

INSPECTION REPORT

WITTERSHAM CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wittersham

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118740

Headteacher: Miss J Thornton

Lead inspector: Mrs J Hooper

Dates of inspection: 18 – 20 April 2005

Inspection number: 268285

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:	153
School address:	The Street Wittersham Tenterden Kent
Postcode:	TN30 7EA
Telephone number:	01797 270329
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Alison Short
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wittersham Primary is a relatively small school situated in the village of Wittersham. It is very popular and currently with 153 pupils on roll it is filled to capacity. Most of the pupils come from the village and the neighbouring villages of Appledore and Stone. A higher than average proportion of pupils join the school after the normal time of entry. Pupils come from a broad social mix. When they enter school, their attainment overall is broadly average. Just over 18 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is in line with the national average; two pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The pupils' special needs are mainly related to learning difficulties, although some have behavioural problems. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. One pupil is learning to speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school received Achievement Awards in 2002 and 2003, and has a Gold Activemark.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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19322	Judi Bedawi	Lay inspector	
22831	Clive Lewis	Team inspector	Art and design Information and communication technology Pupils' personal, social and health education Foundation Stage Special educational needs
27240	Tony Hooper	Team inspector	Mathematics English Geography History Music English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is sound. Overall, it provides a satisfactory education for its pupils, with some good features. It gives satisfactory value for money. There is a positive ethos built on strong Christian values which clearly supports learning in a warm and friendly environment. The leadership, management and governance are satisfactory with some good aspects. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good and very good teaching. Most pupils achieve well and standards are above average when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. Most behave well, are keen to learn and take full advantage of the broad curriculum enriched by a wide range of out-of-school activities. This contributes greatly to their good achievement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By the time pupils leave school, standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and physical education.
- Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, although there is some unsatisfactory teaching in other classes.
- The teaching time per week is below the recommended minimum.
- Staff provide well for pupils' personal development which leads to good behaviour and attitudes to work and harmonious relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and they achieve well.
- A team of very effective teaching assistants supports teachers and pupils very well.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced through the good links the school has with the community and other schools.
- A significant number of parents do not feel they are involved enough in the education of their children.

Since the last inspection improvements have been satisfactory. Most of the issues raised for improvement at the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. However, parents are still not happy about the information they receive about what their children are being taught and how they can become involved in their education. Assessment procedures are better, teaching and learning are monitored and the youngest children now have a safe outside area with good resources for their outdoor activities. Standards in science and physical education have improved, although standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have declined.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The grades in the table should be interpreted with caution because each year group of pupils is small. Too much emphasis should not be placed on one year's results.

Most pupils achieve well in their learning. Last year, pupils in Year 6 attained standards that were well above the national average for all schools in English, mathematics and science. Standards have been gradually improving year on year because more pupils are attaining the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. However, when compared with similar schools whose pupils had similar results when they were in Year 2, the results in mathematics and science were well below

the national average. This is mainly because the few pupils with special educational needs did not make as much progress in knowledge and understanding between Years 2 and 6 as other pupils. This meant that the school's results compared unfavourably with similar schools which had the highest possible results in Year 2.

Children enter the reception class with broadly average standards. Their achievement is generally sound, but in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development some children are not achieving as well as they could so the overall standards are lower than expected. In all other areas of their learning, they are on track to achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

Throughout the rest of the school, pupils achieve well, and standards attained by the current Year 2 pupils are average in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in science. In Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology are average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well in physical education and standards are above those expected in Years 2 and 6. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who are learning English as a second language attain standards that are appropriate for their age and ability and achieve well due to the good support they receive. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour make a significant impact on their achievement. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is sound, with some good features.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is nearly always good or better so that pupils learn and achieve well and often very well. There was some unsatisfactory teaching in other classes, especially where teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour well. Teachers provide very well for pupils with special educational needs, so that they achieve well and make good progress. The expertise of the teaching assistants is used well to provide very effective support for pupils' learning. The curriculum is broad and is enhanced by a wide range of out-of-school activities, visits and visitors to the school. However, the time spent in teaching is not always used effectively. The accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory overall. The quality of the care of pupils, their guidance and support is satisfactory. There are sound links with parents and the school enjoys good communication with the community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is sound. She has developed a good team spirit in the school so that staff understand the school's priorities and work hard towards achieving them. The role of the subject co-ordinators is developing well. Governors are very supportive and meet their statutory duties. They are well informed about the school and have developed a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Control of the school's finances and the day-to-day management of funds are good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Many parents are happy with the education the school provides for their children and are supportive of the school. They say they appreciate the 'open door' approach of the school and the good teaching. However, a significant percentage do not feel they are able to become involved in their children's education because they are not well informed about what their children are learning. Most pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are very keen to participate in all the activities the school provides.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of all teaching to the level of the best.
- Ensure that time spent on teaching is managed and used effectively.

- Provide parents with the information they need to be fully involved in the education of their children.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good overall. Standards in English, mathematics, science and physical education are above average by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and physical education by the end of Year 6 because teaching is good in these subjects.
- Not all children achieve as well as they could in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as a second language achieve well and make good progress in their learning.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.1 (14.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.7 (12.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.3 (15.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.5 (28.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.9 (28.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.0 (29.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. In comparison with all schools nationally, the 2004 results in the national tests show that pupils in Year 2 attained average standards in reading and mathematics, and below average standards in writing. When compared with similar schools, the results were well below average. This was mainly because there was a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the group.
2. In 2004, pupils in Year 6 attained standards that were well above the national average for all schools in English, mathematics and science. They also attained a greater than average proportion of the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. However, when compared with schools whose pupils had similar results when they were in Year 2 in 2000, the results in mathematics and science were well below average. In their tests when they were in Year 2 in 2000, the pupils with special educational needs did very well and, although they achieved well as they moved through the school, they did not progress as well as other pupils in the knowledge and understanding of these subjects. This brought the overall point scores down when compared with similar schools that were in the highest category for Year 2 results. It is important to note that these comparative grades need to be treated with caution because of the relatively small

number of pupils in the year groups at Wittersham CE Primary. The results of only one or two pupils can make a significant difference to the average results attained by the whole year group. Over the years 2000 to 2004 the trend in the school's National Curriculum points for English, mathematics and science in Year 6 was above the national trend. The targets set for the Year 6 pupils in 2005 for English and mathematics are challenging but realistic.

