

INSPECTION REPORT

WICKHAMBREAUX CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wickhambreaux

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118660

Headteacher: Mrs A Campling

Lead inspector: Mrs C Nuttall

Dates of inspection: 5th - 6th July 2004

Inspection number: 258421

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:	Church of England
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	66
School address:	The Street Wickhambreaux Canterbury Kent
Postcode:	CT3 1RN
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev John Allan
Date of previous inspection:	24 th April 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wickhambreaux is a much smaller-than-average-sized school with 66 pupils. It is located within the village community of Wickhambreaux. Pupils come from a predominantly white background, mostly of British heritage. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language and only one of mixed background. When children start school their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide ranging, but in recent years are a little below average for their age. Just over 28 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is above average, but only one of these pupils has a statement of special educational need, which is a low. The socio-economic circumstances of pupils are above average, although the school takes almost half of its pupils from outside the immediate area. Three pupils joined and eleven pupils left the school in the last year. This is a below average proportion. The school was awarded a Schools Achievement award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
31046	Christine Nuttall	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Personal, social and health education Special educational needs
19798	Jane O'Keefe	Lay inspector	
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Science Religious education Design and technology Art and design Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Wickhambreaux is a good school with many strengths. Very good leadership by the headteacher is enabling staff to focus effectively on school improvement, and standards are rising. Very good support from governors helps staff to work together very well in the best interests of the pupils. Teaching is good and so pupils achieve well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good progress made by all pupils resulting in rising standards.
- The headteacher's very clear educational vision and leadership is focused clearly on improvement.
- Governors are fully committed to their responsibilities and are proactive in their support of the school.
- Teaching is good overall, with elements of very good and excellent practice.
- Assessment procedures are very thorough, with very good use made of data to ensure all individuals make good progress.
- The highly effective staff team have a shared purpose and vision that centres on the needs of each pupil.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum, both to support and extend learning, is very effective.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good, with highly effective support from teaching assistants.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well.
- The school's links with parents and the community are very strong.
- Pupils' ability to solve problems in mathematics is not as strong as in other areas of the subject.
- There are few opportunities for younger pupils to extend their writing and use it in other areas of the curriculum.

The school has moved forward very well since its last inspection in 2002, when it was found to be a satisfactory school. Standards have risen in both Year 2 and Year 6 national tests because staff are expecting more of pupils. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and the school has developed its overall provision for pupils' education. All points for improvement from the last inspection have been tackled very successfully and governors are now very effective in their roles as a consequence of very good attention to this area. The use of assessment procedures has improved considerably from a very low position two years ago.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well. In most years, the skills, knowledge and understanding of the group of children entering the Reception class are slightly below average. They make good progress and this year are on target to meet the goals expected by the end of the Reception year. Pupils achieved very well in national tests at the end of Year 2. In 2003, standards in reading and mathematics were well above average and, in writing, were average. Pupils did very much better in reading and mathematics than in schools with a similar percentage claiming free school meals. In writing they achieved the same as similar schools. This is a strong picture. Currently, in Year 2, standards are above average in ICT. Standards in reading, mathematics and science are average whilst standards are slightly below average in writing. This particular year group has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which is why standards are a little lower this year. In most other subjects, pupils reach the levels expected for their age.

The inspection found that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. The school won a government achievement award in 2002 for the good progress made.

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

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

The table above shows that standards fluctuate from one year to the next. There were only seven pupils in the year group in 2003. This is a very small number with each pupil's result dramatically affecting the overall grade. Care needs to be taken when using this data to make comparisons with other schools or years. The grades below for similar schools indicate that pupils at Wickhambreaux were average in English and science and below average in mathematics when compared to their peers in similar schools. However, well over half of the pupils in Year 6 last year had only recently joined the school. Standards in 2003 were lower than in previous years because this cohort of pupils had entered the school with below-average attainment and there was a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The table does not show that all pupils last year made significant progress, with two pupils vastly exceeding their expected targets. Currently pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in ICT are above average. Standards in most other subjects are broadly average.

