

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LITTLE RIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

St Leonards-on-Sea

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114481

Headteacher: Paul Gough

Acting headteacher at the time of the inspection:

Pauline Warren

Lead inspector: David Tytler

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 256753

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 to 11 years                             |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                     |
| Number on roll:              | 452                                       |
| School address:              | Little Ridge Avenue<br>St Leonards-on-Sea |
| Postcode:                    | TN37 7LR                                  |
| Telephone number:            | 01424 752266                              |
| Fax number:                  | 01424 755686                              |
| Appropriate authority:       | Local Education Authority                 |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr N Wilde                                |
| Date of previous inspection: | 1 <sup>st</sup> June 1998                 |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Little Ridge School is in the centre of a modern housing estate on the northern outskirts of Hastings and St Leonards-on-Sea. It is much larger than most primary schools, having 452 pupils aged four to eleven, most of whom come from the surrounding estate. There are 59 children in the Reception classes. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, specifically Asian, African and Chinese and none have English as an additional language (EAL). The number of pupils having special educational needs (SEN) is below the national average. The number having statements is well above the national average, largely because of the school's unit for pupils having speech and language difficulties. The school is involved in an Education Action Zone (EAZ) and the Healthy Schools project. The significant number of pupils who join or leave other than at the usual times has an adverse impact on standards. The school is currently being run by the deputy headteacher in the absence of the head, who is on long-term sick leave. Until this year, attainment on entry into the school has generally matched what is expected nationally for children of their age. This year, it is below.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                  |                       | Subject responsibilities  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 8990                           | David Tytler     | <i>Lead inspector</i> |   |
| 9646                           | Geraldine Osment | <i>Lay inspector</i>  |   |
| 22460                          | Tricia Davies    | <i>Team inspector</i> | English, Art and Design<br>Special Educational Needs.   |
| 2742                           | Alan Dobbins     | <i>Team inspector</i> |   |
| 22223                          | Helen Ranger     | <i>Team inspector</i> | Mathematics,<br>Information and Communication Technology<br>Design and Technology<br>Geography<br>History |
| 27654                          | Robina Scahill   | <i>Team inspector</i> | Foundation Stage<br>Science<br>Music<br>Physical Education<br>Religious Education                         |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils.** Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 have improved this year after a three-year slump and now match the national averages. The achievement of Year 6 pupils in recent years has been adversely affected by disruption to their learning due to staff changes and weaknesses in the use of assessment information to plan for the learning needs of pupils. Pupils in the current Year 6 achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' personal development is good and they co-operate well with their teachers. The acting headteacher has made much needed changes, which have begun to raise standards. **The school provides satisfactory value for money.**

**The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- The acting headteacher's determination to raise standards, which is shared by all in the school.
- The speech and language unit is well led and managed.
- Pupils respond well to the good care provided, behaving well and having positive attitudes.
- The Reception classes give children a good start to their education.
- High quality teaching in the speech and language unit enables pupils to achieve very well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good.
- Music is a strength of the school as a result of very good teaching.
- Good links with the parents, the community and other schools, widen pupils' experience.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators requires further development.
- The school improvement plan does not identify priorities or chart the way to raise standards.
- Assessment information is not being used effectively to plan for the needs of all pupils.
- Governance of the school is unsatisfactory and the parents' annual report does not meet requirements.

Improvement since the last inspection has been **satisfactory**. Standards have been maintained, although there has been a dip in results in the national tests for 11-year-olds in the last three years. The key issues have been addressed, although some of the improvements are recent. The local education authority (LEA) is providing extra support for the school to improve leadership and management and to ensure that there is no underachievement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2001        | 2002 | 2003 | 2003            |
| Reading   | D           | D    | D    | D               |
| Writing   | C           | C    | C    | E               |
| Mathematics   | E           | D    | C    | E               |

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

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

*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 **satisfactory**.

Standards are now beginning to rise after a slump over the last three years. In the current Year 6, standards match the national expectations in English, mathematics and science and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Standards in the current Year 2 are at the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Results in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2003 are similar to those in 2002. However, the Year 6 pupils achieved very well in English, and satisfactorily in science, but unsatisfactorily in mathematics. Standards in music throughout the school are well above the national expectations and pupils achieve very well as a result of the consistently high quality teaching. Teachers have a good range of expertise in physical education and standards in Year 6 are also above national expectations. Children in the Reception classes achieve well as a result of the good teaching. Attainment on entry into the school this year is below national expectations but as a result of the good teaching in Reception most children will achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils in the speech and language unit achieve very well because of very good teaching.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Pupils' personal development is good. Their social and moral development is very good; their spiritual and cultural development is good, although more could be done to prepare pupils for life in a modern multi-cultural society. The good care provided underpins the good attitudes and behaviour throughout the school. Attendance is good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education is sound and has some good and very good features. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall.** It is good overall in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2, enabling pupils to make good progress in their lessons. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, although many examples of good and better teaching were seen, enabling pupils to make good gains in their learning. The consistently high quality teaching in the speech and language unit and in music results in pupils achieving very well. Pupils' experience is broadened through a good range of high quality after school activities. The good care, guidance and support provided and the good links with parents and the community make significant contributions to pupils' learning.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The acting headteacher's leadership is sound and underpins the satisfactory management of the school.** She shows a determination to raise standards, which is shared by the whole school community. Since her appointment in September she has introduced much needed changes, which are already having an impact on standards. The role of co-ordinators is not sufficiently extended to include the monitoring of teaching and learning. Leadership and management of the speech and language unit are good. The governance of the school is unsatisfactory but recent changes leave the governing body well placed to plan for the future. The governors' annual report does not meet statutory requirements.

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

Parents appreciate the happy and secure learning environment. They say teachers are friendly and approachable and that they are given good opportunities to be part of their children's education. Pupils are happy with their school and have good relationships with all adults. They know who to ask for help and know that they will get that help. All feel lessons are interesting and know they have to work hard.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators.
- That the school improvement plan clearly identifies priorities and enables governors to evaluate the quality of education provided by the school and to plan the future development of the school.
- That assessment information is used more consistently to plan for the needs of pupils.

and to meet statutory requirements:

- Include all the required information in the governors' annual report to parents.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are now **average overall** and pupils achieve **satisfactorily**, which represents an improvement over the last three years. Whilst not all children in the Reception classes will achieve the Early Learning Goals, they achieve **well**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are beginning to rise in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- Children in the Reception classes are given a good start to their education.
- Standards in music are well above national expectations throughout the school and pupils achieve very well.
- Standards in physical education in Year 6 are above average.
- Pupils in the speech and language unit achieve well.
- Assessment information is not yet used consistently to drive up standards.
- Standards in Years 3 to 6 in English are adversely affected by inconsistencies in the teaching;
- There is not enough emphasis on using mathematical skills to solve problems.