3. Children enter the reception class with a range of abilities that are broadly average, and most will meet the expected standards in the recommended areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. However, in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development some children are not achieving as well as they could and the overall standards are lower than those expected. This is mainly due to the lack of purposeful learning in the activities that are set for individual pupils and groups of pupils.
4. Overall, the achievement of pupils throughout the rest of the school varies from class to class. However, pupils achieve well as they move through the school because although they start school with average standards for their age, most leave with above average standards in English, mathematics and science as in the current Year 6. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well and often very well because of the good teaching.
5. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology are average in Years 2 and 6. In general, pupils put their information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy skills to appropriate use in other subjects and plans are in hand to develop this further. Pupils achieve well in physical education and standards are above those expected in Years 2 and 6. No judgements have been made on standards and achievement for other subjects as they were only sampled.
6. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who are learning English as a second language attain standards that are appropriate for their ages and abilities and achieve well as a result of the good support they receive. Although the difference in the performance of boys and girls in the national tests varies from year to year, over time there is no significant difference.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are similarly good. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Behaviour management in most classes is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good.
- The school provides well for the promotion of good relationships.
- There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance is not as good as at other primary schools.
- A minority of pupils are regularly late for school.
- Attendance monitoring procedures are not firmly established.

Commentary

7. Behaviour management is good; the school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct and staff work hard, in most cases skilfully and consistently, to achieve them. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show a high level of interest in school life and the good range of learning opportunities provided for them. In most instances, pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good and occasionally very good. Children in reception work and play together happily and help one another. However, they are not given enough opportunities to develop their independence sufficiently. Pupils are friendly and courteous to visitors and to each other. In most classes, these positive attitudes, coupled with skilful behaviour management, enable

them to often make good progress even in lessons where the teaching is only satisfactory. Pupils willingly accept responsibility, for example in their enthusiasm for the well-established school council. Harmony is a very strong feature of the school and although instances of bullying or oppressive behaviour are not unknown, when they do occur they are dealt with very skilfully and promptly. In the months preceding the inspection, there had been two fully justifiable exclusions of one pupil. However, there were none in the last school year.

8. The whole ethos of the school is built on Christian values. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well integrated into the curriculum and contributes effectively to pupils' personal development. The school utilises a wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. As a result, pupils show a good level of respect for the values and beliefs of others. This was demonstrated very effectively in a whole-school assembly led by the local rector where the very positive ethos, the good relationships and quality of singing provided well for pupils' spiritual and social development. Provision for moral development is good; through the school council, pupils have devised their own code of conduct and are fully aware of the way their actions affect others. The school provides well for pupils' social development and this results in most cases in very constructive relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves. Pupils accept responsibility and complete any tasks conscientiously. The school promotes an awareness of pupils' own culture effectively and an awareness of the local culture and history is promoted very well through a good range of links with the community. The school prepares pupils appropriately for life in a diverse multicultural society.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in the last school year.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.7
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.

9. Attendance is unsatisfactory and has declined since the last inspection. Although snow caused some authorised absence earlier this year, term time holidays are increasing, partly, but not entirely, due to the school terms used by local secondary schools. Some holidays last over ten days. In addition, days off are authorised for family trips or visits, contributing to the higher than normal absence. There is considerable unexplained absence. Current registers show that some class and weekly attendance is very low. A minority of pupils are late for school. Latecomers are marked in registers but their arrival times are not always evident.
10. The monitoring of pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. There is no attendance policy to provide guidance for staff on completing registers, or to inform and raise parental awareness of the school's expectations, procedures and legal requirements. The education welfare officer visits each term, and also supports a few families with chronic attendance problems. Parents are expected to telephone in about absences but do not always do so. Phone calls home on the first day of an absence have just been introduced so it is too early to assess the impact.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is broad and enhanced by a wide range of out-of-school activities, school visits and visitors who share their expertise with pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are catered for well. Staff provide appropriately for pupils' care and welfare needs. Although most parents are very supportive of the school, some have concerns. The school has developed appropriate links with parents and enjoys good links with other schools and the community which have a positive effect on pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Assessment procedures are satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2.
- Most teachers plan their lessons well and indicate clearly what they want pupils to learn.
- The basic skills of numeracy and literacy are taught well.
- Most teachers manage the behaviour of pupils very well and give positive encouragement to ensure pupils do their best.
- In English, mathematics and science, assessment procedures are thorough and are used well to track pupils' attainment, achievement and progress.
- Time is not used effectively for teaching and learning.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support pupils' learning especially pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language.
- The quality of marking is variable between classes.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3	13	10	3	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons seen.

11. During the inspection the quality of teaching and learning was variable but overall it was satisfactory. This is a similar judgement to the last inspection, although, at that time, teaching in Years 3 to 6 was better than in Years 1 and 2; this is now reversed. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is successful mainly because the teachers have a lively and enthusiastic approach to their teaching which motivates pupils, so they learn well. At the last inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching whereas now there is.
12. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is broadly satisfactory with some significant weaknesses as at the last inspection. These weaknesses are particularly in the teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, and in the general organisation of the classroom, pace of lessons and use of time. In one good lesson during an outdoor session, a good range of learning activities was clearly linked to the learning intentions and children were well supervised. As a result, the children were well motivated throughout so that they achieved well and made good progress. In other lessons, the main weaknesses were in the lack of focused learning for the group and individual activities that children chose to do following the whole-class introductions to lessons. Assessment is satisfactory. There were some good examples of day-to-day assessment observed during the inspection, for example the regular use of a digital camera to record activities and the detailed notes made by the

teaching assistant on individual children's responses during a teacher-led, whole-class discussion. However, few opportunities are made for assessment during free-choice activities.

13. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 plan their lessons well with a clear focus on what they want pupils to learn. They frequently involve pupils in their own learning by telling them what they are going to learn at the beginning of the lesson and, in the best lessons, teachers assess what pupils have learnt at the end. They frequently use good questioning techniques to challenge pupils' thinking and direct their questions skilfully to challenge pupils of different abilities.
14. The teaching and learning of English, mathematics, science and physical education are good. Throughout the school, areas for the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills have been carefully identified and focused upon. For example, currently an emphasis is being placed on improving boys' writing. Key skills of reading and writing are being taught progressively and are built on systematically so that pupils make at least sound progress through the school. In mathematics, teachers are careful to ensure that pupils' learning is based upon sound mathematical understanding.
15. Most teachers have high expectations of behaviour and in general, a mutual respect exists between the teachers and their pupils. This creates a good learning environment. As a result of the school's positive approach to promoting pupils' personal, social and health education as they move through the school, most pupils develop the confidence to work independently and collaboratively as the situation arises. However, although most teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, there were lessons in the class of pupils in Years 3 and 4 where the teacher found it difficult to control the inappropriate behaviour of a minority of pupils so that the pace of learning became very slow.
16. The school has good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science. These have improved since the last inspection. Information from tests taken by different year groups, together with an analysis of the Years 2 and 6 national test results, is used to identify areas for development and to set whole-school targets. Good tracking systems which measure attainment, progress and achievement are in place for individual pupils. Although assessments are made in other subjects, in general, these are not recorded formally and the school realises this needs to be developed. Marking is variable. In the best cases, teachers make supportive comments in their marking and give pupils a further focus for improving their work. Pupils are becoming more aware of how they can improve in English, mathematics and science through clearly identified targets in their books. The school has recently introduced a system of 'Traffic lights' which involves pupils in their own assessments and has proved to be very popular.
17. Most teachers use the information gained from evaluations and formal and informal assessments of the pupils' learning effectively to guide their planning and to target the work of groups and individual pupils. However, the use of the information varies between subjects but is used well to group the pupils according to their prior attainment in literacy and numeracy lessons. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the needs of the pupils and, in the best lessons, work is matched to individual as well as group needs, so that all pupils experience success, achieve well and make good gains in their learning. The decision to teach mathematics and science to pupils in Years 3 to 6 as individual year groups has been a contributing factor to the improvement in standards because it makes it easier to provide for the different levels of maturity and build on pupils' learning systematically.
18. Given that the amount of teaching time is considerably less than that recommended, teachers do not plan well to maximise the time they have to teach. Fifteen minutes is allocated for morning registration, an activity that normally takes five minutes. Lessons often start late and, in order to complete their planned work, teachers finish the lessons late. This irritates parents waiting for pupils at the end of the day. Conversely, some teachers get the pupils ready too early to go home, wasting valuable teaching time.

19. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good. Class teachers ensure in their lesson plans that work and provision are matched to pupils' learning needs. Support for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is frequently very good. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. They give a high level of assistance to teachers and pupils. Most are very experienced and know the pupils well. They are skilful at managing pupils who have behaviour problems so that lessons move smoothly and there are very few disruptions.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets all statutory requirements. A good range of out-of-school activities enriches it. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links between subjects enhance pupils' understanding and make learning more meaningful.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they achieve well.
- A good programme of out-of-school clubs and activities makes a good contribution to the development of pupils.
- Time is not always used efficiently.
- The hall is too small for the teaching of physical education to whole classes of older pupils.
- Pupils in the same year groups but in different classes receive differing amounts of teaching in National Curriculum subjects.

Commentary

20. There is a satisfactory curriculum for the Foundation Stage. It is planned to deliver all of the areas of learning. Throughout the rest of the school, there is a broad and relevant curriculum that covers all subjects of the National Curriculum. However, the school teaches somewhat less than the DfES's recommended curriculum time. The school's justification for this is the necessity for so many pupils to travel by coach. Linking work in different subjects helps to use time efficiently. However, this good use of time is not consistent. The morning registrations are overlong and, after the register is taken, time is not always used constructively. There are also some longer sessions that are not well defined on the timetable which are not very productive. In the last report, the lack of an overview of curriculum planning was mentioned. This is still the case. As a result, pupils in the same year groups but different classes spend different amounts of time on subjects and this limits some learning.
21. There is an effective programme of personal, social and health education. This helps pupils to make informed decisions about their personal lives. The school has good links with the secondary schools to which most pupils transfer, so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their schooling. The good extra-curricular activities and the visits to places of interest enhance the curriculum. Pupils participate in a good range of out-of-school clubs, including football and French. The Christmas and end-of-year productions develop pupils' interest in the performing arts, as do visits by musicians. There is a bi-annual residential trip to France that helps pupils to understand living as part of a community, as well as increasing their cultural awareness.
22. The curriculum is well organised to cater for pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are learning to speak English as a second language. The school works hard to give these pupils equal access to the full curriculum. Staff have suitable qualifications and experience, and the school is successful at recruiting and retaining teachers and support staff. There is a good programme for developing the skills of all staff through in-service training. This helps to create an effective team in which all understand their own roles and the roles of others. The accommodation of the school is adequate for teaching the National Curriculum. However the hall is too small for teaching physical education to whole classes of older pupils.

This was mentioned in the previous report. There is an attractive outside area for the children in the Foundation Stage. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Resources are always adequate and in some subjects are good, for example music. This helps in the effective teaching of all areas of the National Curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care and welfare is satisfactory. Child protection is satisfactory, overall. Arrangements to settle new pupils into the school are satisfactory. Health and safety procedures and record keeping are satisfactory. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is good in English, mathematics and science. Pupils have good opportunities to voice their opinions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide soundly for the daily needs of their pupils.
- Insufficient attention is paid to the availability and upkeep of health and safety procedures and records.
- Pupils receive satisfactory guidance about their academic progress.
- Good relationships and the school council enable pupils to be involved in the school's decision making.

