

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HEMINGFORD GREY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Huntingdon

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110679

Headteacher: Lesley Strømmen

Lead inspector: John Messer

Dates of inspection: 1-3 March 2004

Inspection number: 256385

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	237
School address:	St Ives Road Hemingford Grey Huntingdon Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE28 9DU
Telephone number:	01480 375040
Fax number:	01480 375040
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Erika Brown
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This community primary school serves two large villages, Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey, as well as the surrounding area. Pupils come from mixed social backgrounds, but the circumstances of most are broadly average. Most are from white British families, although around a tenth are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Nearly all pupils speak English as their home language, but a small number speak other European languages at home, although nearly all of these speak English fluently. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, around three per cent, is below average. A below average proportion of pupils, around 12 per cent, are entered on the school's record of special educational needs and of these a small number have a Statement of Special Educational Needs because they need considerable help with their learning. Overall, the proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school part-way through this phase of their education, around ten per cent, is broadly average, but in several year groups the proportion is higher. There is an almost equal number of boys and girls except in Year 6 where boys outnumber girls.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Lead inspector	English, English as an additional language, art and design.
1131	Barry Wood	Lay inspector	
23009	Anne Hogbin	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, mathematics, geography, history.
23056	Teresa Manzi	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, religious education.
27055	Creighton Muirhead	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, music, physical education, special educational needs.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school that provides an effective education for its pupils.** Teaching is mostly good and, as a result, pupils learn successfully. Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment on entry is average, but most pupils attain above average standards by the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. The leadership and management of the school are good and the governing body provides particularly effective support. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The youngest children settle quickly, achieve well and are given a good start to school life.
- The quality of teaching is good and helps most pupils to attain standards that are above average in English and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education and exceed the standards described in the locally agreed syllabus.
- Pupils' attitudes to work are very good; they are enthusiastic and keen to learn.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school provides a good curriculum, which is enriched by a very good range of activities outside the school day.
- The school is a focus for many village activities and makes a very strong contribution to the local communities.
- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff are good and the governing body provides strong support.
- Pupils' achievement is good and it is particularly strong in Year 6.
- The work presented to pupils does not always match their learning needs and so they do not always achieve as well as they should.
- Standards in science are not as high as they should be because the more able pupils are not always challenged enough and so they do not always achieve as well as they could.

The school has maintained the above average standards in English and mathematics that were reported at the time of the last inspection, but standards in science are not as high as they were then. Standards have improved in religious education, as has provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The full curriculum in information and communication technology is now taught much more effectively. The leadership and management of the school have improved. The key issues from the last report have been successfully resolved. The school is now more effective than it was in 1998.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	C	A	C
Mathematics	B	C	B	D
Science	B	C	C	E

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

**Pupils' achievement is good.** Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and most attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and most attain standards that are above national averages in reading, writing and

mathematics by the end of Year 2. Most pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 5 and achievement is very good in Year 6 so that, by the end of Year 6, they attain standards in English and mathematics that are above average. These findings were reflected in the results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2003 when the school's performance was well above average in English and above average in mathematics. However, when compared with similar schools, the school's performance was below average in mathematics and well below in science. In mathematics several pupils did not quite reach the Level 4 standard. In science, although the proportion of pupils who attained the national target of Level 4 was above average for similar schools, the proportion who attained the higher Level 5 standard was well below average. This shows that the more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should in science. In English and mathematics the school provides extra teaching for groups of both lower and higher attaining pupils in Year 6 in order to boost their achievement. Inspection findings show that standards that pupils attain in Year 6 in English and mathematics are much better this year than last. The school's assessment systems confirm inspection findings that the school's performance in national tests in English and mathematics are likely to improve again this year. As historically there has not been such a strong focus on science, and as higher attaining pupils are not being stretched enough, a similar improvement cannot be assured. However, the school has recently introduced extension classes in science in order to raise standards.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** They have very good attitudes to their work and have high levels of self-esteem. Behaviour is good. Relationships are good, and pupils work and play happily together. Attendance is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching is good overall.** Teaching in a quarter of lessons seen was very good. Skills are taught systematically and teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' performance and their behaviour. Computerised whiteboards are used well to support teaching and learning. Teachers are particularly successful in motivating pupils to learn. Generally teachers' planning is thorough, but tasks are not always sufficiently adjusted so that all groups achieve as well as they possibly could. In a very small number of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory because tasks were inappropriate and did not enable pupils to learn enough in the lesson. Pupils' very positive attitudes to work, and their good behaviour, support learning well. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but marking does not always show pupils how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and to the school's effectiveness. The high quality of care and guidance helps to foster pupils' confidence, which contributes to their successful learning. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good and governors provide very good support.** The headteacher provides strong leadership and maintains a clear direction for improvement. The team of teachers, support staff and governors are dedicated to raising standards. It is self-analytical and responds rapidly and effectively when areas of weakness are revealed by its analyses. The governing body ensures that the school complies with all statutory requirements.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires expressed satisfaction with the education that the school provides for their children. Pupils like their school and are proud to be members of the school community. There is little that they would wish to change.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in science and in particular prepare work that provides sufficient challenge for the more able pupils and helps them to attain higher standards.
- Use assessments of pupils' achievement to match work more closely to the learning needs of all groups of pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

In each class from reception to Year 5 pupils achieve well and in Year 6 very well. By the end of Year 2, most pupils attain standards in reading, writing, and mathematics that are above average. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are likely to attain standards that are above average in English and mathematics. Across the school standards in science are broadly average.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school places a strong emphasis on English and mathematics and pupils achieve well in these subjects and attain standards that are above average.
- Pupils achieve very well in reading from Years 3 to 6 and many attain high standards.
- The extra teaching, for both the slower learners and for the more advanced pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics, helps them all to achieve particularly well.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education and exceed the standards described in the locally agreed syllabus.
- Standards in science are not high enough.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils enter the school with standards that are average. They are keen to learn and their positive attitudes help to foster their good achievement. The teaching is good, especially in English and mathematics, and this promotes good achievement in these subjects. Inspection findings show that most pupils are on course to attain standards that are above average by the end of this school year in reading, writing and mathematics. In science standards are average. The national tests in 2003 largely reflected these findings. The school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 2 was above national averages in writing and mathematics. Standards in reading were average. The school quickly identified the reasons for its performance in reading being lower than in writing and mathematics and has put in place initiatives to improve reading comprehension.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.2 (15.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.9 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.1 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Inspection findings show that most pupils are likely to attain above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The national test results in 2003 mirrored these findings; the school's performance was well above national averages in English and above average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, that is schools where pupils performed at similar levels in Year 2, the school's performance was less favourable. This is partly because pupils' achievement through Years 3 to 6 is uneven. The school's analysis of the amount of progress that pupils make in each year group shows that progress in Year 3 is not as marked as in Years 4 and 5 and that progress accelerates strikingly in Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 make particularly good progress because a lower attaining group, as well as a higher attaining group, receive extra teaching in writing and mathematics each week. These initiatives

to boost their performance are highly successful. Although the progress that pupils generally make in other classes is good, it is not as good as it could be because the work set is not always adapted sufficiently to the needs of all groups of pupils. Teachers do not always use assessments of pupils' performance as a basis for planning appropriately challenging tasks for all groups.