#### Commentary

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading       | 15.2 (15.4)    | 15.8 (15.7)      |
| Writing       | 14.5 (13.5)    | 14.4 (14.3)      |
| Mathematics   | 16.1 (16.6)    | 16.5 (16.2)      |

*There were 61 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

##### Standards in national tests at the end Year 6 in 2002, average point scores

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 25.8 (26.6)    | 26.8 (27.0)      |
| Mathematics   | 23.8 (25.7)    | 26.8 (26.7)      |
| Science       | 27.0 (26.9)    | 28.6 (28.3)      |

*There were 70 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 began to fall in 2001 and continued to fall in the succeeding two years. There were a number of reasons for this: assessment was not being used to identify precisely what pupils knew and could do and so to plan for their individual needs; teaching and learning was not being checked on rigorously so that there were some inconsistencies between classes; instability in staffing in Year 6 had an adverse affect on standards; and in 2003, there were a substantial number of pupils with SEN in Year 6.

2. Steps were taken early in 2003 to tackle the shortcomings. Extra classes were provided in English and as a result, while the results remain below the national average, school data and an analysis by the LEA shows that these pupils achieved well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils also achieved satisfactorily in science, but achievement in mathematics remained unsatisfactory

3. The acting headteacher, who was appointed in September and has the support of a consulting head appointed in the summer, took immediate steps to improve assessment procedures and the use of assessment information and to introduce a regular programme of observation of teaching and learning in the classroom. Whilst more remains to be done, standards in the current Year 6 now match national expectations in English, mathematics and science and pupils achieve satisfactorily in all three subjects.
4. Further improvement is needed in English to ensure consistently good teaching clearly focusing on the raising of standards and building on what pupils already know and can do. In mathematics, more work is required in ensuring pupils apply their mathematical knowledge to solving problems. Standards in Years 1 and 2 match the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
5. Standards in music throughout the school are well above national expectations and pupils achieve very well as a result of the consistently high quality teaching by a specialist teacher. Teachers have a good range of expertise in physical education and standards in Year 6 are also above national expectations. The very good teaching in the speech and language unit enables pupils in the two classes to achieve very well. In many cases they continue their education in mainstream schools.
6. Pupils having SEN receive good support from learning support assistants, particularly in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2, and as a result they achieve well. There is less focused support in Years 3 to 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
7. Attainment on entry into the Reception classes varies from year to year. This year it is below that expected nationally for children of their age. As a result of the good teaching in the Reception classes, however, it is likely that they will all reach the expected goals in all the expected areas of learning by the time they move into Year 1. Nevertheless, teachers and other adults in the Reception classes ensure that all pupils, whatever their background achieve well.

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

Pupils have **good** attitudes to their work and are **well behaved** in classes and around the school. Their personal development is **good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. In particular, their social and moral development is **very good**.

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

- Pupils respond well to their teachers and co-operate with them to promote a good atmosphere for teaching and learning.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this natural enthusiasm is well directed in classes.
- Adults set pupils good examples of tolerance and consideration.
- Religious education lessons make a good contribution to pupils' moral and spiritual development.
- Pupils' cultural development is well supported in music lessons and performances.
- Physical education lessons and after-school tournaments and matches make an important contribution to their social development.
- More could be done to ensure that spiritual development is embedded in the curriculum.

## Commentary

8. The school's strong ethos ensures that pupils can develop in a safe and caring learning environment. Pupils feel valued and know that staff are interested in their views and ideas and will act on them where appropriate. Relationships are good throughout the school and based on mutual respect and trust. Pupils co-operate with their teachers, who are skilful in channelling their natural enthusiasm into purposeful learning. Pupils like school and attendance is good.

9. The low levels of exclusion are reflected in the school where pupils behave well in classes and around the school. Their good behaviour, coupled with their positive attitudes, enables pupils to achieve at least satisfactorily and often well in their lessons.

10. Pupils' moral and social development is very good and is well supported in many lessons, in assemblies, on the sports field and in performances. Pupils work well together, listen to each other and understand the concept of teamwork. They gain a clear idea of acceptable behaviour from the examples set by adults in the school. Their cultural development is good and well supported, particularly in music. Pupils learn about other faiths in religious education and respect the views of others, listening carefully to each other and to their teachers. More could be done, however, in promoting multi-cultural development. Spiritual development is satisfactory but more opportunities could be planned into the curriculum and into assemblies, where the moment of reflection tends to focus on social and moral issues.

11. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to show independence and to support one another. In science, older pupils are able to take responsibility for their own learning when organising their own experiments, but more could be done in other subjects, such as mathematics, to promote independent investigation and research.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British                             |
| White – any other White background          |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean           |
| Mixed – White and Asian                     |
| Mixed – any other mixed background          |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian             |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani          |
| Black or Black British – African            |
| Chinese                                     |
| Any other ethnic group                      |
| No ethnic group recorded                    |

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 329                  | 2                                 | 0                              |
| 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 8                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 3                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 44                   | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 5.2 | School data          | 0.0 |
| National data      | 5.4 | National data        | 0.5 |

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **sound** quality of education for all its pupils and **very good** education for the pupils in the speech and language unit. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall, **good** in the Reception classes and **very good** in the speech and language unit. Arrangements for gathering and using information on what pupils know and can do are **satisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory** and pupils' experiences are widened by a **good** range of after school activities. The care, guidance and support of pupils are **good**. Pupils' learning also benefits from the **good** partnership with parents and the **good** links with the community.

### Teaching and learning

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 0 (0%)    | 18 (33%)  | 16 (29%) | 19 (35%)     | 1 (2%)         | 0 (0%) | 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.*

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is of very high quality in the speech and language unit, resulting in very good achievement.
- Teaching is consistently good in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 and pupils achieve well in lessons.
- Teachers manage their classes well so that pupils can concentrate and work hard.
- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 hampers the learning of some pupils.
- Lessons are not always planned to challenge the more able pupils.

#### Commentary

12. The good, and often very good, teaching in the Reception classes leads to good achievement through a well chosen mix of direct teaching and the well planned and organised classroom activities, which engage and hold children's interest. Children's learning also benefits from the teachers' careful oversight and attention to detail, such as the correct way to hold a pencil.

13. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good and pupils have already made good gains in their learning in a relatively short time. Great care is taken to involve all pupils in lessons and good cross-curricular links were seen in many lessons. A good Year 1 geography lesson exploring the local area, for example, developed pupils' writing skills as they were encouraged to write more complex sentences. All lessons for these pupils were characterised by very good relationships, which were used to create a very positive atmosphere in which the teacher was able to concentrate on teaching and the pupils to work hard.

14. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, although many examples of good and better teaching were seen during the inspection. The learning of some older pupils has been limited by shortcomings in the teaching in the past. There is also some inconsistency in the quality of teaching, which is reflected in the learning. Where teaching did not meet fully the needs of the pupils, it was usually because the work did not build on their prior attainment.

15. In the good and better lessons, work was carefully planned with an appropriate level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. However, this was not always the case so that for some the work was too hard and for others it was too easy. In some lessons, teachers did not pay enough attention to the more able pupils who, as a result, did not achieve as well as they could. In others, teachers wrongly assumed that pupils understood teaching points or tasks, whereas they would have made more progress had explanations been more detailed. Marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to improve their work.

16. Music throughout the school is taught by a specialist whose teaching is consistently very good. Her extensive subject knowledge underpins all the lessons, which enables her to plan lessons carefully to build on what pupils know and can do. As a result, pupils gain secure musical knowledge as they move through the school. They are given many opportunities to sing and play musical instruments, which they enjoy and do well. Similarly consistent high quality teaching was seen in the speech and language unit, details of which can be seen elsewhere in this report.

17. Pupils with SEN receive good support, particularly in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2. As a result, they achieve well in relation to their individual education plans (IEPs), which are carefully constructed to meet their specific needs. Class teachers are becoming increasingly involved in this process. Less individual support is available to pupils in Years 3 to 6, but pupils with SEN achieve satisfactorily in line with their peers.

## **Assessment**

The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are **satisfactory**. The system is beginning to work but the information is not yet used consistently to plan for the needs of pupils.

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

- Assessment in the Reception classes is good and well used to plan for children's needs.
- Assessment arrangements in English and mathematics have improved since the last inspection.
- Tracking arrangements identify next steps in pupils' learning.
- Teachers adjust mathematics lessons where gaps in learning have been identified.
- Assessment information is not yet being used consistently to plan for individual needs.

## **Commentary**

18. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection, when they were identified as an area for improvement. Progress was initially slow, partly due to staff changes, but considerable strides have been made in the last 12 months. The new co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs to be done and has worked hard with the acting headteacher to ensure that arrangements are consistent and understood by all staff.

19. The focus, rightly, has been on English and mathematics, where there are secure assessment arrangements. The co-ordinators work from reliable data to measure performance across the school. This information is used to spot any inconsistencies in performance as a result of the teaching. Support is provided for individual staff where necessary. In turn, teachers identify where pupils need extra help and targets are set. This knowledge is well used in mathematics and teachers adjust their planning accordingly and record what they have done. This, however, does not yet happen routinely in English.

20. The needs of pupils with SEN are carefully identified. As a result, IEPs meet each pupil's needs and include targets for personal development as well as for literacy and numeracy. Good records in the Reception classes are kept up to date to show what children know and can do and used to plan the next stages of learning.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactorily broad** and enriched by a **good range** of additional experiences and after school activities. The school's accommodation and resources support the curriculum **satisfactorily**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There is a well-planned and challenging curriculum in the Reception classes.
- Good provision is made for pupils with SEN.
- Personal, social and health education is good.
- Varied and interesting extra-curricular opportunities, visits and additional activities widen pupils' experiences.
- Support staff make an important contribution to the rising standards in the school.
- Learning resources enhance teaching in all subjects.
- The allocation of time is inconsistent in English and in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school.

### Commentary

21. The curriculum is generally broad and well planned. Links between subjects are identified and used well. Curriculum content is also reviewed and modified so that it matches the interests of pupils and fits more neatly with topics in other subjects. Planning for some subjects readily engages pupils' interest and commitment because it is imaginative and challenging. Planning in the Reception classes is good and all areas of learning are covered effectively. The school has an effective programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), including citizenship. Strengths in this curriculum area make a significant contribution to the school's pastoral care of its pupils and to pupils' good attitudes and behaviour.

22. The provision for pupils with SEN is extensively planned and very well organised. Targets on individual plans are specific and closely matched to each pupil's needs and not restricted to language, literacy and numeracy but also include a range of personal, social and behavioural needs. The blend of in-class and withdrawn support gives staff the opportunity to choose an approach best suited to the child and the task. Teachers are playing an increasing role in setting targets and identifying learning objectives and activities. In some cases, there are learning objectives in lesson planning specifically matching the individual targets for pupils with learning difficulties in that class. This practice is not yet widespread across the school and is recognised by the co-ordinator as an area for development.

23. Every year group has the chance to enhance their knowledge and understanding through a good range of visits out of school, or activities within school, linked to their current work. The quality and quantity of their subsequent work is well fuelled by these positive experiences. The variety of extra-curricular activities is also a valuable source of enrichment, particularly in sport and the performing arts.

24. The organisation of teaching time generally makes sure that all subjects are given enough emphasis. Sometimes subjects are alternated, such as art and design and design and technology, to allow for the necessary blocks of time needed where practical projects are being developed. The time given to each subject, however, is not always used as wisely as it could be. This is true for:

- Mathematics, where there is not enough focus on developing the application of pupils' mathematical knowledge to solving problems.
- Information and communication technology, where teaching basic skills in discrete sessions would use time more effectively.
- English, where the curriculum is not closely monitored to make sure that literacy activities are evenly spread throughout the week, that all sessions are being used as valuably as possible and that every opportunity in other subjects is exploited for developing language and literacy skills.

25. Support staff work very well alongside teachers to ensure that every pupil is able to fully access all that the school offers. They are very supportive of each other and feel valued by the school. Opportunities for training are taken up enthusiastically and knowledge gained is well used to improve their effectiveness including helping pupils to develop ICT skills.

26. The school's learning resources are good and support the curriculum well. In English there is a good variety of fiction and non-fiction books and the library is used well. In music a good range of resources supports the very good teaching very effectively. Since the last inspection, equipment for the youngest children has improved but they still do not have large climbing apparatus for more challenging physical activity.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are **good**. Personal development and achievement are monitored **well**. The involvement of the pupils in the school's work and development is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils are well cared for and they feel secure in school.
- Pupils' personal development is monitored effectively.
- New procedures for monitoring attainment are good but not yet fully used.

### **Commentary**

27. All adults who work in the school form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. They know the pupils well and are good role models. Discussions with pupils show that they feel safe and secure and can turn to a number of adults if they need help or comfort. Lunch and breaktime supervision, health and safety and child protection procedures, first aid and other medical support are good and ensure that pupils and staff work and play in a safe environment.

28. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are effective and helping the pupils to mature as they go through the school. The buddy system between Year 6 and the youngest pupils; PSHE lessons; 'circle time' discussions; and the nurture groups and lunchtime club all promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

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

The school has a **good** partnership with parents. **Good** links with the community and other schools widen the experience of pupils.

