

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLLINGBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hollingbourne, Maidstone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number:118292

Headteacher: Mr R Baldock

Lead inspector: Janet Sinclair

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th May 2005

Inspection number 267036

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:	92
School address:	Eyhorne Street Hollingbourne Maidstone Kent
Postcode:	ME17 1UA
Telephone number:	01622880270
Fax number:	01622880270
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Y Evans
Date of previous inspection:	15 th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hollingbourne is a small primary school located in a village near Maidstone in Kent. Pupils come from a predominantly white background, mostly of UK heritage. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language and few pupils of mixed background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need, which is also below average. Pupils' special educational needs include severe learning, autism, behaviour and communication. Pupils' economic circumstances vary widely but are mainly above average. Attainment on entry varies slightly from year to year but is a good average overall. In the last reporting year an above average number of pupils have joined or left the school, but this is not the norm.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19824	Mrs Janet Sinclair	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Mathematics; Science; Art and Design; Music.
9646	Mrs Geraldine Osment	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
23658	Mr Stephen Parker	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Geography; Physical Education Religious Education; Special Educational Needs.
1578	Mrs Maureen Sinclair	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Design and Technology; History; Information and Communication Technology.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education Services LTD
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3 AD

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well and sometimes very well in Years 3 to 6, as a result of good teaching. However, there are weaknesses in teaching and provision in the Year 1/2 class, and pupils are not achieving as well as they should in writing and only satisfactorily across the rest of the curriculum. The headteacher has created a very good ethos within the school and an enriched curriculum for the pupils. Value for money is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in English, science and religious education and well above average standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6, as a result of good teaching and provision in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards in writing are not high enough by the end of Year 2.
- Aspects of teaching and curricular provision in the Year 1/2 class are not good enough.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development, care and welfare and enriches the curriculum very well, and pupils respond with very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The headteacher and governors lead the school well.
- The school does not make sufficient provision for higher attaining pupils in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 6.
- There are inconsistencies across the school in assessment, marking and reporting to parents.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).
- The accommodation is inadequate for the teaching of gymnastics.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Lesson planning has improved and there are increased opportunities for mental mathematics in lessons. Standards have improved in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. However, standards in mathematics and writing are lower at the end of Year 2. The quality of teaching and learning is similar to that reported at the previous inspection, as is the leadership of the headteacher.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	A*	A*	A
mathematics	A	B	A	C
science	C	B	A	D

*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.*

Overall achievement is satisfactory. In Year 6, standards are currently above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics, and pupils are achieving well. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in ICT in Year 6 and do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs). Standards in Year 2 are average in reading and mathematics, and pupils achieve broadly satisfactorily, given the slightly above average attainment of this year group on entry to the school. Standards are below average in writing and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Children in Reception are

on course to attain the goals expected by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are on course to exceed expectations in personal, social and emotional development. Their achievement is satisfactory. There was not enough evidence to judge standards in the other areas of learning.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good across the school. Relationships are very good and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The school has very high expectations of their conduct and pupils respond very well. They enjoy coming to school because they know they will be well cared for and given many opportunities to take part in the school's extra-curricular activities. Pupils are punctual and the school encourages very good attendance.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. **Teaching and learning are satisfactory** overall, although some good and very good teaching was seen. Almost all of the good teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6. There was a small number of unsatisfactory lessons. Where teaching is good, lessons are well organised and teachers have clear expectations and provide a good structure to lessons. In these lessons, pupils are keen and motivated as a result of the good level of challenge.

Where teaching is less successful – mainly satisfactory, but occasionally unsatisfactory - there are missed opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge. Expectations are too low and input by the teacher excessive. Moreover, in the unsatisfactory lessons, the teacher's inadequate subject knowledge meant that work was not pitched at the correct level for the pupils.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, though opportunities for curricular enrichment are very good. The procedures for child protection, health and safety are very good. Partnership with parents is satisfactory and parents are very supportive of the school. Links with the community are very good and links with other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Governance is good. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in securing improvements. The headteacher provides good leadership through the creation of a very positive climate for learning. However, owing to the constraints of his teaching commitments within a small school, issues are not always tackled with the necessary rigour, and inconsistencies exist within the school across a number of areas. The leadership and management of other key staff is satisfactory overall. The school complies with all statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are supportive of the school. They are pleased that their children like school, and that they enjoy a good range of activities and are making good progress. Most think the school is well led and managed and their children are treated fairly. However, some parents consider that they are not well informed about their children's progress and they have concerns that their children may be bullied. The inspection team found that annual reports to parents were inconsistent and that most could give them more information on their children's progress. However, observations of pupils and discussions with them indicated that there was no evidence of any pupils being bullied or harassed. Children are positive about the school and enjoy finding things out in lessons. They think their teachers are fair and most believe that there is an adult they can go to if they are worried.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards in writing in Year 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching and curriculum in the Year 1/2 class.
- Improve provision for higher attaining pupils in ICT in Year 6 so that these pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Iron out the inconsistencies across the school in assessment, marking and reporting to parents, in order to secure whole school improvement.
- Improve the internal accommodation for physical education, as it currently inhibits the provision for gymnastics.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are above average in English, science and religious education in Year 6, and achievement is good. Standards are well above average in mathematics and pupils achieve very well. Standards in reading and mathematics are average in Year 2 and pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory, given their slightly above average attainment on entry. Standards in Year 2 are unsatisfactory in writing and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Children in Reception are on course to reach the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning where a judgement was made, except in personal, social and emotional development, where they are likely to exceed them. They achieve satisfactorily overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and provision in Years 3 to 6 leads to good achievement by the end of Year 6.
- Weaknesses in teaching and provision in Years 1 and 2 prevent pupils from attaining satisfactory standards in writing and affect achievement in lessons in science.
- Pupils with SEN achieve well.