3. The standards that pupils attained in English in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2003 were well above the national average. However, further analysis of the results show that, whilst reading was relatively strong with all pupils attaining the national target of Level 4 and a third attaining the higher Level 5 standard, writing was relatively weak with only around a half of pupils attaining Level 4 and a much lower proportion of pupils than nationally attaining Level 5. Moreover, fewer than half of boys attained Level 4 in writing. So the strength in reading to some degree masked the weakness in writing in the school's results. The school reacted quickly to this and introduced measures to improve writing. These are proving successful and standards in writing are now much better. The improved standards attained by boys in writing are particularly marked. As a result, the school's performance in English is likely to be significantly higher this year.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (27.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.0 (27.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.3 (28.9)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Standards in science are not as high as they should be. Historically there has been a much stronger emphasis on improving standards in English and mathematics than in science. Science does feature as a priority in the school's current improvement plan and now there are extension groups designed to boost pupils' performance. Nevertheless, the higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged to achieve at the higher levels. Their thinking and reasoning skills are not fully extended. Also tasks are not always modified sufficiently to enable all groups of pupils to achieve well.
5. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well so that their achievement is similar to that of all the other pupils.
6. Pupils' achievement in religious education is good and most exceed the standards defined in the locally agreed syllabus. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards fell below the expected level. Good quality work was seen in art and design, and in information and communication technology.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils are well behaved and they have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' personal development is good and is supported well by good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils' attendance is good and their punctuality satisfactory.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in the reception class make a very good start to their school lives and develop very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes to work are maintained consistently at very good levels and they have an enthusiasm for learning.

- Pupils' good behaviour gives a strong sense of purpose to lessons and contributes to the smooth running of the school.
- Pupils are proud of their school and trust and respect the headteacher and staff.
- Pupils build good relationships with each other and they work and play together with confidence.
- The school's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has a positive effect on pupil's attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance improves markedly after the reception classes.

## Commentary

7. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained attendance levels at above the national average. However, there has been a dip in the figures during the present year because of the below average level of attendance of the youngest children. The school has consistently low levels of unauthorised absence because staff telephone parents on the first day of their children's absence to obtain reasons for the absence. The school is effective in discouraging parents from taking their children on holiday during term time.

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence	
School data	3.8
National data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.2

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

8. Children in the reception classes quickly become enthusiastic learners and enjoy making new friends. They understand the classroom routines and listen well to their teachers. These children develop very good attitudes and behaviour, so that their progress in achieving their Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development is good.
9. Pupils attend school happily, look smart and are pleased to be part of their school community. From the reception class onwards, they respond well to the school's high expectations regarding their conduct. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work, approach tasks with enthusiasm and try to do their best. They enter school ready to start work straight away and quickly settle to productive tasks. Whilst waiting for the teacher to start lessons, they settle to quiet reading or use their initiative to complete unfinished work or learn spellings. They concentrate well and often become totally absorbed during practical activities. Behaviour in classes is good, but the teaching is occasionally disturbed by pupils who fiddle with resources and do not listen. There are few incidents of poor behaviour, and the school's need to resort to exclusions has been minimal. Pupils display maturity and self-discipline, and have realised that hard work will bring success. Pupils with challenging behaviour are managed well and have little effect on orderly learning in classrooms. Around the school, pupils behave well and are polite to adults. In the playground they are boisterous, but they play safely together without fear of bullying or harassment.
10. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are encouraged to reflect quietly on the wonders of the world and to consider beauty in paintings, music and poetry. The school has resolved the weaknesses in spiritual provision identified at the last inspection. Pupils' personal development is good and they often show levels of maturity beyond their years. The school is strong in promoting pupil's self-esteem and developing their curiosity and questioning skills. Collective worship meets statutory requirements and pupils learn about, and have respect for, the celebrations and beliefs of other faiths. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and are taught to share amicably. They have a keen sense of justice and fair play. From the reception class onwards, they are challenged by their teachers on moral issues such as bullying and the need to be aware of the feelings of others. Members of the

school council spoke easily to inspectors about how much they enjoy coming to the school and get pleasure from learning in a safe environment where they have firm friends. Pupils show respect for their school and local environment, of which they are justifiably proud. Links with other cultures are well developed and are supported by using the Internet to contact India, for example, and by visits to Christian and other places of worship.

11. Pupils develop good relationships with adults and show high levels of trust and respect for all staff. They appreciate each other's contributions when working together or discussing issues. The school is energetic in the local community and pupils have pride in their own cultural roots and traditions. Displays are colourful and communicate thought-provoking messages about their own and other cultures. There are a number of ethnic minority groups represented in the school and there are very high levels of racial harmony. The school gives pupils experiences of a wide range of other cultures, especially through literature, music and art. Pupils develop a sound understanding of the cultural diversity of modern Britain.

#### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	206	2	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. It is taught thoroughly and meets legal requirements. Very good arrangements are in place to ensure the welfare and care of pupils. This helps to promote a productive learning environment by encouraging pupils to feel confident and secure.

#### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching is good and helps pupils to learn effectively. Day-to-day assessments are satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in matching work to the learning needs of all groups of pupils.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are examples of imaginative teaching that excite pupils and promote great enthusiasm.
- Basic skills are taught thoroughly.
- Computerised whiteboards are used creatively.
- Teachers work hard, engender high levels of motivation and are strongly committed to helping pupils to achieve well.

- Marking is not always thorough enough or effective in helping pupils to improve their work.
- Work is not always adapted to meet the learning needs of all pupils in the class and so not all groups achieve as well as they should.