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

- The acting headteacher has the confidence of parents.
- Information for parents, including how well their children are achieving, is good.
- Communication between parents and staff in the speech and language unit is very good.
- Good community links enrich the curriculum.
- Good links with other schools successfully promote pupils' personal development.

## Commentary

29. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting were positive and reflect parents' confidence in the leadership of the acting headteacher. There was a good response to a recent survey sent to parents about communication and the acting headteacher responded to their views through the newsletters. The newsletters and her open door policy keep parents well informed of what is happening in school.

30. Parents are kept well informed of the progress their children are making and what they are learning about. There are regular parent/teacher consultations and a whole-school topic in the spring term when parents and governors work together with teachers and pupils. Annual reports provide satisfactory information for parents: they show what their children know, understand and can do and how parents can help them to improve their performance. The school brochure is very well presented and parents can access the school's website to find out what each class is studying. They are also given a useful guide to support numeracy at home.

31. Communication with, and information for, parents of pupils in the speech and language unit are very good. Parents are regularly invited into school for discussions on their children's progress. Parents receive a handbook about the work of the unit and the contact books are well used by the staff and parents to communicate about the children on a daily basis.

32. The school has good links with the local community that contribute effectively to pupils' learning. The school works closely with the Hastings Business Partnership and has a close relationship with local businesses, which sponsor events in school. Visitors include members of the emergency services to support assemblies and the PSHE and citizenship education programme. The local area is well used to enrich the curriculum especially in history and geography.

33. There are good links through the EAZ with other schools to support the learning of pupils. Year 6 pupils take part in numeracy and literacy work with local secondary schools to help prepare them for the next stage of their education. A computer club for girls and a French breakfast club have been set up. Staff from other schools also organise projects for gifted and talented pupils, such as an art course, a games club to develop thinking skills and a maths club. The school is very welcoming to trainee teachers and to students on work experience from local secondary schools. Many pupils take part in sporting fixtures against other schools and in local music festivals.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **satisfactorily** led and managed. The acting headteacher provides **sound** leadership. The governance of the school is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The acting head is showing sound leadership and has a good grasp of what needs to be done.
- She is receiving whole-hearted support from the staff, governors, the LEA and a consulting head.
- Much needed changes have already seen an improvement in standards and in focused teaching.
- Priorities have been clearly identified to improve leadership and management and to eliminate underachievement.
- Rigorous regular monitoring of teaching and learning by all subject leaders is yet to be introduced.
- Governance of the school is unsatisfactory and the governors' annual report to parents does not meet statutory requirements.
- The school improvement plan does not pull together all the school's priorities, with clear success criteria to enable the governors to monitor and evaluate the quality of education provided.

### Commentary

34. The school has gone through an unsettling period in the last 12 months. An LEA audit of the school in February of last year, following a drop in results in the national tests for 11-year-olds, identified some shortcomings in the leadership and management of the school. Booster classes were introduced to support Year 6 pupils in English, which enabled most of them to achieve satisfactorily in the tests, although results remained below national expectations. A further review in June found that there had been limited progress in other areas, such as the use of assessment information, the monitoring of teaching and learning and some aspects of governance. A consulting head was appointed and an action plan developed in conjunction with the school.

35. The long-term sickness of the headteacher led to the appointment of the deputy head as acting head in September. She is well supported by the whole school community, which shares her determination to raise standards. She has rightly concentrated on two priorities:

- The use of assessment information to plan for the future needs of pupils, which is beginning to impact on lessons, particularly in mathematics.
- A planned programme of teaching and monitoring by subject co-ordinators supported by herself and LEA advisers.

36. Inspection evidence showed that the school has achieved its aim of raising standards in Year 6, which now match what is expected for children of their age. The school is now well placed to see further improvements. The school sets a priority on ensuring that all pupils, including those with special needs or the small number from ethnic minority groups, are included in all aspects of the school's work.

37. The governing body was too slow in bringing the school to account in explaining the fall in test results, partly because it was given too little information on which to base any judgements or recommendations. The new chairman and other key governors have reviewed the role of the governing body and the organisation of committees. Training for governors has been introduced and the governing body now receives a good level of information from the school. These important changes have been too recent to have had an immediate impact on the governance of the school. They do, however, pave the way for governors to fulfil their role in planning for the future of the school and in monitoring the quality of education provided. They will be assisted in this when

the school improvement plan draws together whole-school priorities with clear costings, responsibilities, time scales and measurable success criteria which focus on the raising of standards. There are some items missing from the annual report to parents, which does not meet statutory requirements.

38. The headteacher and the bursar, with the approval of the governors, ensure that all the resources available to the school are used to meet educational priorities. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value in all aspects of its work.

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

| <b>Income and expenditure (£)</b> |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Total income                      | 1,105,332 |
| Total expenditure                 | 1,042,707 |
| Expenditure per pupil             | 2,272     |

| <b>Balances (£)</b>                 |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year          | 62,564 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 20,000 |

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **Provision and achievement in the speech and language unit**

Provision in the speech and language unit is **very good**.

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

- The unit is very well led and managed.
- Very good quality of teaching leads to high levels of achievement.
- Language therapists give expert, regular and considerable support.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils very well.
- The accommodation and range and quantity of resources support teaching and learning well.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

#### **Commentary**

39. For most pupils, the primary aim of the unit, to provide opportunities to make sufficient progress in communication skills so that they can return full-time to mainstream classes without specialist support, is met in full. Pupils make considerable gains in dealing with their speech and language difficulties, in the development of their personal and social skills and in their learning.

40. The high standards set by the head of the unit are matched by all who work in the unit. These are easily recognised, for example, in the detailed way in which lessons are planned, the very effective deployment of teaching assistants and in the precise way that the progress pupils are making is recorded. Teachers benefit from the very well established links with the speech and language therapists who provide expert advice and support in dealing with pupils' difficulties, especially with their receptive and expressive language. The good range of specialist resources and the effective use of computers also contribute to the very good quality of teaching. The curriculum focuses on the skills of literacy, numeracy and personal and social development and includes all the required subjects of the National Curriculum.

41. Pupils are included in mainstream lessons, whenever this is appropriate. They may begin by taking lessons in physical education or art with mainstream pupils. As their communication skills improve, pupils spend more time in mainstream classes. When their speech and language skills have made sufficient improvement they transfer for part of their week to a mainstream school close to where they live. The receiving school gains specific information on what must be done to continue to improve communication skills and detailed information on attainment in all the subjects. The speech and language unit is centrally located within the school. As a result, pupils feel part of the mainstream provision and this is helping prepare them for their return to mainstream schools.

42. Through a broad range of outreach activities that help support the teaching and learning of pupils with speech and language difficulties in mainstream schools, the expertise of the unit's staff is well known to other primary schools.