Commentary

1. In the National Curriculum tests taken by pupils in Year 6 in 2004, results were well above average in mathematics and science and in the top 5 per cent nationally in English. The school's trend in improvement of results in Year 6 is above the national trend and pupils achieved well, given their attainment at the end of Year 2. Boys tend to achieve better than girls; but there was no evidence of differential achievement during the inspection. There are minor variations in standards year to year as a result of variations in such small cohorts, and the school is not expecting such high standards this year. Standards are currently above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. This is the result of good teaching in Years 3 to 6. In the case of mathematics it is also due to high levels of homework, booster classes for high and lower attaining pupils and a very thorough and structured approach to the teaching of the subject. Overall standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.

2. In the National Curriculum tests taken by pupils in Year 2 in 2004 the results were below average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. However, the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well below average. In comparison with that in similar schools, attainment in writing was well below average. Results of teacher assessments for science were in the top 5 per cent nationally at the expected Level 2 and well below average at the higher Level 3. Current standards in Year 2 are average in reading and mathematics. Standards are below average in writing and pupils do not achieve as well as they could in science. This is due to weaknesses in teaching, particularly subject knowledge, and to lack of adherence to the curriculum for science and to the National Literacy Strategy. Overall standards are lower than that at the time of the previous inspection.

3. Standards in ICT are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and this is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection. However, there are very few pupils who achieve at the higher Level 5, owing to a lack of challenge and assessment in order to tackle their needs more specifically. Standards in religious education are above the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Year 6. There was not enough evidence to judge standards or achievement in other subjects. However, indications are that higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are not always

sufficiently challenged in history and geography. Some creative and challenging work was seen in the Year 3/4 class in history, but pupils in Year 6 frequently undertake the same work as the rest of the class and this restricts the progress they are able to make. This is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection and the school has not yet addressed it, though it has plans to do so.

4. The proportion of pupils in the main school with SEN is less than is found nationally. These pupils are given good support in class, so that they achieve well.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.8 (15.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.7 (13.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.3 (15.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.0 (30.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	30.0(27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.5 (29.4)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very positive. Their personal qualities are developed very well. Pupils are punctual for the start of school and their attendance rate is well above the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils behave very well as a result of the school's high expectations of conduct and manners.
- The pupils' very good attitudes to school are reflected in their good standards of achievement by Year 6.
- Pupils' personal development is very good because the school gives a high priority to promoting it.
- The rate of attendance and the school's action to promote it are very good.

5. Parents are right in their judgement about behaviour in the school. In all lessons teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils demonstrate an understanding of this through the respect that they show to adults and each other. Pupils are very good at listening to their teachers, even when teachers spend a long time talking at them. As a consequence no time is wasted in lessons, because pupils are able to get on with the tasks that have been set for them. In assemblies and at break and lunch times pupils are well behaved; they play well together, older with younger children. Although some parents expressed concerns about bullying in the school, no unpleasantness or harassment was seen during the inspection.

6. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents spoke positively of the good family atmosphere within the school. The very good relationships that can clearly be seen between members of staff and pupils create a strong sense of community. All adults working in the school are kind and considerate towards pupils, and through their guidance and encouragement pupils are learning to work together well. This was clearly seen in a very good mathematics lesson in the Year 3/4 class when the pupils were solving problems, using odd and even numbers. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were very positive about the help and support they receive from their teachers.

7. The nurturing of pupils' personal and social skills has a high priority in the school. Pupils treat each other with respect, and those with special needs play a full part in the life of their class.

8. Lunchtimes are well organised and are good social occasions. The many and varied trips and visits that the pupils make contribute very positively to their maturity. Assemblies are used very well to enhance pupils' spiritual development. For example, the vicar used his visit on Ascension Day to release a balloon to show Jesus's return to heaven. Pupils choose the hymns for assemblies and they take part in Friday meditation. In many lessons, particularly literacy, mathematics and science, pupils are encouraged to explore, experiment and express their feelings. Teachers use the community and local area well to enhance pupils' understanding of their own culture and the rich heritage of the Kent countryside, including the annual egg rolling ceremony and the visit to woodland in Canterbury to re-enact Anglo Saxon life. Pupils learn about other religions in religious education and about other countries and cultures in history and geography. They make visits to a Hindu temple and learn about other cultures through visitors, such as those from Africa.

9. Parents show their support for the school by bringing their children regularly and on time. The headteacher makes the school's attendance policy very clear to parents and ensures that it is rigorously adhered to. Regular and punctual attendance is having a positive impact on pupils' good standards of achievement by the end of Year 6. There have been no exclusions in the last school year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (95.8%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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 quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory but is enriched very well through the use of visits, visitors, extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities. The teaching is satisfactory overall, although good teaching in the core subjects in Years 3 to 6 is enabling pupils to achieve well. Pupils are looked after very well, and there are very good links with the community and satisfactory links with parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and sometimes very good.
- There are weaknesses in teaching and curricular provision in the Year 1/2 class, which result in pupils not achieving as well as they should in writing or science.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour help with their learning.
- The very good teaching assistant in the Foundation Stage makes a significant contribution to teaching and standards.
- There is good analysis of whole school results of national and optional tests in the core subjects, and appropriate action is taken.
- The assessment of non-core subjects is at an early stage.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not consistently aware of what level they have attained or what they need to do to reach the next one.
- Pupils with SEN are taught well.

Commentary

10. Some good and very good teaching was seen, almost all of which was in Years 3 to 6. In these lessons planning is detailed and learning intentions shared with the pupils. Teachers have high expectations and make very good use of resources. This enables pupils to make good progress in their learning as they know what is expected of them and are fully challenged. In some of the lessons in the Year 3/4 class, good use is made of drama and practical activity to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils were able to mime their activities and discuss dilemmas arising from their history work on World War Two. Additionally, the teacher's enormous enthusiasm for history and very high expectations fully engaged and challenged pupils. In these lessons very good relationships and very good behaviour ensure that pupils are highly motivated and keen to do well.