## Commentary

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8 (25%)	14 (44%)	7 (22%)	2 (6%)	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

- In the substantial majority of lessons observed the teaching was good and in a quarter it was very good. In the very good lessons teaching was imaginative and pupils were excited by the activities. One example of particularly imaginative teaching was seen in a science lesson where pairs of pupils all had clear plastic bowls of hot water covered in cling film with cubes of ice on top. In this way each had created a mini ecosystem that demonstrated the process of condensation clearly. Water vapour condensed on the film and drops fell back into the bowl thereby clearly illustrating the water cycle. This stimulated great enthusiasm for learning.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught thoroughly and basic numeracy is taught systematically. Good foundations for further learning are laid in the reception class and they are extended well in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed further. In English, for example, writing skills are taught rigorously so that pupils develop an extensive range of techniques that help them to write confidently. Above all teachers encourage a desire to learn and an enthusiasm for reading, writing, mathematics and a keenness to discover more about the world around them. Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly and make sure that all pupils are involved in the activities provided. Most lessons progress at a brisk pace and are well structured to provide a good range and variety of activities. Both pupils and their parents appreciate the good teaching that the school provides.
- Teachers use a range of inventive teaching methods. For example, they use computerised whiteboards well to illustrate lessons. These promote particularly high levels of concentration. In one particularly good lesson in mathematics on area, pupils used a touch-sensitive squared grid to create a complex web of different coloured rectangles. They then challenged others to find the total area of the shapes. The board is used as a tool not just for the teacher, but also for the pupils to use.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning through skilful questioning strategies to check on understanding. Towards the end of most lessons, teachers conduct a short review session where they discuss what has been learned during the lesson. These sessions provide sound assessments about how successful the learning has been so that teachers know whether or not any further consolidation is required. Teachers do not always mark pupils' work thoroughly. Work is sometimes not marked. When it is, chances are sometimes missed to use common errors as opportunities to sort out misunderstandings or teach specific spelling rules, for example. Also marking does not always indicate how pupils could improve their work.
- Teaching was unsatisfactory in one music lesson and one lesson in mathematics. In both cases the tasks were not appropriate and, as a result, pupils did not learn enough. In the mathematics lesson the standard plan was used for the lesson, but it proved not to be suitable to the learning needs of the pupils as it was not based specifically on their particular stages of development. In the music lesson the tasks to be completed were not explained clearly enough and proved too complex. Generally teaching was not fully effective where tasks were not sufficiently modified to meet the learning needs of all groups within the class.



## The curriculum

Curriculum provision is good. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and is enriched by a very good range of activities outside the school day. Accommodation is good and resources are satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad and relevant curriculum.
- Very good arrangements are made to include all pupils in all activities.
- There are many learning opportunities before and after the school day.
- Very good links are made between the curriculum and the local community.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

### Commentary

17. The curriculum is well planned and well organised. It is broad, balanced and designed to meet the learning needs of all groups. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is accessible to all pupils. The school's long and medium-term curricular plans show that all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught in full. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The timetable is tight so that no time is wasted. Initiatives, such as booster classes and additional literacy strategies, have been introduced to raise standards. Life in the village is used very well to link subjects together and stimulate pupils' interest. Areas, such as history and geography, are enhanced by visits to study a local author's house. There is a breakfast club and an after-school club that help to facilitate the needs of working parents. Added to this there is a very wide range of activities offered outside the school day, such as dance, drama, table tennis and residential visits for the older pupils.
18. The achievements of all pupils are celebrated and all are fully included in every aspect of school life. The very good work of the social inclusion worker helps pupils with particular social and personal problems to build their self-esteem so that they gain maximum benefit from lessons. The issues noted during the last inspection about teaching the full curriculum for information and communication technology and religious education have been resolved successfully. Resources for ICT have improved and the full curriculum in this subject is taught in sufficient depth.
19. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils make good progress. Provision is very well managed by the co-ordinator who receives good assistance from a well-informed governor. Pupils are supported effectively in the classroom by well-qualified and skilled teaching assistants. The school has strong systems in place to ensure that individual education plans are appropriate and these are monitored regularly by staff with the involvement of both parents and pupils. Computers are used well to support pupils with special educational needs. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, two pupils successfully worked their way through a program on addition under the supervision of a parent helper.
20. Able and gifted pupils have been identified through tests and teacher assessments. There is a register kept and the progress of these pupils is monitored each term. At present extra opportunities are provided in English and mathematics, with developments in other subjects planned for the future.
21. Overall, accommodation is good with very good outside facilities, especially for the youngest children. There are a good number of teacher assistants, who are used well and make a good contribution to learning. Resources are satisfactory overall, but, despite very good improvement since the last inspection in purchasing more computers, there are still too few computers to meet the school's needs, especially for the younger classes, although more computers are on order.

## Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is very good. They receive good support, advice and guidance and the school actively involves pupils in decision making.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- All adults are vigilant about safety and the school provides a secure learning environment.
- Staff give a high priority to the care and welfare of all pupils.
- The headteacher and staff have a very good knowledge of their pupils, which helps them to tailor support to the needs of each individual.
- The school receives good support from outside professional agencies to implement its support, guidance and welfare procedures.
- Pupils are quickly made to feel welcome and part of the school family.
- The school listens to pupils very well and takes their views into account.

### Commentary

22. Since the last inspection, the school has improved most aspects of the support, guidance and welfare agenda. The many policies and procedures are clearly defined and thoroughly implemented by well-trained and caring staff. The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose and insists on high levels of care for pupils. The school receives good and well-focused support from external professional agencies, such as health workers and educational psychologists.
23. Child protection procedures conform to the local authority's statutory guidelines. All staff have been trained during the last year and the school is very vigilant to identify risks to children. The school conscientiously undertakes regular health and safety audits of its premises and its risk assessments are thorough. The school provides a safe environment.
24. Pupils with behavioural problems or particular personal difficulties are supported especially well by the social inclusion worker. She is having a very positive effect on ameliorating pupil's behaviour and raising self-esteem, so that they have a better chance of making good progress in the classroom.
25. The school places a very high priority on the pastoral care of all pupils. Most pupils feel secure and that they can trust their teachers and other adults to listen with a sympathetic ear to their problems and anxieties.
26. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Teachers quickly identify pupils with special educational needs and they develop good individual educational plans with the help of pupils and their parents. Careful records are kept on pupils' personal and social development. These promote accurate feedback to parents at the end of each year and help to identify pupils with problems.
27. Arrangements to help new children to settle happily into school are good. Children in the reception classes are quickly integrated into the school family and children make an enthusiastic start to their school lives. Parents greatly appreciate the school's efforts to give them advice on helping their children and in giving their child a successful start.
28. There are good displays of personal development targets in each classroom. The school encourages pupils to write critical assessments of their year at school for the annual reports to parents, and is good at consulting with pupils on wider school issues. Older pupils are aware of their individual targets in English and mathematics and feel that the targets help them to improve their performance. The headteacher has interviewed all Year 6 pupils individually and

this has given her major insight into the school's daily operation and enabled her to take account of pupils' views in her plans for improvement.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Parents have a good level of satisfaction with the school and the education it provides. The partnership between the school and home is good. The school's links with the community are very good. The school's links with other schools are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most parents have a good level of respect and appreciation for the work of the school, although a minority of parents are dissatisfied with some aspects of provision.
- The good partnership with parents makes a major contribution to children's learning and happiness at school.
- The headteacher and staff work hard at being accessible and approachable to parents, and parents' views are taken into account in the school's development planning.
- The school provides parents with good information about their children's education.
- Pupils benefit greatly from the school's very good relationship with the local community.
- The school maintains good relationships with other primary and secondary schools.

