the pupils' awareness and appreciation of other cultures. For example, the school could pay more attention, in its resources and the content of lessons, to non-western music, art and literature.
28. The school is successfully tackling the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, with notable success with the National Numeracy Strategy, leading to improved standards in mathematics. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and

National Numeracy Strategy has strengthened long term planning in English and mathematics. However, there is still some inconsistency in the National Literacy Strategy planning, particularly for the older pupils, so that progress in English is a little slow for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. There is also occasional loss of pace in the literacy hours for the oldest pupils with the result that not all pupils make the progress they could in individual lessons.

29. A very good range of extra-curricular activities significantly enriches the curriculum. These include after school clubs for art, drama, chess, computers, and table tennis. The clubs, all of which are run by the teachers and a learning support assistant, are well attended and popular.
30. There are satisfactory links with a local private nursery prior to children being admitted to the reception class. Links with Robertsbridge Community College, which the majority of pupils attend when they leave Brede, are good. As well as the "Taster Days", the secondary school teachers come to visit the Year 6 pupils and pupils from the primary school attend sports and cultural events held at Robertsbridge Community College. The headteacher and Year 6 class teacher are involved in a local cross-phase working party that is looking at target setting in Year 7 in mathematics.
31. Overall, the school manages the curriculum satisfactorily to meet the demands of mixed year group teaching. A curriculum map covering reception to Year 6, based on a two year rolling cycle of topics, provides a sound framework for curriculum coverage throughout the school. In literacy and mathematics lessons, the teachers appropriately work to the National Literacy Strategy or National Numeracy Strategy objectives for the older year group in their class. The headteacher makes a significant contribution by taking all the Year 3 pupils together for their daily literacy lessons. Pupils are also taught in single National Curriculum year groups for their extended writing lessons. Progression and continuity of learning are more secure than was the case in the last inspection.
32. Monitoring of the curriculum and of the standards achieved by different year groups still lacks some rigour, so that the school does not have a sufficiently clear view of whether pupils in different year groups are making appropriate progress.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

33. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school provides a caring environment in which the individual needs of pupils are well met, including children under five and pupils with special educational needs. A good feature is the careful monitoring of vulnerable pupils and good liaison with social services for their protection if this becomes necessary. Parents say the school is excellent at knowing pupils well and what they can do. The watchful care of the teachers and the classroom and learning support assistants are a particularly strong feature in the school. The development of this knowledge and care is further enhanced by the good extra-curricular activities provided for pupils.
34. Child protection procedures are satisfactory but there has been no recent training for staff. There are satisfactory procedures for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils in the school. Safety issues identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. The staff room now doubles as a medical room and fire practice arrangements have been improved. There is satisfactory identification of health and safety problems by the school in liaison with county staff and these are recorded. However, there is no formal system for prioritising these concerns. Generally, risk assessment is undeveloped with governors not sufficiently informed about the statutory requirements. The first aid book, with entries currently

completed in pencil rather than ink, is unsatisfactory.

35. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. These have improved since the last inspection, and registers are now correctly maintained and marked. The school now telephones parents on the first day of absence if explanations for absence are not promptly received. Termly attendance certificates awarded to pupils also help to promote good attendance. Attendance has improved to satisfactory levels now. However, there is some persistent pupil absence due to term time family holidays, and the school has not published its policy on what constitutes authorised absence.
36. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The behaviour policy is applied consistently by staff and pupils are clear what the rewards and sanctions are. There is good and appropriate use of praise to encourage good academic progress and behaviour. This has been absorbed by pupils who clap, often spontaneously, to acknowledge good work. Lunchtime supervisors also encourage good behaviour through giving out reward cards to tables where pupils behave well. Good behaviour is well promoted through class rules posted in each room, the daily assembly, lessons in personal and social education and circle time. Though rare, any bullying that occurs is dealt with swiftly and effectively.
37. There is good provision for supporting pupils' personal development through the personal and social education programme and the general ethos of this caring school. Every pupil has a record of achievement folder into which pupils put examples of their good work which they have chosen themselves. These very useful folders include yearly targets for work and behaviour, and any other significant information. This is a potentially valuable system, but as the targets are reviewed only once a year, not as effective as they might be for improving individual achievement. Provision for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress is sound. There are some very good examples of practice in marking pupils' work by some teachers but this is not uniform throughout the school.
38. The school's assessment systems have improved since the last inspection, with some good work in place. However, assessment procedures are still not fully consistent throughout the school and work remains to be done to strengthen the use of assessment data to inform curriculum and lesson planning for pupils.
39. The school makes appropriate use of baseline assessment to put the reception children into groups based on their prior attainment. The teacher reviews the children's progress in the spring term, looking at their knowledge of letters and sounds, and their skills in letter formation. Whilst this is sensible and helpful, it does not assess sufficiently well the children's progress across the six recommended areas of learning. However, the annual reports written at the end of the children's time in the reception year do successfully relate the children's achievements to the early years curriculum objectives and are satisfactorily written in some detail.
40. Overall, throughout the school, the quality of the pupils' annual reports written for parents has greatly improved since the last inspection. They are detailed, informative and identify areas for improvement. This was a key issue from the last inspection which the school has successfully addressed.
41. The teachers' short term plans have spaces for evaluation and a simple colour code for recording the extent to which learning objectives have been met. This is a potentially useful and manageable system for ongoing assessment of pupils' progress but is not used consistently by all the teachers, so is not fully effective through the school. Similarly, the

marking of pupils' work is not of consistent quality through the school and therefore is also not as effective as it could be in helping pupils know how to improve their work.

42. The school makes effective use of the results of reading tests in Years 3, 4 and 6 to identify pupils who need extra support in their reading, and this is leading to sound progress in reading for the lower attaining pupils.
43. The school's effective identification of pupils with special educational needs, regular monitoring of their progress towards targets set in their individual education plans and appropriate involvement of outside agencies lead to overall good progress for these pupils. Records show that recently eight pupils have been removed from the school's special educational needs register having made successful progress.
44. Key weaknesses still remaining in the school's assessment procedures are the lack of monitoring of the achievements of year groups and of rigorous analysis of end of key stage assessment data to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievements. The headteacher and assessment co-ordinator, who between them have management responsibility for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, have insufficient information to tell them whether pupils in the different year groups are achieving appropriately. Whilst they are aware of the National Curriculum test results, they do not use these sufficiently well with the whole staff to agree areas for improvement.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

45. The overwhelming majority of parents have very positive views about the school. In the parents' questionnaire returns, nearly all parents say their children like the school and make good progress. Nearly all parents feel that teaching is good and that the teachers know the pupils well. All parents agreed that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Most parents say that behaviour is good and there is a strong sense of community. At the parents' meeting, many felt that standards in the school are improving.
46. Just a few parents identified in the questionnaire and meeting some areas where improvement could be made: the availability of home reading books for the youngest children; class size reduction; homework; closer working with parents; the management and leadership of the school; and the development in pupils of a greater sense of responsibility.
47. The points raised by parents were considered carefully during the inspection. The features which please parents most are mainly endorsed, although not all children make the progress they should and standards in science, religious education and design and technology could be higher. Although the Year 2/3 class has 37 pupils, for much of the week the pupils are taught in smaller groups led by either the learning support assistants, a part time teacher or the headteacher. The school provides adequate opportunities for homework, particularly in Years 5 and 6 and provides older pupils with good opportunities to develop social responsibility. However, pupils could develop greater responsibility for managing their own learning, using the library, checking their own spellings and undertaking extended writing tasks more widely across the curriculum. The school works hard to maintain effective links with parents. The headteacher maintains a caring and supportive environment in the school but does not focus sufficiently on school improvement and raising standards.
48. The school's links with parents are very effective and involves them in their children's learning. The school provides ample opportunities each day for parents to meet class

teachers, parents being welcomed into the school at almost any time. Many parents volunteer to work in the school, assisting with swimming, craft work, cooking lessons and several provide weekly classroom support. At the end of each year, all parents are surveyed about their contribution to the school and their child's year. Data is aggregated and reported to the governing body and parents are provided with feedback.

