

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **PLUMPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Plumpton Green, Lewes

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114410

Headteacher: Mrs A Gard

Reporting inspector: Mrs C Skinner  
23160

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 196780

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## 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:              | Southdowns<br>Plumpton Green<br>Lewes<br>East Sussex |
| Postcode:                    | BN7 3EB  |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body, Plumpton Primary School          |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr N Satchell  |
| Date of previous inspection: | January 1997   |

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                |                      | Subject responsibilities  | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 23160        | Carole Skinner | Registered inspector | English, music, English as an additional language.  | The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?   |
| 9977         | Fran Luke      | Lay inspector        |   | 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? |
| 10808        | Alan Britton   | Team inspector       | Mathematics, history, physical education, the Foundation Stage curriculum.  |  |
| 17976        | John Francis   | Team inspector       | Science, art and design, religious education.   | How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?   |
| 16492        | Bob Lever      | Team inspector       | Information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, equal opportunities, special educational needs. |  |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Plumpton Primary School educates boys and girls between the ages of four and 11 years. There are 190 pupils on roll, with equal numbers of boys and girls. The school is smaller than most other schools of the same type and its roll is falling. At the time of this inspection, 21 full-time pupils were being taught in the Reception class. There are 21 pupils (11 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need. Approximately one per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is broadly average. Two pupils speak English as an additional language and both are fluent. Approximately five per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. During the last school year, 11 pupils joined the school and seven left it at times other than those of the normal admission or transfer. This represents an average turnover of pupils. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school has fallen recently from above average to broadly average.

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

This is an effective school. The leadership and management are good and are committed to improving the quality of education provided and raising standards. Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school and there is much good teaching. However, standards in Year 6 have not been high enough for the past two years and the school is currently implementing a good range of strategies to address identified weaknesses. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The good leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, other staff with management responsibilities and the governors ensure that there is a shared commitment to raising standards of attainment.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, although there are variations between year groups.
- The school offers a varied and interesting range of learning opportunities for all pupils.
- The good provision for pupils' moral and social development contributes well to the good attitudes, behaviour and relationships that exist throughout the school.
- The school works well in partnership with parents to enhance pupils' learning.
- The good quality provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them to reach good standards relative to their previous attainment.

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

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2, which, although now improving, have declined significantly over the past three years.
- Standards in religious education throughout the school, which do not meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and the pupils' academic progress.

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

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

The school was last inspected in January 1997, since when its improvement has been satisfactory. The key issues from that inspection have been addressed well in most cases. For example, curricular planning is much better and schemes of work are now in place for all subjects. Standards have improved in music, information and communication technology and design and technology. However, although a marking policy is now in place, it is not being implemented consistently well by all teachers. Standards of attainment have improved at Key Stage 1 but those at Key Stage 2 have declined. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve because of the shared commitment to improvement amongst staff and governors.

## STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with |      |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                 | 1998          | 1999 | 2000 | 2000            |
| English         | A             | C    | C    | E               |
| mathematics     | A*            | B    | D    | E               |
| science         | A*            | B    | D    | E               |

| Key                |    |
|--------------------|----|
| very high          | A* |
| well above average | A  |
| above average      | B  |
| average            | C  |
| below average      | D  |
| well below average | E  |

As the information shows, there was a significant decline in standards between 1998 and 2000 in all three subjects. This was most marked in mathematics and science, where the school's results were in the highest five per cent of schools nationally in 1998 and dropped to below the national average in 2000. Although the drop in standards can be explained partly by the differences between year groups, it was mainly due to a decline in the percentage of pupils who reached higher than average standards (Level 5). The school has now begun to address this situation by providing suitably demanding work for the more able pupils. It has also identified weaknesses in writing and spelling and has introduced good strategies to raise attainment in these areas. In 2000, the school exceeded its targets in English and met those in mathematics. It has set much more challenging targets for 2001 in both subjects. The findings of the inspection show an improvement on the previous year's performance in mathematics and science, as standards in the present Year 6 are average. In English, they are average overall, as in 2000, but better in reading than in writing. Pupils attain above average standards in art and music, and average standards in all other subjects except religious education, where they do not meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

In Year 2, standards are above average in English, mathematics, art and music. They are average in all other subjects except religious education, where they do not meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. In mathematics, most children have already reached these. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards relative to their previous attainment. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. By the time they leave the school, most pupils achieve well.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Good. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in all activities and are keen to work. Their positive attitudes support their learning well.   |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Good. Pupils behave very well around the school and at playtimes. Behaviour in most lessons is good although, in some, a few pupils find it hard to sit still and concentrate and wait their turn to speak. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good. Pupils and adults get on well together and this creates a happy learning environment. Pupils enjoy taking responsibilities and show initiative when carrying them out.                                |
| Attendance                             | Good. Attendance is above the national average. Lessons start promptly and most pupils are punctual.  |

These factors have a positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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.*

During the inspection, 20 per cent of the teaching observed was very good and all of it was at least satisfactory. Just under 70 per cent was good. Throughout the school, lessons are generally well paced and teachers make good use of support staff and resources to promote pupils' learning. Teachers' expectations of pupils are higher at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1, which makes for better teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. In mathematics, it is good at both key stages. Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily at Key Stage 1 and well at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop literacy skills through other subjects. Numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school. The teaching of religious education has some weaknesses. In some classes, the management of pupils is not firm enough and pupils call out or interrupt the teacher during whole class sessions. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and varies from class to class. Some is very constructive and shows pupils how to improve their work, whilst some is purely congratulatory. On the whole, teaching meets pupils' needs well as suitable work is planned for different groups to match their previous attainment. Overall, pupils apply themselves well to their work and this helps them to make progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Good. The school provides a varied and interesting range of learning opportunities, with a good emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Links with the community and other schools, visitors to the school and visits to places of interest further enhance pupils' learning.   |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Good. Pupils' individual education plans are effective in ensuring that their needs are met whilst still enabling them to have access to the whole curriculum. Pupils receive good support in lessons or when withdrawn for additional help.   |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are fluent in English and do not require additional help. They have full access to the whole curriculum.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good, overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, and that for moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils benefit from a wide range of visits and visitors and the curriculum promotes personal development effectively.   |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | The school cares for its pupils well. It has good procedures for child protection and health and safety. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Although assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, they are better in English and mathematics than in other subjects, which are in the early stages of development. |

The school works well in partnership with parents. The school's curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. Subject 'focus weeks' are a particularly good feature of the curriculum.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good. The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear vision for the school. She is well supported by the deputy head and other staff with management responsibilities. There is a strong team spirit amongst the staff and a shared commitment to raising standards.   |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | The governors make a good contribution to the management of the school and are effective in fulfilling their statutory duties. They are well aware of the school's strong points and where improvement is required. They use their individual skills well to support the school.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Satisfactory. The headteacher has analysed pupils' test results and from this, appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified. However, the analysis of performance data is not fully effective in helping to raise standards or in tracking individual pupils' progress through the school. Few subject co-ordinators have had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subject. |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Good. Resources are used well to promote learning and expenditure is linked carefully to the priorities in the school development plan. Teaching assistants are used well to provide support for pupils with special educational needs.  |

The school is well staffed, its accommodation is good and resources are adequate to support learning. There are training needs for some staff in religious education. The governors have good strategies to ensure that the school receives the best possible value for money.

## 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>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of their children.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The way the school works with them.</li> <li>• The information they receive about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The amount of homework their children receive.</li> </ul> |

The findings of the inspection largely agree with the positive views of parents, although teachers' expectations are not always high enough in some classes. The findings also show that the school offers a good range of extracurricular activities. The school works closely with parents. However, the reports on their children's progress are not specific enough and do not give parents enough information about how well pupils have achieved. The amount of homework pupils receive is appropriate to their age.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage at average levels of attainment. The attainment of children on entry to the school has fallen from above average in 1998 to its current level. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Reception class. As a result, most children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year, and a significant minority of them have already achieved these goals and are working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Attainment in mathematics is particularly good. Children learn to socialise well with others and develop good relationships with adults. They concentrate on lessons and activities well and sit quietly and listen to the teacher when required. Children listen attentively to stories and most can talk about their favourite extracts and predict the end of the story. They show a sound awareness and understanding of number bonds to ten and use this knowledge for number operations such as simple addition and subtraction. In physical education, children use the space and equipment imaginatively and safely. In swimming, most children achieve standards above those expected for their age.

2. In the end of Key Stage 1 national tests in 2000, the pupils' results were above the national average in reading and writing, and well above average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, they were average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. In science, the assessments made by teachers were above average overall. In reading and mathematics, the percentage of higher attainers was much higher than that seen in most schools, whilst in science it was lower. In writing, it was similar to the national average. Standards have risen significantly since 1997, when they were below average in reading, and well below average in writing and mathematics. The results have fluctuated from year to year, mostly because of differences between the groups of pupils involved and the relatively small year groups. However, standards overall have improved at a greater rate over four years than that seen nationally.

3. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 2, standards are above average in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, art and music. They are average in all other subjects except religious education, where they do not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Compared with the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection in 1997, standards are higher in English and music, lower in religious education and similar in all other subjects. When the pupils in the present Year 2 entered the school, their attainment was above average in language, literacy and mathematics. They have made sound progress during their time in school and their achievement is satisfactory.

4. In Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are average, overall, although better in speaking than listening. Pupils are keen to respond to the teachers but do not always listen carefully to what others are saying. Some pupils speak confidently and audibly, using interesting vocabulary, but others remain passive and allow the more talkative pupils to dominate the lesson. Standards in reading are above average in Year 2. Pupils read simple texts accurately and show a good understanding of what they have read. They express opinions about events and characters in a story, and use a range of strategies when reading unfamiliar words. A higher than average proportion of pupils attain good standards, reading more complex texts independently and showing a good understanding of the content. In writing, standards are above average. Almost all of the pupils are attaining the standards expected of seven year olds and a significant minority exceed them. Pupils generally have a good understanding of how to structure a story and are imaginative

when retelling stories with a 'twist'. For the most part, pupils have a sound grasp of spelling and punctuation rules, and more able pupils are already using speech marks accurately in some pieces of writing. The quality of pupils' handwriting is variable. Although they are taught to write in a neat, joined style, this is not used consistently in all writing. In mathematics, in Year 2, pupils use their knowledge of money to solve problems involving the purchase of items for a holiday. They add and subtract money accurately using correct decimal notation and work out a quarter of one pound and how many ten pence pieces make two pounds. They explain their mental strategies well using correct mathematical language. They classify two and three-dimensional shapes, for example, by the number of sides and corners. Pupils collect data and represent it in block graphs and pictograms, sometimes using information and communication technology.

5. In science, pupils know and name the different parts of a plant and explain the conditions needed for a seed to grow. They name materials and recognise that some are better suited to a particular purpose than others. Pupils carry out experiments and investigations, make observations and explain their findings. However, there is insufficient recording of work to communicate their findings. In art and design, pupils show good attention to detail and mix colours effectively to produce different tones of skin colour. In design and technology, they use models and pictures to develop and communicate their designs for a playground. They select from a range of materials, tools and techniques and learn to join various materials. In geography, pupils explain what is attractive about Plumpton and how it differs from nearby towns. They explain how it changes on race days. In history, they have a sound knowledge of what seaside holidays were like in the past and understand the changes that have taken place over the past 100 years. In information and communication technology, pupils use computer simulations to explore imaginary situations, program controllable toys and collect and record data competently. Good attainment in music in Year 2 is evident in pupils' knowledge and understanding of musical notation and pitch. They use chime bars and glockenspiels to compose their own music, follow a rhythm well and respond appropriately to symbols, notation and hand signals. In physical education, pupils show a sound understanding of simple games tactics. They achieve good standards in swimming. In religious education, there was very little evidence on which to base judgements, but indications are that pupils' knowledge and understanding are limited and that they are confused about aspects of different religions.