11. Teaching in the Year 1/2 class is occasionally unsatisfactory. In English, this is due mainly to the teacher's inadequate knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy, with the result that the structure to teaching writing is not developed or followed through consistently. It also means that the level of challenge is too low. In science, although the curriculum is securely in place, the teacher sometimes chooses to use lessons and work from the scheme of work for pupils in Years 3 to 6, which are beyond the pupils' level of understanding and lead to confusion or complete lack of understanding, particularly for the Year 1 pupils. In terms of providing adequate levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils, the teacher is not always clear about what challenges pupils, and her use of a fairly didactic approach does not allow her to explore what they actually know and can do.

12. In all lessons, pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour ensure that they are motivated to learn and are keen to do well. For example, in several mental mathematics sessions, pupils were very keen to be first to get the correct answer and worked hard to ensure they did so. They listen well to the teachers' introductory talk so that they are clear about their tasks. Even when occasionally the teacher's talk lasts too long and interest is beginning to wane, they still behave very well.

13. The very good support staff in Reception play a major role in the children's teaching and learning. For example, the teaching assistant quickly spots children in difficulty and gives help and support. She also regularly assesses their contribution in lessons and this has a positive effect on their learning. This is a major factor in the children's satisfactory progress.

14. The headteacher ensures that pupils' results in national and yearly tests are well analysed and that appropriate action is quickly taken, such as the introduction of booster classes for underachieving pupils. The tracking and assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory in the core subjects across the school, with the exception of mathematics for pupils in Years 3 - 6, where it is good.

15. Some teachers use good questioning techniques and this helps them to assess how much pupils understand in lessons. However, teachers do not always share the learning intention with the class or refer back to it at the end of lessons, which would help pupils gauge how much they have learned. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given literacy targets but these are not discussed with them, nor are they always referred to when teachers mark work. Most marking in books does not give pupils guidance on how to improve their work or reach the next National Curriculum Level. Marking is not consistently applied across the school, and each teacher has his or her own approach. The best marking occurs in the Year 3/4 class, where the teachers make helpful comments in relation to the subject and suggest areas for improvement. Pupils act on this and improvement is evident.

16. Although work has begun on assessing the non-core subjects against three levels of attainment, pupils are not consistently aware of what level they have attained and what they must do to reach a higher standard. A pilot for humanities teaching in Years 3 - 5 is looking at this issue. There are plans to enhance formative assessment and pupils' involvement in the learning process through a greater focus on self-evaluation and peer review.

17. Pupils with SEN are fully included in all class activities. Teachers include them in discussions and in reviews at the end of lessons. Tasks for them are adjusted to reflect the targets set out in their IEPs. Teaching assistants play a good part in supporting them in lessons, helping them to meet their targets and praising their achievements to boost their confidence. Their progress is monitored regularly and their targets are adjusted as necessary. Some lower attaining pupils are withdrawn for specific phonics teaching, using programmes such as ‘phonic awareness’ and ‘sound progress’, and good records of this work are kept by the teaching assistant.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3	6	10	2	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.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory, and is extended through a very good range of out-of-class activities. Resources are good but the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning for all subjects emphasises enjoyable practical experiences.
- There is good provision for pupils with SEN.
- Pupils are very well prepared to move on to secondary education.
- Planning does not always ensure that higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged.
- The curriculum is very effectively enriched through visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.
- Resources support pupils’ learning well but the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

18. The curriculum meets requirements, and planning is soundly based on national guidance. Teachers ensure that topics and activities are chosen for their high interest level, and the emphasis on practical experiences is a successful feature of all subjects. French is taught to older pupils as an additional subject. Pupils’ mental arithmetic skills have improved, following the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy. The National Literacy Strategy has prompted an improvement in the quality and range of books, leading to higher standards in reading than at the previous inspection. However, significant recommendations for the structure of weekly plans and phases of the literacy hour are not followed closely enough in Years 1 and 2, and standards of writing are too low. Good use is made of opportunities for reading and writing in other subjects in Years 3 to 6. The new computer suite has had a positive effect on standards, and the range of ICT applications in other subjects is satisfactory.

19. Overall, pupils’ development is well planned, and they are very well prepared to transfer to secondary school. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Teachers are generally successful in adjusting their teaching to meet the needs of pupils across the two or more year groups in each class. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the planning of work that challenges pupils with higher attainment. However, planning needs to be monitored more closely because instances were noted in history, geography and religious education where all pupils were set the same task, with no evidence of additional challenge for those with higher attainment. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified. One is given additional tuition in music but there is no specific provision for the others.

20. Pupils identified on the SEN register are given IEPs that set out clear targets focused on their identified needs. As a result, teachers have clear guidance in planning appropriate work for them. Targets are adjusted in the light of assessments so that pupils continue to make good progress. Effective use is made of short-term intensive programmes to boost the skills of pupils who need help, notably in literacy.

21. The headteacher's enthusiasm for extending pupils' learning through hands-on experiences inspires and motivates them. For example, they are involved in the Junior Engineer of Britain and Child of Achievement social skills competitions. Pupils clearly enjoy the residential trips and visits to such places as the North Downs Lost Landscapes, Herstmonceux Science Park, the River Darent, and Dover Museum. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is enhanced by visitors to the school, including the vicar, senior citizens talking to pupils about their World War Two experiences, and African dancers and musicians. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities which enable pupils to compete against other schools in sports, including football and netball, and they receive external coaching for rugby. The choir performs in the local community. These activities are good for pupils' personal development.

22. Resources are good in English, mathematics, science and history, and they enhance pupils' learning. The school uses every available space to the full. Classrooms are small, but because of the very good behaviour and attitudes of the pupils this does not cause too many problems. A computer suite has been added, and together with whiteboards and laptops it has improved the provision for ICT. The co-ordinator for SEN has no office or specific area for her administrative duties. Lack of storage space means that SEN records are stored in the Reception classroom and teaching resources in the toilets. This is unsatisfactory.