49. The quality of information provided for parents has a very positive impact on pupils' education. Since the last inspection, the quality of the word processed annual reports to parents on their children's work has improved and they give parents very good information about their child's progress and future learning goals to aim for. Good opportunities for constructive discussion between parents and teachers are provided at two annual parent consultation meetings. There are also more informal "Parlez" each half term when parents can discuss any concerns. These meetings, together with weekly news bulletins, information sessions with a curriculum focus, and a termly open morning, when the children's work can be seen, ensure that parents are kept very well informed as partners in their children's education.
50. The governors' annual report to parents informs them well about all areas of school life, but, like the school prospectus, omits showing national comparisons alongside the school's reported National Curriculum test results.
51. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at home and at school is very good. Parents say the home school reading scheme works well, and there is a good range of books for this. Some parents are concerned that younger children cannot take home books which are part of the reading scheme, but inspectors judge that the current arrangements give the children a broad reading experience and support progress in reading well. Most parents feel the home-school agreement is working well and the school confirms that this has had a positive impact on both the children and parents' commitment to homework, and inspectors conclude that the use of homework is good. There are many other effective ways in which parents become involved in school life, including supporting school sporting fixtures and outside visits. Parents also assist with cycling proficiency. The Friends of Brede School have raised several thousand pounds to provide useful supplements and improvements to school resources and accommodation. An interesting feature is the provision by Friends of Brede School of a children's video library so parents can borrow videos for a small donation towards school funds. Parents regularly attend the Friday afternoon sharing assembly each week.
52. The school makes very considerable efforts to involve parents in the life of the school, and is rewarded by very strong parental support for both formal and informal activities.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

53. The last inspection found the school had serious weaknesses in leadership and management. To improve, there was a requirement to define the role of the headteacher and enhance the governing body's oversight of the management, curriculum and standards. There has been improvement in both these issues. The headteacher, well-supported by the recently appointed deputy headteacher, is now exercising stronger and more focused leadership in setting out a clear, strategic view. His job description and that of the deputy appropriately focus on school improvement. The strengthened governing body, many of whose members have an education background, under the direction of its chairman and the experienced vice-chairman, have provided a good lead in supporting the management of the school and are now fulfilling the governors' statutory responsibilities. Governors have assigned links with all the areas of the curriculum and actively monitor the work of the

school. Governors now play a key role in shaping the direction of the school arising from a secure understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. There is a positive and shared commitment to succeed.

54. On a day-to-day basis, the headteacher's presence around the school and his daily teaching commitment with Year 3 literacy and weekly Year 5 numeracy lessons is contributing positively to learning and standards. The leadership and management effectively reflect the school's aims and values to create a caring and supportive environment. Nevertheless, there is an insufficient focus in the School Improvement Plan on identifying and developing strategies to raise standards.
55. In the last inspection the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and teaching needed strengthening. During the last year, the headteacher has monitored all teachers by lesson observations and weekly reviews of their lesson planning, and has provided written records, oral feedback and suggestions for improvement. The governors, informed by the headteacher, are developing their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have established sound reporting systems and procedures for getting information about learning provision throughout the school, and have taken part regularly in classroom visits to see lessons in their assigned subject areas. Although improved, the monitoring of lesson planning and pupils' work by the headteacher is not used well enough to improve the teaching. Results derived from the school's internal monitoring and its performance data compared with national and benchmark standards do not yet influence school improvement and development planning sufficiently. Subject co-ordinators do not yet have an adequate whole school grasp of the management issues affecting the raising of standards and achievement in their subjects.
56. In the last inspection, the School Management Plan needed improvement with rigorous monitoring procedures to embrace all aspects of the school, together with better budget predictions going beyond the current year. The governing body now has a school improvement plan, drawn up by a steering group of key governors with advice from the headteacher, which establishes priorities for three years and a more detailed programme for four terms ahead. The governing body receives updates on progress with the plan and is provided with regular and informative financial reports. The budget plan is linked closely to the school's long term School Improvement Plan. Each spring the steering group meets to review the plans for the last year and sets new priorities. This work is sound.
57. Financial control and day-to-day administration are carried out to a high standard and this is confirmed by the recent auditors' report. The governors are prudent with their spending and have effective budget monitoring systems. They are aware of the principles of best value and are keen to apply them to the accommodation improvements for which they are planning.
58. The administration and management of special educational needs have improved significantly since the last inspection. Under the leadership of the deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs co-ordinator, documentation is thorough, the progress of pupils with special educational needs is closely monitored, and individual education plans are well written with specific targets and programmes. There is very good liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator and the special educational needs governor, through meetings twice a term and regular monitoring of the special educational needs action plan, and there is subsequent effective reporting to the whole governing body. Parents are appropriately alerted when their child is identified as having special educational needs and are offered opportunities to discuss their child's progress.

59. Overall, there is an unsatisfactory delegation of responsibilities to staff as the headteacher has curriculum co-ordination responsibilities for mathematics and science and this is a heavy load. Arrangements for appraisal and in-service training with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information technology are working satisfactorily and the headteacher is about to undertake a five day management course. There is a growing confidence in the use of information technology in management, including the recently computer-based assessment recording system.
60. The level and match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum are just satisfactory but very dependent on the contribution of the significant teaching commitment of the headteacher. The general teaching accommodation is adequate, with older pupils taught in the Victorian part of the building and younger pupils in the accommodation added to the school in the last 30 or 40 years. The school hall, which serves also as a dining room and a gymnasium, is of limited size for physical education, though governors and Friends of Brede School intend to implement a plan to make it larger by removing the adjoining library area, and the wooden screen shielding it, from the hall. The teaching accommodation is used effectively with a large general area between two classrooms serving for general use such as when the learning support assistants work with small groups. There is a useful, small room between the junior classrooms available for small groups to be involved in practical activity such as design and technology, equipped with benches and tools. The school site has adequate hard play and conservation areas and an outdoor swimming pool, and has the use of a community recreation ground across the road, opposite the school, for games and athletics.
61. Although the use and upkeep of the classroom and adjoining areas are satisfactory, there are some poor aspects to the upkeep and maintenance of the accommodation which impacts unfavourably on the image presented to visitors to the school. In particular, the main entrance to the building is not well signposted, and the first floor landing, resource rooms and staff cloakroom are shabby and untidy. The governors and Friends of Brede School acknowledge these issues and have a plan to refurbish this area with a new staffroom when the existing one is developed into a new library. The staff room doubles as a medical room, a response to the last inspection, but this is less than ideal.
62. The school makes sound use of its available learning resources which, although satisfactory overall for the areas of the curriculum, have limited reference and non-fiction library stock and insufficient role play and large practical activity equipment for the under fives. The adequate computers are used appropriately in lessons and there is a satisfactory range of software but insufficient provision of programable devices and control hardware. There are shortfalls in the school's range of artefacts for supporting geography and religious education.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

- Improve achievement:
  - in science so that high attaining 11 year olds achieve high standards;
  - in religious education and design and technology so that pupils meet the appropriate standard by age 7 and 11;
  - in pupils' quality of spelling, punctuation and presentation across all subjects and years;
  - generally of the higher attaining pupils in the school.
 (Paragraphs 3, 4, 6, 20, 68, 71, 84, 105, 106, 108, 113, 118, 122, 143, 145)
- Improve the systems for monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance so that the governors, headteacher and staff focus clearly on school improvement priorities and the

school targets are met.  
(Paragraphs 32, 54)

- Improve the management role of the headteacher and subject co-ordinators so that they have effective oversight of standards, teaching and learning.  
(Paragraphs 44, 54, 55, 59, 98)
- Improve the use of assessment so that findings are used more consistently and with greater effect by teachers when planning their lessons, and by the governing body when planning strategically.  
(Paragraphs 18, 39, 41, 44, 98)
- Agree how the appearance of the non-teaching accommodation can be substantially improved.  
(Paragraph 61)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. Paragraph references are in brackets.