Commentary

23. Staff provide appropriately for pupils' care and welfare needs. Qualified first aiders care for pupils if they feel unwell or have a minor accident. The good trust between pupils and staff enables pupils to seek help if they need personal advice or support. There are sound arrangements for new pupils to settle in. All children start school full time in September or January every year. Parents and children are able to visit during the summer term prior to their entry. Sensitive records are kept securely, with restricted access
24. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory, although insufficient attention is given to ensuring that all records are readily accessible, maintained and completed properly with regular reviews. The school's risk assessments are suitable. Risk assessments are completed for all outside residential trips and visits. Some required tests and checks are not always undertaken as regularly as is stated in school policy. The governing body needs to ensure that health and safety procedures and practices are absolutely secure. A number of issues were noted during inspection.
25. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is generally satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Results are analysed and used to plan suitable class work, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress in other subjects and to ensure the steady progress of the youngest children is less well established. Pupils have their individual learning targets for English, mathematics and science written in their books as a constant reminder. They are reviewed each term. Pupils can mostly remember them, but say that not all parents know them.
26. Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are good. Pupils are able to find someone to talk to if they need support or are at all worried. There is an established school council so that pupils have an opportunity to speak about ways of making improvements to their school. When interviewed, some pupils said they would like to have more opportunity to use computers and they do not do enough art. They like their teachers.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parental links are satisfactory overall, but are not as good as at the last inspection. The previous key issue has not been fully addressed. There are good links with the community and with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A significant number of parents remain dissatisfied with the quality of information about their children's progress and the curriculum.
- Targets in pupils' reports are not precise enough to support their progress effectively.
- Parents provide sound support for fundraising and other social events.
- Community and other school and college links are well developed.

Commentary

27. Although many parents are wholly satisfied with the education the school provides for their children there is a significant percentage who are not. Fifty-one per cent of the parents who returned questionnaires expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of home/school communication. This was also an issue at the last inspection. Thirty per cent of parents feel that the school does not take account of their views and 20 per cent say that their children are not making good progress. These are very high percentages. Following a school questionnaire, some action on parents' views has been taken by increasing formal progress consultation meetings to three a year. This is a positive step. Nonetheless, parents continue to tell the school that they want more curriculum information in order to help their children learn and they want a much closer learning partnership. The school is not working proactively enough to ensure that the information they provide is what parents really want and need, to enable them to effectively support their children's learning and progress.
28. Pupils' annual reports fulfil statutory requirements, apart from not identifying the pupils' year group. However, they are inconsistent in written content. Some focus most on what pupils can do, others on what is taught. Academic targets to aid pupil progress and the identification of next steps of learning are not always clearly identified or specific enough. There is very little space for written parental comments.
29. The Wittersham School Association continues to arrange events and fundraise successfully throughout the year, to support the high running costs of the school's swimming pool. Around £4,500 a year is raised. Final preparations are in hand to share and celebrate St George's Day with the community. A small number of parents help in school, hearing readers or through involvement in organising school clubs. Newsletters are regular and give a positive overview of school life. The prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents meet statutory requirements. The provision of homework is satisfactory, based mainly on mathematics and English. Year 6 pupils complete many practice papers in preparing for the national assessment tests. All pupils have diaries or homework folders but these do not make provision for parents to make comments.
30. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges continue to thrive. The school is well regarded in the local area. There are good links with the nearby Church. Pupils regularly contribute to community events like the procession through the village before the Summer Fete. They enjoy dressing up in costumes for this event. There are close links with the local old people's group. A local farmer has generously gifted a piece of land to the school for an environmental area. Pupils express their views about the village travel plan. The local schools' cluster support group is well used by pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy shared sporting events and go on residential visits with another school. Staff are able to meet other teachers at joint professional development training and the headteachers meet through a headteachers' support group. Joint planning sessions are held between cluster schools but staff do not teach or share good practice in each other's schools. Secondary pupils support primary

sports activities in the summer term. Older secondary students do work experience at Wittersham. The school has links with Ashford and East Sussex Colleges, but currently has no student teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory as are the management and governance of the school. Governors meet their statutory duties.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has ensured that the established management procedures in place facilitate a generally inclusive ethos.
- Not all issues for improvement raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed.
- The headteacher's leadership has resulted in a spirit of good teamwork between all staff.
- Governors are very supportive.
- The management of special educational needs is good.
- The school finances are managed efficiently.

Commentary

31. The headteacher's leadership is satisfactory as at the last inspection. Management and governance of the school continue to be sound. The headteacher provides an atmosphere in which staff work together as a fully committed and enthusiastic team, and she ensures that the aims of the school are clear and that the staff work hard to achieve them. The good team spirit fosters a caring atmosphere in which there is the intention that all pupils have an equal opportunity to do their best. The senior teachers, who with the headteacher form the senior management team, provide effective support for the headteacher. However, an important issue has not been fully addressed from the last inspection as there is still not enough information for parents about the curriculum so that they can be fully involved in the education of their children. There are some weaknesses in the leadership of the curriculum. However, procedures have been put into place to address the weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning.
32. The role of the subject co-ordinator is developing satisfactorily and co-ordinators have a good knowledge of the strengths in their subjects and have developed action plans to address any weaknesses. These action plans have a major role in influencing the school improvement plan. Co-ordinators, with the headteacher and outside agencies, monitor and evaluate the curriculum, teaching and learning on a regular basis through classroom visits and scrutiny of pupils' work; this is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers whose teaching is not as good as it should be are supported well by the school and outside agencies. The monitoring and evaluation is not always sufficiently effective, for example about the use of teaching time during the school day.
33. The headteacher ensures that all systems and routines run efficiently and that the school operates as a well-ordered community. She has been keen to raise standards especially in English, mathematics and science, and has been pro-active in raising standards in mathematics and science through teaching these subjects herself to Year 6 pupils. This has also enabled pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 to be taught these subjects in their year groups which makes it easier for teachers to provide for their different levels of maturity and build on pupils' learning systematically. Where the results of the national assessment tests have not been as good as expected, thorough analysis of the results have been made and adjustments to teaching and the curriculum put in place. The improved results in the 2004 science tests over those in 2002 and 2003 are a good example of this.