## **Commentary**

29. The headteacher gives a high priority to the school's relationships with parents. Since the last inspection, the headteacher and staff have been successful in maintaining an overall good level of parental satisfaction with the education provided for their children. Most parents acknowledge the hard work of the staff and the good progress that the school has made and that they themselves are respected and valued. Some parents at the school gate expressed very positive opinions, "It's a fantastic school" or "It's great".
30. Most parents are satisfied with the education provided for their children. However, despite the school's best efforts, the expectations of a small minority parents are unrealistically high and they express dissatisfaction with the education provided. The school now has an exceptionally good range of policies to cover almost all eventualities and good systems have been introduced to ensure that the school is well regulated. A small minority of parents lack a sufficient understanding of school procedures and do not feel in harmony with these improvements. Some parents are concerned about the staff turnover in the school, but teachers moving schools is now a fact of school life and the turnover in this school is not out of line with many others. The headteacher is a capable leader and manager who has the total confidence of her governing body. She is developing the school in line with national initiatives and within the constraints of the school budget. The school performs well in comparison with other primary schools.
31. Information for parents is good. Annual reports to parents are comprehensive statements of what children achieve in all National Curriculum subjects and contain learning targets for the following year. These reports are supplemented by pupils' own reviews of their year at school. Parents feel comfortable with the opportunities they have for engaging with teachers and recognise the feedback and descriptions of their children and their achievements. Parents enjoy informative newsletters from the school, governors and the parents' association. The school web site is interesting and very informative for parents, and includes information on homework.
32. Parents have signed the home-school agreement and they fulfil their pledge through their children's regular attendance and assistance with homework. The school is proactive in discussing with parents how they might help their children and in explaining new educational strategies and initiatives. Parents make very significant contributions to the school's development through responding to regular questionnaires. Many parents willingly help in the

school and parents attend the many school functions. The Hemingford Grey School Association is energetic in involving many parents and raising substantial funds for school development.

33. The school is a focus for the village communities that it serves, and pupils benefit greatly from the close ties. Sporting links are strong. Pupils in Year 6 have been able to experience rowing instruction through the 'Go Rowing' liaison and links with Grafham Water, which has led to an enhanced association with the local rowing club and the annual regatta. The church, village buildings and adjacent countryside are used well as resources for the practical teaching of some subjects. Relationships with the parish are close and the church is visited by the school at Christian festivals. People from the local community are welcomed into the school to tell the pupils about life in times past and about how the area has changed. The school is used well by local organisations. National businesses have been very generous in their support for the school by helping to fund the development of the playing field.
34. The school has very good links with the playgroup that shares the site. Children make an easy transition to the reception class as this means little change in their routine. The school sustains good relationships with its cluster of primary schools and this enables pupils to take part in many activities. There are strong links with the local secondary school, which produce a smooth and anxiety-free transition for parents and pupils at the end of Year 6. The school benefits from funding from the secondary school community partnership for the social inclusion worker, who is very good resource for supporting pupils with particular needs.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership. The leadership and management of senior staff are good. The work of the governing body is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and staff share a clear vision of what they want the school to become.
- The school has accurately identified future priorities to improve standards, but subject leaders' action plans do not always describe how improvements are to be achieved.
- The headteacher has established a very enthusiastic and well-organised team of teachers and support staff who understand their roles well.
- The very strong financial management is supporting the achievement of the school's educational priorities.
- The governing body make a very important contribution to the life of the school
- Although the funding of the school is below the national average, pupils' good achievements and the good quality of education provided, demonstrate that the school provides good value for money.

### **Commentary**

35. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, when the headteacher had only recently been appointed. She has shown resolute and well-focused leadership, allied to a precise analytical approach to determining the school's priorities and future direction. She has been clear in her resolve to maintain a high quality teaching force. This strategy has succeeded and the school is now staffed by an appropriately qualified team who have enthusiasm and share a commitment to raise standards. The senior management team contributes well to the school's strong leadership. The headteacher and staff share a vision of excellence that they pursue determinedly. Performance management is embedded very well into the operation of the school and teachers are set annual targets for improving their performance. These are linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan and help the school in its quest to raise standards.

36. The quality of subject leadership is good and all co-ordinators have the skills to raise standards in their areas of responsibility. The school improvement plan is seen as a valuable management tool and receives a high profile. It is a good working document. It indicates a thorough and well-researched understanding of the school's trends and present position. It is closely linked to subject leaders' action plans and is appropriately focused on raising standards. The plan is carefully monitored by senior staff and the governors. The new deputy headteacher was appointed very recently, but is already gaining a good overview of provision and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders are well organised, given sufficient time to monitor teaching and learning and have a clear understanding of the improvements required. They write sound action plans that define areas for development. However, these plans are stronger in the descriptions of what is to be improved, rather than how it is to be improved. Curricular development is systematic and each subject is led well. However, many of the subject leaders have only recently been appointed to their positions of responsibility and have not yet had time to have a major impact on improving standards.
37. The team of teaching and support staff work well together. They are hard working and enthusiastic. They are all keen to raise standards. The school monitors its own performance well. It does so through the examination of subject planning and the scrutiny of pupils' work, as well as observations of lessons. The senior management team monitors teaching and learning thoroughly and is aware of strengths and weaknesses. The personal development of teachers is closely focused on improving classroom practice. Performance data is analysed meticulously to check how much progress pupils are making and to set targets for improvement.
38. The governing body provide very good support. They are well trained and have the skills and knowledge to act as a critical friend to the headteacher and senior management team. They are strongly committed and supportive of all aspects of school life and ensure that the school complies with its statutory duties. Although many new governors have joined the governing body recently, the core of experienced governors ensures that they have a solid understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are closely involved in generating their own highly informative governors' action plan, which runs in parallel to the school improvement plan, and is monitored vigilantly by governors. They are closely associated with the school and have helped to steer it carefully through all the challenges it encounters. The governing body monitor the work of the school very closely.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	542,923	Balance from previous year	12,150
Total expenditure	535,655	Balance carried forward to the next	19,418
Expenditure per pupil	2,339.10		