- Curriculum and learning opportunities for the under fives; (paragraphs 1, 16, 21, 66, 67)
- Provision for pupils' cultural development; (paragraphs 11, 25, 27)
- Undertaking and monitoring health and safety risk assessments; (paragraph 34)
- Statutory compliance in information to parents; (paragraph 50)
- Improvements to learning resources; (paragraphs 62, 132, 135, 149)
- Marking pupils' work; (paragraph 89)
- Timetable time allocation to English, (paragraph 22).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	14	32	51	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	–	122
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	–	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	–	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	–	18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	14	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (74)	93 (90)	100 (84)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	8
	Girls	6	7	5
	Total	13	15	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (68)	100 (74)	87 (68)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	5	10	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	4
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	11	10	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (80)	67 (60)	80 (53)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	4
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (85)	73 (85)	80 (92)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (70)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	120
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	30.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75.0

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	-
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	-

Total number of education support staff	-
Total aggregate hours worked per week	-

Number of pupils per FTE adult	-
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998-9
	£
Total income	215623
Total expenditure	210228
Expenditure per pupil	1767
Balance brought forward from previous year	681
Balance carried forward to next year	5395

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	121
Number of questionnaires returned	43

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	40	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	58	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	58	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	54	17	2	0
The teaching is good.	58	40	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	51	2	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	26	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	28	2	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	40	7	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	40	51	5	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	38	7	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	38	0	3	8

### Other issues raised by parents

No significant issues raised which are not covered by the questionnaire.

## PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 63 At the time of the inspection, 10 children in the reception class were still of non-statutory school age, taught in a class of 27 children, alongside 13 Year 1 pupils. Baseline assessment scores for the current reception group show their attainment profile, on entry to the school, to be above average overall, with an average score of 24 whereas the county average score for all pupils in East Sussex is 20.9. However, the children's attitudes to learning are less well developed than for their skills and knowledge in language, literacy and mathematics. Observations of the children and discussions with the headteacher and the class teacher confirm this.
- 64 The children are on course to achieve the expected standards for five year olds, but, given their attainment on entry, could be achieving more highly. However, they do well in reading, handwriting and scientific learning, achieving standards beyond the national expectation in these areas.
- 65 In their **personal and social development**, the children mostly show good attitudes to their learning and enjoy many of the activities provided for them. They approach their teacher and other adults confidently. They are, however, restless and inattentive during whole class sessions. Some of this is due partially to rather long teaching sessions which, whilst appropriate for the older Year 1 pupils, are demanding for the children under five. Despite the age difference, the under fives do get on well with their older classmates, who relate to them well. At times, the under fives show patience and good self-control, when waiting their turn in physical education lessons, for example. The children persevere well at tasks such as practising their handwriting or making pictures, but have insufficient opportunities to exercise independence in their choice of activities and the resources they use for learning. There are times when their unsatisfactory behaviour impedes the progress they make.
- 66 In **language and literacy**, the children join in well with the reading of shared texts in the literacy hour. They can talk, often quite articulately, about their experiences and their learning, but have insufficient opportunities for role play activities and for making up their own stories. When reading with an adult, the children handle books appropriately but rarely seem to choose to read spontaneously. This is partly because there is no clear, inviting book corner for them to use in their classroom. Their reading is good: the high attaining children read comparatively difficult texts quite fluently, using their phonic knowledge, reading with understanding, attending to punctuation, and using pictures to anticipate what might happen next; the average attaining children are less fluent but do read with understanding and sometimes correct their reading errors. The very few low attaining children can recognise simple words such as "no", but are still at the stage of interpreting the text based on what they see in the pictures. Whilst nearly all the under fives can write their names correctly, their achievements in writing do not mirror those in reading. They can form quite a few letters correctly and practise their handwriting well, but do not do enough independent writing for a range of purposes. This is mainly because the teacher's expectations are insufficiently high in this area and because the children have insufficient opportunities to write purposefully in different contexts. There are lost opportunities to extend children's writing achievements. For example, when making Mother's Day cards, the children were not encouraged to write their own messages. The lack of role-play and of well structured play experiences in general limit the opportunities for independent writing.

- 67 In their **mathematical** learning, the children recognise patterns of numbers, in large dice for example, and mostly count accurately to at least five. They are learning about numbers to 10 and practising very carefully accurate counting to 10. They can make simple repeating patterns by colouring in the bands on a snake, and by printing patterns with paint. They can calculate simple addition to five, by counting dots on the dice or counters and the high attaining children are beginning to know how to take one away from a set of objects. They are developing their mathematical vocabulary, learning terms such as “long”, “short”, “heavy” and “light”. The high attaining children have begun to measure objects using centimetres and the average attaining children have measured their hands by counting the squares their hand cover on squared paper. As yet, the children are not increasing their familiarity with numbers larger than 20, and there is limited opportunity for them to use their mathematical understanding in practical situations to solve problems, such as in construction work, brick play or imaginative play.
- 68 In their **knowledge and understanding of the world** the children have successfully recorded, mostly in simple terms, pictures and single words, work they have done on different kinds of materials, objects that roll, slide, float or sink, and have drawn magnets. Some of their work on rough and smooth materials has been recorded very imaginatively by sorting and then sticking pieces of material onto outlines of their hands. Their observation skills were well developed in a science lesson when the children saw what difference a torch would make when shone onto objects in a darkened box. In their early historical and geographical work, the children have considered the differences between day and night, old and new things and have looked at autumn colours. The children have completed simple worksheets for these activities and whilst these are quite relevant, they make insufficient demands on the high attaining children, so their achievements are not as high in these areas as they might be. The children are familiar with very simple keyboard commands on the computer and can use a cassette tape recorder.
- 69 In their **physical development** the children show competent skills in physical education lessons, but do not have access to any large outdoor apparatus and facilities to extend their achievements in this area. However, in their physical education lessons, the children show that they can travel over, under and through low level apparatus. They use the hall space quite competently and are learning to handle large apparatus safely and appropriately. Their learning in physical education lessons is sometimes not as effective as it might be because of the teacher tending to stop the lesson frequently to remind the children about high noise levels, sometimes stemming from the children having to wait quite a long time to take their turn. Also, the classroom assistant, understandably anxious to ensure their safety, tended to inhibit the children’s attempts to manage their climbing for themselves.
- 70 In their **creative development**, the children explore a range of tools and techniques, such as painting, printing, blow painting, modelling with plasticene, and making patterns in sand. Many children can draw quite well and make observational drawings of daffodils. In their dance lessons, the children are learning to move in different ways in response to different kinds of music. Overall though, their experiences in this area of learning are a little narrow.

## ENGLISH

- 71 By the ages of seven and 11, the standards in English are above average. Standards in reading and speaking and listening are particularly good, and there is some good quality writing by the 11 year olds. There are, however, weaknesses in the pupils’ spelling, presentation and accuracy of their work throughout the school.

