

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST LAWRENCE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Hurstpierpoint

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126058

Headteacher: Mr Paul Dyer

Lead inspector: David G Collard

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th February 2005

Inspection number: 267847

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	405
School address:	Trinity Road Hurstpierpoint West Sussex
Postcode:	BN6 9UY
Telephone number:	01273 833229
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Peters
Date of previous inspection:	15 th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Lawrence Church of England Primary School is situated in the town of Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex. There are 405 pupils on roll which is above the national average. Children are able to start in the reception class at four years of age and continue to the end of Year 6. Pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are mixed and local housing includes both rented and owner-occupied accommodation.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (3 per cent) is below the national average. The number of pupils from ethnic minority groups is lower than the national average. There is one traveller child in the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (12.2 per cent) is below the national average, as is the number with statements (1 per cent). Pupils' attainment on entry is above that expected nationally for their age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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27667	Carolyn Renault	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education The Foundation Stage
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	7
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is fairly effective but there are some serious weaknesses associated with underachievement, staffing and teaching issues that have yet to be resolved. Standards have fallen in the last four years and pupils have not done as well as they should, although there are signs of improvement now. Teaching, whilst satisfactory overall, is too variable. The leadership and management of the school are aware of the problems but the impact of the improvements is too slow. As a result, the school presently provides unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good but achievement in the core subjects through the infants and juniors is not high enough.
- Teaching, whilst it is often good or very good in individual classes and lessons, is too variable; pupils learning and progress through the school are adversely affected.
- The school places a very successful emphasis on personal development.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Since the development of a secure management team there is a clearer focus and urgency on improving the weaknesses quickly, although the impact of this has been slow in improving the achievement of pupils.

Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory although some issues identified then have been tackled well. The general school environment has greatly improved and management teams are firmly established. Development planning is secure. Information for parents is better and support staff are used more effectively. Assessment information, while extensive, has not been shared well enough. Standards have dipped sharply in the interim because the major issue regarding the quality of teaching has not been fully addressed. This has left a legacy of underachievement by significant groups of pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is unsatisfactory. Children start school with ability levels above that expected nationally, particularly in communication and social development. By the end of the reception year they make good progress and most will have exceeded the expectations of the Early Learning Goals¹. Standards for those in Year 2 in reading and mathematics are in line with those expected for their age but in writing they are below. These pupils could do better. Results in the Year 2 national tests in 2004 were lower. In reading and writing they were well below the national average and in mathematics they were below average. Compared to pupils in similar schools, the reading scores were within the lowest five per cent nationally. Standards in English and science for those in Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally for their age, but above in mathematics. Results in the 2004 national tests, detailed above, show that pupils' performance between Year 2 and Year 6 in English and science was well below the expected rate of progress but it was better in mathematics. Targets for pupils now in Year 2 and 6 suggests there will be a slight improvement although it is

¹ Early Learning Goals are a set of national standards which it is expected most children will reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are set out into six different areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.

unlikely results will return to their previous high. Higher attainers and those with special educational needs generally progress at suitable rates but, because of the variability within the teaching, those within the middle ability range are not challenged sufficiently. There is satisfactory achievement in information and communication technology, the humanities, art and design, music and physical education.

Pupils' personal development is very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They behave very sensibly both in lessons and in all other activities. They are polite, mix well with each other and are enthusiastic about learning. They are given a very good moral and social understanding about their role in society and a good understanding of cultural and spiritual tolerance.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a sound quality of education. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although in the Foundation Stage it is consistently good. During the inspection nearly seven in ten lessons were either good or better but eight per cent were unsatisfactory. This was not fully representative of the longer-term teaching quality. Work samples show that in some classes high standards are achieved; in others, pupils' work showed less challenge. High levels of staff turbulence, an ongoing issue for the school, have meant that continuity in learning is problematic. Strengths, now more evident than from some monitoring reports in the recent past, include the quality of daily planning and good links between subjects. Challenge in some classes is still not related well enough to pupils' capability and assessments are not always used consistently. These factors contribute to the underachievement of pupils. Successful efforts have been made to provide a balanced and broad curriculum and this is enhanced through a wide and exciting range of activities. Pupils' care and welfare is central to the work of the school and all pupils feel secure, their views are valued and parents are happy that their children make a positive start to their education. Community links are particularly strong.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has worked hard to improve the fabric of the school, which now provides a vibrant learning environment. With the recently appointed deputy he has identified weaknesses in the school's provision, especially in the quality of teaching. With the help of outside support, they have provided training, reviewed learning styles and developed a further tier of management. However, whilst understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the school, the procedures have been slow to take effect. Early signs of improvement are evident but there is still more to be done to ensure its sustainability. The knowledgeable governing body also understands the issues. They receive extensive information enabling them to support and challenge the strategic development. They fulfil all statutory obligations.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school although some are concerned about the standards their children achieve. Pupils are equally supportive and happy at school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Resolve staffing issues and raise expectations about pupils' potential, providing all pupils with a consistent and appropriate level of challenge.
- Use the wide-ranging data more effectively and realistically, to make the improvements sustainable.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The standards pupils reach by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are **in line** with those expected for the age of the pupils. Achievement through the Foundation Stage is good but, because of the above levels of attainment on entry to Year 1, achievement is unsatisfactory through the infants and the juniors.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement and attainment is good in the Foundation Stage and children are prepared well for work within the National Curriculum.
- Pupils in the infants and juniors do not achieve well enough because although standards are often in line with those expected for their age a significant number of pupils could do much better.
- Results are not high enough in national tests; although there are signs of improvement particularly in mathematics.
- Provision has improved in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and in art and design, and is improving the progress that pupils make in these subjects.

Commentary

1. Children enter the school in the reception classes with above average levels of attainment, particularly in speaking, communication and social skills. There are a small number of children who do not have such high levels of language but all make good progress through their first year at the school. Evidence from discussions and samples of work suggests that this has improved in the last year, since before this the assessments show lower levels of achievement.
2. Progress through the Foundation Stage is good. Children quickly learn to work with each other, share toys and learn through role play. Even those who had only recently entered the school were able to undertake their own registration, tidy up and know how to behave in large and small group situations. They frequently practise reading and writing, so that at this half-way point of the year a significant number are already working at levels above that expected for their age. They can use and understand simple mathematical terms and can use the computers with confidence. The newly refurbished outdoor area provides a very stimulating environment to improve physical and social skills as well as being used to teach children about the wider world. By the beginning of Year 1, the overwhelming majority of children have achieved the requirements of the Early Learning Goals and are very well prepared for work within the National Curriculum.
3. Through the infants, progress is now generally satisfactory, although work samples indicate that this has only been the case recently and a number of pupils have not achieved well enough in the past. This was because they had not received such a good start through their formative years in the reception and that the expectations of what they could achieve in Years 1 and 2 were too low. An example of this can be seen in poor presentation of previous work in some classes and in the low standards achieved in national tests. Some of these issues still remain even though the downturn in standards has generally been stemmed. Through the juniors, there is a mixed picture. The very good teaching in some classes can be contrasted with the much lower levels of work in others. As a result, standards are variable and, as in the infants, this is also reflected in the national test results over the last three years. The situation is likely to improve but the full effect of the better procedures, teaching and learning will not be

fully realised in this year's national tests. Improvement in standards has not been high enough since the last inspection.