6. In the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in 2000, the pupils' results were in line with the national average in English, but below average in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, the results were well below average. Standards have declined significantly since 1997 and 1998, when they were well above average in English, and in the top five per cent of schools nationally for mathematics and science. The fall in standards over the past two years can be explained partly by differences between successive year groups. For example, in 2000, approximately one third of the pupils had joined the school at various times during the key stage. Also, when relatively small numbers of pupils are involved, variations from year to year are not uncommon. Nevertheless, during the past two years, there has been a significant decline in the proportion of pupils who achieved higher than average standards in the tests (Level 5). This has had an adverse effect on the school's overall results. The school exceeded its targets for 2000 in English and met them in mathematics. Challenging targets have been set for the pupils to achieve in the 2001 tests. In response to the falling standards, the headteacher and staff have put a number of effective strategies in place, which are reversing the downward trend. There has been a good emphasis on raising the achievement of more able pupils and on developing pupils' writing skills.

7. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. This represents an improvement on the results of the 2000 tests in mathematics and science. There are no significant variations in attainment between

boys and girls. In English, standards are similar because standards in writing are still lower than those in reading. The strategies that have been introduced to improve writing have not had time to have sufficient impact on standards in Year 6. However, standards in Year 5 are above average in writing and show clearly the effect of very good teaching strategies. In art and music, standards are above average. They are average in all other subjects, except in religious education, where they do not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Since the school's last inspection, standards have fallen in English, mathematics, science, history and religious education. They have improved in design and technology, information and communication technology and music. In other subjects, they are similar to those seen four years ago. Pupils in the present Year 6 class achieved below average standards in reading, and well below average standards in writing and mathematics in the national tests when they were in Year 2. They have made good progress and achieved well to reach average standards by the time they leave the school.

8. In English in Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils listen well to the teacher and to each other in class discussions. More able pupils express their ideas confidently and thoughtfully, varying their expression and using a wide vocabulary. Average pupils convey their opinions clearly and speak audibly, but less able pupils are often reluctant to offer ideas or contribute to discussions. In Year 6, pupils achieve good standards in reading. Most pupils read with fluency and accuracy and evaluate the texts they read with increasing competence. They express preferences in their choice of authors and explain why they like them. They use their reading skills to carry out research and find information to support learning across the curriculum. Standards in writing are barely average. Pupils write in an appropriate range of forms, including stories, poems, instructional and persuasive writing. The best writing shows a good command of style and expression, and often imaginative and adventurous choices of vocabulary. Most pupils organise their writing in a logical sequence and show a sound understanding of grammatical structure. However, a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 lack sufficient command of style and expression in their writing. Spelling is often inaccurate and punctuation is not always used correctly. In mathematics, pupils demonstrate sound understanding of mathematical operations and explain the strategies they use to work things out mentally. They understand the concept of rotational symmetry and are able to rotate various shapes. Pupils use number patterns, including negative numbers and square numbers, to find out what number comes next. Their mental recall of multiplication tables is well developed.

9. In science, pupils carry out experiments and investigations and determine what makes a fair test. They record their findings in charts, tables and graphs. They test fabrics to analyse their waterproof qualities and understand that gravity and friction are forces that affect moving objects. Pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of different food groups and how they affect health. In art and design, pupils are knowledgeable about various styles of painting, such as Impressionism, some famous artists and the characteristics of their style, for example, Van Gogh's use of thick paint. In design and technology, pupils generate ideas to produce a final design that meets the requirements of the task. They pay attention to the quality of finish and function and adapt their work as they learn from their mistakes. In geography, pupils have sound skills in interpreting a range of maps and use co-ordinates correctly. They understand the geographical features of Egypt and explain the importance of the Nile today and in ancient times. In history, Year 6 pupils use sources of information to find out about different aspects of the way of life of people living in Ancient Egypt. They handle and examine artefacts in order to classify them in different ways. In information and communication technology, pupils use formulae accurately when using a spreadsheet to calculate pocket money and use multimedia applications to present their work for different audiences. Standards are good in music because pupils have been taught very well over a period of time. They sing with confidence and a very good sense of

rhythm and pitch, understand musical terminology and notation and respond appreciatively to different types of music. In physical education, pupils demonstrate sound running techniques and an awareness of pacing and stride patterns when running different distance races. Their attainment in swimming is good. In religious education, although pupils know about the important festivals of Christianity, and its principal beliefs, their knowledge and understanding of other faiths are confused and lack sufficient depth.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards compared with their previous attainment. They make good progress towards the specific targets and goals in their individual education plans, particularly when receiving well-targeted additional support. Annual reviews for pupils with statements of special educational need show that these pupils make good progress against their targets. Pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy, where the recently introduced strategies are giving them good practice in the basic skills of reading, spelling and number.

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

11. The last inspection found that pupils had very positive attitudes to their learning and their behaviour was generally good. In this inspection, these aspects are still found to be good. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to come to school and eager to participate in activities. They are attentive and keen to join in and ask and answer questions. However, they do not always listen well to the teacher and wait their turn to speak. They carry out instructions sensibly and safely. Pupils concentrate well on their work and work well independently as well as in groups and in pairs. They are willing to discuss their work with the class as well as with their partners.

12. Pupils are interested in the life of the school and they behave well around the school and at lunch times. Behaviour in the classrooms is generally good, but in a small number of lessons, pupils become restless and fidgety. On a visit to the church during the inspection, Year 6 pupils' behaviour was excellent. School rules are regularly discussed and all pupils know right from wrong. They are polite and courteous to each other, to all staff and to visitors. The last inspection found that relationships between pupils and staff were good. This inspection finds that pupils still have good relationships with each other and with all adults in the school. No bullying or oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection, and pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others.

13. Pupils handle resources carefully and show respect for school property. They have good opportunities for taking on additional responsibility. The pupils elect members of the playground committee, who, through discussion with other pupils, put together the ideas for the new playground area. Older pupils are good at looking after the younger ones. House captains also have responsibilities and, on their own initiative, have started up house magazines, seeking input from others within their houses. Pupils with special educational needs form good relationships with teachers, support staff and each other. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal development and quickly develop confidence. They form constructive relationships with adults and other children.

14. In the previous inspection, attendance was described as very good. Attendance is above the national average and is, therefore, good. There is no unauthorised absence. Registration of pupils is efficient and few pupils are late to school.

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

15. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, although there are variations between different parts of the school. It is good in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2, and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. This judgement is broadly the same as that made by

the school's previous inspection. However, that inspection did not report on separate key stages and found that five per cent of the teaching seen was unsatisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in this inspection. In this inspection, 68 per cent of the teaching was good or very good, compared with 60 per cent in 1997. Overall, 20 per cent of the teaching observed in this inspection was very good, compared with nine per cent in the previous inspection. These figures represent a clear improvement since the last inspection. The quality of learning closely reflects the figures and judgements for the quality of teaching. Throughout the school, the teaching meets the needs of all pupils. The quality of teaching in music is good and enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school now employs a music specialist to teach all classes, and this has resulted in much higher standards in the subject. The quality of teaching and learning in art is also good. Teachers have good levels of expertise in the subject and have very high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. The quality and consistency of teachers' marking remain an issue for the school to address, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Whilst some is very good, helpful, and constructive, other examples offer indiscriminate praise or fail to show pupils how to improve their work.

16. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is good in all areas of learning, as it was at the time of the last inspection. During this inspection, five lessons were observed in the Reception class. Of these, one lesson was very good and four were good. The quality of teaching promotes good progress and enables all but a few children to reach the national Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. A significant minority of pupils in the Reception class have already achieved these and have progressed to the early stages of the National Curriculum. Both the teacher and assistant in the Reception class have a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children. They work very well together to plan work, and to assess and record children's attainment and progress. This helps them to make sure that appropriate activities are provided for all children, taking account of what they already know. A very good range of teaching methods is used to engage children's interest and further their learning. During the inspection, children had the opportunity to participate in a good variety of practical experiences, as well as learning to sit and listen while the teacher taught them carefully how to write proper sentences as captions for pictures. They learn through imaginative play, by watching and listening, joining in rhymes and reading stories and information books together. The teacher and assistant manage the children very effectively, develop very good relationships with them and respond quickly to their needs. They have high expectations of behaviour and reinforce these consistently so that children know exactly what is expected of them in all situations.

17. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. At this key stage, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught together in two mixed age classes for most of the time. However, they are taught as separate year groups for literacy and numeracy. This works well and enables teachers to plan work effectively to meet individual pupils' needs. During this inspection, nine lessons were observed at Key Stage 1. Of these, two were very good, two were good and five were satisfactory. At this key stage, the quality of teaching and learning is good in mathematics, art, music and physical education, and satisfactory in all other subjects, except religious education where it is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, in literacy and numeracy.

18. Where teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, a contributory factor is that teachers' expectations of pupils' listening skills and general behaviour during whole class sessions are not high enough. Pupils are often allowed to call out answers and talk while the teacher is talking, which detracts from the quality of the teacher's introduction to the lesson and means that some pupils dominate the lesson whilst others remain passive and detached. In one lesson, the teacher remained focused on one group of pupils and did not

supervise other groups closely enough to ensure that they were working at a suitable pace. In addition, there was no classroom assistant to help support this large class. As a result, a few pupils did not concentrate on the task and made little progress during the lesson. Analysis of the work that pupils in Year 2 have done throughout the year in English shows that they have received good teaching and have made good progress. Pupils in Year 1 have made satisfactory progress in developing reading and writing skills. In some subjects, such as science and religious education, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and very little work is recorded. This means that a valuable opportunity for developing pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum is lost. Pupils' attainment in religious education in Year 2 does not meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory for those pupils.

19. The two very good lessons that were observed at Key Stage 1 were in music and swimming, where the co-ordinators' expertise in the subjects was used very effectively to help pupils achieve good standards. A good numeracy lesson for pupils in Year 2 illustrated some of the stronger points of teaching at this key stage. The lesson began with a challenging mental mathematics session, in which pupils were encouraged to explain the strategies they had used to work out the answers to questions. In the main part of the lesson, pupils had the opportunity to discuss their work with a partner and to apply their mathematical knowledge in order to solve problems. The teacher created effective links with the pupils' work in geography, where they are planning a holiday for 'Barnaby Bear', and this helped to engage and sustain their interest and enthusiasm. The teaching assistant provided good support for pupils with special educational needs and made effective use of information and communication technology to develop the pupils' understanding of how to solve number and money problems.

20. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection, 27 lessons were observed. Of these, five were very good, 14 were good and eight were satisfactory. The strongest teaching was seen in Year 5, where all of the lessons observed were at least good, and half were very good. The quality of teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, science, art, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects. The quality of teaching and learning is good in literacy and numeracy. The national strategies are implemented well and teachers develop literacy and numeracy skills well across the curriculum. The school has identified spelling and writing as weak areas and has put a number of additional strategies in place to address them. These are having a good impact on the quality of pupils' learning in literacy. Specialist teaching of music and swimming is of high quality and helps pupils to achieve well in these subjects. The school has experienced difficulties in maintaining a good quality of teaching in Year 6, due to the long-term absence of the class teacher and problems with recruiting a replacement. However, every effort has been made to minimise the effect of this disruption, and the headteacher and co-ordinators for literacy, numeracy, science and special educational needs have all contributed to teaching pupils in small groups. This has met the needs of pupils at all levels of attainment well.

21. A Year 5 literacy lesson illustrated the best features of teaching at this key stage. The lesson began with a stimulating class discussion about an extract from *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which developed pupils' speaking and listening skills well. The teacher encouraged pupils to participate and created a purposeful working atmosphere, which set the tone for the rest of the lesson. After a fruitful discussion about the main features of diary writing, the teacher related the learning very well to the pupils' own experience by asking them to produce a diary entry about a recent residential visit. There was very good emphasis on style, content, and the need for proof-reading, and pupils were encouraged to use dictionaries to check their spelling. The teacher's high expectations of the pupils'

behaviour and the quality of their work inspired them to work with interest, concentration and independence and to apply considerable effort throughout the lesson.

22. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and helps them to make good progress. Teachers use appropriate methods, which enable pupils to learn effectively. They make effective use of information and communication technology to support the learning of basic skills. Pupils' individual education plans contain clear targets and they are sufficiently practical for class teachers to implement when support staff are not present. Teachers take full account of these targets when planning activities for pupils. The special educational needs assistants offer good support and keep accurate records of the progress of pupils with statements of special educational need. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is not always as encouraging or evaluative for pupils with special educational needs as it is for more able pupils

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

23. The school offers a broad and varied curriculum that provides a good focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. It now meets the National Curriculum requirements for information and communication technology and design and technology, which were judged to be a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. Religious education is taught within the framework of the locally agreed syllabus, and schemes of work are in place for all other subjects. Curricular planning has been reviewed in line with the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and follows the guidance offered by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This makes appropriate provision for pupils in mixed-age classes to experience appropriate progression in their learning. The school's senior management team ensures effective coverage through monitoring teachers' long-term planning. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively, and there are opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in other subjects, such as science, where they collect and display data. However, these are more limited at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. Improvements have also been made to other areas of the curriculum, such as music. With the employment of a part-time music specialist, pupils now have good access to high quality teaching and a wider range of experiences.

24. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned in accordance with national guidelines. It offers children in the Reception year a good range of activities and experiences, which help to develop their confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning. There are good opportunities for children to learn through carefully structured play, which also allows them to make choices and to become independent in their learning.

25. The school offers a good variety of extracurricular activities, which includes a range of sports, musical activities, mathematics clubs and adventure gaming. Pupils also visit places such as Glyndebourne, Fishbourne, Hampton Court, and closer to home, the local church. They have experienced an Afro-Caribbean drumming workshop. In addition, there are residential visits to Bristol, as part of the pupils' geography and humanities topic, and to an outdoor pursuits centre, where pupils experience adventurous activities such as rock climbing and abseiling.

26. The school makes sound provision for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education and promotes this through its daily routines. The newly appointed co-ordinator has recently drawn up a revised policy for this area of the curriculum. The scheme of work for personal, social and health education is based on guidance from the local education authority and is timetabled for all classes each week. It takes into account healthy living, developing pupils' awareness of the difference between right and wrong, and friendships. Drugs awareness and sex education are included for older pupils. The school

recently held a successful 'Health and Fitness' week, which focused on personal development, physical education and science to promote healthy life styles.

27. The school maintains good links with the community and these contribute well to the quality of the pupils' education. For example, the school takes part in the East Sussex Music Festival and pupils also participate in events such as a science challenge involving 12 local schools. During the inspection, the Mayor of Lewes visited the school and spoke to the children as part of the school's attempts to raise pupils' awareness of public figures. Older members of the community come into school on a regular basis to listen to children read; they are invited to attend the school's productions and pupils make reciprocal visits. The visit of the 'Sky Lab' during a science week was well received by pupils and added significantly to their understanding of space. There are also links with the local church, and the Rector comes into school each week. The pupils make regular visits to places of interest within the area, such as Plumpton Racecourse, Borde Hill and Preston Manor. Pupils participate in local sporting competitions.

28. The school ensures equal opportunities for all pupils, and those with special educational needs have full and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. The curriculum is appropriately organised for those identified with special educational needs. Arrangements for using individual education plans are effective in ensuring pupils' needs are met whilst still enabling pupils to have access to the whole curriculum.

29. There are good links with partner institutions. The school is part of a cluster of schools, which work together professionally on a regular basis. The schools share resources, and staff have joint meetings to discuss issues of interest. There are good links with the local secondary school, which is also a member of the cluster group, and staff make reciprocal visits. Some Year 6 pupils benefited from the opportunity to extend their knowledge by participating in a science master class at a local grammar school. Visits are also made to the local pre-school group, and children are invited to visit the school before their admission. In addition, there is a pre-school reading scheme, which also gives parents the opportunity to visit the school with their children on a regular basis to familiarise their children with the surroundings and routines.

30. Pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes towards their work are founded on the school's good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This judgement is similar to that made by the previous inspection.

31. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Acts of worship in the school are an integral part of pupils' spiritual development and follow themes such as sharing and looking after our world, both topics being closely linked to social and moral aspects. Worship is mainly Christian, but other major religions like Buddhism, Judaism and Islam, and cultural events such as the Chinese New Year, are acknowledged both in assemblies and in religious education lessons. Statutory requirements for a daily act of Christian worship are met. The sensitive leadership of assemblies ensures a quiet, reverent atmosphere to which pupils respond well. During the visit made by Year 6 to the local church, the Rector initiated a discussion on death and the joy of everlasting life as a happy occasion. In a Key Stage 1 assembly on the theme of sharing, the headteacher made a chocolate cake, using ingredients from all over the world, to illustrate her point. Pupils waited expectantly as each ingredient was uncovered, and selected pupils worked with a teaching assistant to mix the ingredients for the cake. During the prayer, a candle was lit and pupils were invited to reflect on the sharing aspects of making, baking and eating the cake and the number of people involved from all over the world. In a class assembly, the teacher used the story, *The Glass Cupboard* to convey the spiritual and moral message about putting something back into the world. Spiritual development is actively promoted in the Reception class and there are many occasions when children show awe and wonder, as when the cover was taken off the 'wormery'. However, there are

limited opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery, and the school does not fully use possibilities in subjects such as art, music, science and literature.

32. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. There are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour, as displayed in the school rules, and acceptable conduct is promoted effectively through the school's well-implemented policies. The school environment is calm, while good behaviour and attitudes are acknowledged positively and are given a high profile. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong at levels appropriate to their age and help to formulate the school and classroom rules at the beginning of the school year. The school has initiated a house system in order to promote pupils' moral and social development, and a well organised playground committee, consisting of pupils from all age groups, enables pupils to discuss moral issues. Staff award certificates for good work and gold awards are given every half term to pupils for extended effort, achievement and positive behaviour. Adults provide good role models for pupils and the consistent and caring way in which issues are dealt with promotes tolerance and fair play very effectively. Moral aspects are taught well, and pupils show a keen awareness of their responsibility towards property and the environment, both inside the school and in the grounds.

33. There is very good provision for pupils' social development, and most parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The school has a welcoming ethos, relationships are very good and all adults in the school create an open and friendly atmosphere, which encourages the development of pupils' social skills very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are integrated very well into a caring community. Pupils are taught strategies for dealing with difficult situations and personal, social and health education lessons help pupils to relate to one another and share their experiences and concerns. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities in lessons for pupils to work collaboratively and to share resources and equipment. Pupils are also given responsibility for jobs around the school, such as setting up the sound system and helping younger pupils. Many opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are encouraged to use their initiative and to develop their awareness and commitment to the poor and disadvantaged by involvement with activities such as the Indian Flood Appeal, Blue Peter, and Comic Relief. They have links with a school in Ghana and have participated in the 'Raise the Roof' project to help fund a school. Residential visits by pupils in Years 5 and 6 further enhance their personal and social development.

34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Western culture is promoted well through subjects such as literacy, history, art and music. Pupils are made aware of the contributions of ancient civilisations like Greece and Rome to Western culture and of the impact of the Second World War on the twentieth century. They listen to the works of several composers and have participated with other schools in the 'Orpheus Project' at Glyndebourne. Further opportunities for cultural development are provided by visitors to the school, including an Afro-Caribbean Drumming Workshop and a dance project. Pupils have also participated in a Greek afternoon and have learned about the Chinese New Year. The school also provides pupils with an environment and curriculum that reflect positive attitudes towards other cultures, especially in art, music, history and geography. In religious education, pupils are provided with good opportunities to study other religions, including Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. In music, pupils sing songs from other countries and they use a variety of instruments. Resources reflect the cultural diversity of British society and pupils in Year 6 learn about this at first hand through a residential visit to Bristol.

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

35. The previous inspection found that the school looked after its pupils well, and the support and guidance it provided were very good. This inspection finds that staff continue to be very caring and know and support the pupils well. External agencies including the education welfare service provide good support for the school.

36. There are appropriate arrangements in place for the management of health and safety. The deputy headteacher regularly undertakes risk assessments with members of the governing body. Regular checks are made of the grounds, buildings and equipment. Fire drills are held regularly and recorded. Appropriate numbers of staff are trained in the administration of first aid, and there is a dedicated medical room. Staff are kept well informed about pupils' specific medical needs. The school follows the local authority guidelines for child protection. The deputy headteacher is the person responsible for child protection matters, and she has ensured that all staff have been informed of the procedures and the importance of advising her if they have any concerns.

37. Attendance at the school is good and is above the national average. The school has good procedures in place for promoting and monitoring attendance. The class registers are kept up to date and are checked regularly by staff and the education welfare officer, who provides good support for the school, and will visit families when requested.

38. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. Pupils are rewarded for good behaviour, and golden awards are presented in special assemblies, to which parents are invited. School rules have been drawn up, following discussion with pupils. These are regularly discussed with pupils and are on display around the school. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong. No bullying was seen during the inspection and procedures are in place to deal with any incidents should they occur. The monitoring of behaviour is very good. Detailed analysis is carried out each term of the behaviour log, and the reasons for poor behaviour are analysed and discussed with pupils in personal and social education lessons, 'circle time' or assembly.

39. There are no formal monitoring procedures for pupils' personal development, but all staff provide very good support for all pupils. The staff regularly discuss any concerns, they know the pupils well and the use of a "pastoral book", which is kept in the staff room, ensures that staff are aware of, and understand, pupils' individual well being and development. The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs and monitors their progress well.

40. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Pupils are assessed at the end of each year as part of a whole school assessment programme. The results of these are being used appropriately to track pupils' attainment, although this is still being developed and is not sufficiently sophisticated to show how pupils have progressed over a number of years. Currently, an assessment framework, much of which is based on guidance given in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's subject documents, is being developed. Subject co-ordinators are working on aspects of this to produce a whole school scheme that will provide the quality of information that they feel will be valuable to them, whilst still being manageable. The school uses assessment data from teachers, national tests and internal standardised tests to inform target-setting procedures in individual education plans for pupils at Key Stage 2 and is using assessments made on entry to school and during Key Stage 1 to enable early identification of pupils needing extra support.

41. There is an annual assessment plan that indicates when different assessments are carried out and analysed throughout the year. Results from National Curriculum and other tests are analysed in detail to show any weaknesses in the curriculum or teaching. A regular writing assessment gives valuable information about pupils' progress and helps with target setting. The tracking sheets used to monitor pupils' progress are good, and are giving a clear focus to this area of learning. These are being used in conjunction with

additional training and support for staff and are beginning to raise pupils' attainment. Portfolios of work in all subjects are being developed, with examples that have been assessed and have levels of attainment agreed by all staff so that they can be used to give consistent judgements. At present, where these exist, they are not always clearly annotated and their purpose is unclear.

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

42. Parents generally have positive views of the school. Most parents feel that the school is good; however, a small but significant minority, in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, were critical of the school's arrangements for homework, did not feel they were kept well informed of their children's progress, did not feel the school worked closely with parents, and felt that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The previous inspection found that the partnership with parents was a strength of the school, and this continues to be the case, despite the misgivings of some parents.

43. The inspection team found that there is a good range of extracurricular activities available to pupils, the information provided for parents by the school is good and the school works hard to involve parents. Written end-of-year reports for parents are satisfactory, but the other information provided for parents by the school is good. The reports on their children's progress are not specific enough and do not give enough information about how well pupils have achieved. However, pupils' writing targets are shared with parents at consultation evenings. Regular newsletters are sent home, which give parents information about what is happening in school. In addition, class newsletters are also sent home telling parents what pupils will be doing during the coming term. The prospectus and governors' Annual Report to parents both meet statutory requirements. There are good opportunities for parents to meet informally with staff, and parents appreciate this. There are also planned, formal consultation evenings when parents can discuss their children's progress and look at their work.

44. The school has good arrangements for introducing children into the Reception class, which enable parents to meet with staff before their child starts school. The pre-school library is a weekly opportunity for parents and children to come into the school. There are links with the local pre-school groups and the staff make reciprocal visits.

45. The school tries hard to involve parents in many aspects of its work. Questionnaires have been sent to all parents consulting them about their views of the school and, more recently, regarding home learning. Parental views were also invited when the school created its vision statement. To involve parents more, an information and communication technology club has recently been introduced.

46. Parental support for the school is good. Many parents come into school on a regular basis and help in classrooms and supervising pupils to and from swimming. Several also help out on school trips. The school receives good support from the Friends Association, which raises significant funds for the benefit of the pupils. Recent fund raising activities have provided a safe surface for the new play area. Parental support for pupils' learning at home is good. A significant number support their children by listening to them read, or helping them with other homework. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved in identifying their needs. They provide appropriate support and regularly review their child's progress.