- 72 In the 1999 National Curriculum reading and writing tests for seven year olds, the pupils' results, as measured by average points, were broadly in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. In the reading tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the average level 2 was well above the national average and the proportion attaining the higher level 3 was above the national average. In writing, however, whilst the percentage of pupils attaining the average level 2 was above the national average, the percentage reaching level 3 was below.
- 73 The pupils' achievements were good in reading, but not high enough in writing. When compared to similar schools, the results for the seven year olds in reading and writing were well above average overall, with reading standards at the higher level 3 being above average. However, the results for the higher level 3 in writing were below the average for similar schools because no pupils attained this level. The school has identified a weakness in spelling as being the reason for this and has appropriately made improving standards in spelling a priority. Trends in test results indicate that standards in reading and writing at age seven have been maintained overall since 1996.
- 74 By age 11, the pupils' English results, as measured by average points, were above average in comparison with national averages. Compared with similar schools, the pupils' achievements were good. While the percentage of 11 year olds attaining at least the average level 4 was broadly in line with that for similar schools, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 5 was well above. Trends in test results since 1996 show great variation from year to year, because of the small cohort size, but on analysis, the school's performance of its 11 year olds has remained consistently above the national average. The overall trend in the school's average points has been broadly in line with the national trend.
- 75 The inspection has found a similar picture of standards to that indicated by the national tests with above average standards overall. These standards reflect sound achievement for the pupils. Standards in writing for the higher attaining seven year olds are beginning to improve.
- 76 By the age of seven, the pupils have good speaking and listening skills. They invariably listen very attentively to their teachers and to each other. They answer confidently in whole class discussions and listen closely, with evident enjoyment, to stories such as "The tiger who came to tea". The pupils use their language skills well in other subjects. For example, in a science lesson, the pupils were very interested in the whole class discussion, contributing their ideas about forces and developing their descriptive vocabulary. In geography, the pupils use words such as "route" and "bird's eye view", with understanding.
- 77 By the age of 11, the pupils have equally good speaking and listening skills. They engage well in whole class reading and discussion sessions and have a wide vocabulary. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 understand words such as "spectre", "monocle" and "spurn". In a Year 6 lesson, the pupils demonstrated high order skills when discussing their views on whether men and women should play football together. They listened to each other's viewpoints and gave reasons for their views, even though the discussion got rather heated! In their science lessons, the pupils use technical vocabulary competently and work well at expressing their ideas. The great majority of pupils have a secure grasp of Standard English and use it confidently in their talk with each other and with adults.
- 78 These standards in speaking and listening are better overall than those found in the 1996 inspection of the school and are more consistent through the school than they were then.

- 79 The six and seven year olds achieve good standards in reading. By seven, the average attaining pupils read fluently using phonic knowledge to tackle unknown words and with some expression emerging in their reading. The high attaining pupils read relatively difficult texts accurately and with some expression. They can talk in an informed way about the books they have read and predict what might happen in the stories they are reading. They reflect on the meanings of sentences and correct their reading accordingly. The few low attaining or special educational needs pupils struggle with relatively simple texts, but are developing an appropriate range of strategies to help them with their reading, using their phonic skills and picture cues to help them decode text. They do identify some errors in their reading when a sentence does not make sense and correct themselves.
- 80 By the age of 11, the average and high attaining pupils are very fluent, accurate and articulate readers. They can grasp the main elements of a story and confidently express preferences in their choices of author and the types of books they enjoy. They know about the summaries on the backs of books and can talk about the characters in the stories they read. They have competent understanding of the library indexing system and know how to use it for research. Many of the pupils understand more sophisticated reading strategies such as skimming and scanning. The few low attaining 11 year olds read clearly, but not smoothly. They can recount events in the books they read and tackle new words well, mostly using their phonic knowledge.
- 81 Notably, the pupils display very good attitudes to reading. The younger pupils, whatever the level of their skill, take a delight in the stories they read and the older pupils are lively, interested readers.
- 82 Standards in reading have improved since the last inspection. Factors contributing to this improvement include:
- improved provision of core reading scheme books;
  - a home-school reading scheme with sound on-going assessment of pupils' progress with the scheme;
  - good support from classroom assistants for pupils' individual reading;
  - good provision of a wide range of big books for the literacy hour; and
  - the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.
- 83 Standards of writing are average by age seven, but the pupils are not yet achieving as highly as they should. The work of the high attaining pupils is beginning to improve. By seven years, they successfully re-write familiar stories such as "The Ugly Duckling", write simple poems, and can produce some good quality descriptive work, when writing about the characters in "Little Red Riding Hood", for example. Some re-telling of the story of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff" was particularly lively, capturing the essence of the story, with some adventurous use of vocabulary, such as "yelled" and "hissed". These stories show reasonable structure, and some accurate use of punctuation. Average attaining pupils can write simple instructions, re-tell familiar stories and produce some pieces of personal writing. The low attaining pupils can produce three or four sentences of sound quality, with some simple words spelled correctly. The pupils make good attempts to spell words independently, using their knowledge of letters and sounds, but, overall, there are too many weaknesses in the spelling and presentation of their work. The pupils cover a satisfactory range of purposes and styles of writing, including writing in other subjects. There was some imaginative work in history, for example, where the pupils had written letters from Roman soldiers.

- 84 By the time they are 11, the pupils' standards of writing are above average, and they achieve well overall, though their progress is uneven. It is rather slow for the younger junior pupils but accelerates for the older ones. The Year 6 pupils cover a good amount of work. The high attaining pupils produce very extended pieces of imaginative writing with good use of vocabulary, some use of paragraphs, and good structure to them, including some original ideas for story endings. The pupils have successfully learned to plan the structure of their stories, considering points such as plot and characters. There is a reasonable range in the pupils' writing and some effective cross-curricular work, which reflects an improvement from the last inspection. The pupils write letters, critiques of plays they have seen, and re-tell stories from another viewpoint, such as "Cinderella" seen through the eyes of one of the ugly sisters, and the parable of "The Prodigal Son" from the viewpoint of the older brother. However, weaknesses in spelling, punctuation, and presentation are sometimes still evident, reflecting insufficiently high expectations from the teachers and from the pupils themselves. This weakness, evident in the last inspection, has not yet been addressed sufficiently rigorously.
- 85 The school has embarked on teaching joined-up writing from the reception class onwards and the pupils are responding well to this initiative, with some pupils confidently using joined-up writing in Year 2. Cursive script is used extensively by the older pupils. As yet, however, the quality of the pupils' handwriting varies and is sometimes unsatisfactory.
- 86 Teaching and learning in English are good for the infants and satisfactory for the juniors. There are clear strengths in the teaching but there are a few weaknesses in the junior classes, mostly linked to planning for the literacy hour, assessment of pupils' achievements and the marking of pupils' work.
- 87 Good questioning successfully draws out and develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of concepts such as the use of punctuation and of terms such as antonym and synonym, and of more complex grammatical structures, such as complex and compound sentences and dependent clauses. Teachers in the infant classes and the younger junior classes work hard to ensure that questions are directed at as many pupils as possible, so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, feel included and able to contribute. Occasionally, this is not achieved so effectively for older pupils. Lessons for the infants are very well planned, with sound evaluation of the lessons and some good monitoring of pupils' progress, so that work is well matched to their achievement and is fairly challenging, leading to productive learning. Whilst the lessons for the juniors are satisfactorily planned, the use of the literacy hour format is inconsistent, and lesson evaluations are not always rigorous. Thus, sometimes the high attaining pupils do not make the progress they could in individual lessons, and the pace is occasionally slow.
- 88 In the infant classes, knowledge of phonics is successfully reinforced in handwriting lessons for Year 1 pupils and dictation tasks for Year 2 pupils provide good practice in attentive listening and the application of phonic knowledge. The pupils benefit from seeing good models of handwriting by their teachers, and apply themselves very well to practising their writing. All teachers make good use of the classroom assistants assigned to them to help the progress of groups or individuals and this often means that lower attaining or special educational needs pupils learn particularly well. Information technology is used well to support learning in the great majority of lessons. Year 3 pupils, for example, worked in pairs to draft a note on the computer, using the word processing facility. Independent work is well organised, but the junior pupils would benefit, sometimes, from being reminded to use dictionaries or other resources to research words and to check their spellings, so that they work more quickly and accurately. The use of interesting and motivating texts engages the pupils and reinforces their knowledge and understanding. During the

inspection, for example, texts were used effectively to reinforce and extend work on punctuation. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 needed to apply their knowledge of all forms of punctuation as they worked with the "Colonel Fazakerly" poem.