4. In the 2004 Year 2 National Curriculum tests for reading, writing and mathematics, standards fell significantly. The rate of improvement over the last five years has been below the national trend. In 2002 pupils achieved above average scores in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Since then the steady fall meant that, in 2004, standards fell to well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. When the scores are compared with similar schools the results are even more disappointing. They were in the lowest five per cent of schools in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. The school's original targets set for this year's tests (2005) were similar to those last year but since then they have been readjusted to take account of the higher level of teaching and are set to be exceeded. Despite this, they are unlikely to reach the previously high levels. Although not fully solved, this does provide some initial signs of success and improvement, which was also reflected by the teaching seen during the inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.1 (26.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.3 (26.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.0 (28.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. The results from national tests for those in Year 6 have been low for the last four years and, as for the infants, they have not improved as well as the national trend. Different subjects show different rates of improvement. In English, there has been a steady decline since 2000, although they did improve slightly to average levels in 2004. In mathematics, results significantly improved in 2004 and also to a lesser extent in science. When measured against schools of a similar type, results have been either below or well below average for the past four years. In mathematics, the work to consolidate teaching practices through intensive training has begun to have an impact and these results have risen to above average levels. When comparing the performance of pupils from when they were in Year 2 to when they took the tests in Year 6, their progress was well below that expected in English and science and in line in mathematics. Those with above average ability do better than those with average ability and again this was reflected in the quality of work being undertaken during the inspection.
6. Standards in English have been improved since the appointment of the deputy headteacher, an experienced co-ordinator, who has been able to provide the correct level of intensive support and identify the many weaknesses in the provision for the subject. Those in the present Year 2 are achieving standards in reading, speaking and listening in line with those expected for their age. Writing standards are still below those expected, particularly for pupils in the middle ability range. In contrast, those with above average ability are achieving standards in line with their capability. Through the juniors, and especially in Year 6, spoken language is well developed. More able readers can discuss with confidence their choice of authors and styles, although this is not so apparent with other abilities. Pupils in the juniors have not been provided with sufficiently strong foundations for their writing skills in the past and this means that many pupils in the juniors, while being very capable of highly creative narratives are not able to use common grammar conventions as a matter of course. There are indications that an upturn in standards has just begun. Teaching is now more focused on raising achievement but there are still instances, particularly in the recorded work, where too little is expected of the pupils.
7. Standards in mathematics do show signs of sustained improvement. Those in Year 2 have standards that are in line with those expected for their age but they are below the expected level for those in Year 6. This is confirmed by the targets set by the school for the end of year

national tests. Again, it is those of average and below average ability who do not do as well, whilst higher attainers achieve suitably. The majority of pupils have satisfactory mathematical understanding and vocabulary. They have more difficulty in using and interpreting this knowledge because, as in English, the building blocks have not been firmly established in previous years. A concerted drive to raise teachers' expertise has been undertaken using outside specialists and the work in books reflects an increased urgency about improving the provision. However, it is still variable between different year groups and teachers and this is a cause of the lack of more rapid improvement.

8. The drive to improve the overall quality of teaching and the standards in English and mathematics has meant that science has not had a high priority. Provision is unsatisfactory because the school has not identified and dealt quickly enough with the weaknesses. Standards are in line with those expected both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but pupils are capable of doing much better than this. Achievement is unsatisfactory, as the improvement in standards has not kept pace with those nationally. Pupils enter Year 1 with good scientific understanding for their age but this is not exploited well enough, particularly through the written recording of work. Thus, pupils have good access to experiments and investigations, enjoy the work, but do not build up good scientific practices by thinking about what they have found out or by hypothesising about the outcomes. This means that older pupils are not using what they know to help them develop more intensive and secure experiments.
9. Although standards in ICT have remained the same as at the last inspection, the overall provision and expertise of teachers has greatly improved. Pupils in both Years 2 and 6 have standards in line with those expected for their age; achievement through the school is satisfactory. The computer suite is used well; pupils build up a full range of technological skills and can see the relevance of the hardware in other subjects. Still more needs to be done to incorporate these systems to the best potential use of classroom computers.
10. Standards in history and geography are in line with those expected for pupils' ages and achievement is at least satisfactory. Visits and visitors are used well so that pupils have better recall when they have had these first-hand experiences. Literacy and numeracy are used suitably in other subjects. Written work is often thorough, although it varies between classes. Standards and achievement in design and technology are also in line with those expected and there has been an improvement in the quality of evaluation since the last inspection. Standards are good in art and design and there are a number of talented artists within the school. The quality of display is very good and has greatly enhanced the learning environment, providing professional and stimulating work areas throughout the school. The subject has helped raise the expectations of teachers about the capability of all abilities of pupils across other subjects. Provision for music and physical education ensures that pupils achieve in line with the levels expected. They have opportunities to attend musical workshops, take instrumental lessons and to perform in concerts. The various sporting teams have had a number of local successes and pupils have access to a full range of opportunities.
11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve at similar levels to their peers although those with high levels of support make suitable progress against their own targets and capability. Teaching assistants provide good support through focused group work and by providing specialist support through nationally recognised initiatives. More needs to be done to provide specialist teacher support for basic skills, as the co-ordinator's role is very much set towards administrative procedures and specific teacher time is much more limited. The school has set up a gifted and talented register of pupils. Whilst this is at an early stage and the criteria have still to be refined, it shows that in some year groups, particularly in Years 5 and 6, nearly a quarter of the pupils are said to have a particular academic, sporting or musical flair. This provides further evidence that a number of pupils could do better in the basic skills than they are at present.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Attendance and punctuality is **good**. Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- When pupils are stimulated by good teaching they have very good attitudes to learning.
- From their early days in school, pupils are encouraged to develop a responsible attitude towards each other.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very well provided for and there is a friendly atmosphere throughout the school.
- Pupils' spiritual and cultural development has improved since the last report.
- Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem and learn to respect the needs of others.
- A minority of parents take pupils out of school for extra holidays.

Commentary

12. In most lessons pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They listen well and are keen to contribute answers and add to ideas in discussions. They undertake tasks with enthusiasm, working well in pairs and small groups, planning their work intelligently. When stimulated by good teaching pupils rise to a challenge and really enjoy what they are doing. When teaching is pedestrian, pupils very soon lose interest and fail to grasp the basic building blocks of learning.
13. Standards of behaviour are very good in school and in the playgrounds where pupils play harmoniously together. Even when teaching is less stimulating, pupils remain calm although their concentration may waiver. The play activities in the foundation classes are exceptional, making a very positive contribution to their Early Learning Goals. Pupils have natural good manners and are proud of their school. They are keen to show visitors what they are doing and to discuss the best performance of their peers. Aggressive behaviour is rarely seen and parents confirm that when it does occur, it is swiftly and fairly dealt with. There have been no exclusions in recent times.
14. From their early years children are encouraged to become independent and willingly take on a range of responsibilities appropriate to their age. This helps children to reach and exceed the goals they are expected to achieve at the end of reception. For instance, they find their own name and self-register in the nursery. In later years, pupils lead assemblies and carry out monitoring duties about the school. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously as they learn to live in the school community. As they mature, their confidence grows. They discuss intelligently how others might feel and regularly distinguish right from wrong in their discussions. The friendly atmosphere in the school results in very good social and moral development. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development has improved. In the better lessons, pupils know about inspiration, they are given time to reflect and to express their feelings in words. However, there is still room for improvement and the school's management recognises that it needs to raise the profile of multicultural development.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	School data	0.2
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 **sound**. Teaching and learning are both **satisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The care, welfare and safety of pupils are **good** and parents generally appreciate the **good** procedures to support them. There are **very effective** links with the local community and **good** links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching during the inspection was good, with a significant number of very good lessons seen; teaching over the longer term is not as strong because the level of challenge is not always high enough.
- Teachers plan well and use appropriate methods and organisation; although the level of expectation about what pupils can achieve is more variable.
- The good quality resources are used well, including a wide range of visits and visitors.
- Assessment has improved and is starting to be used by all teachers to indicate where more challenge is needed, although this is not consistent amongst all staff.

Commentary

15. The teaching and learning seen during the inspection were good overall, with nearly seven in ten lessons being good or very good. Eight per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory because the level of challenge was insufficient to meet the needs of all pupils. Over the past four years, the school has suffered from a series of long-term absences of various staff and from a variable quality of teaching. These difficulties were reflected in the lesson observations seen. During the week, a number of teachers were brought in on a supply basis and not all full-time teachers were present. From the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with staff and parents and also from extensive reports of the monitoring of lessons both internally and by external specialists it can be seen that teaching and learning over the longer term is not as strong and is therefore satisfactory overall.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	12 (31%)	15 (38%)	9 (23%)	3 (8%)	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.

16. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Following an extensive programme of training, refurbishment of the facilities and a new leader for this phase, the quality of the provision has improved substantially. The work is now planned well to provide opportunities for both teacher-directed work as well as independent play. The teachers and assistants work hard to allow the children to choose their activities in a structured way but quickly intervene to encourage the use of vocabulary, role play or to help children learn about the world around them. The environment provided is highly stimulating and has been very well enhanced with the introduction of a secure outside area that is used extensively during the day. Parents are pleased that the provision in the reception year has been improved so much. Regular assessments take place using simple but effective systems. These allow teachers to alter and change the work in light of the findings. Teaching assistants are being encouraged to improve their own expertise and provide good support to the work being undertaken. The children quickly build on the skills they have. They are able to talk at length about how they are learning new words and letters, numbers and what they are reading.

17. Teaching through Years 1 to 6 is more variable, although overall it has improved since the last report. There are now fewer unsatisfactory lessons. During the inspection good and very good lessons were characterised by secure and careful planning that provided challenging activities for all levels of ability. For instance, in one very good English lesson in Year 3, the teacher recapped on previous work, used quick games to identify words and then checked to make sure the levels that pupils were working at. The independent work was clearly set to make pupils think about what they were learning. In this way the class was highly motivated, completed a lot of work and, most importantly, knew how well they had done. This contrasts with an unsuccessful ICT lesson in Year 5 where the work set was far too difficult and pupils were only able to complete the tasks in a mechanical way and did not understand the reasons behind what they were doing.
18. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. This has improved considerably in ICT since the last inspection. They plan daily lessons thoroughly and ensure that work links well to the nationally recommended guidelines for each subject. Where possible, topics and themes try to make real links between subjects, whilst at the same time providing the specific subject skills. This generally works well, although in books the work is not always recorded in sufficient detail, especially as pupils move through the juniors. The pupils behave very well even when teaching is more mundane or provides little challenge to their ability. All pupils respond well and want to do their best. Where minor instances might disrupt the smooth running of lessons the relationships between the staff and the pupils ensures that lessons run smoothly. When asked to work in small groups, pupils are willing and able to be trusted to get on with what they are asked to do. By Year 6, teachers treat their class in a mature way, expecting the highest levels of attention. When teaching is particularly good then there is an expectant air of anticipation and excitement about what is to be done. The good quality resources are used well and help pupils to become engrossed in the activities they undertake. The use of the whiteboards in some classes provides a further stimulus to learning.
19. The level of expectation and challenge, especially over the longer term, is more variable. In the best cases pupils make substantial progress through a series of lessons. For instance, the consistently high level of good teaching in one Year 3 class means that achievement has improved since the beginning of the year and is a noticeable feature in the recorded work. However, in a discussion about science with some Year 2 pupils the higher attainers showed a confident understanding about some materials, electricity and forces but those within the middle ability range were far less certain because many of these areas had not been reinforced though the opportunities offered over time. The variability is very noticeable when comparing books from different classes and age groups. For instance, in mathematics similar tasks are given in some classes to all levels of ability. Thus the lower attainers achieve satisfactorily, while those within the middle ability range are not challenged enough. On other occasions the volume of work is too low or the challenge is too high and so some pupils are left without any understanding about what they have been doing.
20. Marking is also variable, particularly in science, ranging from the best examples where there is consistent praise, an analysis of performance and further targets to be reached, to minimal correction or little attention to detail. The whole-school range of assessment has improved since the last inspection and is being used to highlight the strengths and weaknesses within the provision and teaching. However, whilst the school has identified where the underachievement of pupils is occurring it has not been fully effective in dealing with the causes. There has been improvement in the Foundation Stage and in the basic skills of English, mathematics and ICT because the co-ordinators have a more realistic view about where improvements should be targeted. In a number of other areas, co-ordinators are either new to their post or do not have sufficient data to be able to develop better quality improvement plans. In addition, data showing how well pupils progress year on year has only recently been collated and so individual need is not yet sufficiently well targeted within all classes. This information has not been shared widely enough, particularly with the subject co-ordinators.

21. Homework is used suitably. Both teachers and pupils value the contribution it makes to other studies. Learning assistants are satisfactorily deployed. They are briefed about their roles and know when to intervene. They have been given suitable levels of training to provide them with the necessary expertise to be effective.
22. Overall, pupils do make progress and this has improved with the introduction of more stringent monitoring procedures and an analysis of a whole school approach to learning and teaching. However, the level at which pupils acquire new knowledge is too dependent on the class or subject. Higher attainers make suitable progress over time but those within the middle ability range are not always given the correct level of challenge. Those with special educational needs make progress suitable to their capability. Individual education plans vary in quality between classes although all do suggest the important small steps that need to be made. The temporary special needs co-ordinator is already working on providing more support and monitoring the effectiveness of this, including regular meetings and discussions with parents and staff.
23. The school recognises its weaknesses and is trying hard to resolve them. Processes have included very high levels of support, coaching and training of some teachers and regular monitoring by the senior management team and outside specialists. Some of these have been successful, but not all. Staff now understand how to develop more pertinent planning, methods and organisation. However, some teachers are not realistic about the capability and potential of the pupils within their class and do not expect enough from them. As a whole staff, there is a need to develop an understanding about best practice, some of which is evident in the school, and still more examples are needed to ensure that the consistently higher level of teaching seen during the inspection can be maintained over the longer term.

The curriculum

Provision for the curriculum is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good.
- It has been difficult for the school to establish consistency in provision because of the high level of turbulence of staff.
- Good enrichment of the curriculum takes place through lunchtime and after-school activities.

Commentary

24. There has been satisfactory improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection as there are now appropriate schemes of work for every subject and the long-term planning identifies good cross-curricular links. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements.
25. The high level of staff turbulence has made it particularly difficult to establish a consistent curriculum. Recent appointments have begun to address previous weaknesses. For example, the appointment of a new deputy headteacher who is also the English co-ordinator has already had a good impact on improving the provision and has begun to raise standards in that subject. The newly appointed senior management team and subject co-ordinators have identified the ways in which the curriculum should be monitored and developed to ensure that standards are improved, particularly in literacy and numeracy. For example, teachers now have higher expectations of pupils' understanding, particularly in the juniors. However, there has been insufficient time for these new initiatives to have an impact on raising standards.
26. Planning in the Foundation Stage has been revised thoroughly to link the learning activities across all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum, providing an enjoyable and creative experience that is relevant to the needs of the children. The completion of an outdoor

classroom shared by both reception classes is well resourced for all six areas of the curriculum and has made a significant improvement to the provision.

27. Teachers' planning in English, mathematics and science appropriately identifies groups of pupils with different levels of capability. Activities planned for pupils with high ability are generally challenging and appropriate. However, the activities planned for pupils of average or less than average capability often differ only in the amount of work the teacher expects, rather than meeting the learning needs of these groups. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but insufficient use is made of assessment information to identify group or individual targets for pupils and there is insufficient reinforcement and practice of basic skills such as spelling and recording in numeracy.
28. Activities for pupils who have special educational needs are appropriately planned to match the targets identified on the individual education plans. The teaching assistants give the pupils good support during lessons. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunity for participation.
29. Recent curriculum development in ICT has been effective in raising the motivation and interest of groups of pupils. For example, the use of the interactive whiteboard and a lap-top computer in a Year 6 mathematics lesson during the inspection provided purposeful independent activities to reinforce pupils' understanding of reflective symmetry. Personal, social, health and citizenship education has a high priority and effectively contributes to the calm and orderly atmosphere within the school.
30. French teaching is an innovative enhancement of the curriculum. Lessons of less than an hour were introduced as recently as September last year for Years 3, 4 and 5, partly to enrich the curriculum and partly in anticipation of national policy. Year 6 is to be included in the future. The subject has appropriately informal content of games, songs and simple language games with the emphasis on fun, enabling children of all capabilities to enjoy the activities. An enthusiastic co-ordinator has planned lessons using national guidance and the language is used in forging cross-curricular links between subjects such as December's simple nativity play. Class teachers take the lessons, supported by a parent who is French. There are class swaps where some members of staff are less confident.
31. The curriculum is enhanced by the provision of a good range of visitors and educational visits, which help pupils see connections between subjects and help raise standards in many areas. For example, a recent visiting artist inspired pupils to produce large sculptures on the theme of recycling, requiring good personal skills of collaboration, design and use of a range of found materials as well as interpreting the ideas creatively. The residential trip to the Isle of Wight by Year 6 provides good opportunities for engaging in outdoor pursuits as well as contributing to the personal and social development of the pupils.
32. The provision of a very good range of extra-curricular activities, mainly in the juniors, enriches the pupils' experience and positive attitudes. The availability of the school swimming pool after school for a large part of the school year is beneficial to the health, safety and enjoyment of all pupils. Competitive sport and chess provide the pupils with a sense of pride in their school. Dance and drama clubs enhance pupils' enjoyment and creativity.
33. The accommodation is spacious and well maintained to provide an attractive learning environment. The level of resources such as books and equipment is satisfactory to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is sufficient teaching staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and recent appointments have ensured a satisfactory match of teachers to the curriculum overall.
34. The school prepares pupils well for each stage of transfer. The majority of children attend pre-school or nursery and make the transition into reception classes well because of the good links made with parents. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school when they leave Year 6, with good self-confidence and high self-esteem.