## Example of outstanding practice

### **The excellence of the link between the speech therapists and the teachers and teaching assistants is realising powerful gains for the pupils in the speech and language unit.**

The very well established link between the staff of the unit and the speech and language therapists provides excellent benefits for pupils. Speech therapists are based in the unit every day of the week, which provides considerably more support than in most similar units. The close co-operation between the therapists and teachers and teaching assistants provides great benefits to pupils. Based on the results gained on a comprehensive battery of speech and language tests, specific targets are identified for pupils over seven areas of speech and language. Some pupils may have more than one target for each area, perhaps up to 15 in all. Targets are set in consultation with the teachers so that they focus on the development of speech and language, but in the context of the National Literacy Strategy. This brings the strengths of the two professions together. The teachers and teaching assistants know pupils' targets very well and, in lessons and at other times of the school day, provide regular opportunities for the practice and reinforcement of the skills identified as important to pupils. Precise records chart progress towards the targets, which are reviewed half-termly. New targets are set and the focused teaching promotes yet more progress.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE (Reception classes)**

43. **Overall provision for children in the Reception classes is very good.** At this early stage of the year, there is limited evidence on which to judge children's achievement in all areas of learning. However, work from the previous year and observations of pupils in Year 1 indicate that children reached the expected goals for children's learning and achieved well. Attainment on entry varies from year to year and there is a wide range of abilities when children join the Reception class. Overall, the current group is below average compared with what is expected nationally. It is likely, however, that given the good teaching they receive most children will meet the expected Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. The management of the Foundation Stage continues to be good and the staff work hard and conscientiously to ensure that all children have a good start to their education. Good assessment records are constantly updated to ensure that they record what children have done and to plan their learning. However, because the children have such a wide range of pre-school experiences, teachers do not know what all the children know, understand and can do until they start school. As a result there is some imbalance in the allocation of classes. Children with SEN have been identified and extra support is planned for them. Overall, children make a smooth start at school and there are fruitful and supportive links with parents. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in the provision of a secure outdoor play area for Reception class children.

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

- Good teaching and learning result in pupils achieving well in all areas.
- Classes are very well organised and managed.
- Planning is good and all areas of learning are covered effectively.
- Assessments are good and the information gathered is used to plan appropriate activities.
- Displays offer a rich variety of learning opportunities.

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

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

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

- Very good emphasis is placed on the personal, social and emotional development of the children.
- Clear routines successfully encourage children to behave well.

#### **Commentary**

44. Some children have very limited skills when they start school. They make very good progress due to the quality of the teaching, good relationships and the secure environment. Most respond well by listening, following instructions and taking part in whole group sessions. Some still find it difficult to listen to others and frequently call out during whole-class sessions. All children become increasingly confident and develop good relationships with both the staff and each other. Most children take turns and share when playing together. They are encouraged to make independent choices, which they do confidently, and most remain focused on their chosen activity. Because personal and social development is strongly promoted in all areas of learning, children achieve well.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

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

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

- Well-planned activities and lively displays reinforce whole-class lessons.
- Learning is shared with parents.
- Children are well supported so all are included in discussions.

### **Commentary**

45. Most children have average speaking and listening skills and many are confident to ask adults for help and to talk about their experiences. Some children have speech difficulties and the teaching assistants support all children so that all can participate in discussions and feel fully included in all lessons. Generally children start school with average reading and writing skills, although, in one lesson seen, a few children could not hold a pencil properly and the marks they made were very unformed. More able children make rapid progress, achieve very well and begin to write simple sentences, spelling familiar words correctly. Lower attaining children are supported well so that they learn to write by the time they leave the Reception classes. Adults support them well by writing the children's ideas down for them so that they can see the correct way of writing what they want to say. There are good opportunities for the children to attempt their own writing in role-play and other self-initiated play activities. Frequently used words are displayed around the classrooms and are used to support children's learning. Learning is reinforced by children taking home letters and words they have learnt in school together with books to share with their parents.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

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

- Good reference is made to numbers in everyday activities.
- Lessons are fun.

### **Commentary**

46. Staff working in the Reception classes have very high expectations of what children can achieve and this is reflected in the provision for mathematical development. Good emphasis is given to developing mathematical language and knowledge of numbers and shapes. Lessons in counting are fun. Children followed a story and held up their fingers to show which number the story referred to. More able children count and recognise numbers to 20. Adults use every opportunity to reinforce familiarity with every day numbers, such as asking a child to get the apron from number 4 peg. The good variety of equipment set out for activities encourages children to count and order numbers.

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

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

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

- Children become increasingly confident in using computers and other equipment.
- Planned work is linked to other areas of learning.

## Commentary

47. Children learn about their world in many ways. Past work shows that they have learned to sort objects into groups using different criteria, such as living and non-living things or different recyclable materials. They learn about special occasions such as weddings and Christenings and talk about their families and relationships. Children use the computer confidently and demonstrate good control of the mouse. Children are given opportunities to listen to taped stories and they can set up the equipment themselves. Adults work effectively with small groups of children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the things around them. Topics, such as 'Autumn' are enriched by painting leaves and singing songs about them.

## Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children have access to a good outside area with a good selection of ride-on toys.
- Lessons are well planned with high expectations of children's behaviour and performance.
- There is no climbing equipment.

## Commentary

48. Children learn to use a wide range of tools correctly. They are taught to use scissors safely and hold pencils correctly. Staff work with small groups of children in order to make sure that these skills are developed appropriately. In a lesson in the hall, children used space sensibly and moved confidently. They responded well to the teacher's directions and tried very hard to improve their movements. In both classrooms, through a variety of construction equipment, pencils, crayons, brushes and scissors, children are encouraged to practise and develop the finer movements necessary for writing, cutting and sticking. Children achieve well in their physical development and the provision for them to do so has improved since the last inspection. There is now a safe outdoor area for children to play with a good selection of ride-on toys. It does not, however, have any climbing equipment for children to develop climbing and balancing skills or a soft surface to play on.

## Creative development

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is very good.
- Children have good opportunities to experiment with a wide range of art materials.

## Commentary

49. The many activities and good resources for creative play support other areas of learning. The good resources in the 'doctor's surgery' stimulate imagination and there are many opportunities for the children to talk about their own experiences. The staff also provide good opportunities for the children to experiment with paint and other media and talk to them about their choices. Children have painted their names and decorated them with a wide variety of materials such as sequins, sand and feathers. Many have produced thoughtful self-portraits, mixing paints carefully. Through very good teaching, children sing enthusiastically and tunefully. They learn to appreciate that music can portray characters in stories such as the Tortoise and the Hare.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**, with some strong features.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Planned activities are imaginative and challenging.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are well taught.
- Good leadership has brought about much improvement.
- There is too little monitoring of lessons to ensure that the English curriculum is consistently well taught throughout the school.
- Evaluations of teaching and learning are not routinely used to change the content of subsequent lessons.