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

47. The school's leadership and management are good. This is essentially the same judgement as that of the school's previous OFSTED inspection, which described the

leadership of the headteacher and governors as "strong and effective". Other staff with management responsibilities, particularly the deputy headteacher, support the headteacher well. There is a strong team spirit amongst the staff, which helps to ensure that the school's aims and values are implemented well and that there is a clear focus on improvement and raising standards. Since the previous inspection in 1997, a new headteacher has been appointed, as have several new members of staff.

48. The school has made a satisfactory improvement since its previous inspection. The key issues from that inspection have been addressed well in most cases. For example, curricular planning is much better and schemes of work are now in place for all subjects. Standards have improved in music, information and communication technology and design and technology. However, although a marking policy is now in place, it is not being implemented consistently well by all teachers. Standards of attainment have improved at Key Stage 1 but those at Key Stage 2 have fallen. A thorough analysis of the reasons for this has led to the implementation of a number of strategies to raise standards, which are already beginning to have a positive impact. The headteacher, governors and staff are well aware of the issues facing the school and have identified the need to raise standards further. There is a commitment to self-evaluation, which is clearly stated as one of the main priorities in the school development plan. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve because of the shared commitment to improvement amongst staff and governors.

49. When the headteacher was appointed in April 1999, standards at Key Stage 2 were falling. Although she identified that some factors, such as a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a significant turnover of pupils, could partly explain the decline in standards, she also carried out a detailed analysis of the pupils' performance in tests. This helped to pinpoint specific weaknesses in the pupils' understanding which needed to be addressed. For example, weaknesses in some aspects of mathematics at both key stages were analysed and this led to further investigation by the co-ordinator, which eventually resulted in the implementation of different teaching strategies.

50. There are sound procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, although most of this is done by the headteacher and deputy headteacher at present. Subject co-ordinators are appropriately involved in monitoring the standards of pupils' work and the implementation of the curriculum, but they have not had the opportunity to observe their subjects being taught in other classes. This is identified by the school as a priority for development and co-ordinators have received training to prepare them for this aspect of their role. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the school's provision very well. She is experienced and has attended a good number of valuable and relevant courses. The headteacher and some staff with management responsibilities have carried out a detailed analysis of the pupils' performance in national and internal tests, in order to determine where improvement is needed. They have then put strategies in place to raise standards, such as a framework for teaching spelling, writing targets for individual pupils and extension groups in literacy and numeracy. The analysis of performance data is not fully effective in helping to raise standards or in tracking individual pupils' progress through the school. However, this has already been identified by the headteacher as an area for development.

51. The governors make a good contribution to the management of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work closely with the headteacher and staff to support their work. Governors visit the school by arrangement with the headteacher, and always with an agreed focus for their visit. They receive and discuss reports and policies and have been closely involved in analysing the reasons for the decline in standards in Year 6. They make an effective contribution to the school development planning process and regularly evaluate the progress being made

towards stated objectives. Governors act as effective critical friends to the school, and are prepared to challenge and question in order to carry out their role in shaping the direction of the school.

52. The school's financial resources are used well to provide a good quality of education for the pupils and to promote their progress. The school development plan, which covers a three-year period, shows clearly how money will be spent to support educational priorities and governors are very concerned to ensure that they get good value for money. Parents and pupils are consulted about important spending decisions and governors consider a number of different options when planning for the future. For example, governors, pupils and parents were involved in designing and selecting equipment for a new adventure playground, which had just been installed at the time of the inspection. The school's finances are monitored closely and administrative procedures are efficient.

53. There are an appropriate number of teachers, who have suitable experience to match the needs of the curriculum. However, the long-term absence of a full time member of staff has affected the continuity of education for pupils in Year 6. The school has an average number of teaching assistants, who support a range of pupils, including those with special educational needs, in classes and when they are withdrawn for extra help. There is a suitable number of other support staff in the school. The midday staff provide good support and make an enthusiastic contribution to school life. Members of the administrative staff work efficiently as a team to ensure the school's smooth everyday running. The caretaker maintains the school well.

54. The formal systems for the appraisal of teachers and performance management are working well. A good feature is that teachers' objectives are clearly linked to the priorities in the school development plan. Although there is no formal policy for the induction of new staff, informal arrangements work effectively. Training for staff is matched appropriately to the needs of the school, as a result of monitoring, and to the needs of individuals as identified by appraisal. There are currently training needs for some teachers in religious education.

55. The school has good accommodation overall. Outside accommodation is very good. The school enjoys a magnificent position, with far reaching views over the countryside. There is a secure area for the youngest children, an adventure play area with a soft surface, and good shaded areas for the summer. The playing fields and playground are used well to support the good range of sporting activities on offer and for break times. The swimming pool is well used during the summer months and pupils attain high standards. Classrooms are of an adequate size, but the hall is cramped for assemblies, lunches and physical education. There is limited storage space, and the storage of dining furniture in the hall reduces its size. The libraries are situated in corridor alcoves and a new computer suite has just been installed. There is a suitable area for food technology and a medical room. The building easily enables disabled access.

56. Levels of resources, which were identified as inadequate in some areas at the last inspection, have been improved and are now satisfactory overall. The new computer suite has improved the provision for information and communication technology. The school has provided more large play equipment and bicycles for younger children, and the outdoor area is being extended to provide increased opportunities for the Foundation Stage. In addition to their own outdoor area, children in the Reception class have supervised access to the fenced playground and the new adventure area has been designed with their needs in mind.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to continue to improve the quality of education provided by the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

**1. Raise the standards of the pupils' work in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 by: \***

- continuing to implement effective strategies to raise pupils' attainment in spelling and writing;
- improving pupils' listening skills throughout the school;
- ensuring that the pupils' work is marked in ways which help them to improve and that this is consistent throughout the school;
- continuing to develop and refine the procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress throughout the school and using assessment information more rigorously to inform curricular planning;

(Paragraphs 4-7, 15, 18, 22, 40, 41, 48, 50, 68-71, 75-77, 79, 89, 91)

**2. Improve the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by the pupils in religious education to meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.**

(Paragraphs 3, 5, 7, 9, 18, 54, 124-126)

**3. Further develop the role of the subject co-ordinators to give them a greater involvement in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the standards achieved by the pupils in their subjects. \***

(Paragraphs 50, 79, 91, 97, 101, 105, 109, 114, 123, 126)

\*denotes issues identified in the school development plan

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 41 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 40 |

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection**

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0         | 20        | 48   | 32           | 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**

|   | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      | 190     |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 9       |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

|   | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 2       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 21      |

#### **English as an additional language**

|   | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 2            |

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

|  | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 11           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 7            |

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 4.5 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

### 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

|  | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2000 | 18   | 17    | 35    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 15      | 15      | 16          |
|   | Girls    | 17      | 17      | 17          |
|   | Total    | 32      | 32      | 33          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 91 (82) | 91 (76) | 94 (79)     |
|   | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83) | 90 (87)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 15      | 15          | 16      |
|   | Girls    | 17      | 17          | 17      |
|   | Total    | 32      | 32          | 33      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 91 (79) | 91 (79)     | 94 (79) |
|   | National | 84 (82) | 88 (86)     | 88 (87) |

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 |
|  | 2000 | 15   | 8     | 23    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     |         |             |         |
|   | Girls    |         |             |         |
|   | Total    | 19      | 16          | 19      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 83 (72) | 70 (79)     | 83 (97) |
|   | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69)     | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     |         |             |         |
|   | Girls    |         |             |         |
|   | Total    | 21      | 17          | 21      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 91 (79) | 74 (79)     | 91 (93) |
|   | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69)     | 79 (75) |

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

The numbers of girls and boys are omitted because there are fewer than ten girls in the group.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 0            |
| Black – African heritage        | 1            |
| Black – other                   | 0            |
| Indian                          | 0            |
| Pakistani                       | 0            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 0            |
| White                           | 167          |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 1            |

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

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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 9.1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 21  |
| Average class size                       | 27  |

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 6   |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 106 |

**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.*

**Financial information**

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Financial year | 1999/00 |
|----------------|---------|

|  | £      |
|--|--------|
| Total income                               | 390833 |
| Total expenditure                          | 371696 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1859   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | (5054) |

|                                      |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Balance carried forward to next year | 14083 |
|--------------------------------------|-------|

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 190 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 106 |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 58             | 35            | 7                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 42             | 49            | 8                | 0                 | 1          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 33             | 58            | 7                | 0                 | 2          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 24             | 56            | 17               | 2                 | 1          |
| The teaching is good.  | 49             | 43            | 8                | 0                 | 0          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 28             | 51            | 19               | 1                 | 1          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 60             | 31            | 8                | 1                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 44             | 47            | 8                | 0                 | 1          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 38             | 41            | 19               | 2                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 36             | 49            | 11               | 2                 | 2          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 49             | 42            | 8                | 0                 | 1          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 30             | 42            | 23               | 4                 | 1          |

## **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**

58. At the time of the inspection, the Reception class consisted of 21 full time children. There is a staggered start for children in September, after a thorough induction programme in the summer term. The attainment of children in the Reception class was broadly average on entry to the school. Nearly all children have had nursery or play school experience. The findings of the previous OFSTED inspection in 1997 were that provision for children under five was good and, by the time they were five years old, attainment for most areas of learning was above expectations for children of that age. The judgement of this inspection is that nearly all children are on course to achieve expected standards in all areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. A significant minority of pupils have already attained the Early Learning Goals and are working on the early stages of the National Curriculum. The class teacher and full time assistant are very experienced and well qualified. Both adults have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children. They have worked hard, in a relatively short period, to produce long, medium and short-term curricular plans that are in line with the new national recommendations for children in the Foundation Stage.

59. The children have a safe and secure environment, both indoors and outdoors, including a classroom, a garden and an enclosed yard with direct access from the classroom. Children also have the use of the school hall, main playground and a brand new outside activity area, which is allocated to the Reception class at times for their own use. The key issue from the previous inspection concerning the provision of appropriate opportunities and resources for the physical development of children under five has been satisfactorily resolved. Resources are generally good and are well used by children and staff to provide many activities to further all children's learning opportunities. The teacher and support assistant work very well together, planning, assessing and recording as a team, and ensuring that all children receive a well planned, safe, happy and appropriate start to their school life. The quality of teaching is good overall and all lessons observed in the Reception class were judged to be good or very good. Day-to-day liaison with parents is good and there are appropriate induction procedures before children attend school. These include regular visits to local play and nursery groups, visits to school by parents and pre-school children and a weekly class library visit for these children to meet the teacher and their future classmates.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

60. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. All staff expect high standards of behaviour and this results in a quiet working atmosphere in all activity areas. The teacher and learning support assistant act as very good role models for the children's social development. All available space, both in and out of the classrooms, is used well to organise a broad and stimulating range of activities. This helps children to make good progress in this area of development, and all are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Reception class. A very few children find it difficult to initiate ideas and solve simple practical problems. All children show a developing confidence in trying new activities. They initiate simple ideas, especially in role-play activities in the 'Jungle' play area, and when using large wheeled toys on the playground. Children concentrate on their lessons and activities well and sit quietly and listen to the teacher when required. This is especially noticeable when they are listening to a story or singing and acting number rhymes and songs, such as 'Down in the Jungle', related to the role-play area.