23. The hall is unsatisfactory and currently not suitable for teaching the whole range of physical education skills, and there is a shortage of large gymnastics equipment because of lack of space in the hall. However, the school is due to have a replacement hall within the next year. The playground is very small and has to double as a car park, but the pupils are able to use the large field for recreation.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure the care, guidance and welfare of the pupils are very effective. Achievement and personal development are monitored well. The pupils' involvement in school developments is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes very good care of its pupils.
- The very good relationships between pupils and adults help the pupils to feel secure in school.
- Pupils' involvement in school developments is good.
- Pupils with SEN are well cared for.

24. The systems for safeguarding pupils' health and safety, child protection procedures, first aid and medical support are very effective. Although the provision for SEN is good, the school has requested more specialist support from outside agencies for pupils with rarer SEN. The Year 5 buddies feel that they support younger pupils well. Meals are well presented, and during break and lunchtimes the pupils are supervised appropriately. The school use local community members well, including the fire and police services, to support the PSHE programme. Parents are very happy with the care that is taken of their children and with the good arrangements to settle their children into the Reception class, which helps prepare them for learning.

25. All adults who work in the school form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that there are adults they can go to if they have worries. Teachers know the pupils very well and are able to monitor their personal development effectively.

In many lessons, teachers give pupils opportunities to express their ideas and opinions and also the confidence to share their feelings with their teachers and classmates. Teachers listen well to pupils during lessons; they value their contributions, and this helps to build self-esteem.

26. The headteacher values the opinions of the pupils and encourages them to take responsibility around the school. The oldest pupils choose the hymns for assemblies and organise the music and equipment. They are encouraged to help in the library and have worked with teachers and parents to improve the outdoor environment. The headteacher seeks their views through an annual questionnaire and shares the responses with them.

27. Pupils with SEN are well cared for. Teachers and assistants develop close relationships with them, encouraging them to join fully in all activities. Records of their progress and needs are well focused and maintained.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. Links with the community are very effective and there are good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents support the school very well.
- The school recognises that communication with parents needs improvement.
- The school's partnership with the community enhances the curriculum.

Commentary

28. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting were mainly positive. Many parents show good support for the school through helping in classrooms and on visits and by attending the friends association fund raising and social events. Parents are very supportive of the school's homework policy, encourage their children to read regularly, and help them with research and topic work. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

29. The termly parent/teacher consultations are very well attended but some parents are unhappy that they are not always able to make appointments with teachers. Although there is a termly newsletter, parents feel that they are not kept well informed about school events. Each class sends parents curricular newsletters telling them what their children will be studying and any ways in which they can support them. Parents find it useful that the annual reports to parents are now sent out in the spring term, but they are not written in a consistent style. Although reports inform parents of what their children know, understand and can do, they do not set clear targets for improvement. Parents of pupils with special needs are kept fully informed of their children's progress.

30. The school is an integral part of the local community. The vicar leads a weekly assembly, and senior citizens support pupils' learning in history and geography. Pupils take part in village events such as the Armistice memorial service, Harvest Festival in the local church, a senior citizens' party and maypole dancing displays. The choir sang at the Leeds Castle Christmas celebrations and at All Saints Church in Maidstone in a Sing around Christmas schools' event. All of these very good opportunities promote pupils' personal and social development effectively.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good and the governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides good leadership within a very caring and supporting ethos.
- Issues are not always tackled with sufficient rigour and this leads to inconsistencies across the school.
- Although subject leadership is overall sound, there are weaknesses which impede good progress.
- Finances are well managed and used.
- Governance is good.

Commentary

31. The headteacher leads the school enthusiastically. He himself provides high quality teaching and a good focus on experiential learning. He is committed to getting the best for his pupils and ensuring that they achieve well both academically and personally. Through rich extra-curricular provision, he ensures that personal development needs are very well catered for. The school is fully inclusive. In terms of standards; the headteacher ensures that test results are analysed and pupils' progress monitored. As a result, booster classes have been provided in mathematics for both high and low attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6. Lower attaining pupils and those with SEN are well catered for through good support in lessons.

32. There is an appropriate school improvement plan, which clearly identifies the school's main areas for improvement. However, owing to the headteacher's teaching commitment some of the improvements identified in it, although dealt with, are not always followed through sufficiently to ensure that improvement is secure. For example, in writing in Years 1 and 2, although a great deal of support has been given, there has not been enough done in terms of monitoring and therefore there remain weaknesses in the teaching of writing. Inconsistencies exist across many areas of the school, such as in the marking of work and in reports to parents. A weakness in the school improvement plan is the fact that although success criteria are identified in the plan, they are often too general in nature to enable the success of initiatives to be rigorously monitored.

33. Whilst most subject leaders provide satisfactory and sometimes good leadership in their subjects, they do not have an overview of the whole school. They particularly do not know enough about what is happening in Years 1 and 2. The result is that they have no clear idea of where the strengths and weaknesses lie and of how to build on the former and tackle the latter.. Some staff have too many key roles and limited time out of class to fulfil them, which makes it difficult for them to be successful in securing improvement or monitoring subject provision. For example, one member of staff is responsible for the Foundation Stage, SEN and ICT.

34. The governing body is well informed, and as a result it is effective in guiding school development. The chair of governors is in close contact, visiting the school each week and taking on a major role in analysing test results for other governors and the school, ensuring that governors have a good understanding of the school's effectiveness. Other governors take part in a programme of visits for agreed purposes, including the observation of lessons. The governing body works closely with the school's senior management, and this is a positive partnership. The governors play a satisfactory role in challenging senior management. However, their effectiveness in this area is limited because the school improvement plan does not set out clear criteria by which the success of the school's targets can be judged.