#### Commentary

50. Rapid development of the provision for English has taken place over the past 12 months and it is to the subject leader's credit that so much has been achieved during her first year of leadership. Substantial support was organised for last year's Year 6 group to increase their progress in the run up to the national tests last summer. This support proved to be successful. Although this low attaining group reached standards below those of the previous year group in the national tests, analysis of their performance shows them to have achieved satisfactorily. Other improvements, to planning and assessment, have been more fundamental, their purpose being to create the right conditions for long-term growth. As a result of these developments, inspection evidence collected early in the school year points to pupils now achieving satisfactorily and standards to be generally in line with national expectations in the current Years 2 and 6.

51. The school recognised the need for all teachers to understand what pupils should know and understand at each National Curriculum Level of attainment. Once this was established, assessment could be used to give an accurate picture of pupils' performance. A start was made with writing and much work has taken place to enable teachers to identify what each child needs to do to move on. The subject leader now has reliable data to track performance across the school. She uses this to identify trends in performance and where training and support are needed for individual staff. Teachers evaluate gains in pupils' learning and identify areas in need of further attention. This valuable information, however, is not routinely used to adjust lesson planning.

52. Planning is detailed and comprehensive and, most importantly, its content is imaginative and challenging. Texts are well chosen for interest and resources are good. When lessons are taught with flair and vigour, pupils' enthusiasm is readily kindled and they learn well. Match these features with excellent subject knowledge and thorough preparation, and pupils' learning is very good. In the most successful lessons pupils listen well and speak and read confidently. Pupils readily recall earlier learning, for example about stylistic devices when exploring poetry. They sustain concentration and work hard.

53. Much time is devoted to the teaching of English, but there has been too little attention given to how well it is organised and used in each class or to what extent agreements about change are being carried out. Consequently, in some classes English activities take up the greater part of a day. Agreements about where to place group reading sessions are not being consistently implemented.

54. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is consistently good. The progress of pupils is being maintained and built on over time. These pupils have made good gains in learning in the first few weeks of this term. They are readily stimulated to write at length with variety and interest, in response to



first hand experience for example. Careful exploration and reinforcement of different writing styles enable even the youngest and lower attaining pupils to write confidently in the same style. Good relationships between pupils and with adults, a conspicuous feature of many lessons, allow these younger pupils to make mistakes and test out ideas in a safe learning environment.

55. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall and ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Despite lessons having imaginative activities, these are not always delivered well or fully exploited. Sometimes pupils are not given the chance to participate fully or to explore ideas. Even in the most successful lessons, teachers do not always make sure that the quieter pupils take part during whole-class discussion.

56. Whilst the subject leader's evaluation of performance is effective when using assessment information, she is much less well informed about teaching and learning as she has not been able to monitor teaching and learning in the classrooms. As a result, relative weaknesses that restrict pupils' learning have not been identified and resolved. These weaknesses, across and within older year groups, lead to inconsistencies in teaching and learning and are a significant reason why overall achievement is currently not greater than satisfactory.

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

57. Opportunities for using and developing language and literacy skills in other subjects and activities are generally sound. Writing activities figure in science and in subjects such as history, geography and design and technology. There are many planned opportunities for discussion in lessons and pupils are keen to join in. In a few others, where pupils have little chance to take part, they listen well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory** and current initiatives are eliminating former weaknesses in the standards achieved by older pupils.

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

- Senior staff have successfully begun to implement plans to raise standards and to eliminate the underachievement in the last two years' test results for Year 6.
- All the teaching seen during the inspection was at least sound and much was good.
- Teachers are improving how they evaluate the success of lessons, assessing pupils' progress and using the assessment information to plan future activities.
- Pupils do not do as well as they could in applying their mathematical knowledge to practical work and problem-solving activities.
- In some lessons, the more capable pupils are not taught as well as other groups in the class.

### **Commentary**

58. The school's performance in mathematics, as shown in the results of the National Curriculum tests for Year 6, was low in 2002. It dropped even further in 2003 when only 47 per cent of pupils reached at least Level 4 (the level expected nationally), compared to a 2002 national average of 73 per cent. While it is acknowledged by this inspection that there was a significant number of pupils with SEN in 2003, the school's pupil tracking systems confirm that there was underachievement. This was partly as a result of weaknesses in teaching. The school has shown determination to raise standards and early indications this year are that these are being successful. Attainment in the current Year 6 matches the national average. Considerably more of the pupils now in Year 6 are on course to achieve Level 4 by the end of the year, although the school's target for the proportion that will reach Level 5 seems optimistic on the evidence of their current work. Recent performance by pupils in Year 2 has been similar to national averages, although not quite

as good in 2003 as in 2002. Standards are currently average by Year 2 and the classes include a reasonable number of higher attaining pupils. Pupil achievement in all year groups is at least satisfactory. Standards of attainment are currently similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

59. The whole-school initiative to improve mathematics has included an intensive focus on how teachers plan and evaluate their lessons. Teachers have worked hard and successfully to ensure that they base their lessons securely on pupils' previous learning. They set appropriate targets for individuals to reach. Teachers across the school plan interesting activities to cover the required curriculum. They cater particularly well for pupils with SEN, often deploying teaching assistants effectively to support this group. They integrate ICT well into lessons. At times, they do not give enough attention to the more capable pupils. In some of the lessons seen, these pupils did not work to capacity or were wrongly assumed to understand tasks where they would have benefited from a little initial adult help. The school's analyses of its test results have shown that pupils do not find the investigative and problem-solving aspects of the curriculum easy to understand and this was confirmed in several lessons seen. This is an area rightly identified for further improvement.

60. The acting headteacher and a senior teacher are co-ordinating the leadership of the subject. They are doing this well and, with an impressive level of commitment from the whole staff, such efforts are having a positive impact on standards. The school is making good use of specialist staff from the LEA and of initiatives organised through the Education Action Zone.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. There are satisfactory links between mathematics and other subjects. Pupils, for example, apply their knowledge of data handling in science and geography, constructing and interpreting graphs and tables. Careful measuring contributes to good quality products in design and technology. Constructing timelines in history practises pupils' numeracy skills and contributes to their understanding of number order.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Achievement over time is improving.
- All areas of the curriculum are covered and there are good links with other subjects.
- Pupils enjoy science lessons and work hard.
- There is an inconsistency in marking.

### **Commentary**

62. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally. From the work in books, there is evidence that the pupils have covered the required aspects of science. Pupils make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily.

63. Results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 have dropped but compared with the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2, this group of pupils made steady progress and achievement was satisfactory. Older pupils are now beginning to devise their own experiments and investigations and know the importance of making their tests fair. Younger pupils, however, are directed by the teacher and not all understand the reason for the work they are doing. Pupils use the knowledge they have gained in mathematics lessons to record their results in graphs and diagrams. Overall, in the work seen this year, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations for their age.

64. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers plan their lessons well with clear learning intentions. In some lessons, however, these objectives are not shared with the class so that pupils are not clear about what they are trying to find out. In a good Year 6 lesson, the brisk pace, clear explanation and good demonstration led to pupils' interest and concentration as they investigated the ways they could reflect light with mirrors. Pupils with SEN were well supported and encouraged to join in the concluding discussion. However, work is not always matched to pupils' needs and pupils of all abilities experience the same tasks and activities. Marking is inconsistent. In the best examples, teachers tell the pupils clearly how they can improve their work, but, in some cases, marking is inadequate and work is just ticked.

65. Science is satisfactorily led. The school has identified the weaknesses and there are clear plans to develop the subject. Priorities are to encourage pupils' questioning and to increase their skills and knowledge through experimental and investigative work, which will help their understanding. Although standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection, pupils achieve satisfactorily across the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

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

- Activities are planned well to fit in with topics studied in other subjects.
- Pupils often use ICT as a natural part of their work.
- Skilled teaching assistants give good support to pupils.
- The subject co-ordinator is well informed and effective, although he has little opportunity to check on the quality of teaching and learning in other teacher's lessons.
- The present organisation of resources and accommodation creates difficulties for teachers to teach specific skills to large groups of pupils.

### **Commentary**

66. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' achievements are sound and standards are average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers integrate computer activities well into the planning of a wide range of subjects. This encourages pupils to use the computers and other equipment such as the smartboards as a regular tool in their work. Teachers and teaching assistants have received the training necessary to enable them to keep abreast of developments in the subject. Pupils are keen to learn and they make progress in all the main strands of the required curriculum. During the inspection, they were seen, for example, producing graphs, compiling spreadsheets, controlling a floor robot, researching subjects via the Internet and combining texts with images to display their work.

67. The subject leader serves his colleagues well, both directly with advice and technical help and by producing documents to support their practice. He has a clear view of standards and of how the school can improve. He monitors standards as they are demonstrated by pupils' work and checks teachers' planning. His monitoring of teaching and learning directly in lessons is more limited. Teachers have just started to use agreed procedures to assess pupils' progress and this should mean that they are better informed about standards in the future.

68. The school has a broadly average number of computers, mostly in classrooms. It makes effective use of a small central computer area where a few pupils can be taught together. With the current deployment of resources, it is difficult to teach a new skill to a whole class at the same time, even in rooms that have smartboards. This means that the time available for teaching new skills is not always used as efficiently as it could be, as the many small groups require separate teaching by an adult.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used satisfactorily across the curriculum. In English and mathematics, computers are used well to display and enhance work. Pupils' science books in Years 5 and 6 show good progression in the use of temperature graphs to record their findings from experiments. A pupil in Year 6 was seen finding a favourite logo on the Internet to use as part of his design for a slipper in design and technology. Pupils talk with interest about the ways they have used compact disks and the Internet in their research on a range of topics, such as the work on rivers and Victorian Britain. Pupils in Year 2 have produced well presented images of castles this term using a 'painting' program as part of their history topic and Year 1 pupils have made pictograms of how they travel to school, which support their geography work.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography and history

70. It is not possible to give judgements on standards of teaching in **geography** in Years 1 and 2 or in **history** in Years 3 to 6. Provision in the lessons that were seen was **satisfactory** in both subjects. Wider evidence taken from pupils' work show that pupils' achievements are sound and they reach the standards expected for their age.

71. The arrangements for planning the required curriculum are sound and pupils are taught in units of work that are tailored well to fit in with other topics that are studied. The school has adapted these units well to exploit the resources that are available locally. This was shown in Years 1 and 2 in pupils' work on the area immediately around the school and on nearby castles. Pupils learn about a wide range of people and places.

72. In **geography**, the oldest pupils begin to understand how different environments affect the lives of others and how people in turn affect the environment, as was seen when they studied the impact of tourism on a Greek village.

73. The subject leader for geography and history shows a keen interest in the subject and ensures that lessons are supported well by good quality resources. She has had too few opportunities to monitor teaching, learning or the curriculum directly by observing lessons. She has rightly identified the need for the school to consider whether additional time for both subjects could be provided by integrating aspects of them into other lessons, such as literacy sessions. New assessment arrangements are in place this term. These look promising but it is too early to judge their effectiveness in monitoring pupils' progress.

### Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to enrich their understanding through visitors to the school.
- Work is well presented.
- Learning is enriched by work in other subjects.

### Commentary

74. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils match the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily. Throughout the school there is sound

coverage of the curriculum, which makes a good contribution to pupils' personal, moral and spiritual development.

75. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about Bible stories and Jewish and Christian festivals. In their work about 'Ourselves', pupils learn about rules and relationships. Year 4 pupils learn about the reasons for prayer. In answer to a question about this, a higher attaining pupil referred to the Lord's Prayer, which they had studied earlier. Year 6 pupils learn about Christian beliefs through their work about the Salvation Army.

76. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and pupils are told what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Clear explanations and good question and answer sessions lead to pupils showing interest and the majority being involved in whole-class discussion. Teachers make good use of paired discussion, which involves pupils sharing ideas. As a result, most are confident in answering questions and offering opinions. Learning is enriched by work in other subjects such as art and design and technology.

77. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Planning shows systematic coverage of the locally Agreed Syllabus, which includes the study of world religions and is supported with elements of the nationally recommended Syllabus. The teaching of religious education is enriched by visitors, such as a Salvation Army officer talking to pupils in Year 6. Religious education provides a solid foundation for the good spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

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

Work was sampled in **art and design** where no teaching was seen, and in **design and technology**, where no teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 and only lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6. It is not possible therefore to make a secure overall judgement on provision for this curriculum area.

### **Art and design**

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

- The curriculum is varied and interesting.
- The leadership is knowledgeable and enthusiastic.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is limited.

### **Commentary**

78. No teaching of art and design took place during the inspection and therefore it is not possible to make a secure judgement on provision. Evidence has been taken from work currently on display and from within the school's portfolio of work completed over the past two years. Recently completed work indicates that, overall, standards are broadly similar to those expected nationally and that achievement is currently satisfactory. The selected work within the portfolio, however, shows standards that are above expectations and the achievement of those pupils whose work is included has clearly been good. The work of Year 5 pupils is of a particularly good standard, as they benefit the most from the subject leader's skill and imagination. Funding from the EAZ is to be used to target the needs of pupils who have a particular talent in art and design.