61. The teacher and assistant make sure that children wait to take their turn before talking or answering a question, and most listen very attentively to each other without interruption. All children are beginning to form good, trusting relationships with adults and with each other. They take turns and share fairly, and understand the need for a code of good behaviour to enable them to work harmoniously. Children understand the classroom rules and behave well accordingly. When required to leave the classrooms and move around the school, they act sensibly and quietly, showing good awareness of pupils working in other classrooms. During the week before the inspection, the Reception class received an award for lining up quickly and quietly in the playground. Most children speak confidently in discussion groups and one child gave an excellent description of the methods used to make 'grass hair' creatures. Nearly all children are able to put on their coats and find their snacks independently. Most manage their own personal hygiene, such as washing their hands after visiting the toilet.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

62. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Adults encourage children to speak by asking questions, responding positively and giving encouragement to their answers. Literacy work is well structured and the format of the literacy hour is being used well in a slightly shortened form. The teacher started one lesson by reviewing the children's earlier learning as they read with her the information book they had made about their garden. Information and communication technology was used well by the teacher, who had taken photographs with a digital camera to illustrate the book. The teacher showed pupils very well how to write sentences, with good emphasis on finger spaces and capital letters. Skilful questioning helped the teacher to ascertain children's learning: "Should that be a capital letter or not, and why?" and "What sentence should we write underneath this picture?" This gave children a good opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills. There was also an opportunity for children to discuss what they wanted to write in pairs. Stories are used well during literacy lessons and at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions to develop the children's interest in, and enjoyment of, books. Adults also share books with individuals or small groups to encourage children to enjoy books and handle them carefully.

63. Children are given valuable opportunities to develop their ability to talk about their experiences when engaged in imaginative play, which adults sometimes participate in to help develop communication skills. Children make good progress in this area of learning and most are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Reception class. All children listen attentively to stories and most can talk about their favourite extracts and predict the end of the story. There are varying levels of skill in writing words and sentences, but all pupils make a good attempt at writing simple sentences. Most are able to contribute ideas for writing an information book by suggesting their own text to match the appropriate photographs and pictures. Nearly all children can identify letter sounds and rhyming words, and most writing is neat and well presented. Spoken language is generally mature in classroom conversation, either to the teacher or in role-play activities. All children have developed an awareness that print conveys meaning and they easily recognise clues in book illustrations. Standards in reading are good and a significant minority of children have begun to read independently. Most children recognise and write their names independently.

### **Mathematical development**

64. The quality of teaching is good in this area of learning and enables children to make good progress. The majority of children have already achieved the Early Learning Goals before the end of the Reception year and have started to work on the early stages of the National Curriculum. Most children count to 100 and beyond in tens, but they have some difficulty in counting in tens in reverse. They show a sound awareness and understanding

of number bonds to ten and use this knowledge for number operations such as simple addition and subtraction. They also use this knowledge to add by combining two groups of frogs on lily pads, while the more able children can count on in twos. Most children use correct mathematical language, such as 'add' and 'subtract' and use vocabulary well to describe shape, position, size and quantity. They write simple number sentences. Children actively participate in, and enjoy, number songs and rhymes and this helps in their understanding of the concepts of 'one more' and 'one less'. Pupils' participation in role play 'in the jungle' also helps them to count small numbers for admission charges and this is actively encouraged by skilful questioning from staff. In their work on sorting, all children have developed the ability to recognise simple two dimensional shapes, such as squares, rectangles, triangles and circles. Nearly all children are able to identify and name these shapes and can identify the 'shortest' and 'longest' of two objects. A significant number of children are able to use their developing mathematical understanding to solve practical problems. Learning resources are organised very well to give all children the opportunity to participate in the various planned activities, including those that involve sand and water. In one lesson, children were encouraged to talk about their work and use their developing ability to make mental calculations when they participated in a game called 'Okey Dokey'.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

65. The quality of teaching and learning is good and enables children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Reception class. Children are provided with a wide range of opportunities to explore their classroom and school environment. Teachers provide children with an interesting selection of objects, materials and equipment to use and handle in their everyday activities, in order to further their knowledge and understanding of their immediate locality and the world around them. Most show a developing awareness of change in their work on 'Living Things'. In a lesson about developing a mini-beast code, the teacher used the story, *In the Tall, Tall Grass* to help children imagine what it must be like for a very small creature. The class then went outside wearing 'snail hats' to imagine what it is like to be a mini-beast. Outside in the garden most children were able to recognise and describe how things have changed and nearly all had good observational skills, which were developed by well focused questioning from the teacher. All children are developing sound scientific investigation skills, for example, when using observational techniques and recording the way that the plants in their garden and classroom are growing. In connection with the 'Living Things' topic, they write simple labels to attach to their clay models of mini-beasts. They demonstrate good control of the computer mouse and keyboard, undertake simple word processing tasks and control and move symbols on the screen. Children experiment with sand and water, looking closely at differences and changes, and identifying the different features of objects.

### **Physical development**

66. The quality of teaching and learning is good and promotes good progress. Most children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals for physical development by the end of the Reception year. In swimming, most children achieve standards above those expected for their age. Children are managed well, and all staff show a very good awareness of health and safety factors when children are engaged in physical activity. During the observed swimming lesson, the teacher's very good organisation and management of the session ensured their safety and enabled them to develop their swimming skills at a good rate. Children and parent helpers played 'Ring a Roses' in the pool to give children the confidence to put their heads under water. All children listen very carefully to instructions and are able to move safely in a confined space with a developing sense of confidence. Adults work alongside children as they use apparatus, tools and equipment to help them gain confidence in using the space and equipment imaginatively and safely. The manual dexterity of most pupils in using pencils, crayons, paint brushes

and simple tools like scissors is well developed. Full use is made of the available resources, equipment and materials. The key issue from the last OFSTED inspection concerning appropriate opportunities and resources for the physical development of children under five has been satisfactorily resolved. The Reception class now has a small, uncovered area adjacent to the classroom and a small garden for the sole use of Reception children. Large wheeled toys have been purchased and are used on the main playground when it is not being used by infant and junior pupils. Reception children also have the use of an outside activity area as well as a time-tabled slot in the school hall.

### **Creative development**

67. The quality of teaching and learning is good and enables children to make good progress in developing their creative skills. Most are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Reception class. The many activities for this area of learning are well resourced and organised to ensure that children of all abilities have the opportunity to participate in creative work. Both staff give good demonstrations of the required activities before the children commence their tasks, without being too prescriptive. Parental help is also invaluable in the Reception class and ensures that all children can participate in small groups. Adults make good use of the plentiful resources and opportunities for independent work, for example, in their use of clay to mould the material into shapes of mini-beasts. The children enjoy learning and singing new songs, can state their favourite ones and are able to participate in role-play associated with songs, rhymes or stories. Nearly all show the ability to initiate and use role-play to stimulate their imaginations in their classroom play area. There are good examples of the children using paintings to express their own ideas in the colourful displays of work in the classroom corridor. They have also explored texture, shape and form in using different materials and paints in artwork. All children welcome the opportunity to work with a variety of construction kits and they represent their ideas well by designing their own ideas of buildings and vehicles.

### **ENGLISH**

68. Pupils in Year 6 attain the standards expected of 11 year olds in English. Standards in reading are above average, whilst those in speaking and listening and writing are average. In Year 2, pupils attain above average standards in reading and writing. These judgements are the same as the school's results in the 2000 national tests at both key stages. When compared with the findings of the school's previous inspection, standards are higher in Year 2 and lower in Year 6 than they were four years ago. Over the past four years, standards have risen at Key Stage 1 at a higher rate than that seen nationally. At Key Stage 2, standards have fallen significantly, mainly due to weaknesses in writing and spelling and a decline in the attainment of the more able pupils. The school has introduced a number of strategies to address these weaknesses, which are having a positive effect on standards. Although the pupils in the present Year 6 have had their education disrupted by long-term absence of staff, their achievement in English is good. Their results in the national tests for seven year olds in 1997 were below average in reading and well below average in writing. They have done well to reach average standards by the age of 11. In 2000, the school exceeded its target for 75 per cent of the pupils in Year 6 to attain Level 4 in English. However, the percentage of pupils who reached Level 5 was low. Challenging targets were set for the present Year 6 to achieve in the 2001 national tests and the school is on course to achieve them. The proportion of pupils expected to achieve Level 5 has increased considerably.

69. Pupils achieve well in English as they move through the school, although standards in writing are still lower than those in reading. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards compared with their previous attainment, especially when they receive well-targeted support in class. The Additional Literacy Programme supports pupils'

needs well. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language are fully fluent in English and achieve well.

70. In both key stages, standards in speaking and listening are average, overall, although generally better in speaking than listening. At Key Stage 1, pupils enjoy listening to stories, rhymes and poems, as was evident when Year 1 pupils shared the story *Alex and Roy*. However, when the teacher asked them to work out what was happening in the story, they were keen to respond but did not take turns or listen carefully to what each other had to say. In whole class lessons, some pupils speak confidently and audibly, using interesting vocabulary, but others remain passive and allow the more talkative pupils to dominate the lesson. There is insufficient direction by teachers to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to answer and to ensure that pupils' listening skills are well developed.

71. At Key Stage 2, pupils' speaking skills develop well but, in some classes, their listening skills are not as good as they should be. Pupils still call out or talk when others are speaking, which detracts from the quality of some lessons. In one lesson, when they should have been listening carefully to the teacher, some pupils were fidgeting and playing with each other's hair. By contrast, pupils in a Year 6 lesson listened intently to each other as they read out poems they had written and even applauded spontaneously to show their appreciation. In Year 6, more able pupils express their ideas confidently and thoughtfully, varying their expression and drawing upon a broad vocabulary. Average pupils convey their opinions clearly and speak audibly, but less able pupils are often reluctant to offer ideas or contribute to discussions. Pupils are given good opportunities to take part in school productions, which include both music and drama.

72. Standards in reading are above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils enjoy books and learn to read a range of texts fluently and accurately. At Key Stage 1, pupils read simple texts accurately and show a good understanding of what they have read. They express opinions about events and characters in a story, and use a range of strategies when reading unfamiliar words. A higher than average proportion of pupils attain good standards, reading more complex texts independently and showing a good understanding of the content.

73. Pupils' interest in, and enthusiasm for, books develop well throughout Key Stage 2. In Year 6, most pupils read with fluency and accuracy and evaluate the texts they read with increasing competence. For example, pupils in Year 6 analysed the structure and content of a poem and used the knowledge they gained to write a poem of their own. Pupils in Year 5 read *The Diary of Anne Frank* to increase their understanding of the genre and went on to create their own diary entries. Pupils express preferences in their choice of authors and explain why they like them. They use their reading skills to carry out research and find information to support learning across the curriculum, as when pupils in Year 6 gathered information about Ancient Egypt for their history topic.

74. Standards in writing are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. In Year 2, almost all of the pupils are attaining the standards expected of seven year olds and a significant minority of pupils exceed these. Pupils generally have a good understanding of how to structure a story and write a description of the school. They demonstrate good use of imagination when retelling stories with a 'twist'. More able pupils use language imaginatively, as when one wrote about "the wonderful glorious icy sea". In a literacy lesson during the inspection, pupils used their developing knowledge of alliteration to write a poem, creating lines such as "Six slimy sea monsters sailing seven seas" and "Nine nurses nursing noses". For the most part, pupils have a sound grasp of spelling and punctuation rules, and more able pupils are already using speech marks accurately in some pieces of writing. The quality of pupils' handwriting is variable. Although they are taught to write in a neat, joined style, this is not used consistently in all writing.

75. In Year 6, pupils write in an appropriate range of forms, including stories, poems, instructional and persuasive writing. The best writing shows a good command of style and expression, and often imaginative and adventurous choices of vocabulary. For example, one pupil described "a streamline, solitary killer, like a silent torpedo in the depths". When describing their favourite things in a poem entitled "My Magic Box", pupils included original ideas such as a "Whiff of freshly cut grass" and "Hidden mysteries of underwater misty caves". Most pupils organise their writing in a logical sequence and show a sound understanding of grammatical structure. For example, they designed and produced leaflets about Plumpton Primary School to encourage parents to choose the school for their children. In these, they presented information clearly and used persuasive language to convince the reader. A high proportion of pupils in Year 6 lack sufficient command of style and expression in their writing. Spelling is often inaccurate and punctuation is not always used correctly. The school has put strategies in place to improve pupils' spelling and writing, and these are beginning to have an impact on standards. Pupils in Year 5 are achieving high standards in writing, and show a good awareness of style and imagination in their use of words to create an effect.

76. The development of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum is variable. At Key Stage 1, there is insufficient emphasis on written work in science, history and religious education. This means that many opportunities are missed for pupils to write in different forms and styles. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have more opportunities to develop literacy skills in other subjects. For example, as part of their work in geography, pupils in Year 6 considered the possibility of using Plumpton Racecourse as a landfill site as an exercise in persuasive writing. In the lessons observed during the inspection, although teachers modelled reading well and showed pupils clearly how to read with expression, there were surprisingly few opportunities for pupils to read aloud together from the shared text.