39. The financial management of the school is very good. The governing body has been successful in managing budgets prudently over many years. The budget supports the provision of a high number of well-qualified support staff in each classroom, which is having a marked impact on improving both standards and behaviour. The school's income is below the national average and, consequently, the expenditure on resources has been below national averages. Governors seek to ensure that the principles of best value inform their spending decisions. They compare the school's performance with similar schools, consult with parents and challenge the school to improve on all fronts. Overall, taking into account pupils' good achievements and the good quality of education provided, the school provides good value for money.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

40. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and the quality has been maintained since the last inspection. There is a wide range of attainment on entry, but it is average overall. Children enter reception in the September before they are five. The majority are taught in a single age group, but a few of the older children are taught with Year 1 pupils. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision and there is a particularly close liaison with the playgroup that shares the school's site. Children achieve well because the teaching is good, and the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to their needs. The joint co-ordinators provide good leadership and the management of provision is good. All adults set excellent role models for the children and manage them well. There is a good ratio of adults to children, ensuring that the needs of all are well met. Staff work very well as a cohesive team, carefully monitoring all children's progress. The accommodation is good and has recently been improved by an all-weather area adjacent to the classroom. The colourful and stimulating classroom displays and resources have been well thought through to enable children with physical and sensory difficulties to learn as well as other children.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well because of the good teaching and the high expectations set by staff.
- Many children exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception.
- Very good relationships enable children to feel self-assured and happy.
- The very strong relationship with the playgroup helps children to start school confidently.

#### **Commentary**

41. The personal, social and emotional development of children is generally as expected for their age when they start school. Pupils from the adjoining playgroup are confident as they join the reception class for many activities during the preceding year and most have grown up together in the village. Teaching and learning are good. All pupils conform to the high expectations set by staff. The clear boundaries, and the consistent role models set by the adults, ensure that the children know what is expected of them, so that they quickly learn the correct way to behave. They realise the consequence of their actions, such as not throwing quoits indoors or they might break the windows. Children know the routines well, settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss and behave well. The excellent teamwork of the adults in both classes gives the children very good role models for co-operation, and a calm, but rigorous, approach to work. The majority of children show interest in what they are doing, concentrate very well, even when not directly supervised, and are keen to learn.
42. Children are continually encouraged to feel proud about what they achieve, and are reminded of the high standards that the adults expect. They are friendly and take a pride in their work. Children are encouraged to share and take turns amicably, and put up their hands when answering a question. When children do not conform they are dealt with firmly, but fairly, so that they learn how to appreciate the needs of others within the group. Children are expected to clear up after themselves, which they do without much prompting. The very supportive relationships ensure that children feel secure and confident to seek help when required. The gains in learning in this area are promoted by the continual reinforcement of rules by the adults, and the way in which staff treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This has helped to maintain trusting relationships and has enhanced the children's development.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills, and teaching is good.

### Commentary

43. Nearly all children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of this school year. Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well as a result of the many opportunities they are given to talk and listen. For example, they asked sensible questions of a museum curator about his antique toys and old photographs and listened to his explanations very well. Adults take every opportunity to develop the children's vocabulary by asking probing questions and insisting that they listen to the contributions of others. Very good relationships help children to develop the confidence to contribute to discussion sessions. Adults are genuinely interested in what the children have to say and listen carefully to their views and comments. Children achieve well in reading. They enjoy books, and listen attentively when stories are read to them. They particularly enjoy the weekly sessions when their 'buddies' in Year 6 read with them. They are developing well as independent readers and participate willingly in group reading sessions led by adults. Here adults develop skills effectively by encouraging children to notice the detail in pictures and to predict what might be about to happen in the story. Children take home a reading book to share with parents and they regularly read to the teacher. Good use is made of a computer program with a soundtrack that helps children read books on screen. There is a strong emphasis on teaching children to recognise letters and the sounds that they represent. The attractive 'sound sacks', filled with objects with the same initial sound, are used very effectively for group work. There are many opportunities to write informally, such as when making lists in 'Bob the Builder's Store' in role play, and more formally in handwriting lessons when writing about their favourite characters in a story. Children's attainment varies widely; a few still use play writing whilst the more advanced learners form letters correctly and write simple words. However, all children are achieving well and are making good progress.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning, which ensures children achieve well.
- Every opportunity is grasped during activities to promote children's mathematical development.

### Commentary

44. Teaching and learning are good. No written recording of number was seen during the inspection, but there are many photographs of pupils working that show a wide and practical curriculum. Resources are mostly adequate, but there are occasions when the lack of resources slows progress. In one well-planned lesson children's achievement was hampered by a lack of scales for weighing and they lost interest whilst waiting their turn to compare the weight of different objects. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding and take every incidental opportunity to include mathematical ideas. During registration, for example, they count how many children are present and work out how many are absent. They count beyond 20 to ascertain the number present and enjoy the

challenge of counting the packed lunch boxes to see if it tallies with the register. Most children are working at the levels usually expected for their age. A few higher attaining children recognise patterns in sequences of numbers, such as the pattern of odd and even numbers. Imaginative approaches, such as using a squirrel puppet that makes mistakes, engages children's interest, and they learn a good deal in an enjoyable way by trying to catch him out. Teaching assistants are used very well to help individual pupils and to take groups during outside activities such as 'hunt the number and peg it on the line'. Teachers use a variety of number rhymes and songs to help children count. Children recognise different coins, which they spend in 'Bob the Builder's Store', and make repeating patterns across the floor with plastic shapes. Children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

45. It is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards, but the work on display showed standards as expected for the children's age. In the one lesson seen, teaching and learning were good and children achieved well. A visitor from the local museum was quizzed about the antique toys he had brought to show them and children were very interested in playing with toys of a bygone age. Children know a range of Bible stories and visit the local church. By talking to a wide range of visitors, for example, the fireman and doctor, they appreciate that different occupations contribute to their community. They understand that objects are made from different materials and go for a science walk to look at all the different materials from which the school building is made. Children use the computer mouse confidently and click on screen tools to access programs to support their literacy, numeracy and artistic development.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

46. It is not possible to make a judgement of provision or standards because insufficient teaching was observed. A few children were seen developing their manipulative skills well by hammering nails into wood in 'Bob the Builder's Yard'. Photographs show pupils moving around the hall in a variety of ways in a physical education lesson and using a good range of construction toys. The new outdoor area allows children to work and exercise in the fresh air, whatever the weather.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

47. It is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards, but the work on display and photographic evidence suggest that most pupils are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals. In the music session observed teaching and learning were very good, and children achieved very well because teaching was challenging and methods captured their interest. Children listened very carefully to the beat of the music so they could bounce the teddy to the same rhythm. All children demonstrated the ability to maintain a regular beat whilst the more advanced could remember a more complicated rhythmic pattern. Imaginative play is promoted well. An area in the classroom was set up as 'Bob the Builder's Store' and was linked with an outside area that was his builder's yard. These areas had been well thought out to stimulate opportunities for imaginative play-acting.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above average.
- Teaching is good and skills are taught systematically, but pupils' books are not always marked thoroughly.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is particularly good and many pupils develop a love of literature.
- Pupils learn a good range of writing skills, but there are too few opportunities to apply these skills.
- The subject is led and managed well.