Care, guidance and support

The school continues to make good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Academic assessment of pupils is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel secure and work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Children are introduced to school life well.
- The school council provides pupils with the opportunity to become involved with the work of the school.
- Monitoring of pupils' academic progress is variable so at some stages pupils do not know what they have to do to improve.
- Pupils do not always find it easy to approach staff if they have a concern.

Commentary

35. The school provides a happy environment in which pupils can thrive. Health and safety procedures are well established and the welfare of pupils continues to command a high profile within the school. A healthy schools initiative has been established and the personal, social and health provision is carefully planned and monitored. Governors and senior management conduct regular inspections of buildings and equipment. Defects are noted and swiftly dealt with. Staff are qualified to attend to pupils who are sick or injured. Records are kept and parents informed. Child protection procedures are clear and staff know their responsibilities. Parents say that the school promotes equality between different pupils and groups and their children are treated fairly.
36. Regular teachers and staff know the pupils well. This helps them to guide their pupils. However, as a result of staff disruption and inconsistent teaching, pupils do not always find it easy to approach staff if they have a concern. Marking systems are too often unhelpful so pupils do not know what to do to improve. Subject managers have not clearly identified groups of pupils and remedial action has not been effective in redressing the situation. Induction arrangements as children start school are good. Their needs are carefully monitored. Through the programme of learning at play, they very soon join in with other children and really enjoy learning. As a result they gain a good grounding as well-behaved and responsible members of the community. Pupils are well prepared for life in their secondary school. The school council is well established and members take their duties very seriously. Their ideas are realistic and as they are well directed for the benefit of all. The school management respects their views and act on their advice. Parents recognise that the council is valued and respected by the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains good links with parents, other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are generally satisfied with the education provided for their children, in particular the 'whole' education.
- Parents' concerns centre on recent results and the irregular attendance of certain teaching staff.
- Parents are impressed with the way the school deals with behavioural matters particularly bullying when an incident occurs.
- There are good links with local schools and colleges.
- There are very good links with the community, which help pupils to broaden their education.

Commentary

37. Parents are very satisfied with the school and the education it provides for their children. The responses to the questionnaires were generally very positive and comments made at the meeting indicate high levels of support. Parents feel that the school has made improvements in recent years but there are still some areas of worry. There are some concerns over recent results and about the lack of emphasis on reading, particularly in Year 2. They recognise the attendance of some of the teaching staff is poor which is having a negative effect on their children's learning. Parents are kept well informed about the school and its activities, though there is often insufficient time between notice and event. The majority of parents are impressed by the high standards of behaviour and the way the school deals with bullying if it should occur.
38. Consultation evenings are well attended and there have been evenings devoted to the teaching of English and mathematics, which were also well attended. Information booklets on reading and the information provided for the parents of new pupils are interesting and helpful. The annual reports to parents are short but well written. They give parents a measure of how well their children have achieved and their effort in the four main subjects. A majority of parents are involved with their children's reading and find homework explanation sheets helpful. They felt that, although homework is generally relevant and procedures are known, the value of the work and the feedback can vary between teachers. Management have strengthened the links between school and parents through parent questionnaires followed by details of parents' views. The speciality meetings have undoubtedly given parents the opportunity to state their concerns. They find it easy to talk with staff and the headteacher if they have a particular concern. There are good transition arrangements for transferring to the local secondary schools.
39. There are very good links with the community, who are very proud of their village school. Older members of the community come into school as volunteers or to attend the school events. There are very strong links with the Church and pupils are very involved with local festivals. As chess is a strong feature of the school, many pupils take part in competitions with other schools. Their success in these events gives the school pride in their achievements. There are many after-school clubs, which also widen pupils' educational experience and help to develop their social awareness. There are strong links with other schools and colleges in the area. Student teachers help in class and pupils benefit from their input as they introduce new and youthful ideas.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The work of the governing body is **satisfactory**. The headteacher and other key staff provide satisfactory leadership overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Following major refurbishment the school is now well equipped to provide a quality environment for learning; there is very good financial planning.
- The leadership and management of the school have been strengthened through the appointment of a new deputy headteacher and senior management team.
- The school understands its strengths and weaknesses but has not been effective enough at bringing about rapid changes.
- Although the leadership has made good strides in raising the expectation of its staff about pupils' potential, the impact of this is not always evident.

Commentary

40. The school has been through a turbulent time since the last inspection and as a result, improvement since then has been unsatisfactory. There have been a number of difficult staffing and teaching issues as well as a major refurbishment and modernisation of the buildings. Many of these have been difficult to resolve and some are still ongoing. All have been addressed with vigour but only in the last two years have there been signs of significant impact. Successes include the fabric of the school that is now vibrant and provides a very good learning environment. Within the staff there is a culture of change and a high level of commitment to provide the best possible opportunities for academic and personal success. The appointment of a new deputy head two years ago and more recently the formation of a new senior management team are rightly seen by the headteacher and governors as an attempt to move the school on, following a period of declining standards. There are identifiable signs that an upturn in attainment is now underway, although some weaknesses still remain. Standards are beginning to rise. The quality of the provision in the Foundation Stage is much improved, teaching is less variable than it was, although it is still not consistently good throughout the school, and there is a better sense of purpose about sustainable strategic planning. Some staffing issues are still to be resolved and the school's own data has identified a level of underachievement by some groups of pupils.
41. The recently developed partnership between the headteacher and his deputy has a strong sense of purpose and ambition for all pupils at the school with a focus on achievement especially in core subjects. They provide sound leadership and management and have identified where there were substantial weaknesses in aspects of the provision. They work hard to ensure that all pupils are included in the variety of activities. They have correctly prioritised the needs of children and classroom standards. There is some evidence that their efforts are beginning to pay dividends and standards have been prevented from falling further. An example of this can be seen in the targets set for pupils in Year 2 for this year's national tests. These are much higher than last year and indications from an analysis of interim testing suggest that they will be exceeded. However, this contrasts with the Year 6 predictions, which are likely to remain at the levels of those in 2004. A further weakness can be seen in the school's analysis of the improvement that pupils make between Year 2 and Year 6. This suggests that some children still do not make the level of progress that they should. The newly formed group of phase leaders provides a further useful and increasingly effective tier of management that has started to analyse and develop better teaching and monitoring methods. However, they are only just coming to grips with the intricacies of the information they have and how best to deal with the issues. Overall, many correct priorities have been addressed by the senior management team, notably in English and in teachers' expectations of the capability of the pupils but nevertheless the impact of these strategies is slow in bringing about substantial improvement.
42. Staff are given suitable information and support when they join the school. A new teaching and leadership structure is in place, with teams designed to draw on expertise and views from across the school. Some teachers are able to provide good role models for others and for children. Curriculum leadership in the Foundation Stage is very good where a new co-ordinator has introduced an exciting and creative curriculum. The deputy headteacher, as English co-ordinator, has worked extremely hard to provide a good role model for developing teachers, support for those who needed it and improved curriculum and resources. Similarly, ICT and mathematics have been given a high priority and the leaders of these subjects have produced effective improvement plans. The temporary special needs co-ordinator has been able to review and revise the procedures for these pupils but her post only allows a limited amount of time to provide actual specialist teacher support. Elsewhere the co-ordination of subjects is variable; it is unsatisfactory in science.
43. The school's strategic plans in recent years have been very full in urgent recognition of the need for an improvement in standards. Future actions will be guided by the school's long-term plan. The school's self-evaluation processes are rigorous. Judgements made by the headteacher are similar to those from the inspection, except in terms of the satisfactory

achievement suggested by the school. This is at odds with the evidence from the extensive data held by the school and from monitoring and review reports. Performance management has only had partial success in addressing teaching performance. There has been a strong commitment and substantial provision for staff through continuous professional development activities, notably in English and mathematics.