- 89 The marking of pupils' work varies in quality and consistency of written comments and needs to be improved in their reading records. Although teachers' comments are sometimes very evaluative and helpful to pupils in indicating clearly how to improve their work, this is insufficiently regular or consistent, particularly for the juniors.
- 90 Throughout the school, the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to the quality of their learning. The pupils are always attentive in whole class sessions, with many eager hands going up to answer questions. They enjoy the big book texts and relish reading them together. The pupils move quickly to their independent tasks and work quietly and diligently. They co-operate well, when using the computer, for example, and in group discussions.
- 91 The co-ordinator for English appropriately has seen all the staff teach the literacy hour and has produced a brief report for the teachers and the governors. She will revisit classrooms in the summer term to see how well the identified teaching points for improvement have been addressed. She is working with her colleagues to agree an approach to planning, but does not monitor teachers' plans herself. This inhibits her ability to have a clear, evaluative view of the quality of literacy hour planning across the school. Whilst some analysis of the end of key stage tests is undertaken, the co-ordinator does not have a rigorous knowledge of standards being achieved through the school, and of the numbers of pupils likely to achieve above average standards by the end of each key stage. Thus, she is unable to be sufficiently pro-active in ensuring that the pupils make the necessary progress in English through the school. The school has set appropriately challenging statutory targets for the pupils' attainments in English this year, namely 92 per cent of 11 year olds to reach at least the average level 4 standard. However, the school has not chosen to set an internal school target for the proportion of pupils to attain level 5 in the National Curriculum tests. This would be appropriate because it would focus attention on raising the achievement of the higher attaining pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 92 Overall, standards in mathematics are broadly in line with the national average for seven year olds and above for 11 year olds. National test average points scores over time show the school's standards in mathematics have fluctuated year on year and when compared with similar schools, results for seven year olds were just below average in 1999 due to the small number of pupils achieving the higher level 3. Although all pupils achieved at least level 2, very few reached level 3. The 1999 average points score for 11 year olds was broadly in line with similar schools and above schools nationally. In the proportions achieving level 4 and above, the standards were below average, though well above in the proportions achieving level 5.
- 93 Compared with the last inspection, pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved throughout the school and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, now make sound progress. Changes to the school's arrangements for staffing, and in teaching methods and curriculum planning arising from the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy have, since last year, improved achievement and boys and girls are now achieving good standards overall, and are good at numeracy.
- 94 The teachers' assessments for 1999 show that at level 2 and above, pupils are broadly

average in using and applying mathematics, and their understanding of shape, space and measures, and they achieved highly in number. On the evidence of lessons and work completed, achievement is good: pupils by the age of seven can identify odd and even numbers, recall addition facts to 10 and 20, plan data collection activities and record their findings using graphs and Venn diagrams. They can put numbers in order to 200, and add and subtract competently to 100. Higher attaining pupils can write three digit numbers to 500 or 600, work with unit fractions and do a range of money sums.

- 95 In the 1999 tests, 67 per cent of the 11 year olds achieved the expected level 4 or above, and 40 per cent gained the higher level 5. The former was lower than, and the latter well above, similar schools. The average points trend over the last four years for pupils at this age has been above the national average by the equivalent of about a term and in line with similar schools. By the time they are 11 pupils can find areas and perimeters of shapes. They can construct right angled and isosceles triangles with compasses, measure angles with protractors and construct regular polygons. They know how to look for lines of symmetry and can use information technology to construct regular polygons using the repeat function in logo. They are familiar with probability, data handling, pie charts, line graphs, areas of triangles, internal angles of parallelograms, ratios, percentages, nets, long division co-ordinates, and rotational symmetry. They have an appropriate range of numeracy skills which they execute very carefully and they can add, subtract, multiply and divide to 1000. The pupils can work systematically on paper as well as rapidly apply mental methods for applying their mathematical skills. The higher attaining pupils learn to be systematic, which will help them when they are tested, but are not always fully challenged.
- 96 Overall, the quality of teaching in the infant classes is satisfactory with some very good teaching. The teachers, who have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils, plan lessons carefully to cater for the different levels of attainment and for progression during the week. They define clear objectives for their pupils' learning and then provide appropriate tasks to ensure that objectives are met. They often provide practical activities which make the learning more meaningful to the pupils such as when conducting surveys and analysing and presenting the results. Teachers organise time well, often telling pupils, task by task, how many minutes they have to work and what they are capable of achieving in the time, so that a brisk pace is sustained. The teachers use firm, sensitive management to keep their groups focused on learning. The lesson structure of the National Numeracy Strategy is being successfully used.
- 97 The quality of teaching in the junior classes is broadly satisfactory and sometimes good. It is of much better quality, than when last inspected. All lessons have clear objectives, with varied, appropriate expectations for different groups of pupils, and plenary sessions are used to summarise the lesson. The resources in the lesson make appropriate, well chosen use of work sheets and published material. All teachers mark pupils' work carefully but could do more to ensure that incorrect calculations are worked again. From time to time appropriate homework assignments are set in mathematics.
- 98 Inconsistency of practice in assessment and record keeping impacts adversely on the quality of lesson planning. Whilst in the younger infant class very careful records are made at the end of each session to show pupils' progress, generally there is insufficient assessment and little record keeping. Thus, teachers plan lessons without reference to what pupils had achieved in the past. This slows down progress. No oversight of standards in different classes or years has been established, except by the assessments and tests at the end of the key stages. However, the teachers do have useful discussion about samples of pupils' work which will help teachers to make their assessments

consistent with each other

- 99 The progress made by the infants is satisfactory, with no appreciable differences between boys and girls. They develop their understanding in whole class discussions with their teachers and have a good balance of skills practice and new learning. Their teachers ensure that they stay work focused, practising counting and mental problems during the morning registration period, for example. Pupils carry out many practical tasks which support their understanding. Progress is steady for both junior boys and girls, but could be swifter. The pupils do a great deal of practice calculations and get most of their answers right but could usefully have more variety. Frequently the juniors are working at different tasks so the teacher cannot talk to more than one pupil about their work at once. Progress is slow when they have to wait for attention and do not have the benefit of being able to share other pupils' ideas. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good in mathematics throughout the school. Individual planning for them is supported by sensible deployment of learning support assistants to work with them in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5.
- 100 The pupils' attitudes to mathematics reflect their very good attitudes elsewhere in the school and are an improvement on their responses as reported in the last inspection. Pupils generally present their work neatly and well and do their frequent practice tasks with enthusiasm. They take responsibility when it is given, getting out equipment which is needed for the lesson, helping one another using the computers in mathematics lessons and adding notes to the whiteboard.
- 101 Curriculum planning for mathematics has improved since the last inspection. A broad outline of topics to be taught is in place, which match with the National Numeracy Strategy. The quality of termly work plans is satisfactory. Where Year 5 pupils are taught in two classes, systems do not ensure that the teaching and the curriculum are parallel for all the year group, though the school has recently introduced a weekly Year 5 mathematics lesson.
- 102 The co-ordinator for mathematics, the headteacher, gives colleagues a good lead and helpfully examines their lesson planning in order to advise them. He is knowledgeable and aware of the effectiveness of the school's mathematics provision. Mathematics has been and remains a priority area of the School Improvement Plan. The governors have fulfilled their statutory requirement to set a target for mathematics attainment for the Year 6 pupils in 2000. This is suitably demanding being 92 per cent for pupils reaching level 4 or above.