35. Finances are well managed. The school's admin officer works very efficiently, using up-to-date software that allows spending to be closely monitored. The governors' finance committee is

kept fully informed and has the expertise to check spending patterns. There are current concerns over future funding against a falling roll and new staffing requirements, but governors are working with the headteacher to produce contingency plans. Spending priorities are well thought out in order to improve provision and raise standards. For example, the new library and computer suite have had a good impact on learning. The governors' efforts to secure a new school hall have been successful, and building work is expected to begin in the near future. Funding for pupils with SEN is spent appropriately for their benefit. Recommended procedures are carefully followed and record keeping is systematic. Expenditure per pupil is slightly high even for a small school; overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	342,620.00
Total expenditure	336,777.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,660.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25,036.00
Balance carried forward to the next	30,873.00

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. A new unit has recently been refurbished to a high standard and an outdoor area imaginatively designed. The teacher, who has a number of other roles in the school, has been well supported by the local education authority (LEA) specialist staff. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Examples of good practice have been introduced, such as a balance between formal and informal teaching, and between teacher-directed activities and the opportunity for children to play. An appropriate curriculum and assessment procedures are in place but these have not yet been fine-tuned or carefully monitored and evaluated. Teaching is satisfactory. There are some missed opportunities to extend the children's capabilities, although there are some good aspects such as a strong team approach by all the adults, including parents, involved in the Foundation Stage. Very good support staff play a major role in the children's teaching and learning, including the establishment of a secure and happy environment. This is a major factor in the children's satisfactory progress.

37. By the end of Reception, the large majority of children are on course to meet the expected goals in all the areas of learning on which a judgement could be made, with the exception of personal, social and emotional development, which exceeds expectations. Overall, they make satisfactory progress, as their attainment on entry is average. The small number of lower attaining children and those who have been identified as having SEN are well supported and make good progress. This is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children behave well and have positive attitudes and relationships.
- Good use is made of stories to promote empathy for others.

Commentary

38. The good relationships ensure that all children feel happy and secure and that personal development is promoted well. Almost all will reach the early learning goals and some will exceed them. Children benefit from a good induction process that has a number of carefully planned visits and activities so that they gradually feel at home in the classroom. Staff regularly visits the local play groups and consequently many children already know the new adults when they start school. An effective focus on class routines, such as washing hands before lunch, establishes a sense of order. Staff have high expectations that children will quickly learn to become more independent, and they do. They register themselves and respond sensibly and maturely when choosing their activities. Children work well independently in a variety of situations such as painting or using the computer. They learn to share and listen carefully to each other during group activities, although a few find it more difficult to pay close attention when involved in more formal settings. Stories are skilfully used to help children develop empathy for the plight of others, such as 'The Hungry Caterpillar'.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good support staff, and parental involvement through extensive homework opportunities, extend the children's learning well.
- There are missed opportunities to extensively reinforce the links between letters and sounds and the implication for reading and writing.

Commentary

39. A planned approach to teaching all aspects of communication, language and literacy results in satisfactory learning. An emphasis on role play enables children to act out a number of stories, such as 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. These activities, and the focus on speaking and listening throughout the school day, ensure that achievement is satisfactory. They are a sound basis for the development of reading, which is taught in a structured manner. Children learn letters and their sounds and use this knowledge to reach reading standards that are average. There were, however, missed opportunities to consistently reinforce their understanding of the links between letters and sounds, for both reading and writing. The majority of the class are keen participants in shared reading activities, although there are one or two who find it hard to listen carefully for extended periods. Children are encouraged to recall the main points of a story but there are too few challenging opportunities that focus on the use of more advanced sequencing and inference skills. Handwriting and writing are methodically taught. The size and shape of the children's letters are appropriate. Nearly all Reception children can write their name and are beginning to link words together with meaning, although many have still only a hazy idea of full stops and capital letters. There are good links with home, so that the school, children and parents work as a strong partnership.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Sometimes activities are too difficult and children's interest is affected.
- There is a good range of tasks which help to reinforce mathematical skills.

Commentary

40. Children are taught satisfactorily and consequently they achieve satisfactorily. A range of strategies is planned to promote mathematical development. For example, a formal teaching session began with a brisk recap of earlier learning, with the group able to count up to 60, although their concentration lessened as the afternoon progressed. Two children who were playing with water sorted objects into sets. A comprehensive album of photo evidence shows that the class have been involved in various mathematical activities which include making squares and other shapes and learning about repeating patterns. Practical activities increase conceptual understanding. For example, children involved in buying plants and pots began to learn about money and simple counting and addition, although some were finding this difficult. They were taught mathematical language such as 'greater' during a tallying exercises, and their completion of construction tower blocks increased their understanding of length.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the local area and community to increase the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- There were missed opportunities to challenge children's thinking about scientific phenomena such as sinking and floating.

Commentary

41. Good use is made of the local environment to extend learning. For example, the children go on nature walks and study the range of houses in the village. The well-planned visit to the nearby Nursery centre enabled them to see a range of plants, including oranges and lemons, and formed the basis for the planting of their own seeds. Children could talk knowledgeably about the need for water and light. A visit to the seaside forms the basis of their learning about the seashore and the seaside past and present. Scientific exploration and investigation often occur during small group activities. Children were thoroughly engrossed in deciding which objects sank and which floated, but staff missed opportunities to encourage them to talk about their findings and suggest why this might be happening. Children are involved in simple construction activities and use the computers to extend their understanding of other aspects of the curriculum, such as drawing symmetrical patterns. Bible stories, such as Noah's Ark, help to develop their ability to empathise as well as giving them an insight into culture and belief.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

42. Good use is made of the well conceived outdoor play area, with many opportunities for physical development during outdoor play and the varied activities that children engage in. The skills of co-ordination, balance and an awareness of space are extended. For example, the children use scooters to manoeuvre around cones, or ride the bicycles whilst acting as delivery boys.