44. The governing body has worked hard to remedy the weaknesses within the school's provision. As a body they bring a very good range of expertise and know what the issues are. They are highly supportive of the school and its aims and, because of the good range of information they are given, are able to question and challenge the strategic decisions made within the school improvement planning. They are aware of the extent of the underachievement of pupils through the use of the school's data and the monitoring undertaken by the local education authority and other specialists. The recent opportunities for appointing new staff with the capacity for tackling school improvement has been welcomed by the governing body. There are signs that these appointments are beginning to galvanise teaching staff into a cohesive, committed and appropriately skilled team but the headteacher is still rightly concerned about variability in the quality of teaching. All statutory requirements are fully met and stringently reviewed through the planning cycle. A number of governors provide regular and effective support for curriculum areas and a strong overview of the financial arrangements. The latter being instrumental in ensuring that the new building and refurbishments were completed within budget. The administrative staff and bursar provide friendly, helpful and professional advice to governors, staff and pupils.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	831,930	Balance from previous year	(2,201)
Total expenditure	825,601	Balance carried forward to next year	4,126
Expenditure per pupil	2,090		

Figures in brackets show a deficit balance

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, when provision was satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently appointed Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides good leadership.
- The teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to provide an imaginative environment, which is stimulating and well organised for children's learning.
- The recent improvement to the accommodation by the development of the outdoor classroom has enhanced the quality of learning.
- Good teaching ensures that children achieve well, particularly in developing personal and social skills and speaking and listening.
- The curriculum is very well planned and integrated so that most activities offer overlapping opportunities for development in all six areas of learning.
- The overwhelming majority of children are on line to attain or exceed the national goals in all six areas of the curriculum by the end of Reception.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are self-confident and independent and enjoy learning through playing and exploring together.
- Relationships are very good between children and adults and between the children themselves, so that they learn to be caring and to resolve any differences by negotiation.

Commentary

45. Most children enter reception with skills already above national average levels. Most children have attended a pre-school group or playgroup before starting school and they settle quickly into the reception class. The good and often very good teaching enables them to continue to develop self-confidence, independence and social skills at a rapid rate. Their achievement is good and most children are on line to attain and often exceed the national goal for this area.
46. Teaching is good. Good planning and collaboration between all the teachers and teaching assistants in the Foundation Stage means that children have lots of opportunity to work alongside others in a whole-class situation or in small groups, as well as individually. The children are given lots of opportunities to choose activities for themselves, such as during the daily self-registration sessions. They learn to take responsibility, for example by recognising and responding to 'tidy-up music' by clearing away their equipment and toys safely. They are able to select and use activities and resources independently and sustain concentration on chosen activities well. They enjoy playing alongside one another and interact well with one another, sharing toys and ideas and helping each other in activities such as role play and playing with construction toys. They know how to resolve disagreements without becoming angry or upset. The children respond well to structure, routine and consistently high expectations and are developing positive attitudes towards learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good planning provides an exciting range of activities which integrate the objectives for the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing across the curriculum.
- All adults take every opportunity to develop children's spoken language, listening skills and understanding through constant questioning and discussion throughout the day.
- Good use is made of the outdoor classroom to provide a range of opportunities to practise and develop speaking, listening and writing skills.

Commentary

47. Most children begin Reception with speaking and communication skills above national averages. They achieve well and most children are on line to exceed the national goals in this area. A large number of children already meet the national goal in speaking and listening.
48. Good teaching, using a mixture of whole class and guided group work and learning through play mean that children develop their phonic knowledge and reading and writing skills in line with their capability. There are planned opportunities throughout the day for the adults to engage children in discussion and develop their vocabulary, and for children to write for a purpose and develop and practice their reading and writing skills. Teachers use good strategies to track individual children's achievement and ensure that they are challenged in their learning, so achievement is good for all pupils.
49. During the inspection week the study of Antarctica inspired the children to develop all their literacy and communication skills. For example, during a role-play activity in the outdoor area the children were encouraged to describe a blizzard as they acted it out with white streamers. In a whole class session the children, dressed as penguins, described how they had cared for their eggs throughout the day, and used very good vocabulary, such as 'huddle' and 'gently'. In another lesson the good teaching enabled the children to practise and reinforce their phonic and spelling skills in preparation for writing their own penguin books. During guided group work many children were able to form letters correctly and attempt writing a sentence. Non-fiction books about penguins and Antarctica were used readily by the children. Stories, poems and rhymes are also enjoyed throughout the day. Learning opportunities are good.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching provides opportunities for children to develop counting skills throughout the day, as well as during numeracy lessons.
- Mathematical skills and knowledge are generally above national expectations.

Commentary

50. Opportunities throughout the day are taken to encourage children to count and develop mathematical vocabulary and skills. The majority of children learn quickly so that they are likely to reach and exceed the national goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching is good and sometimes very good, using a variety of strategies. For example, high expectations in whole-class teaching enabled children to understand and use comparative vocabulary such as 'longer/shorter', 'more/less', 'heavier/lighter', 'taller/shorter'. Guided group work ensured that able children were appropriately challenged through skilful questioning, and the linking of

imaginative play activities reinforced the children's understanding. Good questioning in class and group teaching and good intervention by the teaching assistants during play activities promotes good learning.

51. The emphasis is on children gaining understanding through practical experience, so that they learn to count orally through rhymes and songs and play activities. Children are able to count accurately from one to ten and some able children count readily to 50. They compare the different lengths of their bead necklaces or chain links and are given challenges such as suggesting ways to compare their height with others or with the life-size model penguin they have made together. They are given investigative opportunities, such as comparing the length of objects in the outdoor area against a length of string, to find objects longer or shorter. They enjoy the activities and achieve well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with good opportunities to explore and investigate through lots of interesting first-hand experiences.
- Adults provide good support and encouragement for children to develop their skills of observation and critical thinking.

Commentary

52. The emphasis in the Foundation Stage is on providing interesting first-hand experiences, which stimulate the interest and curiosity of the children and widen their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their design and making skills are developed through using a range of tools and equipment such as card, scissors, glue and crayons. The computer is used readily to support learning and children have appropriate ICT skills, for example manipulating the mouse to move shapes on the screen. Teaching is good. Children are given lots of opportunity for first-hand observation and to find out about the environment or talk about their experiences. For example, the current Antarctic theme has led to the children having an exceptionally high level of knowledge about penguins and their care of their eggs and young. They have also had the opportunity to learn about snow and ice and make observations about our weather. They are on line to attain and exceed the national goal in this area.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor classroom provides good opportunity for pupils to move with increasing self-control and co-ordination.
- Good opportunities are provided to develop confidence and control in handling natural materials, equipment, tools, and construction toys, which help develop manipulative skills.

Commentary

53. Children make good progress in this area and the majority are expected to reach and exceed the national goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. Good planning and teaching means that the outdoor classroom is used throughout the day and in all but the most inclement weather. It has become a natural extension of the two main classrooms and its use has been well planned to provide opportunities for the development of children's physical skills. Large construction equipment and fixed climbing equipment offer good opportunities for children to

climb, jump and move freely and safely, developing their skills of balance and control. Children have lots of opportunities to handle small tools, equipment and toys, developing their manipulative skills. Good teamwork between the teachers and teaching assistants enables the children to develop fine and gross motor skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given good opportunities to experiment with a range of materials and ideas through creative play and guided activities.
- There is a good balance between the teaching of skills and knowledge, and the provision of rich opportunities for children to experiment and reinforce their skills.
- The high quality of the displays and organisation of the environment stimulate the children's imagination and enjoyment.