## **SCIENCE**

- 103 In the National Curriculum teacher assessments in 1999 for seven year olds, the pupils' results were broadly in line with the national average but with considerable variation in the standards achieved in different aspects of the science curriculum. For example, the pupils' knowledge of life and living processes was above the national average, with all of the pupils attaining the average level 2 and a good proportion reaching level 3. The percentages of pupils reaching level 2 in materials and their properties and physical processes were below average but were above average for those reaching level 3.
- 104 When compared to similar schools, the pupils' results for seven year olds were below average for the numbers of pupils reaching level 2 and above but broadly in line for the numbers reaching level 3 and above.
- 105 In the National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds, the percentage of pupils reaching the average level 4 was close to the national average, but below the national average at level

5. When compared to similar schools, the pupils' results were below average, which indicates that the higher attaining pupils are not achieving high enough standards in science.
- 106 Standards in science since 1996 show considerable variation because of the small year group sizes but, in the last two years, have been below the national average. Standards seen during the inspection show that the seven year olds' achievements are improving, but are still not high enough for 11 year olds.
- 107 By the time they are seven, standards are above average and the pupils achieve well. They show good understanding of forces and have good investigative skills. In a Year 2 lesson, the pupils tested different materials to observe the effects different forces would have on them, classified the materials accordingly and recorded their observations in their own words, using descriptive vocabulary such as "stretch", "twist", and "squish". By the age of seven, the pupils have also learned about fair testing, about solids and liquids and electrical circuits. Some of their written work, particularly that of the high attaining pupils, is of good quality. It includes very good attempts at describing fair testing in their own words, good descriptions of observations and simple experiments, and some hypothesis, for example, as in wondering why a boat still sank even though adjustments had been made to its structure. The average attaining pupils achieve sound standards in their science recording when the teacher structures it well for them. The few low attaining or special educational needs pupils appropriately record their work more often in pictures and some of their drawings show very careful observation. Sometimes, however, the written work by these pupils is unfinished and there are unacceptable, and uncorrected, spelling mistakes, such as writing "flood" and "soac", for "float" and "sink".
- 108 By the time pupils are 11, standards are average, but higher achieving pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is mainly because progress is not rapid enough, and there are variations in standards achieved by pupils in the same National Curriculum year group, but different classes.
- 109 By the age of 11, the pupils have a sound grasp of air resistance, gravity and forces. They have studied magnetism, electrical circuits, materials, conductors and insulators, the earth and the solar system, and human and animal life cycles. Overall, their experience of the knowledge component of the science curriculum is satisfactory. However, scrutiny of the pupils' work shows extensive copying of text by pupils of all levels of attainment, and this does not secure good progress in their assimilation of knowledge. Notably, as in infant classes, the work of the few low attaining or special educational needs pupils is often unfinished and this is unsatisfactory for their learning. The recording of experimental work in the pupils' own words is rarely evident until Year 6, and some of the levels of the work are insufficiently challenging for the pupils, particularly the high attainers. For example, an experiment on floating and sinking was too easy for Year 6 pupils. There was insufficient reference to fair testing or awareness of variables in the scientific process and little evidence of the use of graphs, tables or bar charts. However, many pupils do produce good quality drawing in their science work. In their lessons, the Year 6 pupils demonstrate some sound scientific skills and understanding, making predictions, carrying out simple tests and starting to draw conclusions using their scientific knowledge. Work on parachutes and balloons within the context of air resistance engaged the pupils well, and they worked hard to explain why things happened the way they did.
- 110 Teaching and learning are good for the infant classes and satisfactory for the juniors. In the infants classes, very good subject knowledge and very high expectations for the Year 2 pupils particularly, lead to very good learning. The pupils apply the scientific process well

for their age and successfully develop their ideas in whole class discussion. In Year 1, well-structured investigative tasks, looking at light sources, with good expectations of the pupils' ability to work independently, led to good learning, meeting well the learning needs of pupils with differing prior attainment. The pupils worked well at their experiments, competently recording their findings in simple tables and were beginning to draw conclusions from what they had found out.

- 111 In junior classes, prompt starts to lessons, and open ended questions and tasks engage the pupils quickly, reinforce their understanding and lead to good application to their work. Classroom assistants are well used to support pupils with special educational needs enabling them to make good progress in individual lessons. Good practical demonstrations, such as those with balloons looking at air resistance in Year 6, with good use of technical vocabulary and encouragement to pupils to observe carefully and think scientifically, lead to good learning. There are some weaknesses in the teaching in the junior classes and these include some missed opportunities to teach fair testing, some slow pace for the younger pupils so that they made satisfactory rather than good progress, and some missed opportunities to develop their thinking and understanding. For example, a lesson on the conventional symbols used in electrical circuit diagrams did not fully develop the pupils' understanding of the purposes of these conventions, with the result that the pupils did not use correct symbols later when they made their own drawings.
- 112 The pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour make a significant contribution to their learning. All pupils show a keen interest in science. They can work well independently in groups or pairs from Year 1 onwards, and enjoy good relationships with each other and with their teachers. They make enthusiastic contributions to class discussions.
- 113 The previous inspection noted weaknesses in continuity and progression in science and these weaknesses remain, notably in junior classes. Standards for the high attaining junior pupils have not improved sufficiently from the last inspection. The headteacher, in his capacity as science co-ordinator, reports that last year; two pupils just missed achieving level 5 by a few points. The small size of the cohort does mean that one pupil represents a relatively high proportion of the school's total results and therefore the results must be treated with some caution. However, no rigorous analysis of the 1999 results has been undertaken to identify exactly where points were lost. The prediction that approximately 82 per cent of the Year 6 pupils will attain at least average standards in this year's tests does not indicate an anticipated improvement on last year's results. The monitoring of standards of teaching and learning in science is insufficiently rigorous or pro-active. For example, although the headteacher is aware of the prevalence of copied text in some junior work and of the disparity in standards for the Year 5 pupils, he has not yet tackled these issues.

## **ART**

- 114 Standards in art meet the national expectation. The evidence from this inspection indicates that standards have improved on those found in the 1996 inspection. It is noteworthy that some pupils with special educational needs have artistic talents and are being enabled to achieve good standards due to some good teaching and learning in art lessons.
- 115 By the age of seven years, pupils record their ideas and feelings confidently. They work practically and imaginatively with an appropriate range of techniques in two and three dimensions. They can describe and compare images in simple terms. The Year 1 pupils produce some quite well controlled patterns and some lively confident drawings. The seven year olds achieve some good standards in their observational and collage work.

They benefit from opportunities to experiment with techniques and materials, such as printing, blow painting, and making paper flowers. They are successfully encouraged by their teachers to observe carefully, to improve the quality of their work and to use their knowledge of colour. They concentrate well in art lessons. Work in their sketchbooks shows that the infants are learning well the skills of drawing solid objects and shading with a pencil. There is also some good cross-curricular work in art. For example, the youngest pupils have made attractive paintings linked to their science topic of "Light".