34. The co-ordination of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed and meets statutory requirements. The school's special educational needs co-ordinator has a good overview of special needs within the school. The positive atmosphere and ethos of the school promotes the effective inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into every aspect of the school's life.
36. The school improvement plan is a clear document, detailed for a year with an outline plan for future developments. It highlights the most important areas for development and demonstrates a clear vision for raising standards, especially in English, mathematics and science. It also focuses on making pupils' learning more meaningful by cross-linking subjects. Achievable goals have been set, timescales are realistic and funding has been allocated appropriately. However, not all issues the school recognises as needing improvement are included; for example, the school recognises that attendance is an important area for improvement but there is no plan for doing this. The professional development of staff is linked appropriately to school developments as well as their personal development, identified through well-established performance management involving all staff.
37. Governors meet their statutory duties fully and work hard to support the school. Within the governing body, there is a good balance between newly appointed and experienced governors and they work together well. There is a good level of expertise between them which is used to good effect and their committee structure enables them to work efficiently. Many governors including the chair of governors are regular visitors to the school. The school has appropriate self-evaluation procedures which inform school improvements and through this governors have gained a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil their role appropriately in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	425,401	Balance from previous year	6,250
Total expenditure	411,463	Balance carried forward to the next	13,938
Expenditure per pupil	2,654		

38. Control of the school's finances and the day-to-day management of finance continue to be good as at the time of last inspection. Detailed analysis of spending is carried out regularly. Best value is sought by the governors at all times when considering the purchasing of goods or services. Financial planning is related through the school improvement plan to the school's educational priorities. In addition to this, the school has appointed an experienced finance officer to provide specialist support. Financial information now provided to the headteacher and governing body is very good.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for the foundation stage and its leadership and management are broadly satisfactory. This is a similar judgement to that made at the last inspection. Although overall attainment on entry to the school varies widely year on year, the attainment on entry to the school of the current group of children was about average in all areas of learning. There are still, however, the inconsistencies and weaknesses in teaching identified at the last inspection; for example, a lack of focus, the generally slow pace of learning and the low level of challenge in free-choice activities. As a result, a significant minority of children have not made sufficient progress in their literacy skills and mathematical development to be completely ready for the Year 1 curriculum by the end of the year. Overall, accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The new outdoor area is a great asset for promoting learning. The quality of teaching and learning is broadly satisfactory. Assessment of children's learning and progress is sound.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is broadly **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff work consistently to ensure there are good relationships between children.
- Opportunities to develop independence are limited.

Commentary

39. Most children achieve satisfactorily and standards are as expected. Teaching is mainly sound. When properly motivated and given activities to engage their interest, most children work and play together appropriately, helping each other, playing happily and taking pride in their work. The class teacher has developed sound relationships with the children; she and the teaching assistant work consistently to ensure good relationships between children and they both provide suitable role models. However, the children are not provided with the range of activities to encourage them to develop their independence sufficiently. For example, they do not self-register when they arrive in the morning, there is no opportunity to organise and order their free-choice activities and there is little expectation that they will tidy up after their activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is broadly **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Not all children are achieving as well as they could.
- Most free-choice activities do not have a clear focus for learning.
- Children enjoy books and stories.
- Most children are developing the early skills of handwriting.

Commentary

40. Although achievement is broadly satisfactory and the majority of children will have attained the standards expected by the time they leave the reception, a significant minority will not. Also, not enough children are attaining standards beyond these expectations. Given that the overall attainment on entry was average, it is clear that some children are underachieving.

41. Children learn to enjoy books, picking out their favourite characters, pictures and rhymes. They enjoy listening to stories read by the teacher, such as 'The Giant Turnip'. Most are beginning to recognise some basic words, and recognise and write their names. They listen to stories with increasing attention and recall, and are questioning why things happen and giving explanations. They demonstrate that they have been listening attentively by their relevant comments. They develop their letter formation by regular practice and some make legible attempts at independent writing, for example when writing lists for the supermarket. In one lesson observed, the teaching was unsatisfactory. The teacher provided satisfactory opportunities for speaking and listening which motivated the children and kept them interested during the whole-class introduction to the lesson. Following this introduction, two groups worked directly with the teacher and the teaching assistant. The third group of 11 children was directed to choose from a limited range of activities. However, these activities had no clear learning focus so the children wandered aimlessly and increasingly fractiously around the class. The teaching assistant occasionally challenged them when the noise level got out of hand but they remained largely unsupervised for most of the lesson. The group working directly with the teaching assistant was making a 'seed packet' and spent most of their time colouring in and cutting out from a prepared worksheet. The only literacy learning was tracing quickly over the teacher's prepared dotted letters spelling out 's e e d s' and adding their name.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is broadly **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A significant minority of children are not likely to meet the expected standards.
- The free-choice activities do not have a structured learning focus.
- Children have a good range of opportunities to develop their mathematical understanding.
- Children use their mathematical knowledge in other areas of learning.

Commentary

42. Achievement is broadly satisfactory and many children reach the expected standards. However, there is a significant minority of children who do not achieve well and so are not likely to attain the expected standards by the time they leave the reception class. In a lesson observed, the quality of teaching and learning was just satisfactory. Most children were able to count up to and back from 20 during the introduction and the teacher covered a number of related mathematics concepts appropriately during this activity. However, during the follow-up work, there was a lack of focus to the activities. The pace of learning was slow and, because the children were not challenged by the activities, some were wandering around the class which led to a high noise level. However, the teacher successfully drew the children together at the end of the lesson to discuss what they had learned. Similarly, in a short observation, it was noted that children were flitting between activities rather aimlessly because there was too much flexibility for children to play rather than become engaged in purposeful learning activities. Photographic evidence provided confirms that children have opportunities to develop mathematical concepts such as the language of shape, space and measure in sand tray activities and using tally marks to record activity in a role-play travel agent's shop.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher plans a wide range of activities.
- Children enjoy their learning through practical activities.