77. The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. There were no clear judgements of teaching in the previous inspection. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and create a positive climate for learning that encourages pupils to have the confidence to participate and offer ideas. Teachers stress the importance of using language effectively and reinforce this by using precise terms, such as 'phonemes', 'alliteration', 'simile' and 'metaphor'. Most classrooms provide pupils with a language rich learning environment, through displaying key words and labels. However, not all are equally effective in this respect. At Key Stage 1, a good feature of the teaching is the way teachers show pupils how to read with expression and question them about what they have read or ask them to predict what might happen next in the story. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher used the pictures from a book to teach pupils how to gain information about the story. The teacher asked them what they thought was happening in each picture and then they read the story together to see if they were right. This engaged pupils' interest and effectively taught them how to use picture clues to help them in their reading. At Key Stage 1, pupils' listening skills are not sufficiently developed. For example, in the whole class session at the beginning of each lesson, pupils are allowed to answer at will or talk among themselves, instead of learning to wait their turn to speak and listen carefully to what others have to say. Teachers do not have effective strategies to ensure that pupils become active listeners. This is also the case in some classes at Key Stage 2.

78. A good literacy lesson in Year 3 illustrated some of the strengths of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2. After reading an extract from a story, the teacher's well focused questions encouraged pupils to predict what might happen next in the story and analyse the extract, justifying their answers by referring to specific episodes in the text. The next part of the lesson built effectively on this as pupils identified 'powerful' verbs. Well-planned group activities met the needs of pupils at all levels of attainment. For example, more able pupils worked with the teacher to identify eight key incidents and to chart the levels of fear

experienced by each of the characters. Less able pupils worked with the teaching assistant to sequence pictures and write sentences about them. There was good provision for pupils with special educational needs and good use of information and communication technology as one group typed their sentences straight on to the screen. The teacher engaged pupils' interest well and this led to good concentration and effort.

79. The curriculum in English is balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well. The recently revised English policy supports teaching and learning well. Assessment procedures are good, and there are very effective procedures for tracking pupils' progress in writing. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and experienced and provides very good leadership in the subject. As a result of analysing the pupils' performance in national and internal tests, spelling was identified as a priority for development. The co-ordinator, together with the co-ordinator for special educational needs, has produced an excellent framework to provide structure and progression for the teaching of spelling throughout the school. In response to the need to raise standards in writing, pupils have been given individual targets to achieve, which motivate them and give them responsibility for their own learning. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The quality of marking is variable. Some is very good and follows the guidelines set out in the school's marking policy. It shows pupils clearly how they can improve their work and also gives praise for what is done well. However, some marking is merely congratulatory and some work is just ticked, with no indication of how it could be improved. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' work and provides valuable support for colleagues on an informal basis. However, she has limited opportunities for observing lessons in other classes. There is a satisfactory range of resources overall, and most classrooms have an appropriate range of books to enable pupils to develop a love of reading.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. Pupils in Year 2 attain above average standards in all areas of the mathematics curriculum. This finding is slightly lower than the results of the national assessment tests in 2000, which were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. There has been an improving trend in the school's results over four years. The findings of this inspection are the same as those of the previous OFSTED inspection in 1997. There is no significant difference in performance between boys and girls. All pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well in this key stage.

81. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average. However, there is evidence of above average standards in mathematics by a significant minority of pupils in all Key Stage 2 year groups. The judgement shows a decline from the standards found in the previous inspection, when attainment was above average. The findings of this inspection show an improvement on the results of the national assessment tests in 2000, when standards were below the national average. This is due in part to good teaching and the introduction and effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy in all classes. In the tests for eleven year olds in 2000, pupils' results in mathematics were below average in comparison with national standards but well below the standards in similar schools. There has been a declining trend in the pupils' mathematics results over four years. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils' achievement, including that for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, is satisfactory at this key stage. Challenging targets have been set to raise the standards of mathematics in Year 6, and these are appropriately linked to the teachers' assessment of the present year group.

82. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is good, based on the evidence of classroom observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work in both year groups. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory. In the Year 1 lesson observed, the mental activity was lively and well paced. The teacher used a 'function machine' to develop pupils' mental calculation skills, stating, 'This machine is worked by brain power, your brain power'. Pupils were given a numbered card and had to find a partner to make up a total of 50. A good range of activities were provided for this age group, although the whole class session went on for too long, almost half an hour, and learning slowed down. Most pupils use the correct vocabulary when discussing their work. The Year 2 lesson was linked well to the class topic of planning a holiday for Barnaby Bear. It involved pupils in using their knowledge of money to solve problems about buying items for a holiday, with a given amount of money. A good degree of challenge was introduced into the mental mathematics session by asking pupils to count on and back in five pence and two pence amounts. The teacher made effective use of an unmarked number stick for this activity, which required all pupils to count backwards and forwards and include missing numbers. Pupils explained their mental strategies well, using the correct mathematical language. The teacher's good understanding and knowledge of the subject were evident in her explanations and questioning; for example, 'Which is the largest amount of money?' and 'How many items can you buy without going over the amount of money available?' Pupils went on to calculate how many five and ten pence pieces made two pounds and worked out a quarter of one pound. The class session at the end of the lesson was used well by the teacher to ascertain pupils' knowledge and understanding of money problems. She asked if pupils had enjoyed the lesson and whether they felt they had achieved what they had set out to learn.

83. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs in both classes, and suitably demanding work is provided for more able pupils. All pupils respond very positively, which leads to good progress for pupils of all abilities. In some cases, the presentation of pupils' work was untidy. An analysis of previous work in Year 2 indicates that pupils have a sound understanding of how to classify two and three dimensional shapes, for example, by the number of sides and corners. Pupils also collect data and represent it in the form of block graphs and pictograms, sometimes using information and communication technology. The quality and use of ongoing assessment are satisfactory. Teachers and assistants record pupils' weekly progress well and use this information to plan work for individual pupils and to inform curricular planning.

84. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Of the four lessons seen during the inspection, one was satisfactory, two were good and one was very good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are generally good, and all classes are working to the format of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is a good emphasis on using and applying mathematical knowledge in a variety of situations, and pupils are beginning to develop good skills in explaining the mental strategies they use. In the Year 3 lesson observed, the lesson started well, but as different questions were aimed at pupils in each of three groups on the basis of their previous attainment, this strategy tended to slow the pace of the session. The purpose of the lesson was explained clearly to the pupils and the teacher made good use of 'noughty squares' to interest pupils and engage them in learning. Teaching assistants were used appropriately to give help to pupils with special educational needs. Year 4 pupils have a sound understanding of the relationship between multiplication and division. They identify the properties of numbers in order to develop an understanding that division is the inverse of multiplication. They find the missing number in a simple three number equation. The Year 4 lesson was well planned, with a very lively and challenging mental mathematics session, when pupils only had a minute to write down five facts about a given number. Pupils were encouraged to explain their reasoning with a good emphasis on using the correct mathematical vocabulary. The class was managed

and organised well, and tasks were matched appropriately to the pupils' capabilities. Pupils in Year 5 made very good progress in their mental warm-up work on the eight times table, including halving, doubling, factors, multiples and digital roots. Most pupils were able to explain their search for pattern and relationships logically. In the main activity, pupils estimated and calculated area accurately. Work was planned and organised well to match all pupils' capabilities and some pupils carried out an independent, unsupervised investigation. Pupils worked well co-operatively, discussed their ideas and demonstrated good problem solving skills when finding the area of shapes other than rectangles. The teacher made very good use of the whole class session at the end of the lesson to ascertain and reinforce what pupils had learned while also giving pupils the opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills.

85. Most pupils in Year 6 understand the concept of rotational symmetry. They are able to rotate various regular and irregular shapes, and are developing the ability to recognise the order of rotational symmetry for these shapes. Most pupils' mental recall of multiplication tables is well developed. In the Year 6 lesson observed, a challenging start involved pupils in looking at various number patterns, including negative numbers and square numbers, to find out which number comes next. The teacher encouraged pupils to explain the reasons for their answers, and most were able to do this. In the main activity on rotational symmetry, pupils had to ask the teacher a certain number of questions to try to identify the shape in her mind; for example, "Is it regular?" and "How many sides does it have?" A good example of assessment was observed in this lesson as the teacher realised that a significant minority of pupils found shape recognition difficult and she subsequently returned to this later in the lesson. A high proportion of direct teaching was used both with the whole class and by the teacher moving around the room to ensure that pupils understood the activities and that they remained on task. At Key Stage 2, pupils' work is usually neat and well presented and work is marked up to date, with helpful comments from the teachers in all year groups. Teachers' planning is generally good and makes good use of assistants to support pupils with special educational needs. Good, practical activities are planned by teachers to stimulate pupils' interest in the subject and to develop their learning.

86. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced into all classes in both key stages and it is being implemented effectively. This is improving pupils' investigative and problem solving skills and has resulted in high standards in Key Stage 1 and rising standards in Key Stage 2. The leadership and management of the subject are good and ensure clear direction for its development. Strengths in the management of mathematics include the range and use of assessment procedures, which include tracking the progress of individual pupils, the effectiveness of the strategies for teaching numeracy skills in both key stages and the use of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs within the classroom. The subject co-ordinator, who is a member of the senior management team, is very experienced and enthusiastic. She has produced a policy and scheme of work for mathematics, which offer good guidance to all class teachers and support staff. Staff have also been trained in the implementation and planning of the National Numeracy Strategy, and all class teachers have been monitored by the headteacher and co-ordinator. The raising of standards in mathematics has been a high priority in recent years and the further improvement of standards at Key Stage 2 is still a priority. Booster groups for mathematics have been organised by the school for some Year 5 and Year 1 pupils with special educational needs. Extension groups for more able pupils in Years 4 and 6 are used well to raise these pupils' achievement. Numeracy is used well in other areas of the curriculum, for example, graphs and measurement in science and geography. Pupils of all age groups use their numeracy skills and knowledge in producing graphs, charts and collecting data in information and communication technology.

Resources for mathematics are good. The subject fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **SCIENCE**

87. Attainment in science for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Standards are not as good as at the time of the previous inspection, and for 11 year olds show a marked decline over the last three years. Current standards are, however, an improvement on the test results from summer 2000 for pupils in Year 6, which were below average, and very few pupils attained the higher Level 5. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 has increased in line with the national average.

88. Teachers' own knowledge is generally secure, and a strong feature of the teaching is the emphasis on investigative and experimental science. This is giving pupils good opportunities to try out and improve their skills as well as their knowledge. Pupils learn how to carry out experiments and determine what makes a fair test. A Year 3 lesson about how well a range of materials allowed light to pass through was well structured, and interested and motivated pupils. The small, often mixed gender groups were very effective in getting pupils to co-operate and work together. In the most effective lessons, pupils are given only a limited amount of guidance and are allowed to investigate and record in their own way. However, in other lessons, teachers frequently over-direct this through the use of often unnecessary worksheets. This allows little scope for the most able pupils in particular to devise their own methods of working and recording. For younger pupils and less able pupils, however, these do provide valuable guidance to help them develop their investigation in a logical way.

89. From the evidence of the lessons observed, pupils' work and teachers' records, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, and good at Key Stage 2, where teachers' expectations are higher. There was little work available from pupils in Year 2, or from pupils in Year 6 before this term, and much of the evidence comes from discussions with pupils. A lesson on habitats, for pupils in Year 4, built effectively on an earlier lesson in the school grounds. During the introduction, the teacher's questioning drew out pupils' knowledge and understanding well. However, not all pupils were good listeners and, during the independent work, the noise level slowed the work rate down for some pupils. Nevertheless, pupils showed a good understanding of the habitats and some of the creatures that live there. They knew the difference between insects and spiders, and more able pupils were able to use terms such as 'arachnid' when discussing spiders. The co-ordinator's own skills are good and the specialist teaching she has done in Year 6 over the previous half-term to address weaknesses in their learning has been effective.