Commentary

54. Good leadership by the Foundation Stage co-ordinator has provided the vision to develop the new outdoor classroom and integrated curriculum to be a stimulating environment for learning. Indoor and outdoor space is well organised and resourced so that children are able to experiment freely with materials such as paints and crayons, glue and fabrics to explore colour, texture and shape in making pictures and models. They have a good repertoire of songs and enjoy exploring the different sounds of percussion instruments. Children work co-operatively to act out stories and narratives. During the inspection the children enjoyed free imaginative play within the role-play area 'ice-house' in both classrooms and the 'travel agents' and 'plane' in the outdoor classroom. Props and dressing-up clothes are changed frequently to link with the overall theme. Good teaching encourages children to express ideas and feelings through a rich variety of activities. Children achieve well and many already demonstrate attainment of the national goals for this area, particularly in their ability to use imagination in art, design, music, dance, imaginative play and role-play stories and in their ability to communicate these ideas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the past there has been widespread underachievement in basic literacy skills; but the decline in standards has been arrested.
- Leadership of the subject is very good with a clear potential to help raise standards.
- The quality of teaching is variable, although daily and longer term planning is very good.
- The attitudes of children are very good.
- Assessment and the collation of data are rigorous.

Commentary

55. Declining standards in English over recent years have been arrested due to the school's improving provision. When national comparative data for the 2005 tests is available, it is likely that Year 2 standards in reading and writing will continue to be below age expectation and Year 6 standards will be in line. This represents negative achievement overall considering the

above average level of attainment on entry to school. The school's comprehensive tracking data suggests that the steady decline in standards since 2000 has been halted, but there is no evidence for a significant upturn this year. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

56. The inspection found that pupils of average ability achieve less well than the more able. The 2004 results for eleven-year-olds were at average levels when measured nationally against all schools but below the national average when measured against similar schools. Pupils achieving the higher levels exceeded the national expectation. This represents a slight improvement from 2003 and, along with evidence from teacher assessments and lessons, shows that the decline appears to have been stemmed. Pupils with special educational needs receive satisfactory support, and achievement is in line with the rest. During the inspection, no significant differences were noticed between the work of girls and boys but in tests at age seven and eleven, girls achieve slightly better than boys. Extremely challenging targets have been set for Year 2 and Year 6 results in 2005 and 2006.
57. In lessons seen, standards in speaking and listening were in line with those expected for their age in Year 2, but were above the expected level in Year 6. Older pupils have above average speaking and listening skills and their creative use of spoken language at Year 6 is well developed. Here the children listen carefully and are articulate in their responses. The quality of spoken language has not been reflected in the quality of written work over time.
58. In the past, achievement in reading has been unsatisfactory, reinforced by the 2004 national test results that show very low standards for those then in Year 2. Standards seen during the inspection were variable, but in line with expectation at age seven and eleven. A new structured reading programme is in place, with pupils working through a carefully graded range of reading scheme books during a relatively new, daily, guided reading session. A reading extension club for more able Year 6 readers has been introduced as well as the provision of additional support for particular groups of children in Years 1, 3, 4, and 5. Pupils are encouraged to read at home with parents or carers but some teachers do not always find time to write constructive comments in reading diaries. Only the more able readily discuss reading preferences and favourite authors such as Jacqueline Wilson and Paul Geraghty, who opened the extended library at the end of 2004. This is a valuable asset but children's ability to use it is variable.
59. Teachers are working hard to drive up standards in writing. The legacy of a failure to provide pupils with a good grounding in basic literacy skills, such as spelling and handwriting, is continuing to prove a strong challenge. National test results in 2004 show writing standards to be very low for all except the more able, whose results were in line. In infant lessons and in the work seen, writing skills are still underdeveloped especially among the middle range of ability. This trend continues into the juniors but there is some evidence that standards are better for the middle ability Year 6 children and better than that for the more able. ICT is used suitably when in the computer suite although its use in the classroom is more limited.
60. In the nine lessons seen, teaching ranged from satisfactory in infant classes to good in junior classes, with some very good teaching. As yet the amount of good and very good teaching is not extensive enough to begin to raise standards more rapidly. The best lessons have well-differentiated tasks but in others, differentiation is more likely to be by quantity required rather than by providing more difficult work. The quality of marking is variable and standards vary between teachers of the same age group. There are pockets of high quality teaching with an emphasis on the development of literacy skills through purposeful and enjoyable activities. In Year 3, the teacher used 'The Hunter' by Paul Geraghty as a stimulus for writing simple poetry based on observations and experiences. The teacher's high levels of skill, knowledge and planning enabled the pupils to make good progress despite only average standards of writing. In a Year 6 class, where pupils had studied the idea of metamorphosis in 'The Iron Woman' by Ted Hughes, the more able were presented with a comparison with the opening paragraph to 'Metamorphosis' by Franz Kafka. As a result, these pupils wrote with great sensitivity about the relationship between two pond creatures. The use of sentence length as a device to

create mood as one accidentally kills the other, was particularly impressive. *'He stared. She wailed. A shiny tear dribbled onto her gentle wing and she leant on his armour-plated body.'*

61. Pupils' attitudes are very good overall as a result of their natural instinct for good behaviour, the lack of any significantly disruptive pupils and teaching that was at least satisfactory. Virtually no unsatisfactory behaviour was seen.
62. Subject leadership is very good. Senior staff continue to recognise the weaknesses in basic skills. The co-ordinator was appointed with the task of raising standards in English and has a very clear agenda. She has worked intensively with staff during the last 18 months to put improvement strategies into practice. There is very close monitoring of pupils' work, teachers' planning and assessment results, as well as coaching of teachers. The improvement plan is appropriate but very full. Longer term plans for the subject need to be refined so that there is a better-paced time-plan of developments in future years.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Pupils use their language and literacy skills variably in other subjects. There are clearly planned examples of opportunities to link history with literacy using ICT in Year 6 and with geography in Year 5. However, pupils are not encouraged to make sufficient use of literacy skills in science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in Foundation Stage make a good start in mathematics, where standards are above national expectations.
- The quality of teaching is variable, with different expectations from class to class.
- Pupils generally have satisfactory or good mathematical understanding and vocabulary.
- Some teaching is unsatisfactory and a significant number of pupils underachieve.

Commentary

64. Recent tests show that standards in mathematics are broadly in line with national expectations for pupils at the end of Year 6, but below national expectations at the end of Year 2. The trend has been for the school's standards to decline when compared with similar schools in Years 1 and 2 and with pupils' attainment from Year 2 to Year 6. This can be attributed to the underachievement of a significant group of pupils, mainly those of average and below average capability. Those in the present Year 2 and Year 6 have standards in line with those expected for their age. There has been a concerted effort by the school to improve the progress that pupils make by raising the expectation of teachers. This is beginning to have an impact and so pupils are now generally achieving satisfactorily through each year.
65. Teaching observed during the inspection was mostly satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6, with some very good teaching seen. Good teaching was characterised by detailed planning with clear learning objectives for different levels of capability. There was challenging pace and high expectations of pupils' understanding and participation and effective questioning by the teacher. Interesting activities motivated pupils' interest, often involving first-hand investigation and an insistence on high standards of accuracy and care in workbooks. In addition, there was good support for pupils during group work, particularly for the less able and those with special educational needs. In these lessons the pupils showed good achievement, learning new concepts and vocabulary with ease. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson on money the teacher provided opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and gave lots of short, sharp activities which were well matched to the wide range of ability in

the class, so that the pupils were constantly challenged. In a good Year 4 lesson the teacher used a good range of strategies to involve all pupils in the oral discussion about fractions, which moved at a quick pace. The teaching assistant provided very good support to a small group of pupils with learning difficulties by constantly checking their understanding and repeating information for them, so that all pupils were achieving well. In a Year 6 lesson on reflective symmetry the pupils were able to use correct vocabulary with good understanding about co-ordinates. ICT is used well within the computer suite but not during everyday classroom activities.