Commentary

43. Teaching in the one lesson observed was good. Most children achieve satisfactorily and are likely to meet the goals expected for their age by the end of the reception year. Their skills are developed through such practical activities as using information and communication technology to develop mouse control, clicking on icons and labels to make things happen. They understand, for example, that plants need water, soil and sunshine to grow successfully. They demonstrate a high level of interest and motivation when planting seeds with the teaching assistant, and in making close observations through magnifying glasses of the mini-beasts in the lawn. They are also aware that the duck nesting directly outside their classroom door is sitting on her eggs and 'has to keep them warm' and of the need to 'be quiet and let her settle' when the duck is walking back to her nest.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new secure, well-resourced outdoor accommodation for the reception children provides a good facility for outdoor learning.

Commentary

44. Most children achieve satisfactorily and meet the standards expected. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the outdoor area, children move with appropriate control and co-ordination, as they cycle around the area, balance on wooden bars and climb on the climbing frame. They experiment with different ways of moving, adjusting speed and changing direction to avoid obstacles. They use simple tools to effect changes to materials such as play-dough. There was no opportunity to observe a physical development lesson during the inspection but the photographic evidence confirms that children have sufficient opportunities to use small equipment and develop the basic skills of moving with confidence, control and safety, showing an awareness of space.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have experience of a good range of materials and media.

Commentary

45. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most children achieve soundly and meet the expected standards for their age. Children recognise colours and show awareness of detail in their pictures. They play appropriately alongside other children who are engaged in the same role-play activity, for example in the class kitchen, and, when they are appropriately supervised, they play co-operatively as part of a group. Photographic evidence provided confirms that children have a good range of opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form. They paint self-portraits, use their imagination by making shark masks and designing a sea for sharks to swim in, and design and make puppets and musical instruments.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Assessment procedures are generally good.
- The majority of pupils develop joined handwriting by the end of Year 2.
- There is no system of home/school reading diaries; this limits opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's' learning.

Commentary

46. The standards at the end of Year 2 in both writing and reading are average. In Year 6, standards are above average. These judgements are similar to those made at the last inspection. There has been some fluctuation in results over recent years. However, the small numbers in each year group mean that apparent trends have to be treated with caution. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well. Pupils in Year 6 have also achieved well since entering the school.
47. The general standard of teaching is good. During this inspection, the standard of teaching varied from unsatisfactory to good. In the better lessons, the teachers set work appropriate to all levels of ability within the class so that all pupils received an appropriate level of challenge. A range of interesting activities stimulated them and, as a result, they worked productively. In less successful lessons, teachers lacked the necessary techniques to establish a calm setting where learning could take place without disruption. This resulted in time being lost and pupils learning too little in the lesson. Many teachers use questions well to assess pupils' understanding and to develop their spoken English. As a result of this good development of speaking and listening skills, pupils talk confidently to visitors and explain their work in other subjects clearly. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of pupils. They support pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, for example working with small groups when pupils do written work, and sometimes take an active part in the presentation of the main focus of the lesson.
48. Younger pupils use their knowledge of letter combinations and recognition of simple words to help them read. The average pupils sounded out words like 'telephone' and 'fitted' while higher-attaining pupils talked about the characters in their reading books in a thoughtful way. Pupils in Year 6 read fluently and talk about the books in some depth. Their attainment in reading is above the national average. Pupils are developing preferences for the work of different authors. Dick King Smith, Meg Cabot and JRR Tolkien are favourites. Pupils have reading diaries but these are not used to make links with home. The school teaches library skills effectively and pupils know how to find books and information by using alphabetical order. The library is centrally situated and is of adequate size. There are enough books and they are well suited to the needs of the pupils. Pupils regularly use the Internet and CD-ROMs to find information.
49. Many teachers encourage pupils to be imaginative in their use of written language. In a display, older pupils had used sentences like 'It can paint a soothing picture and make good friends by using one hand of truth'. In some work on the theme of 'Colours', a pupil wrote 'Light blue is the refuge from the storm, calm and neutral'. Much of the work on display was word-processed. Overall, standards of handwriting are satisfactory and are developed well in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are taught to join their letters in Year 1 and by the end of Year 2 most

pupils are writing in a neat joined style. Some teachers give useful advice in their marking which helps pupils improve their work, and pupils are given individual targets to guide their progress. However, this good practice is not consistent from class to class.

50. The co-ordinator manages the subject soundly. She has had opportunities to observe teaching and learning, and has a good grasp of what is happening in literacy throughout the school. There is good recording and analysis of pupils' progress, but these need further development to help teachers use the information to improve the achievement of groups and individuals.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. The school has focused on pupils developing their literacy skills in all subjects. This has resulted in pupils writing extended pieces in history, instructions in design and technology and science, and note taking in geography. Teachers take care to use subject specific terms in all subject areas, for example 'pentatonic' in music, and this is an effective way of extending pupils' vocabulary.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching.
- Teaching pupils in Years 3 to 6 in year groups enables them to cover topics at the appropriate level of difficulty.
- Work in some lessons is not challenging enough.
- Assessment is thorough so teachers know which groups and individuals need support.
- The use of information and communication technology to support learning is underdeveloped.

Commentary

52. Pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 in mathematics are average. This is similar to the results in the last national tests. In Year 6, standards are above average. This is not quite as good as last year when the standard was well above average. With small year groups, variations in standards are not always significant, as the scores of a very small number of pupils can have a disproportionate effect on the group's results. During this inspection, boys and girls attained similar standards.
53. In Years 1 and 2, pupils estimate and make approximations confidently. They know when this is the appropriate method to use, rather than counting or measuring. These younger pupils have a good knowledge of number bonds and how these help them to add and take away. They name two-dimensional shapes correctly. In a Year 3 class, pupils identified right angles and knew that they represent a quarter turn. In Year 6, pupils have a clear understanding of how to represent mathematical information by using a range of graphical methods, for example bar charts and pictograms. All groups of pupils achieve well through both key stages. The introduction of teaching Years 3 to 6 by year groups helps to extend more-able pupils, while supporting those who do not find the subject easy.
54. Work in pupils' books shows good examples of the understanding of a range of mathematical concepts, and how mathematics can be used to solve practical everyday problems. However, little of the work was done on computers. During the inspection there was no information and communication technology used in numeracy lessons, although in displays of pupils' work there was some graph work done on computers.