#### Commentary

48. Pupils' achievement is good and most attain standards that are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards have been maintained at above average levels since the last inspection. Although standards in English overall are above average by the end of Year 6 there is a big difference between standards in reading and writing; reading is especially strong, but writing is not. Pupils read a good range of children's literature and by the end of Year 2 most are fluent readers. However, a significant proportion of pupils read accurately and with good expression, but do not fully understanding the material that they read. Their skills of comprehension are not as well developed as they should be. The school has identified this as an area for development and has introduced good systems to help pupils' to develop strategies that assist them in gaining a deeper understanding of what they read.
49. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in reading and many have read an extensive range of children's fiction. They express preferences and compare the work of one author with another. They have read the works of many modern authors such as Philip Pullman, Lemony Snicket, Jacqueline Wilson and Eoin Colfer and discuss their books knowledgeably. They enjoy non-fiction books, especially those that contain gory details about life in Tudor times, for example, or those that reveal intriguing scientific facts about how the body works. The school has recognised that boys are sometimes not as keen on reading as girls and has taken action. Material has been introduced that appeals particularly to boys and in one reading session in Year 6, for example, boys were enjoying football magazines. Pupils write well and have produced sensitively written poems about parents' feelings when their sons went to war. They used figurative language well, as in one line, 'As lonely as a single leaf on a bare tree'. The school's performance in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 rose last year and is set to rise again this year.
50. Many pupils have developed a great love of reading and thoroughly enjoy reading sessions. The older pupils feel that they would like more time for independent reading. Several enjoyed the unexpected opportunity to spend time reading when the school was forced to close for a day during the inspection.
51. Teaching is good and learning is effective. The skills of reading and writing are taught systematically. The mechanics of reading, such as learning which combination of letters make which sounds and developing a range of words recognised on sight, are taught methodically. In Years 1 and 2 the school has introduced an effective system for teaching literacy skills. A very good routine has been established where, on four mornings each week, a team of adults, including voluntary helpers, take small groups of pupils for intensive work on literacy skills for half an hour. This provides a very productive start to the school day. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning in these sessions. They use their initiative and demonstrate good teaching skills.

52. Pupils' written work is not always marked regularly and marking does not always help them to understand how they can improve their work. Errors in reading and spelling, such as writing 'are' instead for 'our', are not always identified and used as teaching points.
53. Writing is generally taught well. Teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' performance. The oldest pupils know how to structure stories with a dramatic opening, descriptions that build to a climax and how to resolve a dilemma in the last section of the story. They use short sentences to speed up the action and different styles of writing for formal letters or persuasive arguments, such as whether or not pupils should be allowed mobile phones in school. They understand the power of a well-considered, balanced argument as when debating whether or not smoking should be banned in public places. Pupils have well-developed technical skills. However, there are too few opportunities for them to apply their skills in, for example, writing short books or letters to organisations to request information. There are several good initiatives, such as the boys' writing project where the oldest boys work with other schools in the area to create a magazine, called LAD, for the local web site and occasionally write articles for a local school newspaper. These help to maintain an enthusiasm for writing, but such opportunities are infrequent. Pupils agree that they would welcome more opportunities for writing stories, like one that involved writing short books and reading them to the younger pupils.
54. The subject is well led and managed. Good systems have been established to identify groups of pupils in each year group that would benefit from extra support. In Year 6 special booster classes are formed to help pupils who may not be achieving as well as they should. The faster learners also join special extension classes to ensure that they attain the highest standards of which they are capable. The school reacts rapidly and decisively when areas for development are revealed. When, for example, the test results showed that pupils' reading comprehension was not as strong as it might be, strategies were introduced to focus more strongly on this aspect of reading. The school also explains to parents that the quality of reading is important rather than just the quantity of books read and encourages parents when reading with their children to explore the nuances in the text and to delve beneath the literal.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

55. Pupils use their reading and writing skills well to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum. They write good pieces as part of their projects in history and use their reading skills well when conducting research on the Internet. Good links are made with other cultures as when, for example, pupils in Year 4 studied myths from around the world, including one translated from the African Dinka language. Pupils write neatly and the quality of presentation of written work in many subjects is of a high standard.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average.
- Teaching is good and helps pupils to learn effectively.
- Detailed monitoring and tracking of pupils' performance is helping to raise standards.
- There is insufficient emphasis on practical activities that promote problem solving.
- Marking does not always give pupils a clear picture of how well they are doing or what they have to do to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

56. Standards in both Years 2 and 6 are above average. The good provision found at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. Overall, the school does well for its pupils, with all groups making good progress and achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and achieve as well as their classmates. Although nationally boys achieve less well than girls, there were no significant differences in the work examined during the inspection.
57. Teaching is good overall. In one very good lesson for pupils in Year 6, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard very effectively to demonstrate how to measure angles with a protractor. Pupils learned rapidly and by the end of the lesson, every pupil could draw angles to the nearest degree of accuracy, whilst higher attaining pupils could confidently name the type of angles they had drawn. In one lesson for pupils in Year 2 teaching was unsatisfactory because the plans designed to teach one particular unit of work were not adapted enough to meet the individual pupils' particular stages of development. The work was too easy for some and too difficult for others so they did not learn enough. There are common features in the good teaching, such as using classroom assistants well to work on specific tasks with groups of pupils, the use of class and group targets, the sharing of lesson objectives with pupils so they understand the purpose of the lesson, the integration of computer programs to support learning and a clear focus on developing mathematical vocabulary. The one common weakness in teaching is that work is often unmarked and when it is, it does not give pupils a clear picture of how well they are doing or what they have to do to improve. Parents expressed their concern about this to inspectors. Another area of parental disquiet is that in Years 3 to 6, the teaching of investigation skills is generally through the use of worksheets and these do not promote particularly purposeful learning opportunities. Inspection findings confirmed that there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in practical activities. As a result, opportunities are missed to encourage an appreciation of how mathematics can be used to solve problems in everyday life.
58. The management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator's clear understanding of how to use the school's very detailed assessment data is instrumental in raising standards. Pupils not making the expected progress are quickly identified and given regular extra support in small groups. Those showing exceptional achievement are also identified and given work to extend them. The higher attaining group of pupils in Year 6 is supported by a governor who works under the direction of the teacher. This is helping them to achieve well and raise their attainment significantly. Consequently, the school confidently predicts a considerable rise in its performance in this summer's national tests. Inspection findings support the school's assessments. The school's performance in the tests for pupils in Year 6 rose last year and is set to rise again this year.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. Pupils often develop their mathematical skills well as part of their work in other subjects. Links with science and ICT are very strong. For example, pupils use graphs and tables to record data in experiments and enter their findings in databases on the computer. In art and design pupils look closely at the different mathematical shapes used by Kandinsky in his paintings, and they record the findings of traffic surveys in geography. However, opportunities tend to occur coincidentally rather than as part of systematic planning.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has made good efforts to increase the opportunity for investigative activities.
- The new co-ordinator has made a good start in leading the curriculum.
- Computers are being used well to extend learning opportunities.