116 By the age of 11 years, pupils work with increasing accuracy and attention to detail. They experiment with and show increasing control over an appropriate range of materials and techniques. They evaluate their own and others' work with discernment and confidence. The juniors achieve some good standards in their observational and three-dimensional work. Year 4 pupils produced some very good sketches of Victorian artefacts, benefiting from their teacher's valuing, but critical appraisal, of their work. This led to them to concentrate well, make good progress and take a pride in their finished pieces. Year 6 pupils showed good understanding of techniques, such as the use of papier-mâché to make large masks and three-dimensional sculptures. They reflected carefully on the quality of their work, reviewing and modifying and improving it as the lesson progressed, giving much creative effort to their work. The junior pupils handle tools and resources sensibly and carefully. They respect and value each other's efforts. This was particularly evident at the end of the drawing lesson when pupils gathered together for an evaluation of their work.

117 The art co-ordinator has worked effectively with the staff to raise the quality of display and to raise achievement in art, drawing on the school's policy for teaching and learning. Art is a priority focus within the school development plan next year and there will be further training for staff. The co-ordinator has begun compiling a portfolio of the pupils' work to gain an over-view of standards across the school, but as yet, has not undertaken any monitoring of teaching in art. Nevertheless, her good leadership of the subject is already impacting positively on standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

118 Based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, and of activities in lessons in infant and junior classes, standards by the ages of seven and 11 are below the national expectation with pupils not achieving as well as they should. Although pupils have an appropriate range of making skills, as in the last inspection, the principal shortcoming is pupils' low achievement in design skills.

119 Pupils have knowledge and experience of working with a broadly appropriate range of materials. During the past year, pupils have completed assignments which involved analysing how toys work, making moving pictures and models, making Greek temples in card linked to a topic in history, and constructing battery operated circuits linked to their work in science. They have produced a range of models or products in paper, card, recycled materials, fabrics, and food.

120 Children in the reception class know about simple push-pull card mechanisms and their use in pop-up books but have difficulty in relating their understanding to the design contexts they are set. Older pupils show they can relate their technological activities to contexts set within other areas of the curriculum. For example, linked to their work in geography, pupils in Year 2 have designed a puppet, have designed and made a rain gauge and also have considered the ingredients for making pumpkin soup.

- 121 Pupils in Year 3 are developing their understanding about methods of construction. For example they explore in a variety of ways the need for a secure corner join when using sheet card and balsa wood, and have learned a method from their teacher. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 can experiment with, and mould, papier-mâché effectively to make expressive masks and sculptures.
- 122 Pupils keep planning books containing their work on a few design situations which have resulted in them making lists of materials, measurements, methods of construction and an evaluation, but their designs are limited by their conceptual and drawing skills and some of their evaluations indicate their disappointment with their practical work. The quality of pupils' learning would benefit from more practical and investigative approaches to design situations leading them to record, where appropriate, their ideas and designs as they go.
- 123 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons in appropriate detail, but planning does not include sufficiently for the broad range of attainment and experience of pupils. A range of appropriate topics based on the national schemes of work are planned for each term. Pupils respond to the teaching and assignments with enthusiasm and demonstrate good powers of concentration. Although junior pupils have access to a design and technology work room equipped with two benches and an appropriate range of small tools for working with wood, they make only limited use of this room.
- 124 The last inspection noted a need to improve the management of design and technology. However, the new co-ordinator also has responsibility for the co-ordination of information technology, which is a priority area, and physical education. Recently, a new, and significantly improved, subject policy for design and technology has been agreed with the governors and the new scheme of work follows recent national guidance. However, there is no subject development plan, and no staff training opportunities to develop strategies for teaching design have been implemented since the last inspection or for the current year. Subject monitoring arrangements are informal and do not provide a sufficient over-view of standards, but work on developing an appropriate assessment portfolio is being developed.
- 125 Since the last inspection, additional construction kits have been added to the learning resources, but these are not used widely. Consumable resources, apart from resistant materials, are satisfactory, and tools and equipment are broadly satisfactory, though modest. The use of information technology to support teaching and learning in design and technology is undeveloped. More could be done to display pupils' design and technology work around the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

- 126 Standards are average in both subjects with pupils achieving satisfactorily. In geography, pupils in Year 2, developing their geographical skills, understand how maps are made and the symbols used to represent objects seen from an aerial view. They understand the importance of a key to explain the symbols. They are developing their geographical vocabulary, using words like 'route' in context.
- 127 By the time they are 11, pupils understand the conflicting demands of land use in a local village context. Pupils have looked at weather and made simple measurements of weather and records. Higher attaining pupils are able both to discuss orally and write persuasive letters to the local planning authority reasoning on the interests of local people in the face of impending housing and commercial developments. The majority are able to focus their thoughts quickly and write coherently. Those pupils with learning needs appropriately complete the task assigned to them with support from their teacher.

- 128 Pupils in Year 2 understand history in the context of a comparison of artefacts from Victorian England with those from the present day. Pupils are confident and alert when observing the artefacts and discussing the differences and use with their teacher.
- 129 Pupils in Year 4 have studied ancient Egypt and are developing their research skills to gain a sound appreciation of the construction and purpose of Roman roads in Britain. Year 5 pupils in class discussions are gaining a vivid understanding of features of life in Victorian England, including the lives of the children who worked in the mines. In their work books, junior pupils understand aspects of the Tudors and Stuarts and something of the arts and costume of the period. They have looked in depth at the lives of famous Victorian characters such as Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale.
- 130 The quality of teaching is good for geography and history. The teachers carefully introduce topics and ask useful, well focused questions to draw out information. They provide appropriate tasks, generally matched to the low and average achieving pupils, but more could be done to challenge high achieving pupils. The quality of learning is at least sound and mostly good for both subjects. The pupils learn through looking at real objects in their classrooms and outside in the village. All the classes use their reading and writing skills well to find out information though there is an absence of sustained writing or extended studies. The pupils' attitudes in their lessons are positive. They work hard and concentrate. Their own good self image helps them to take an interest in other people and their lives.
- 131 The last inspection, based on the limited evidence available, found that in geography standards were below the national expectation and progress was slow. There was insufficient curricular time, poor resource provision and subject management needed improving, with for example, better assessment and curricular planning. These issues have been significantly addressed. In the last inspection of history, standards were broadly average but progress needed improvement overall. There were no monitoring procedures in place to check that planning matched with lessons taught or that pupils' learning progressed through the school. Assessment did not inform planning and resources were barely adequate.
- 132 There has been significant improvement to standards in both subjects. The school has moved from the former topic based approach to separate teaching of geography and history; this ensures more balanced subject coverage. The co-ordinator for geography and history has an appropriate development action plan for 12 months and the subjects benefit from being priority areas within the current School Improvement Plan. The co-ordinator conscientiously monitors classroom displays and pupils' work books and has made an accurate evaluation of standards. This provides a sound basis for establishing development priorities. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory but do not sufficiently influence curricular planning. Lesson planning, generally is sound and based appropriately on the National Curriculum. The resources have been audited and improved for geography and history but the co-ordinator has identified a few remaining gaps, such as resources and artefacts for world geography.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 133 Standards of achievement in information technology are in line with the nationally expected standards for pupils of this age. Although only a limited range of pupils' finished work was available during the inspection, in all classes pupils, often working in pairs, make regular and appropriate use of computers to enhance their learning in literacy, numeracy and other subjects, as well as developing their information technology understanding and skills in the popular after school information technology clubs.