66. By looking at pupils' books it was clear that teaching over time is more variable in its quality. The rigour in marking pupils' work is variable and the standard of presentation and application varies considerably from class to class. This means that many pupils do not consolidate their understanding before moving on to a new topic. Many pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2, have insufficient opportunity to practise their written number skills in order to become accurate in their calculations. Messy and inaccurate work is often accepted throughout the school, leading to errors and misunderstandings which slow the pace of learning for many average ability pupils. Assessment is not used to set individual or small group targets and so pupils do not always know how they can improve.
67. Leadership and management in mathematics are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has made good impact in raising the amount of investigative and practical work across the school. He has awareness of the need to improve the level of expectations of some teachers and has prepared an appropriate plan for the subject's development, which includes developing the cross-curricular links and developing more focused curriculum targets. However, in some individual classes there is a lack of rigour in the analysis of data and the use of this data to plan more precisely for the next stage in pupils' learning, ensuring that the pace and level of challenge is appropriate for different groups.
68. Improvement in mathematics is unsatisfactory overall since the last inspection, even though certain aspects of the provision have improved. This is because the standards at the end of each key stage when compared with similar schools were higher and the quality of teaching overall was more stable.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Curriculum plans show satisfactory opportunities and links with other subjects for mathematics across the curriculum. Evidence of pupils' good use of mathematical skills was seen in a number of subjects. In design and technology, pupils used mathematical skills to measure and construct moving vehicles and music, and children in the Foundation Stage sang songs to develop their knowledge and understanding of number.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should because the school has not taken action to identify and remedy strengths and weaknesses in provision.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning in science.
- Pupils' work is not always carefully and accurately presented.
- Systems for assessing pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.
- The role of the subject leader is not well established and has too little impact on raising standards and achievement.

Commentary

70. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with the expected levels. Although standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection, insufficient improvement has been made to science since then. Standards in national tests have not kept pace with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The pupils' above average attainment on entry to the school and the good gains made in the Foundation Stage are not sustained, so consequently pupils do not achieve as highly as they should. This is because the school's focus has been on improving provision in literacy and numeracy, and there has been very little emphasis on raising standards and improving teaching and learning in science. The school has not identified why pupils are underachieving because effective management and assessment systems have not yet been established.
71. The teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall but better than that reflected in pupils' work and in their progress over time. Not all year groups were seen during the inspection due to staff absence resulting in changes to the lesson timetables. In the three lessons seen, teachers demonstrated sound subject knowledge and used this effectively to provide interesting work for pupils of all abilities. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and they particularly enjoy the practical nature of the subject. Links with ICT are suitable. The subject contributes well to pupils' personal development through the many opportunities they have to work together, which they do well. The lessons were well planned and organised. Teachers explained clearly the purpose of the session so that pupils knew what skills and knowledge they were to use and build upon. Teaching in the Year 6 lessons was good. Pupils had good opportunities to analyse and research information about different types of soil and their suitability as a habitat for plants and animals. In these lessons, teachers and pupils made good use of ICT to enhance learning.
72. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but teachers have not systematically assessed pupils' progress and this leads to weaknesses in planning. Teachers base their planning on the national guidance for the subject so that work is matched to the expectations for each year group. However, they do not give enough consideration to the amount of progress pupils could reasonably be expected to make each year and their expectations are not always high enough. Teachers pay particular attention to developing pupils' scientific vocabulary, but pupils do not get enough opportunities to reinforce this through written work. The recording of work is inconsistent across the school. Too little value is placed on this and there is no established means of presenting pupils' work in a coherent way so that pupils and teachers can see what progress is being made. Work is not always marked and opportunities to provide guidance on how pupils might improve are missed. For example, it was suggested to a group of pupils that they might try an investigation again. However, there is no evidence to indicate this was done. In another case, the teacher did not encourage the pupil to give the reason for the judgement that a fair test had not been undertaken.
73. Teachers move all pupils systematically through the national subject guidelines but, until very recently, there has been no adequate means of assessing their progress. The newly introduced assessment system shows what pupils can do, but does not give a clear indication of what they need to do to improve. Teachers do not check well enough on pupils' learning to find out who is ready to move on more quickly. This is because there is no systematic checking and tracking of pupils' progress to ensure that individuals are doing at least as well as could be expected. Consequently there is too little information about pupils' achievement available to enable teachers to tailor the science curriculum plans well enough to meet pupils' needs and accelerate their learning.
74. The subject leader has not yet got a clear idea of what is and is not working within the curriculum. There are no procedures to ensure that the subject is carefully and accurately evaluated. Information about the results of the school's performance in the national tests indicates underachievement, yet the school does not highlight the subject as a priority in the school development plan. Although the subject leader has drawn up a subject action plan, this is unfocused because she does not know where in the subject the strengths and weaknesses lie. Effective management systems to bring about improvement have yet to be established. As a result, there is no analysis of pupils' performance in national tests, assessment procedures

are not embedded, and the subject leader has not had an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning. Consequently, the leadership and management of the science curriculum are unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are now starting to improve more rapidly with the introduction of better hardware, well-trained teachers and good management.
- Pupils work hard and quickly gain new skills and understanding.
- Good links are made to other subjects.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.

Commentary

75. Pupils' standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected for their age. Achievement through each year, including for pupils with special educational needs, is sound. Although this is a similar finding to the time of the last inspection there have been considerable improvements in the quality of hardware, software and in teacher's expertise. Leadership of the subject is very good. The refurbished computer suite has a good range of modern equipment, which is being constantly updated to ensure that all aspects of the nationally agreed guidelines for the subject can be covered.
76. When pupils enter Year 1 they have good skills. Through Years 1 and 2 pupils learn to use a variety of programs that enable them to write, paint and draw. They are able to label drawings and combine these with short pieces of text. They can use word banks to help them with difficult spellings and have looked at charts and graphs. These are all skills pupils would be expected to have learned by the end of Year 2. In Year 2, work has been combined with history on a topic about the Great Fire of London. Pupils have been able to learn how to cut and paste by sequencing a set of events.
77. Through Years 3 to 6, the pupils continue to learn the specific skills within ICT. Expertise in word processing includes using different fonts and colours to highlight texts and, in later year groups, to developing presentations about themes that are being studied in other subjects. In one lesson the pupils confidently talked about why they were using light and dark colours on their slides to help make the work easier to see and experimented with colours that might clash. By Year 4, pupils are beginning to learn how to write short procedures that will move a cursor around the screen and to see relationships between the commands they enter. In Year 5, for instance, a group of pupils understood that to draw a square they would have to use a right angle and similar length on each side. Year 6 pupils also benefit from a residential trip that enables them to tackle more complicated tasks and to be able to understand the relevance of using computers in our daily lives.
78. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their work in the computer suite and concentrate very well. They relate well to each other and work hard when asked to undertake a task on their own. Teachers plan the lessons suitably and try to make significant and worthwhile links to the work in other subjects. Since the last inspection an analysis of the skills that should be learnt each year has enabled teachers to first plan how these will be learnt but then to develop ways of practising the skills in real-life situations. The co-ordinator monitors these plans to ensure that work is not repeated unnecessarily. In the best lessons teachers have good subject expertise and can deal with some searching questions from the pupils. They provide a good balance between a formal introduction and independent work. Thus, pupils have the maximum amount of time to experiment and investigate and to enhance their own levels of understanding. In a very good lesson in Year 4, for instance, the teacher started

in the classroom, using an interactive whiteboard, and provided an introduction to what was to be studied. This included showing how to use different commands and the effect they would have. The class then moved efficiently to the computer suite where they quickly settled to the practical element of the lesson. By the end, pupils had made good gains in their understanding and were confidently drawing triangles. Learning assistants are used well and the school benefits from a specialist technician who is able to deal with most problems or breakdowns of equipment. In the small number of cases where teaching is not so strong the teacher spends too long on an introduction and the work is not set at the correct level for the pupils. This is because the teacher does not understand where pupils' ability lies and is linked to a lack of knowledge about the capability of the class through rigorous assessment.