- Higher attaining pupils are not routinely challenged and, therefore, make less progress than they should.

## Commentary

60. The standards that pupils attain in national tests in Years 2 and 6 are very similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. The achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. Following detailed analysis of pupils' performance, the school has devised and implemented an intervention strategy to raise standards. A focus on investigative science was introduced and pupils' work shows that this is now a strong feature throughout the school. This is designed to promote higher standards of attainment. At present the standards overall remain average at the end of Years 2 and 6, because higher attaining pupils are not being given the information or opportunity to develop their skills and thinking to higher levels. Pupils in Year 6 were observed conducting a range of experiments on changes in the state of substances. They showed good interest in the activities and conscientiously recorded their results. However, although the lesson was satisfactory overall, they were allowed insufficient time to complete each activity. This meant that they were unable to consider their observations in depth and failed to develop a greater level of understanding.
61. Samples of work show that by the end of Year 2 pupils are used to conducting experiments and are being routinely introduced to scientific vocabulary. A strong feature is the use of appropriate searching questions on the covers of the pupils' books, which direct their thinking. Pupils have studied a good range of work covering many aspects of the subject. They have, for example, studied the effects of forces, conducted experiments to find out the effects of friction and classified materials according to their properties. This active approach to science continues through the school and in Years 5 and 6 pupils have covered much ground. Good pro forma have been developed for recording investigations. These have been carefully designed to match to pupils' widely varying abilities to understand what they read and to help them in reinforcing their investigative skills. Most pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Year 6 pupils use the correct scientific terminology for the major organs of the human body, use keys to classify living things, describe the properties of materials and classify them into solids, liquids and gases. They understand that some changes are reversible and some are not, and can explain phenomena such as the apparent movement of the sun and the formation of shadows.
62. As at the time of the last inspection, teaching and learning are generally satisfactory, but within this overall picture there are clear strengths. The emphasis on learning by doing was evident in the lessons observed during the inspection. In a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils carried out an investigation into condensation. Previous good teaching had ensured that pupils had a thorough understanding of evaporation. The teacher skilfully built on this knowledge. She gave very clear explanations and, as a result, pupils knew exactly what was expected of them. They conducted a well-planned experiment that involved close observation and recorded the results of their experiments carefully in detailed, annotated drawings. The teacher used good questioning strategies to assess how much the pupils had learnt and to consolidate their learning. The experiment generated great enthusiasm and because of the well-structured, imaginative teaching all pupils learned very effectively.
63. Computers are used effectively to support teaching and learning. In a lesson for pupils in Year 5, the teacher used an interactive whiteboard skilfully to introduce the topic. Work in pupils' books shows that computers are used appropriately to record and present information from experiments. In Year 2, for example, computers were used to chart how efficient different materials are in providing surfaces to slow a moving toy lorry. The school has invested in appropriate software to support learning as, for example, in classification keys, and makes good use of special web sites that have good material designed to gauge and enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding.
64. The co-ordinator is new and has not yet had time to have a major impact on improving standards. He has made a good start in identifying where improvements can be made and has

already put into place strategies designed to raise standards. The school has rightly made science a major focus in the current school improvement plan and there is evidence that the areas picked out for greater emphasis are being addressed.

65. Good assessment procedures are in place and the school uses a colour-coded system that illustrates pupils' progress clearly. The systems also help the school to confirm which pupils learn rapidly and which need extra support to help them to catch up with all the others. In Years 3 to 5 this information is not always used to adjust work so that all groups are challenged appropriately. The school has introduced extension groups this year for pupils in Year 6, which are intended to raise the standards that the higher attaining pupils attain. However, the thinking skills of the higher attaining pupils are often not challenged effectively and, as a result, they often perform at an average level. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher Level 5 standard in national tests in 2003 was below average and early indications are that, unless the extension classes prove exceptionally effective, there will be little improvement in 2004.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The whole curriculum is now covered; a good improvement since the last inspection.
- There are examples of very good teaching, especially where the computerised interactive whiteboard is used well to support learning.
- Leadership of this subject is good.
- Resources have been improved since the last inspection.
- There are too few computers in classes for the younger children.
- Some teachers lack confidence in this subject.

### **Commentary**

66. The curriculum is now fully covered and pupils know about the use of technology in our daily lives. Pupils in Year 6 know about sensor thermometers and use these in their science work. Younger pupils program control toys. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the full curriculum was not taught. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and most attain average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Within this overall picture there are particular strengths. In Year 5, for instance, pupils are currently engaged in producing a good multimedia presentation. They have chosen suitable music and pictures to illustrate their Tudor poems well. This is due to the relatively new increase in resources, good links made between subjects, teacher's expertise and good leadership of this subject.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and at times they are very good. Very good use is made of the interactive whiteboard. Teachers use it well during the introductions to lessons and the clear displays help to stimulate interest and aid concentration. During the course of lessons pupils use the touch-sensitive board to experiment as, for example, in a mathematics lesson where they created coloured grids as part of their work on area. The school recognises the need to use teachers' particular strengths and expertise as widely as possible and so the subject co-ordinator teaches another class besides his own. This has proved effective use of specialist teaching. Teachers are still getting to grips with how to make best use of the new computer suite that has only been established this term.
68. This subject is led and managed well. The new subject co-ordinator has a very good understanding of this subject and uses expertise from the local education authority effectively. As a result, the school has a good action plan to move forward. Teachers are to be trained and more computers are on order, one of which has been purchased by the parents' association.