90. Teachers use accurate vocabulary and their questioning is used effectively to check on pupils' understanding. Good links are made with other subjects, such as mathematics, in counting and measuring, and in information and communication technology for graphing results or where pupils record their work. This was used well for the less able pupils in Year 4 where they could use a menu of words to generate their sentences. Data logging to measure and record events is the aspect of science and information and communication technology that is currently under development. Teaching assistants and other adults are well informed and used well to work with small groups during practical sessions.

91. The curriculum and the management of science are good. In producing a scheme of work, the co-ordinator has made full use of guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, linking it effectively with the requirements of Curriculum 2000. Suitable provision is made for pupils in mixed age group classes. The recording and assessment systems are developing well and are providing clear evidence of pupils' progress and standards of attainment. They are now showing more clearly what is needed

to maintain the recent improvements. Although teachers' marking is regular and mainly supportive, too little gives pupils the guidance they need on how they could improve their work. As a result, pupils themselves do not have any involvement in their own assessments or a clear understanding of where they are and what they need to do to improve. The co-ordinator is not sufficiently involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the standards achieved by the pupils. This is identified as a priority for development in the school development plan. However, as a result of monitoring pupils' work, an action plan has been implemented.

92. The co-ordinator has set up many initiatives to develop aspects of science, for example, links with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Young Investigators' Club, and Science Challenge. The 'focus weeks' involving science are popular and bring a good range of outside agencies and visitors to school such as 'Space Lab'. All of these show pupils how science is used in the wider world and extend the range and interest of science for them. National Curriculum requirements are met.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

93. Few lessons in art and design were seen during the inspection. However, there was a significant amount of evidence available from pupils' work on display, samples of work retained by the school, and from discussions with teachers and pupils. In analysing all of this, it is clear that in Years 2 and 6, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve above average standards in art and design. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.

94. In discussion, pupils spoke of their enjoyment of art and the range of approaches and techniques they have been taught. Older pupils, in particular, were knowledgeable about different styles, such as impressionism and modern art, some of the famous artists from these eras, and the characteristics of their style, for example, the thick paint application typical of Van Gogh's work.

95. The well-planned scheme of work, and the good knowledge of the co-ordinator, ensure good progression as pupils move through the school. This is seen clearly in their sketchbooks that contain examples of pupils experimenting with different approaches to line and form, and the development of figure and portrait drawing from simple sketches to more complicated groups. Younger pupils show good attention to detail and practise colour mixing for different tones of skin colour. Pencil drawings by older pupils in the style of Van Gogh, or of various styles of chairs through the ages, are well observed and show good skill.

96. Although little teaching was seen, the additional evidence of good work in pupils' sketchbooks, folders and the displays around the school indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Sketchbooks show good development of skills and techniques over time and pupils listen to, and act on, advice given to them by their teachers. The organisation of lessons is good. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and create the right conditions for this. Materials are well organised and readily available for pupils to use. The Year 3 lesson observed on Aboriginal art gave pupils the opportunity to experience this painting style through using 'paint sticks'. Pupils in Year 5, currently working on a large wall picture based on Egyptian tomb paintings, worked well in small groups and used a wide range of techniques and materials including fabric and various papers. Through this co-operative approach, pupils were able to make good progress in developing complex designs.

97. The co-ordinator's own skills and knowledge bring much to the subject. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are satisfactory, but there are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor standards and pupils' progress. The curriculum follows much of the content of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance, but

this is appropriately built on through advice from the co-ordinator. Pupils experience a wide curriculum through working with clay, fabric and other materials. All aspects of art link effectively to other subjects of the curriculum, such as the history of the Ancient Egyptians. In subjects such as geography, there are well-finished drawings of local landmarks and buildings, and in information and communication technology, pupils create designs using computer programs. Artwork is attractively displayed around the school and adds to pupils' cultural development. African art and work in the style of Aboriginal art shows good understanding of technique and gives pupils the opportunity to discuss various features of the way people in other cultures represent the important things in their life.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

98. During the course of the inspection, there were limited opportunities to observe lessons. Evidence gained from two lessons, an analysis of a limited amount of previous work on display, teachers' plans and discussions with pupils are sufficient to show that pupils attain average standards for their ages in Years 2 and 6. The previous inspection found that standards were average at Key Stage 1 and below average at Key Stage 2. This indicates an improvement at Key Stage 2. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

99. Although only two lessons were seen, indications are that the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory overall at both key stages. No judgements were made by the previous inspection. From a scrutiny of pupils' work, it is evident that, in Year 2, pupils understand that the making process begins with a plan. They use models and pictures appropriately to develop and communicate their designs for a playground. They select from a range of materials, tools and techniques and learn to join various materials. Pupils know what they have done well and suggest how they could improve it. This was also evident in the work on Barnaby's blanket, when pupils also used computers to produce repeat patterns.

100. In the lesson seen in Class 5, the quality of teaching and learning in food technology was good. The teacher gave clear instructions and, with the support of another adult, demonstrated how to make biscuits. Pupils learnt appropriate technical vocabulary, such as 'mix', 'rub', 'knead' and 'roll', and were keen to take part in the making process. They suggested what could be added to the basic recipe and assessed their product by taste and appearance. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils designed and made money containers. The teacher clearly explained sketching techniques, using a range of pencils to sketch when designing, and encouraged pupils to produce detailed drawings of their purses. They annotated these drawings, showing features and materials. Their comments on appearance showed a sound understanding of consumers' needs and they evaluated their product with a specific market in mind. In Year 6, pupils generated a number of ideas to produce a final design for a hat that met the requirements of the task. They evaluated their hats as they developed and suggested changes. They paid attention to the quality of finish and function and were willing to adapt their work and learn from their mistakes.

101. The school has introduced national guidelines, which ensure that skills are systematically built upon, and assessment arrangements are now in place to record pupils' skills at the end of each unit. The co-ordinator manages the subject efficiently. She has produced a new policy and has recognised that some staff are more skilled than others. She recognises the need for further training to support the new schemes of work and gives teachers advice but does not have the opportunity to monitor lessons. Resources, which were judged inadequate at the previous inspection, have been improved.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

102. During the inspection, it was not possible to observe the teaching of geography. Judgements are based on the evidence of a limited amount of previous work, discussions

with teachers and pupils and on the school's planning and records. Indications are that pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach average standards. The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. This is the same judgement as that made when the school was inspected in 1997. There are no differences in attainment between boys and girls.

103. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at both key stages. The previous inspection found teaching to be "sound or better". The analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have appropriate early map work skills. The teaching successfully uses the pupils' own local knowledge and they have drawn satisfactory maps in their study of Plumpton. Discussion with Year 2 pupils shows they have knowledge of localities beyond their own and can talk at length about some of the places they, and Barnaby Bear, have visited. They talk about what is attractive in Plumpton and how it is different from nearby towns. They like Plumpton Green because it is quiet, peaceful, has little pollution and they can go for bicycle rides. They explain how it changes on race days. They explain that Burgess Hill is nearer than Lewes and give the exact mileage. They compare the features of the country and towns using appropriate geographical language.

104. Teaching in Year 3 ensures that pupils know about weather around the world as they discuss holiday destinations. Pupils use the Internet to research climate and produce and interpret climatic maps. They have produced maps of the local area and plans of the school and the classroom. They use appropriate symbols and a key. In Year 4, pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of weather by producing weather maps with meteorological symbols. They interpret photographic evidence to find similarities and differences when comparing India with England. Work in Year 5 indicates high quality teaching and learning as pupils study modern Egypt, wet and dry places using climatic maps and water sources, water treatment and pollution. They use the Internet for research but, as the teacher informs them in her marking, they tend to paste chunks of text without being selective and putting the information in their own words. In Year 6, discussion with pupils shows that they attain broadly average standards. They have sound skills in interpreting a range of maps and use co-ordinates accurately. They understand the geographical features of Egypt and explain the importance of the Nile today and in ancient times. In investigations, they draw on primary and secondary sources of evidence and use appropriate geographical vocabulary. They are knowledgeable about their local area and know how people can cause damage and improvement to the environment. As an exercise in persuasive writing, they considered the hypothetical use of Plumpton Racecourse as a landfill site.

105. Management of the subject is satisfactory and the co-ordinator has successfully introduced new guidelines. She monitors planning but has little opportunity to monitor teaching or pupils' work. The curriculum is appropriately enhanced by visits into the local environment and residential visits for Years 5 and 6. A recent 'airport day' provided exciting motivation for pupils to find out about different countries and to simulate travel. The school hall was turned into an airport and pupils 'flew off' to different classrooms, to discover what each class had been learning. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they become aware of environmental issues and look at other countries and cultures.

## **HISTORY**

106. During the inspection, three lessons were observed at Key Stage 2 and none at Key Stage 1 due to timetabling arrangements. Judgements take into account the lessons seen, an analysis of pupils' work, classroom displays, discussions with teachers and teachers' planning and records. The indications are that average standards are achieved in Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement, including that made by pupils with special educational

needs and English as an additional language, is satisfactory. This judgement is similar to that made by the previous inspection at Key Stage 1 but lower than that made at Key Stage 2. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

107. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have studied change over time in their work on 'The Seaside'. They have developed their understanding and knowledge of chronology by constructing a time line of swimming costumes from 1900 to 2001. Teachers engaged pupils' interest by asking them to imagine packing a suitcase for a seaside holiday in 1900. During the later discussion, pupils soon realised that they had packed the wrong things, leading to a sound understanding of what seaside holidays were like in the past. Teachers used old photographs and asked questions like, "Why didn't children wear swimming costumes?" and, "Why is a man wearing a suit on a beach?" To make comparisons between the past and the present, part of an activity area was converted to represent a present day beach, including candyfloss, deck chairs and beach towels. Pupils also are developing the perception to identify why people in the past acted as they did, for example, in the use of bathing machines in Victorian times. The link between history and literacy is underdeveloped as there are not enough opportunities for written work in this key stage.

108. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is also satisfactory. Some of the best features of teaching were seen in a good Year 5 lesson on the Ancient Egyptians, where the teacher asked relevant and searching questions to ascertain pupils' understanding of what constitutes an artefact. Resources were used well to demonstrate that some objects are real and others are replicas. As three of the artefacts were genuine, pupils were asked to handle them very carefully and they acted responsibly. A good range of resources was used in this lesson, including real artefacts, books, photographs of Ancient Egyptian artefacts, a CD ROM and the Internet. The teacher made good use of the county museum service to provide a range of useful materials that encouraged pupils to link and select information from a variety of sources. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher began the lesson well by asking questions to find out what pupils remembered from the previous day. She struck a good balance between giving pupils information and allowing them to find out things for themselves. However, the pace of learning slowed down considerably by the end of the lesson because the planned lesson was rushed and not all pupils remained fully on task. Year 6 pupils used sources of information effectively to find out about different aspects of the way of life of people living in Ancient Egypt. The teacher asked questions such as, "What sources of evidence can we use to find out about the life of Ancient Egyptians?" to gauge pupils' previous knowledge and understanding of the period. Pupils handled and examined artefacts in order to classify them in different ways, by discussing in groups such questions as, "Why have these objects survived?" and "Is the evidence more about rich or poor people and why?" During the plenary session at the end of the lesson, pupils were given the opportunity to talk to the rest of the class about the findings of their group.

109. There is a comprehensive policy for the subject and a scheme of work has been devised using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines. This is incorporated into a rolling programme to ensure that work is not repeated in later years. The subject co-ordinator has only been in post for two terms and also has responsibility for geography. She is well qualified and provides sound leadership for the subject. She has not had the opportunity to monitor the teaching of history but monitors teachers' long term plans and analyses classroom displays to ensure appropriate coverage of the subject. Resources for the subject are good, and include a variety of books in the library and in classrooms and a broad range of artefacts. The school makes good use of the local authority Museum Loans Service to supplement its learning resources. Pupils have visited Anne of Cleves House and Bignor Roman Villa in connection with their studies of Tudor and Roman times. Assessment of pupils' progress is carried out at the end of each topic for inclusion in end-

of-year reports. However, the history assessment policy is still in the process of being developed in order to make it a whole school policy to ensure continuity across each age group.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

110. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only one lesson in this subject. Judgements are based on observations of pupils working on computers, the evidence of their previous work, discussions with teachers and pupils and on the school's planning and records. Indications are that pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve average standards and that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This shows an improvement on the judgement made when the school was inspected in 1997, which found unsatisfactory standards at Key Stage 2. Standards have risen as a result of improved resources, curricular provision and teachers' expertise. There are no differences in attainment between boys and girls.

111. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at both key stages. In Year 2, the teacher has provided the pupils with sound opportunities to make use of a range of programs. The pupils' knowledge of the keyboard has been developed appropriately by the teachers, and the pupils also use the mouse competently. Their ability to use computer simulations to explore imaginary situations, to program controllable toys and collect and record data show that they have been taught these skills effectively. In both Years 1 and 2, pupils have been taught to perform simple searches using CD-ROM information and to evaluate research from this source and from books. Pupils are also able to generate and communicate ideas in both text and pictures.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. In the group sessions seen and when pupils were working on computers, teachers and support staff intervened appropriately and pupils were attentive, found the work enjoyable but challenging, and learned new skills. In Year 6, the teacher gave good instruction and showed good knowledge of spreadsheets. She intervened appropriately to ensure that pupils understood the formulae when calculating pocket money and encouraged them to evaluate various graphical representations to show their data most effectively. Previous work shows that pupils use multimedia applications to present their work for different audiences, including a powerpoint presentation about the school. Work in Year 3 shows good use of the digital camera as pupils have reorganised images and put symbols on an aerial view of Plumpton. They have combined text and images and show they can organise and reorganise text. In Year 4, this work has been well developed as pupils use a range of fonts and features such as bullets. Their covers for the project on the River Nile show good skills of combining text and pictures and good understanding of presentation. They have also used spreadsheets and have used an art package to support their work on symmetry. In Year 5, good teaching has ensured that pupils have extended their learning well. They are beginning to use spreadsheets to model outcomes and have conducted an investigation into how much of *The Independent* newspaper is taken up by advertisements, presenting their findings in the form of a pie chart. Their posters show good use of clip art and their work about the visit to the Bowles centre shows good layout in columns.

113. Many pupils bring good skills and understanding from their home experiences of computers. Across the school, pupils show appropriate skills in communicating and handling text and data. They show an awareness of audience when combining text and graphics in their work and use a variety of fonts, colours and sizes. They use multimedia and the Internet to access information and use a spreadsheet to handle data and ask "what if..." questions if elements are changed. Pupils have the opportunity to control events in predetermined way, sense physical data, and explore patterns and relationships with the aid of computer simulations or models.

114. The co-ordinator has only recently taken on the role. He is very knowledgeable and highly skilled in the subject. He gives good support to colleagues but has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching of the subject. The school has adapted national guidelines to ensure that pupils receive a balanced programme, which builds systematically on previously acquired skills and assesses them at the end of each topic with a simple tick list of " I can do.... " statements. The subject contributes well to the development of a technical vocabulary and supports and enhances data handling in mathematics. In literacy lessons, pupils draft and redraft their work directly to screen and extend their use of the features of the software. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is developing soundly. Pupils make appropriate use of word processing to produce their work and presentations, and are confident in accessing information for various topics. They have access to a scanner and digital camera to support their work and are beginning to use the Internet and e-mail. The computer suite and classroom computers are generally well used.

## **MUSIC**

115. Standards in music are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were found to be average at Key Stage 1 and below average at Key Stage 2. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language, achieve well in the subject and show great enjoyment in music making.

116. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a music specialist, who has very good expertise in the subject and high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. She teaches pupils throughout the school, and also organises a school production, which involves music, drama and dance. As a result of her input, the subject now enjoys a high profile throughout the school, and the quality of teaching at both key stages is at least good, and often very good. In the previous inspection, teaching was "sound" overall, and unsatisfactory in a minority of lessons. Very good teaching in a Year 2 lesson led to good attainment as pupils increased their knowledge and understanding of musical notation and pitch. The teacher's calm, quiet approach engaged pupils' interest and held their attention, and her good organisational skills ensured that pupils worked productively in five groups using chime bars and glockenspiels to compose their own music. Good teaching of skills enabled pupils to follow a rhythm and respond appropriately to symbols, notation and hand signals.

117. At Key Stage 2, the teacher's good relationship with the pupils and her firm but calm management of a large group contributed very well to a productive singing practice for all four classes. Pupils responded with enthusiasm to a series of warm-up exercises, which they clearly knew well, and which prepared them very effectively for singing and controlling their breathing. Vocal exercises helped them to achieve good pitch and the teacher was quick to spot any missed notes and model the correct pattern. There was very good emphasis on diction, as the teacher led pupils in saying the words of a song before singing them, and pupils were reminded often about the importance of good posture when singing. It was obvious that pupils have been taught very well over a period of time, as they sang with confidence and a very good sense of rhythm and pitch. After singing a round in four parts, they sang *Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God* with a descant. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher developed pupils' listening and appraising skills well as they compared two pieces of music by Stravinsky and discussed how the composer used different musical elements to communicate particular moods and effects.

118. The school also employs a peripatetic music teacher from the East Sussex Music Service to provide recorder tuition for pupils in Year 3. The lesson observed was very good and enabled pupils to make very good progress in learning to play the recorder. The teacher gave very clear demonstrations, as when she showed pupils how to 'pinch' in order

to play top E and G. She demonstrated the fingering for F sharp very clearly for those pupils who were having difficulty and helped pupils to create a pleasant sound by reminding them to "watch the tone quality". Pupils showed good levels of skill in playing five note exercises and made a good attempt at reading the music for *My Bonnie lies over the Ocean*. Other pupils receive tuition in brass or violin from visiting music teachers.

119. The subject is very well led and promoted by the co-ordinator. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there was no subject leader. The co-ordinator has introduced a new scheme of work to the school, which is due to be reviewed in the light of national guidelines for the subject. She has expanded pupils' awareness of an increasingly wide variety of musical styles from different cultures, including jazz, spirituals, blues, protest songs, music from India, Africa and Brazil and a range of classical music. Assessment procedures are sound, although only recently introduced. The co-ordinator liaises closely with class teachers, who are also involved in the lessons and often take notes about how well the pupils are progressing. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support teaching and learning. The subject is well resourced. There is a good supply of high quality tuned percussion instruments and a good number of drums and tambourines. Productions such as *Peter Pan*, which is currently in rehearsal, allow every member of the school to take part in making music and performing to an audience. The curriculum is further enhanced by visiting musicians, such as an Afro-Caribbean drumming workshop, and opportunities for pupils to participate in music festivals with other schools.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain average standards in physical education. Only games activities and swimming were observed during the inspection, but analysis of teachers' planning and discussion with pupils contribute to this judgement. Standards in swimming are above average at both key stages. Achievement, including that by pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is good at both key stages. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection. There are no differences in attainment between boys and girls in either key stage.

121. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 1. This judgement is an improvement on the previous inspection when teaching was considered "sound". In a Year 1/2 games lesson observed, the teacher began by reminding pupils of the need for a 'warm-up' session before commencing the lesson. The main activity, an introduction to simple team games, was organised well by the teacher using a hoop and two skipping ropes to define the activity's perimeters. The organisation and management of this lesson gave the youngest pupils an opportunity to begin to develop their skills in playing within a small team. The teacher was actively involved in the lesson and paused at appropriate intervals to point out good practice in the activity. In the parallel Year 1/2 lesson on the same topic, pupils were given the opportunity to observe and analyse each other's performance, thereby improving their own skills and understanding. The teacher, a physical education specialist, showed very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and insisted on good, quiet behaviour during the lesson to enable all pupils to learn well. The lesson was well paced with challenging activities, and improved pupils' understanding of simple games tactics. In a Year 1/2 swimming lesson, parent helpers were used very well to assist pupils and to ensure the safety of all pupils during the lesson. Good teaching of techniques helped pupils to improve their style. The most able pupils were used very well to demonstrate front crawl. Constant praise and encouragement gave pupils the confidence to improve their swimming skills and the teacher's relationship with the pupils encouraged them to give of their best.

122. The quality of teaching and learning is also good at Key Stage 2. This also represents an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be

sound overall. Only two lessons were observed, one in athletics and the other in swimming. In the Year 5 swimming lesson, there was a high regard for safety with an adult helper acting as a lifeguard. The lesson was very well planned and organised to develop pupils' swimming skills and the teacher kept a very good record of individual pupils' progress. The teacher showed a very good knowledge of swimming, giving clear, precise instructions and placing the emphasis on style and efficient use of the arm stroke. Breathing techniques for the crawl were also emphasised well to enable pupils to achieve the most efficient stroke. All pupils showed a good capability to evaluate each other's performance. Year 6 pupils showed a good understanding of running techniques and an awareness of pacing and stride patterns when running different distance races. The teacher introduced a lively warm-up session and most pupils understood the reasons for a warm-up. In the initial activity, pupils had to turn 'domes' into 'discs' in a restricted space on the field in a limited time. This fast paced activity gave pupils a good opportunity to use a short stride pattern to practise and consolidate their sprinting skills. Good planning gave pupils the time to assess their own performance, whilst appropriate grouping enabled pupils of all abilities to compete against their own targets.

123. All teachers observed during the inspection were confident in teaching the subject. The subject co-ordinator is only in his second year of teaching, but is very well qualified and provides good leadership for the subject. A subject policy is in place and a scheme of work, based on national guidelines, is being used which fully covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor the teaching of physical education but teachers' planning is regularly examined to ensure progression in learning from year to year. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and pupils are assessed in relation to National Curriculum levels at the end of each unit of work. However, these assessment sheets are being reviewed in the near future. The physical education curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extracurricular activities, including soccer, netball, basketball and badminton. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make a residential visit to an outdoor activity centre in the summer term, which contributes well to their physical development. At present, no extracurricular sporting activities are provided for Key Stage 1 pupils. The school has its own swimming pool and all pupils receive swimming tuition during the summer term. Resources for the subject are generally good, although the hall is relatively small. Pupils have the benefit of a large playing field and hard surfaced playground. An outdoor activity area has recently been completed.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

124. It was not possible to see more than two lessons during the inspection, both of which were at Key Stage 2, and there was no work available from pupils in either Year 6 or Year 2. Judgements are based on these observations and on discussions with a limited sample of pupils in these year groups. Although the pupils were able to discuss the work they had covered, their knowledge and understanding were limited and they were confused about aspects of different religions. Overall, in Years 2 and 6, standards do not meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection. In other year groups at Key Stage 2, there was sufficient work available to see that the pupils have covered the syllabus in suitable depth and met the requirements laid down. Work was well presented and recorded their studies into Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Work from the more able pupils was well presented and detailed. The work of the less able pupils in Year 4, however, was very brief and often unfinished.

125. There was insufficient evidence to make definitive judgements about the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1. However, the absence of any recorded work is a weakness. Although the pupils knew about the important festivals of Christianity, and its principal beliefs, their understanding of other aspects of religion was very limited. At Key

Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory overall. The temporary teacher in Year 6 arranged a successful visit to the local church. Pupils were prepared well and showed suitable reverence in church and during the talk by the Rector. Their behaviour was very good. Their questions were thoughtful and showed a keenness to understand some of the more difficult concepts, for example, death and everlasting life. In a lesson in Year 3 on the parables of Jesus, the teacher's questions led the pupils to an understanding of their meaning and the way in which they explain human characteristics. The pupils responded well and were keen to answer questions, offering their own ideas and points of view confidently. The written part of the lesson, retelling the story in a manner suitable for a child in the Reception class, was not as effective and too much time was wasted on drawing in their 'zig-zag' booklets.

126. The co-ordinator has only been managing the subject temporarily since the beginning of term. Her own knowledge is good and she has a clear view of what is needed in order to improve the quality of learning for the pupils. She is aware that not all teachers feel confident teaching this subject and further training and support is being investigated. Planning follows the guidance in the locally agreed syllabus and is used in conjunction with the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This does provide a good framework for teachers to follow. However, with the changes to co-ordination, there is little in the way of monitoring, either of teaching or pupils' work. This is a weakness. Visits out of school and visitors in school add to pupils' experiences but these are limited in range. Currently, the co-ordinator is developing a system for assessing and recording pupils' progress to help teachers gain a clear view of pupils' attainment.