79. All strands of the curriculum are covered, although the school recognises that there is still more need to use monitoring equipment. Research skills using the Internet have improved particularly well. The computer suite is used well but teachers do need to make more use of the computers in the classrooms to enhance the work within other subjects. The newly introduced whiteboards are becoming an integral part of many lessons and have enabled teachers to give more visual appeal and interest.
80. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well and has worked very hard to improve the opportunities for all pupils. Initially, staff were hampered by poor quality hardware and their own lack of understanding. This is not now the case. All the equipment works efficiently and there is at least one member of staff in each year group who has a good skill level. This enables planning to be shared and any training to be given. Assessment has started this year but is not yet used well enough to ensure that the quick gains in pupils' skills are capitalised on. Overall the subject has moved on well and, with the development plans in place, has the capacity to continue to improve.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. ICT is used well through the curriculum. Almost all the examples on display or in books are linked to another subject such as history, geography, English or mathematics. This is an aspect that has improved very well since the last inspection because teachers now understand how pupils must see a relevance to the skills they are learning. The school has tried hard to incorporate technology into all areas of its work, such as programs that develop musical skill and presentations of topics in assembly. Unfortunately, the classroom computers are not yet an integral element within all lessons and the school is developing this valuable resource as part of the overall subject development plan.

HUMANITIES

82. **History** and **geography** were not inspected in full but there was sufficient evidence from teachers' planning, portfolios of work, the very small number of lessons seen and discussions with children to suggest that provision in both subjects is at least satisfactory.
83. There are indications that standards are at least up to age expectation by Year 6. Given the above average speaking and listening skills shown in lessons generally, a higher level of achievement would have been expected in discussion with a small group of Year 6 pupils, assessed as articulate by teachers. Their level of recall and knowledge was higher when describing first-hand experiences of fieldwork in comparing their village with nearby Brighton in a previous year, than it was when talking about their most recent work about World War Two.
84. Despite this, attitudes to learning among the older children were good in both subjects. The quality of written work seen was satisfactory and presentation is imaginative. Children have very mature attitudes to work by age eleven, knowing what the teacher expects of them and how to achieve it. There was a noticeable difference in the standard of work between paired year group classes in the work about the Romans at Year 3.

85. In both subjects it is clear that a range of visits and visitors play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant. An Egyptologist had recently visited Year 4 classes. Teachers made good use of the interactive whiteboards in history and geography lessons such as presenting text and illustrating recycling in Year 6 and the study of Egyptian artefacts in Year 5. Planning is comprehensive and coverage appropriate in both infant and junior year groups but in lessons seen there was no attempt to differentiate the work other than by amount of work set. Good links were planned with other subjects such as art and design, literacy and ICT.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. It was only possible to observe one lesson of **design and technology** during this inspection and therefore a judgement cannot be made about the quality of teaching and learning. Judging from this lesson in Year 2, the scrutiny of planning, scrutiny of portfolios and displays of work and discussion with the subject co-ordinator, standards are at least satisfactory overall and in line with national expectations. Achievement is at least in line with that expected for the pupils' ages. The provision is broadly similar to that found at the time of the last inspection, with some improvement in the opportunity given to pupils to draw designs of their ideas and evaluate their work.
87. The design and technology curriculum map shows that there is satisfactory coverage of the programme of studies and satisfactory opportunity for the development of skills and knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 1 designed and made a playground following a visit to a recreation ground, exploring ways in which to join materials. In Year 2 the work on constructing moving buggies enabled pupils to understand the difference between fixed and moving axles on vehicles. By Year 6, pupils are able to incorporate control technology to make working models of fairground rides. There are good links made with other areas of the curriculum when appropriate. For example, Year 6 pupils were able to combine their knowledge and skills about joining materials and using tools to create large, imaginative sculptures based on the theme of recycling.
88. Leadership is satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator has subject-specialist qualifications and has already identified areas where teachers' planning and teaching can be improved. She recognises the need to make a formal evaluation of standards and to ensure consistency in provision across the school. Resources, materials and tools are always readily available.
89. Work in **art and design** is of a good standard and pupils are achieving at least in line with the level expected for their age and in many cases above this. Displays are well presented and greatly enhance the whole school environment. A number of parents and governors have suggested that this has improved considerably over the last few years. In one discussion, a parent indicated that in some classes the walls '*were very sterile and uninteresting two years ago*'.
90. Through all years there are good examples of painting, drawing, models and large pictures that have been undertaken during the year. Much of this work is very well connected to topics being studied in other subjects. Examples of sketches show that teachers have been able to develop particular skills such as blends and tones and then allowed pupils to practise these. The sketchbooks contain further examples of how pupils have tried out different ideas before starting on their final drawings. There is a suitable balance between two- and three-dimensional work. There are a number of talented artists in the school and pupils are very keen on the subject. Some of these pupils have been identified in the gifted and talented list being compiled as part of an ongoing programme. These pupils are offered further courses through another local school project.
91. Computers are used well to improve these skills and as pupils move through the school they are able to produce some very fine line work using different sizes of brush. The subject has

continued to improve since the last inspection and the contribution made in developing a more exciting learning environment is very good.

92. In **music**, the school plans appropriately for the development of pupils' musical skills and the curriculum covers all key areas. Opportunities for pupils to take part in musical workshops led by visiting specialists broaden their experiences and enrich the curriculum. In the lesson seen, teaching was good. The lesson had a clear focus and the teacher introduced and explained musical terminology well. It was well planned and the teacher carefully built on pupils' knowledge and understanding in small, manageable steps enabling them to apply a new musical feature to their compositions. Pupils can extend their skills by joining the school's choir, recorder club or orchestra. Although the opportunities are available, few pupils take up learning a musical instrument. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a good understanding of the music curriculum. She has drawn up a well-focused action plan to improve the provision but, currently, has limited scope for action due to other school priorities.
93. It was only possible to observe two lessons of **physical education** during this inspection and therefore a judgement cannot be made about the quality of teaching and learning. Judging from the lessons in dance observed in Year 3 and Year 4, the scrutiny of planning, scrutiny of the provision for extra-curricular dance and sport and discussion with the co-ordinator, standards are at least satisfactory overall and in line with national expectations. The provision for swimming is good, with pupils having good access to the school swimming pool during the school day, as well as after school. Achievement in this area is at least in line with that expected for the pupils' ages. The provision is broadly similar to that found at the time of the last inspection.
94. The physical education curriculum map shows that there is satisfactory coverage of the physical education curriculum, with blocked teaching of gymnastics, games, swimming and dance over the academic year. The residential educational visit to the Isle of Wight in Year 6 makes appropriate provision for outdoor pursuits. Good cross-curricular links made with dance enhance the pupils' motivation and enjoyment, for example, in linking African dance and Egyptian dance with current music, drama, art and design, geography and history studies. There has been an appropriate level of monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and suitable training provided over the past few years.
95. Leadership is good. The co-ordinator is a subject specialist and has provided good advice to colleagues and identified good support from outside agencies to develop skills in football, netball, rugby and dance. The co-ordinator has an appropriate action plan identifying the need to develop the quality of teaching gymnastics, particularly the use of fixed apparatus. There is good provision for after-school sport, with the school enjoying success in football, netball and field sports competitions. The after-school dance club builds on pupils' skills and enables some pupils to achieve very well during lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

96. Although not a compulsory subject within the primary curriculum the school places a very high priority on this area of its work. This is ensuring that pupils become familiar with their role within society and the community and understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. The school works hard to involve the local community in its work by supporting charity events and inviting visitors to the school. It has become the centre of the village life and the parents and pupils are proud of this. Regular discussion times are held within each class where views can be exchanged and ideas shared. Assemblies provide another opportunity to think about the wider world. Health matters are dealt with through subjects such as science. The strong procedures contribute to the smooth running of the school as pupils feel part of the decision-making processes and value each other's friendship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
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).