43. There are dance sessions in the very small school hall, which is not a good environment for more robust games and gymnastics activity. All the children develop their manipulative skills well through a range of activities such as baking, cutting and sticking objects, and the persistent focus on handwriting skills encourages fine motor skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

44. In the work seen, the children were achieving satisfactorily in this area of learning. A range of interesting activities allows them to respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. They explore through the use of sand and water. There is an effective blend of clear instruction and allowing children to explore and investigate. For example, the children were taught about primary colours when painting a rainbow and then encouraged to consider how to make other colours. They make clay pots and sculptures with natural materials. They learn to sing some songs and to make simple music. Many opportunities are provided for creativity and imaginative play during various role play activities. Children are encouraged to express themselves through dance and their response to music, as when they imagine themselves as snowflakes in a blizzard. Their imagination is extended by such activities as painting about bad dreams and creating spells after hearing about *Winnie The Witch*. There was little evidence that the more able children had been encouraged to review their work and suggest improvements.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching in Years 3 to 6, reaching above average standards by Year 6.
- Standards in writing are not high enough by the end of Year 2.
- Speaking and listening and reading are given good attention.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is effective.

Commentary

45. Results in the Year 6 national tests were in the top 5 per cent nationally in 2004 and for the last four years have been at least well above the national average and that of similar schools. Due to variations in cohorts, standards in the present Year 6 are not as high as those of last year, but they are above average in speaking, listening and writing, and well above average in reading. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

46. Results in the Year 2 national tests have varied widely over recent years. In 2002, they were well above average, but they have fallen since. In 2004, results in reading were average compared with those of schools nationally and of similar schools. The fall in writing has been greater, with results in 2004 that were below the national average and well below the average of similar schools. This is a deterioration since the last inspection.

47. In the broader range of work outside the tests, standards in the present Year 2 are above average in speaking and listening and average in reading. Standards in writing continue to be below average and pupils are underachieving. The school has sought specialist advice and this is leading to some improvement, particularly in brief forms such as poetry. Standards of spelling and punctuation are satisfactory. Some pupils write in a joined style, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Higher attaining pupils write interesting stories, with good use of dramatic dialogue, but generally pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length. The main weakness affecting writing standards is that the focus of lessons changes much too frequently, giving pupils too little time to master the key principles of any one kind of writing. This was evident in an unsatisfactory lesson seen in the Year 1/2 class. The structure of the lesson and the plans for the week did not closely follow the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy. For instance, many pupils made too little progress because not enough time was spent in showing them how to write dialogue for a puppet play. The resulting written work was weak because expectations for pupils of different ability were not made clear. Standards were not checked rigorously enough as they wrote, or at the end of the lesson. Nevertheless, the interesting task held their attention well and they made good progress in speaking and listening. A pupil with special needs performed particularly well, speaking in character.

48. By Year 2, pupils listen carefully to instruction and work well together on shared tasks. They generally have a wide vocabulary and want to join in discussions. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from drama activities to extend their range of experience, and this was a very effective feature of one lesson seen. Teachers have high expectations for response during discussions and involve all pupils. As a result, pupils speak clearly and thoughtfully, reaching a good standard by Year 6. Nevertheless, more use could be made of the review at the end of lessons to challenge pupils to take the lead in speaking formally and at length.

49. Reading books are graded to ensure consistent progress and it is a good feature that pupils are expected to move quickly on to wider reading. By Year 2, skills in sounding out unfamiliar words

are secure. Pupils can explain the meaning of what they read and this skill is developed through the school in regular small group discussions led by a teacher or assistant. Year 2 pupils have been well taught to read aloud with expression. Homework makes a very good contribution to learning. By Year 6, many pupils are very keen and most have wide reading interests. Reading books likely to interest boys have been purchased. This has been particularly effective with one Year 6 pupil with SEN, who is making very good progress because of his intense interest in his present reading book.

50. Teaching was good in the three lessons seen in Years 3 to 6. These pupils make good progress because of:

- * Teachers' high expectations for the quality of pupils' work;
- * Energetic teaching, using stimulating and challenging resources;
- * Regular opportunities to read and write in other subjects;
- * Additional help and resources given for those having difficulties.

51. Tasks are well planned so that pupils write confidently for a range of purposes by Year 6. Standards of spelling and punctuation are good, and pupils use a wide range of vocabulary and sentence patterns. A small amount of work is word-processed, with good results. Marking is inconsistent. It is sometimes used to boost confidence through praise, but teachers do not always require further work which would help individuals learn from their mistakes.

52. The subject is well led and managed. Assessment information is used effectively to identify pupils who are falling behind. Selected pupils are withdrawn for short bursts of intensive instruction. Pupils with SEN achieve well through the school. Tasks are matched to their individual targets. Teaching assistants play a key role in helping small groups, and these pupils make good progress at such times.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Opportunities for reading and writing are planned into other subjects in Years 3 to 6. Year 2 pupils have achieved well in writing postcards as part of recent work in geography, though they need more opportunities to write at length in other subjects. By Year 6, pupils have good skills in reading for information. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, reflecting the development of the school library.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 achieve very well as a result of effective teaching and provision across Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching in Year 2 does not enable pupils to make good progress in lessons.
- There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good overall.

Commentary

54. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well as a result of good teaching in these years. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, pay good attention to mental mathematics and provide well organised and structured lessons. This is supplemented well by regular homework, which is conscientiously marked by teachers, and by booster classes for both high and lower attaining pupils. The staff ensure that mental mathematics is taught in a stimulating manner which motivates pupils to give of their best and compete happily with each other to get correct answers. Teachers clearly know the subject well and enjoy teaching it, and this has clear benefits for pupils.

55. In the Year 1/2 class, the teaching is methodical but very didactic, giving little opportunity for pupils to find out things for themselves or to carry out investigations. In the mental mathematics session seen, pupils were not stimulated because the pace and type of questions the teacher asked did not encourage a quick fire response. The teacher tries to ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs and works hard to achieve this, but because work is so directed it is difficult to know how much better pupils could achieve. They are not working to capacity and do not make the good progress in lessons that is now expected. This was confirmed by the sample of work. In the satisfactory lesson, which was well planned and organised, there were weaknesses. The teacher's instructions were not always clear and this led to some confusion. Although most of the group tasks were at an appropriate level, a few Year 1 pupils found their work daunting, and the extension activity for the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 was not explained clearly to them at the outset.