79. The subject leader has been keen to extend the school's repertoire of activities and has successfully promoted this by assessing the needs of colleagues and working alongside them to support their growing confidence and expertise, and by introducing national guidance to supplement the school's existing curriculum. Activities are varied and interesting, using a good range of media. Skills are systematically developed over time and pupils encouraged and enabled to develop ideas. Links with other subjects, such as English and history, have been identified and used, and the art

and design curriculum is adjusted where necessary to make this possible. Careful auditing of resource and training needs has resulted in clear and well-focused action plans for improvement, but the subject leader does not yet have the opportunity to monitor lessons to evaluate the success of innovations and support.

## **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **good** in Years 3 to 6.

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

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- More use could be made of ICT.

### **Commentary**

80. In the lessons seen, pupils achieved well as a result of effective teaching and the provision of good quality resources. They reached at least the expected standards in the quality of the products they made, which included slippers and musical instruments. They showed interest, enjoyment and application in their tasks and took a justified pride in their results. Particular strengths were the way teachers planned each unit of work to build on prior attainment and the quality of pupils' recording in their books. These strengths are also reflected in a collection of work from all age groups in the school, drawn from previous terms. Teachers plan lessons that include exciting activities to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. They enable pupils to work through the main stages of developing ideas, planning, making products and evaluating them. Units of work are adapted well to fit in with topics being taught in other subjects.

81. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are applied satisfactorily in their work. There is scope for pupils to use their skills in ICT more. The school has recently introduced a straightforward system for assessing pupils' progress. It is too early to judge its effectiveness but, if applied regularly, this should improve the way that the subject is monitored. The subject leader is capable and has an infectious enthusiasm. She has a good understanding of provision and of priorities for further development.

## **Music**

Provision for music is **very good**.

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

- Very good teaching leads to progressively good learning and very good achievements.
- The specialist teacher has very good subject knowledge.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and participate enthusiastically.
- The music curriculum is very well managed and organised.

### **Commentary**

82. All pupils attain standards above national expectations in all aspects of the subject. All classes achieve very well because they respond to the high standards expected of them. Pupils make very good progress as they move through the school because they are taught by a music specialist who builds up their musical understanding from the time they start school. They experience a good range of activities, which are designed to develop their skills. Pupils in Year 2 are taught to sing in tune and are developing a good sense of pitch. They demonstrate this by two groups singing *London Bridge is Falling Down* and *Pease Pudding Hot* at the same time. They learn to clap different rhythms which enable them to keep in time. This is used very successfully when they perform a medieval dance sequence. Older pupils show a secure knowledge of the hand signs which relate to notes on a

scale. They learn to play repeating patterns on xylophones and work well together, making the music loud or soft according to the mood they want to create and following the directions of a conductor. By Year 6, pupils learn to clap complex and syncopated rhythm patterns and confidently sing songs in more than two parts. Past work shows that pupils develop recording their compositions from simple pictures to musical notation.

83. As at the time of the last inspection, teaching remains very good. The pupils benefit from the very good subject knowledge of a specialist teacher and the subject makes a significant contribution to their cultural development. Lessons are very well planned, taking into account what pupils have learnt previously and they respond well to the high expectations and challenge. In lessons, they are very attentive, keen to participate and concentrate on their tasks. The teacher makes very good use of the keyboard, programming it to play accompaniments while she conducts or sings with the class.

84. Pupils are encouraged to learn to play musical instruments and many do so. The school runs several recorder clubs and visiting instrumental teachers give lessons in violin, cello, trumpet, guitar and keyboard. The curriculum is carefully linked to other subjects such as history, where Year 2 pupils sing and dance at a medieval banquet, and design and technology, where pupils make their own musical instruments. Accommodation has improved with curtaining of the hall to improve the acoustics. The good range of musical instrument is stored conveniently so lessons are prepared quickly and no time is lost at the start.

## **Physical Education**

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

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

- Teaching is good resulting in good achievement in Years 3 to 6.
- There is very good provision for a wide range of sports.
- Pupils' experience is widened through good links with other schools and colleges.

## **Commentary**

85. Standards in physical education remain above national expectations as they were reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils achieve well because work is well planned and taught, with a focus on developing skills.

86. In the three lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to ensure that they build upon previous work. There is a good balance between teachers giving clear instructions and pupils having time to practise their skills. In all lessons, pupils are beginning to evaluate and improve their own performance and pupil demonstration is well used for illustrating teaching points and encouraging pupils to evaluate each other's work.

87. The subject is well led and managed. The improvements to the timetable and use of the hall, playground and field create many opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of sports. There are particularly good links with partner schools where the school participates in sports festivals and physical education sports conferences. There is a good range of mixed sports teams in cricket, hockey and football, and the older pupils compete against other schools. Pupils' social development is well supported in these activities, and in lessons, as pupils learn to work together calmly and productively. A particular strength is the wide range of after-school clubs and competitions, including, netball, football, performing arts, basket ball, stool ball and cricket which are led by various members of staff and are well supported by the pupils.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Nurturing programmes for promoting social and personal skills.
- Good links with other areas of the curriculum.
- Effective use of 'circle time' style discussion to explore ideas.

### Commentary

88. There is a comprehensive policy for this area of the school's work that gives very good guidance to staff on how to increase pupils' skills and understanding over time. Opportunities within lessons on other subjects, such as design and technology, geography and art and design, are well used to explore relevant personal or social topics as a natural part of the lesson's discussion. The conventions of 'circle time' are well established and enjoyed by pupils, and their use allows many to contribute. Topics related to citizenship, and specifically on the theme of *consequences*, were very effectively covered in a Year 6 lesson through a combination of this type of discussion, warm-up games and drama.

89. A particularly strong feature of PSHE is the use of nurturing programmes, designed to help pupils build the positive patterns of behaviour which enable them to take a full part in their learning. Children in need of such support are identified in the Reception year and go to sessions taken by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Pupils experiencing difficulties in the playground can attend a lunchtime club. Supporting this second initiative is a 'Healthy Schools' scheme, which focuses on promoting playground games.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i>  | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>4</b>     |
| How inclusive the school is  | 3            |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4            |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 4            |
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b>                                    | <b>4</b>     |
| Pupils' achievement  | 4            |
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>        | <b>3</b>     |
| Attendance   | 3            |
| Attitudes  | 3            |
| 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>4</b>     |
| The quality of teaching  | 4            |
| How well pupils learn  | 4            |
| The quality of assessment  | 4            |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs                           | 4            |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities     | 3            |
| Accommodation and resources  | 4            |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                             | 3            |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                              | 3            |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views                  | 4            |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents                 | 3            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                 | 3            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                   | 3            |
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b>                   | <b>4</b>     |
| The governance of the school   | 5            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                    | 4            |
| The leadership of other key staff                                    | 4            |
| The effectiveness of management                                      | 4            |

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