69. Resources for ICT have improved considerably since the last inspection, although there are still too few computers throughout the school and the younger pupils have too little access to this resource. There are plans to improve this situation, but this is urgent if the youngest pupils are to fulfil their potential to achieve well in this subject.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

70. Information and communication technology features in subjects across the curriculum. Computers are used well in subjects such as English, mathematics and science, and good links are made through using the Internet for research in other subjects, such as history. The timetable promotes good connections as it identifies time both for teaching specific computer skills and for making links with other subjects.

### **HUMANITIES**

*Religious education was inspected in detail and is reported in full below. Work in history was sampled, but the subject was not inspected in full. Geography was not inspected.*

71. There is every indication from pupils' work that standards in **history** are broadly average and they achieve well. Discussions with the co-ordinator established that the subject is well managed and that a range of visits and visitors play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant. Pupils were observed acquiring good history enquiry skills. Year 2 pupils were making up thoughtful questions about old toys to ask the curator of the local museum and Year 4 pupils were examining photos of the Sutton Hoo burial site for clues about precisely where the artefacts might have been buried. The teaching seen in Year 4 was very good and pupils achieved particularly well because they were stimulated by the use of the use of Internet displays of Sutton Hoo using the new interactive whiteboard and the class teacher's very infectious enthusiasm. Standards pupils attained as a consequence in this lesson were above average. The centenary of the school is providing a very good platform for historical local studies this year.

### **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards across the school are good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of many religions.
- The very good provision for personal development helps pupils understand differing views.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Commentary**

72. Across the school standards are above those expected and achievement is good as younger pupils are given a good start and standards are maintained throughout the school. Pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and other faiths and are able to compare their own lives with those of others. They can name and understand many aspects of several different religions and compare these with Christianity. They also show a good understanding of developing relationships and the need to respect each other.
73. The curriculum is very well developed due to the very good leadership of this subject. It is broad and comprehensively covers all aspects of the locally agreed syllabus. It is enhanced by guidance for teachers on developing pupils' spirituality.
74. Teaching and learning are good overall. This is due to the good support given by the Programme of Work and the support of the subject leader, who is a very good role model.

Teachers are enthusiastic about this subject and are knowledgeable due to the training that they have received. They provide interesting resources and artefacts to stimulate pupils' interest. They use the computer and interactive whiteboards well to bring this subject to life. Visits arranged to the local church and mosque also enhance pupils' learning. Teachers challenge pupils by asking thought-provoking questions and, as a result, receive perceptive answers such as, "a rabbi or teacher needs to respect confidentiality and care a lot".

75. The subject is led and managed well overall, and there has been a very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below expectations and teaching was unsatisfactory.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

*Work in art and design, music and physical education was sampled, but design and technology was not inspected.*

76. Pupils are introduced to a good range of experiences in **art and design** and there is evidence in pupils' work that skills are taught systematically. In Year 2 pupils learn how to mix colours to achieve a range of tones and drawing techniques such as hatching, stippling and blending. In Years 3 and 4 they develop good watercolour techniques. They develop a good understanding of how to make printing blocks from polystyrene and to print repeating patterns. In Years 5 and 6 pupils use computers to create images inspired by the work of Mondrian. They also study the work of Klimt and Matisse and use the work of other artists as inspiration for their own creations. In Year 6 pupils are good at using lines to create the impression of action and speed in their drawings. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of different cultures as they study African masks, Aboriginal art forms and Rangoli patterns from India. They learn to weave and work with clay. There are examples of good quality work on display. Pupils have painted detailed pictures of scenes around the school that form part of the school's centenary display.
77. Too few lessons were seen to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in **music**, but the limited evidence available indicated that there are particular strengths as well as areas for development. In a very good lesson for pupils in Year 2, the teacher engaged the pupils' interest with good visual stimuli and used recorded music on a compact disc as a teaching aid to enable the pupils to sing in time. Skilled use of hand signals helped the class to learn and appreciate pitch and all the pupils could relate the sounds they made to picture stimuli. The pupils learned effectively and made very good progress because a well-planned lesson was taught exceptionally well by a teacher who maintained high expectations of pupils' performance.
78. Teaching was less successful in a lesson for pupils in Year 6. The lesson lacked pace and interest, and the pupils were not enthused by the composing task. Also too much was expected of the class in one lesson. Because pupils were not given clear instructions, or taught the necessary skills they needed, they found it difficult to complete the task successfully. As a consequence they did not learn enough.
79. There is evidence of music occurring outside the curriculum; a small group of pupils accompanied songs in an assembly on their recorders and one boy played the keyboard. Lessons are available to the pupils in recorder and woodwind. Computers are beginning to feature in music and some Year 5 pupils were observed adding music to their Powerpoint presentation to help illustrate the poem they had written.
80. One dance lesson in **physical education** for pupils in Year 4 was seen. Here the teaching was good. The lesson was purposeful and well structured. The teacher conveyed his enthusiasm to pupils who responded well and enjoyed themselves. Pupils made good progress in learning the steps for the Dorset Ring dance.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

*This area of the curriculum was sampled.*

81. The school has a strong commitment towards this aspect of education and, as a result, has adopted and modified a new curriculum to meet their pupils' needs. This has good suggestions for activities and is very helpful for teachers. Teachers have been trained and are confident with these areas of the curriculum. Several initiatives have been introduced such as a 'Health Promoting School' action plan and circle time. A social inclusion worker helps raise pupils' self-esteem in class and at playtime so that they are able to choose to behave well. As a result, behaviour has improved throughout the school. Added to this the personal, social and health education programme and lessons in citizenship help to develop self-confidence and a thoughtful approach to life. This work is enhanced by the social inclusion worker who concentrates on particular pupils in order to help them to understand and cope with their feelings so that they choose to do the right thing.
82. The leader for this subject is given sufficient time to monitor the quality of teaching and judge the strength and weaknesses across the school. She is analytical and influences the school well by introducing ideas to make the curriculum relevant. For instance, a 'healthy living week' has been planned and parents are invited into school to discuss issues relating to drugs.
83. The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed was very good. Samples of pupils' work suggest that teaching is good overall. The work is well presented and of a good quantity, suggesting that pupils work hard. The subject matter covered is interesting and thought provoking, such as writing about the role of the local council and 'I feel valued when...'.
84. Pupils are beginning to understand their duties towards the community. Representatives are proud to be elected to the school council and act on behalf of their peers. Generally pupils care for each other, for instance, by sending congratulatory letters to classes who have taken assembly. Pupils are being well prepared to take their part as citizens in society.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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