56. Regular assessments are carried out in Years 3 to 6 and these are analysed and individual and group needs identified. There is then an action plan for all staff in order to secure improvement. This information is also used to identify pupils for booster groups. Pupils have personal targets for their numeracy work, which they are expected to complete when they have attained each target.

57. There is good leadership and management of the subject. The subject leader has purchased a good quantity of suitable books and resources to support the teaching. Where necessary, she has also engaged external support. She has ensured that the planning for the mixed age classes is appropriate to both age groups. She has organised staff meetings and training on problem solving this year, which has been a whole school focus for improvement. However, it would be helpful to give greater support to teachers in the Year 1/2 class, as their position is rather isolated.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Mathematics is used well across the curriculum and consequently pupils are developing a good understanding of the practical uses of the subject. It is used well in science for measuring length and recording and for comparing the results of investigations. It was used in PSHE to calculate the annual cost of cigarettes and in geography for measuring river flow.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Weaknesses in teaching and curricular provision in the Year 1/2 class prevent pupils, especially high attainers, from achieving as well as they could.
- The subject leader has an inadequate grasp of the subject requirements.

Commentary

59. Standards are average at the end of Year 2, and pupils achieve appropriately at the expected level but less so at the higher level. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well. This is an improvement in standards in Year 6 since the previous inspection.

60. In Years 3 to 6, lessons are well planned and organised, with a good amount of time given to investigative work. This was a recent focus for the school and there was good evidence of its being put into practice. In the Year 5/6 class particularly, there are high expectations of both the quality and the presentation of work. Work is well laid out, showing resources, method and conclusion, and all diagrams are well labelled. This helps to develop the pupils' scientific knowledge and establish

good working habits. In the lesson seen, good links were made with health education as pupils discussed the effects of smoking on the body. This lesson concluded with pupils making posters to dissuade people from starting the habit – some were quite startling. The general consensus of the class was that they would not smoke. In the Year 3/4 class, marking is clearly focused on scientific content and pupils are expected to respond to it. They undertake a good number of experiments and record what they have learnt. They make good use of graphs, label diagrams well and make sensible predictions. Pupils are developing good scientific knowledge and are using a range of scientific vocabulary such as 'current', 'cell' and 'insulator' appropriately. The main weakness in their work is that it is often untidily presented.

61. Standards in science are broadly average at the end of Year 2, although there is little evidence of appropriate work at the higher Level 3. It will therefore be difficult for many to achieve at this level. There are few experiments, some not related to the Year 1/2 scheme of work, and not all completed, and some work is not carried out in sufficient depth. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 showed that they have a sound understanding of the work undertaken at the appropriate level and are developing a satisfactory scientific knowledge and understanding. However, sometimes the teacher chooses to give them work which is normally planned for older pupils; they find this too difficult and end up with an incomplete understanding of the subject matter or are confused. This is particularly true of Year 1 pupils who are given the same tasks. For example, in the unsatisfactory lesson seen, the work was not part of the Year 1/2 curriculum plans for science but was intended for much older pupils. The teacher's explanations were not clear, comparisons were not well made, and pupils had a very limited understanding as a result.

62. The subject leader is very new, and although enthusiastic and keen to improve science she has an incomplete understanding of what is appropriate for each age group and of how this needs to be built on if scientific concepts are to be understood.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Work in ICT was sampled, as the school timetable meant that only one lesson could be seen.

63. In the lesson seen, the attainment of a small group of Year 2 pupils working with a learning assistant was good. They successfully used the internet to research a science topic. Good teaching resulted in an increase in their understanding of how to use the website and the function of a toolbar. Careful questioning promoted some good ideas about whether it was better to use a book to find the information. However, a scrutiny of work in their portfolios indicates that, over time, the standard of their work is satisfactory. No direct teaching was seen in Years 3 - 6 but discussions with pupils, and scrutiny of their work and of the teachers' planning, indicated that they had learnt a number of ICT skills such as desk top publishing, e-mailing and the use of the Internet. They had experience of control and the use of sensors to ascertain the weather. Other areas of the curriculum not yet covered are to be taught, with help from the local education authority, as part of the teachers' professional development, thereby enhancing pupils' achievement by the end of the academic year. Older pupils have not studied to a higher standard and this hinders their ability to attain really well. They are not sufficiently challenged to evaluate their work against criteria that they have chosen.

64. Leadership and management are just satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a number of onerous roles and until very recently had no non-contact time to help fulfil the tasks. This has made monitoring of teaching and learning difficult, especially in Years 3 to 6, where assessment is under developed and not as strong as it is in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum is satisfactory in that it is line with national guidelines, which are followed by the teachers, but detailed schemes of work are not yet finished. There is a three-year plan and an awareness of development needs. In-service training is highlighted, as is the pressing need to update the hardware so that the system is fully compatible, with suitable interchangeable software, and that it meets modern standards. There is an attractive ICT suite, which was underused during the week of the inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. There was evidence across the school of links between ICT and other curricular activities. Year 6 are engaged in a multi-media presentation about Elizabethan times, and many classes use desk top publishing to produce interesting 'Blurbs' about books they are reading. Pupils use word processing to draft text. Art is developed through the use of Paint programmes and the Internet to research artists such as Bridget Riley. However, there is not an extensive use of ICT as a tool to aid learning, and there has been no audit to monitor the actual and potential impact of ICT on the teaching of subjects. There is no technical support, although the school is exploring ways of remedying this.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history were sampled

66. No lessons were seen in **geography**, but a sample of pupils' work from each class shows that the curriculum meets requirements and pupils reach the expected standard for their age. Study is imaginatively extended through visits to local sites and contact with other countries through the work of charities. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of other cultures.