55. Overall, teaching and learning are good. In the lessons seen, teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. Lessons are carefully planned and have clear learning objectives. This helps pupils to know what they will be learning. Time is used well in most lessons and pupils achieve well as a result. Most have a good pace that captures pupils' interest and enthusiasm. However, in one lesson, the work was not sufficiently challenging because the teacher pitched the level of work too low for most pupils in the class and pupils lost concentration. Teachers take care to develop pupils' mathematical vocabulary by using technical terms like 'estimate' and 'symmetry'. Teaching assistants are well briefed, and make an effective contribution to raising standards, particularly by supporting pupils with special educational needs.
56. There is a comprehensive system of assessment that makes it easy to see if any group or individual needs extra attention. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Older pupils have individual targets in their books. This helps them to realise what they need to do to improve their work. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. She is enthusiastic and monitors learning and teaching across the school. This helps her to have a good understanding of what is happening in the teaching of mathematics and to support colleagues if necessary. The new assessment system and the teaching arrangements for pupils in Years 3 to 6 contribute to a good improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. For example, they use stopwatches to measure time in science and graphs to record data. However, this is as a result of good practice by individual teachers rather than because of a consistent school policy.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve well.
- The good teaching enables pupils to attain above average standards in Years 2 and 6.
- The subject is well led.
- There is a good balance between teaching about knowledge and understanding and providing opportunities for investigative work.
- Assessment procedures are good.

Commentary

58. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and so by the end of Years 2 and 6 they attain above average standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
59. The scheme of work provides a good balance between developing pupils' knowledge and understanding and opportunities for scientific investigation. For example, through opening fruits and vegetables to find the seeds, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were building up knowledge of sizes and types of seeds and their purpose. It was clear that pupils in Year 6 had an in-depth background of investigations as they had a good understanding of a fair test and knew how to record their results correctly. These pupils were very comfortable when using scientific vocabulary; for example, one pupil suggested that 'evaporating' water from a solution could be a way of producing a reversible change. In both of these lessons, pupils were using their mathematical knowledge to good effect. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were estimating and counting seeds and pupils in Year 6 were measuring liquids and their temperatures.

60. Teachers' planning is detailed and teachers clearly define what they want pupils to learn. They have a good subject knowledge and impart it well at an appropriate level for pupils' understanding. Good open-ended questioning and the use of key questions help pupils to make connections with their previous learning. When teachers make the work exciting for the pupils, it gives them a sense of wonder and aids their learning. For example, in the Year 6 lesson, pupils made simple rockets and illustrated that gases can be produced in some reactions. They thoroughly enjoyed the effect of them when they built up in a closed container. Most teachers have high expectations that pupils behave well and work hard. Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively and this has a good impact on their social development. Most lessons provide appropriately for the more-able pupils and for those who find learning difficult. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs. However, in a less successful lesson, the work the teacher had prepared was pitched at too low a level so that the more-able pupils did not achieve well. Most teachers pay particular attention to developing pupils' understanding of scientific vocabulary. Marking is generally good; in the best cases teachers make points for improving and developing work as well as giving pupils praise.
61. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The decision to teach science to pupils in Years 3 to 6 as individual year groups has been a contributing factor to the improvement in standards because it makes it easier to provide for the different levels of maturity and to build on pupils' learning systematically. The school has developed good systems to record what pupils know, understand and can do. The results of assessments are used effectively to track pupils' progress through the school. The school is working towards the 'Healthy Schools' award which is making a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a significant improvement in the quality and quantity of resources for the subject since the last inspection and this is improving the quality of learning.

Commentary

62. Standards in the subject by the end of the Year 6 are in line with expectations and, overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. This is an apparent decline in standards compared to the judgement made by the last inspection team, who judged standards to be above average. Since then, however, the school's new computer suite, with eight desktop computers, has been opened and pupils now receive at least one lesson there each week. Although standards in the current Year 6 remain average, as a result of more regular use and practise with computers, and more cross-curricular use of ICT, indications are that pupils lower down the school are now making good progress, with a higher level of skills in the subject. As a result, standards are likely to improve in future years.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In one lesson observed, the teaching and learning were good. The teaching was based on very secure subject knowledge and the generation of a high level of enthusiasm. The teacher successfully created and maintained interest by giving very clear instructions and using questioning very well and, as a result, pupils made good progress as they worked with a programmable toy. No Year 6 lessons were observed, although discussions with Year 6 pupils and the Year 6 teacher provided evidence that an appropriate range and quality of work had been undertaken during the current school year.

64. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is committed to continued improvement and has overseen a significant improvement in staff subject knowledge and confidence. Resources, which have improved considerably since the last inspection, are satisfactory for the number of pupils in the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to further develop the whole-school cross-curricular use of information and communication technology especially for mathematics. Pupils regularly and confidently use information and communication technology in English, especially word-processing final copies of their writing. Year 6 pupils have made PowerPoint presentations to support their topic work. Pupils often use the Internet and CD-ROMS for research, for example in geography and history.