- 134 The majority of pupils are familiar with the computer keyboard and the use of the mouse and are successfully developing their hand and eye co-ordination. In the older infant class the pupils are using the computer to list the results of their work on data handling and graphically present information. They can use a word processing program appropriately to supplement their writing activities in literacy. Although most pupils explore information held on the computer and use simulations to make decisions and solve problems in imaginary situations, they do not communicate ideas using pictures and sound.
- 135 Junior pupils regularly work in pairs on the computers beginning in morning registration and at appropriate opportunities within lessons. They consolidate their use of the word processor in literacy lessons but do not significantly develop their skills. Evidence around the school shows that word processing is often used by pupils, but at an elementary level of sophistication. In Years 4 and 5 pupils use CD-ROMs to access mental mathematics simulations and programs to practise basic skills and use ROM-based encyclopaedias to aid them in their topic research. Recently, the pupils have begun to use e-mail between classrooms and e-mail addresses beyond the school, and visit appropriate Internet web sites such as those provided by the BBC. Several pupils are regular users of information technology at home and a boy had researched and printed a topic on Roman roads in a study of Roman Britain. The oldest pupils are able to use a 'LOGO' type program to plot regular polygons related to their mathematics work. Pupils are not able to use information technology for control purposes and data logging.
- 136 Teaching is satisfactory. All teaching seen was on a one-to-one arrangement with the teacher checking occasionally on the progress of the pairs of pupils using the computers. Although pupil management was satisfactory, more use could be made of teaching the whole class so as to effectively consolidate all pupils' information technology knowledge and understanding. Teachers have a realistic view of the potential of information technology and are confident users. The incorporation of information technology into lessons gives an added dimension to pupils' learning, as in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, when a few pupils from the class were assigned to use the computers to word process a draft letter to a local planning authority as part of a geographical study. Pupils enjoy using the computer and approach tasks confidently and with interest. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory use of information technology programs in their learning, either supported by their class teacher or their assigned learning assistant. All pupils concentrate and co-operate well when working individually and in pairs.
- 137 In many ways the standards in information technology are similar to that found in the previous inspection, when overall it was satisfactory. Progression to the higher skills levels is still an issue, as is the place of control and data handling, though the introduction and use of CD-ROMs and the Internet are significant improvements. Information technology is a priority in the school improvement plan and a new and appropriate whole school policy has recently been approved by the Governing Body. Recently, with a new information technology co-ordinator and the support of the link governor for information technology, the subject has been effectively led. The staff will soon be undertaking a programme of information technology training provided nationally under the New Opportunities Fund. These measures, together with the improved management, will make a positive impact on standards. The school has an adequate number of computers, including two lap-top machines.

## **MUSIC**

- 138 Insufficient teaching and learning of music could be seen during the inspection, because of

timetabling difficulties, to arrive at a definitive judgement on standards. The limited evidence collected indicates that there is sound compositional work in junior classes. Work on group-composed sound poems by pupils in Years 4 and 5 show some variety and imaginative ideas. The tape-recorded work shows an effective use of a range of untuned percussion and of pupils' own voices, based on symbolic notation they had written for themselves. Year 6 pupils worked well together in groups to put simple percussion accompaniments to their class song, but did not improve their performance as effectively as they might.

- 139 The music co-ordinator is new to this role and has appropriately given priority to managing her work as the deputy headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator. However, the school makes sensible use of a commercial scheme to support the teaching of music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 140 Standards in gymnastics exceed the national expectation and the pupils achieve well through the school due to the good teaching and learning. It was not possible to observe a full lesson with the Year 2 pupils, so most of these judgements are based on observations of juniors' lessons. Nevertheless, the work with Year 1 pupils and some brief observation of Year 2 pupils showed that these lessons are clearly laying the foundations for good standards by the end of the infants. The school has successfully maintained high standards in this aspect of physical education since the last inspection.

- 141 By the age of 11, the pupils successfully practise to refine their own performance, working together well in groups on sequences of movements with increasing control and good co-ordination. They execute well many movements such as arching of backs, cartwheels, and different kinds of rolls. The pupils have learned well how to work safely in physical education lessons and know how to support each other, when performing handstands for example, showing good mutual trust. The teachers' good subject knowledge, high expectations and strong emphasis on evaluation enable all pupils to learn well, make good progress and achieve high standards. Clear demonstration by teachers of skills such as headstands and backward rolls ensures that pupils perform movements correctly and safely. Lessons are well structured with appropriate warm up and cool down times, and have good pace, so that the pupils put in a good level of physical effort and work productively. The pupils clearly enjoy their physical education lessons and although the noise level is sometimes a little high, this is mainly because of their eagerness and is not at a dangerous level, because the pupils swiftly respond to their teachers' instructions.

- 142 The school has adequate learning resources for physical education and games. There is an on-site open air swimming pool for use in the summer term and the school uses a public recreation ground opposite the school for athletics and games. Internal accommodation is barely adequate, although teachers and pupils cope well in the limited space. The school hall, which is also the dining and assembly hall, and has a partition from the library, serves as a small gymnasium but is equipped with an adequate range of equipment.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 143 Attainment in religious education is barely satisfactory and the pupils do not achieve sufficiently high standards. Whilst pupils show some sound knowledge and understanding in aspects of Christianity, their knowledge and understanding of other faiths, as required by the East Sussex agreed syllabus, are unsatisfactory. The pupils' progress in knowledge, skills and understanding through the school is too slow. There has been insufficient improvement in standards and progress since the last inspection.

- 144 By the age of seven, the pupils know about aspects of the life of Jesus, such his birth and his calming of the storm on the Sea of Galilee. They are learning about how aspects of their own lives and experiences relate to religious concepts such as that of belonging to God's family. They have done some interesting writing about the Christmas story. They have done a little work on Judaism; having met the words "Torah", "scrolls" and "synagogue" but their understanding of this work is not well developed.
- 145 By the age of 11, the pupils know more about the parables of Jesus, being able to recount some of them and understanding their purpose. Writing by the younger juniors, re-telling a parable from another viewpoint, is of sound quality, but the oldest pupils are also tackling work of similar kind and this makes insufficient demands on them. The pupils by the age of 11 know about the festival of Easter, but the quality of their writing is sometimes poor. The extent of their work on other religions is very thin.
- 146 The teaching and learning of religious education seen during the inspection was satisfactory. In an infant lesson, the teacher used a family photograph to set the context for learning about families and this elicited some sensitive response from the pupils. They thought about their own families and were introduced to the concept of God's family. Well-planned support for the infant pupils enabled all of them to produce simple pieces of writing about their mothers. In junior classes, teachers used good open-ended questioning and had high expectations of the pupils' ability to understand and to reason. This led to well developed understanding in whole class discussion.
- 147 There is insufficient use of resources which can support the pupils' learning. For example, whilst there was some good discussion in one lesson about the meaning of Easter, the absence of pictures, books or artefacts led to satisfactory rather than good progress. Insufficiently high expectations of written work for the oldest pupils, and a lack of research material, led merely to consolidation of knowledge rather the acquisition of new learning.
- 148 The pupils bring good attitudes and enquiring minds to their lessons and learning in religious education. The level of discussion in one junior class was good, with pupils asking questions such as "What does God look like?" and "Why don't we have chocolate crosses at Easter rather than chocolate eggs?" This suggests that the pupils have good potential to learn well in religious education. As in other subjects, the pupils behave well in religious education lessons, applying themselves to their work, and relating well to their teachers and each other.
- 149 The religious education co-ordinator has only recently taken on this management role and therefore does not yet have a secure overview of standards and quality in the subject and no effective monitoring is taking place. Weaknesses evident in the last inspection, such as a lack of progression in learning, have not been addressed. The allocation of only 2 to 3 per cent of teaching time to religious education is barely enough to ensure good coverage of the locally agreed syllabus. The limited provision of books and artefacts, particularly to support the teaching of other religions, has been identified already by the co-ordinator.