67. All pupils are included successfully in the work because they record their learning in different ways, such as drawings, diagrams, charts and maps. By Year 6, pupils show sound skills in interpreting evidence from maps in a range of scales and photographs of contrasting locations. On occasion, the same task is set for all pupils regardless of their ability, with no evident higher challenge for the more able. Nevertheless, pupils' explanations of what they have found, for instance in studying a local river, show a well informed interest in the work.

68. No evaluation about the overall provision or the quality of teaching and learning can be given for **history**, as not enough lessons were observed during the inspection. A selection of pupils' work and the displays around the school were analysed and planning was scrutinised. The evidence indicates that standards achieved by Year 6 pupils are satisfactory, although above average standards were seen in the lesson in the Year 3/4 class.

69. A Year 2 project on *Toys In the Past* had been well taught, with pupils benefiting from a range of approaches. They looked at toys in their favourite stories and compiled graphs about their favourite ones. Pupils had to decide which toys were from the past and which from the present and give reasons for their answers.

70. The Year 3/4 class benefited from very good teaching, characterised by good planning and great enthusiasm and vigour, effectively communicated to the pupils. Consequently, they were deeply involved as they considered what it was like for children during World War II. They were engaged by the extremely good collection of artefacts and the presence of a local resident who had been a teenager at the time. They had independently prepared a list of highly appropriate questions and were involved in finding out the answers in a most mature fashion. Standards were good; they would have been very good if the older pupils had examined the question of differing interpretations more closely. The extensive use of artefacts, visits and visitors enlivens history throughout the school. From the work seen, pupils in Year 6 reach satisfactory standards. Their work on the Tudors is sound but lacks an awareness of why interpretations might differ, and there are too few attempts to link cause and effect. This was also the case during a history lesson on the

social organisation of Sparta, where teaching was satisfactory. Pupils' ability to achieve the higher attainment levels is hindered by lack of challenge in the work. The school follows national guidelines but there is no co-ordinator to rigorously monitor and keep up to date with the changing curriculum and expectations.

Religious Education

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, reaching standards above those expected by Year 6.
- The curriculum is well planned and resourced.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

71. Standards at the end of Year 2 continue to meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved and are above expectations.

72. Work seen in Year 2 indicates a sound understanding of major Christian festivals and Bible stories. Pupils also know some of the customs and beliefs of Hinduism. Higher attaining pupils retell the story of Rama and Sita at length, with good attention to detail. Overall, much written work is brief, though facts are accurately recorded. Pupils are encouraged to relate the subject to their own experiences and values, for instance by writing their own prayers. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 show good understanding of the key principles of Judaism, resulting from a well-planned sequence of lessons. Less work than this has been covered in Year 6, but the quality of pupils' responses is good and they show a good understanding of significant beliefs and practices of Islam.

73. Two lessons were seen, both in Years 3 to 6. Teaching was satisfactory in one lesson and good in the other. These lessons were planned carefully around issues relating to pupils' own experiences. The teachers showed good subject knowledge, and instruction was well informed. Pupils were encouraged to consider how the principles and practices of other religions related to their own experience. Shortage of time limited pupils' spoken and written contributions in the satisfactory lesson.

74. The subject is well led and managed to ensure that pupils study a range of topics in depth. The co-ordinator guides planning, and it is a good feature that pupils' progress is recorded, using an officially recommended format. The scheme of work is extended well through the programme of school assemblies, which focus mainly on Christian worship but with occasional reference to the beliefs and celebrations of other faiths. Pupils regularly visit the parish church for services and study, and the vicar leads a school assembly each week. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. Only one lesson was seen in **design and technology**. The very well planned lesson enabled the teacher to use her good knowledge of the subject to ensure that pupils reached high standards. Not only did they produce very good quality models of insects, but careful questioning prompted them to consider if their attempt could have been better. The expert demonstration of some of the skills required to produce a good outcome gave these young pupils a very good grounding and enabled them to be successful. A display of the work of Year 5/6 pupils showed above average standards. They used a range of materials to make a number of different musical instruments. Detailed plans were on show. These showed why pupils chose certain materials as well as the reasons for changes. Pupils had been well taught. Year 3/4 pupils were enthusiastically involved in the designing and making of a vehicle that was linked to an electric circuit.

76. Only one lesson was seen in **physical education**. Teaching was satisfactory and pupils in Years 1 and 2 co-operated well in practising throwing and catching.

77. The school reports that the programme for swimming is highly effective, with overall standards above national expectations, because by the end of Year 3 all pupils have reached the level expected of Year 6. The smallness of the hall restricts whole-class activities and the school lacks large gymnastic equipment as a result. However, the range of sports offered as out-of-class activities is impressive for a school of this size, and includes cricket, football, gymnastics, netball, touch rugby, Maypole dancing and rounders. Parents and professionals offer coaching, with the result that school teams perform well in local displays and competitions, with several trophies currently on display to celebrate their success.

78. No lessons were seen in **art and design**, but displays show that the subject is covered appropriately. For example, there are some good observational drawings of flowers in pastels in the Year1/2 class, and detailed work in the style of Bridget Riley in the Year 5/6 class.

79. No lessons were seen in **music**. The school employs a music specialist to teach music to the whole school. She also trains the school choir, who sing very well in assembly under her direction. For example, in an assembly attended by the vicar, the choir led the singing of 'Make me worthy Lord' while the rest of the school provided the echo. This, accompanied by the release of a balloon for Ascension Day, gave a strongly spiritual dimension to the assembly. The choir also sings at a number of local events. There is some peripatetic teaching of music.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled

80. There is now good provision for PSHE, including citizenship. The scheme of work provides wide coverage of key topics. It is a good feature that pupils have an exercise book in which to record their learning so that they can see their own progress. There are strong links with provision in religious education and the programme of school assemblies.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
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
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	4
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	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).