HUMANITIES

66. Work in geography and history was sampled, because too few lessons were observed to make reliable judgements on provision, standards, achievement and teaching.
67. During the inspection only one lesson was seen in **geography** and two in **history**. All of these were in Years 3 to 6 and the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall. The school uses national guidance as a basis for planning in both subjects. All the junior classes in the school have two year groups within them. The co-ordinator for history has planned work effectively to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes. In geography, the co-ordinator has not been in charge of the subject for long and is investigating the best arrangement of topics so that pupils in the mixed-age classes are taught all of the necessary work without repetition.
68. In history, artefacts give pupils the opportunity to extend their understanding of past eras. There are satisfactory stocks of books and atlases for pupils to use in their geographical work.
69. These subjects use self-assessment by pupils which is proving to be successful. Teachers encourage pupils to use this system themselves to show how they feel they have grasped the work. The extended pieces of writing that are set for older pupils in history are effective at developing their skills in literacy, and the emphasis on class discussion in both subjects helps all pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening.
70. There is a good programme of visits and fieldwork that enables pupils to broaden their knowledge of historical and geographical topics. In geography, there are visits to local sites for work on specific projects, as well as trips further afield. In history, there are also visits to local museums and historic sites. The recent project on India in geography made very good links with other curriculum areas such as religious education and art and design. Visitors to the school, for example, the owner of a local Indian restaurant and a speaker on ancient Egypt, add to pupils' knowledge of geography and history. Both subjects make good links with other subject areas when appropriate. Pupils use the Internet and CD-ROMs for research.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

71. Work in art and design, design and technology and music was sampled, because too few lessons were observed to make reliable judgements on provision, standards, achievement and teaching.
72. Only one lesson was observed in **art and design**. However, a scrutiny of the work and photographic evidence indicates that pupils throughout the school undertake an appropriate

range of activities. The displays of pupils' work around the school vary greatly in quality from class to class, but are generally satisfactory and in the best cases they indicate clearly that pupils' work is highly valued by teachers and support staff. In the lesson observed in Year 2, the quality of teaching was good. The pupils were recording from first-hand observation, drawing their partner's portrait and following their teacher's encouragement to "Look very, very closely". Pupils were very well-behaved, concentrating on their work and trying their best.

73. Leadership and management of art and design are broadly satisfactory. The school follows national guidance, on which lessons are based, and the guidance has been adjusted to meet the schools needs more fully.
74. Although no lessons were observed in **design and technology**, planning indicates that pupils' skills are built on progressively as pupils move through the school. A display of a good range of musical instruments made by pupils in Year 5 linked very well with their studies of 'Sound' in science and music. Another display outside showed that Years 4 and 5 pupils had painted chairs imaginatively and built them into a large sculpture. The subject is managed soundly.
75. Only one lesson was observed in **music**; the teaching in this lesson was good. Pupils enjoy singing and in assemblies they sing with enthusiasm and a good sense of the melody. The headteacher is acting as co-ordinator for the subject. At the moment, the school follows national guidance for its lesson planning. However, there are plans to supplement this with a commercial course that will help teachers with little musical knowledge to teach the subject more confidently. Visiting teachers from the Kent Music Service provide instrumental lessons and several pupils learn stringed and other instruments. Pupils have the opportunity to play in assemblies as well as in Christmas and other productions. Resources for teaching the subject are good. There is a large stock of good quality tuned and untuned percussion instruments, as well as some keyboards.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards exceed national expectations in Years 2 and 6.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The school provides a good programme of extra-curricular activities.
- Leadership is good.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

Commentary

76. The school places a high priority on physical education. Most pupils achieve well so that pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain higher than expected standards in all areas of the subject. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the lessons observed, most pupils showed they were developing good co-ordination in gymnastics and games, and employing movement in an imaginative way in their dance lessons as they moved through the school. Most pupils know the importance of a 'warm up' session at the beginning and a 'cool down' at the end of lessons. No swimming lessons were observed but records show that standards in swimming are above national expectations by the end of Year 6.
77. The quality of teaching varies but is mostly good especially when the teachers are confident in teaching the subject. Lessons are well planned and organised, and teachers pay good attention to health and safety. In a very good dance lesson with pupils in Years 4 and 5, the brisk pace and the teacher's enthusiasm held pupils' interest and engagement completely. In the best lessons, teaching points were made clearly, and there were good opportunities for pupils to practise the skills being taught. A particularly good feature in a gymnastics lesson

with pupils in Years 1 and 2 was the use of a camera to film pupils' movements so they evaluated their own and each other's performances at the end of the lesson. Teachers often employ good links with other subjects; for example, in their dance lesson, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were developing dance sequences relating to particular areas of life in Ancient Greece, which complemented their history studies. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons and made appropriate progress.

78. The subject is managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. The school provides a large number and a good range of extra-curricular opportunities which are well attended; many of these are run by parents and volunteer helpers. There are good opportunities for competitive sporting activities, both within the school and against other schools, and pupils frequently do well in these, winning trophies and other awards. This enables pupils to develop their skills further, including personal and social as well as physical. The school has recently won a Gold Activemark Award. There are good outside facilities which include a large field, a good-sized hard area and a swimming pool. However, the hall is too small, especially for whole-class lessons with the larger classes of older pupils. The school has a good range of resources.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The school's provision for the development of pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong whole-school commitment to developing pupils' PSHCE and a strong sense of school community.
- There are good relationships between adults and pupils.
- Most pupils have a clear understanding of the impact of their actions on others.

Commentary

79. This aspect of pupils' education is given a high priority by the headteacher and staff, and there is clear evidence of the success of this provision in the good attitudes and behaviour observed throughout the school during the inspection. Adults provide a secure and happy environment where all are valued. Pupils learn to respect each other and accept that some pupils need special support. Teachers, teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors and all of the adults working in the school treat pupils with respect and set a very good example, to which the pupils respond positively. Provision for PSHCE is both formal, through 'circle time' and class assembly discussions which allow pupils to deal with their emotions and feelings, and informal, by means of the good relationships and day-to-day interactions between pupils and adults. The school is inclusive in all its policies and practices which aim to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. Good use is made of visits and visitors to the school during the year to support pupils' PSHCE development. These opportunities, together with the linked themes of whole-school and year-group assemblies, make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. The school council is a thriving and healthy aspect of school life; pupils are enthusiastic participants and feel that their views are supported and acted upon. A good range of charities is supported which fosters pupils' social and moral development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
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	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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).