Pupils' personal development is very good and is supported by very good provision for their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. They are very positive about school and behave very well both in lessons and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. This includes good teaching throughout the school, which enables pupils to achieve well. Strengths in the teaching include very good relationships, which help pupils to approach learning with confidence. Pupils learn effectively because they trust and like their teachers, teaching assistants support them very effectively and work is challenging and interesting. Curriculum provision is good. Pupils' learning is supported very well by effective planning in all subjects, very good personal and academic guidance, very good support from home and highly effective involvement with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Both the leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher has a very clear educational vision for the direction and work of the school and her leadership is very good. Staff work together as a highly effective team with the same clarity of purpose and commitment to the individual needs of each pupil. The governance of the school is very good and governors are proactive in their support for it. All statutory requirements related to running the school are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very positive about the school. Parents are happy with all areas of the school's work. A very small minority expressed concerns about homework. The inspection found no evidence to support these worries. Teachers provide an appropriate amount of homework that enhances the learning that pupils do in school. All pupils enjoy school and are very positive about the support they are given from staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop further pupils' ability to solve problems in mathematics.
- Provide opportunities for extended writing and writing in other areas of the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils throughout the school achieve well. When pupils leave the school, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average. Standards are average in most other subjects, with standards in writing slightly below average currently in Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good and by the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Standards in ICT have improved significantly and are now above average in all year groups.
- Throughout the school pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Standards attained by pupils in Years 1 and 2 in writing are presently slightly below the national average.

Commentary

Starting school

1. When children start in the Reception class, the school's own assessment shows that in most years their knowledge, skills and understanding are wide ranging, but slightly below average overall. The current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were significantly below-average groups on entry.

School's results in national tests

2. The results for individual years have to be treated with extreme caution owing to the small numbers of pupils involved. Overall standards continue to rise in national tests and, in 2002, the school received a government achievement award for the good progress made. In 2003, standards were well above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing in Year 2. Standards in science were in the top five per cent of all schools nationally. A well-above-average number of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics last year. An above-average number achieved Level 3 in science. The table below shows the average point score for the last two years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.6 (17.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.6 (18.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The table of results that shows the standards attained in the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 during the last two years has been omitted from this report. This is because of the very small number of pupils involved and the consequential possibility of identifying the test and assessment results of individual pupils. Standards overall were average in English and science and below average in mathematics last year in Year 6. Very few pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in any of the three subjects. Any dip in results in 2003 at age 11 was due to particular special needs in that cohort. Only seven pupils took the tests and the attainment of

one or two pupils can, therefore, have a significant impact on the overall results. The school diligently analyses individual results each year and there is clear evidence to show that each pupil in Year 6 in 2003 made significant progress. The school successfully achieved the targets set for this cohort of pupils.

Inspection findings

The Foundation Stage

4. Children have settled extremely well into school. They achieve well in all areas of learning because of the good provision made for them. There is every indication that most will achieve the goals expected for their age by the end of the year in all areas of learning.

Years 1 and 2

5. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In Year 2, standards are above average in ICT. Standards in reading, mathematics and science are average whilst standards are slightly below average in writing. This particular year group has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which is why standards are a little lower this year. In most other subjects pupils reach the levels expected for their age. There was very limited evidence of work in geography, history and religious education and so it is not possible to make a judgement on standards in these subjects.

Years 3 to 6

6. Pupils achieve well in all year groups and continue to make good progress. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science in all year groups. In ICT, standards are above average. Pupils achieve very well in this subject and have very good knowledge and understanding. In most other subjects, pupils reach the levels expected for their age. Again there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in geography, history and religious education.

Whole-school matters

7. Last year, as a consequence of lower standards in mathematics in Year 6, the school focused on improving provision. This was very successful and standards have risen. There is a continued focus this year, particularly on more-able pupils in Year 3, to consolidate the very good advances made. The school is also focusing on raising standards in ICT. This has been extremely successful and standards have improved significantly.

Pupils with special educational needs

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. As a result of very well organised support, they play a full part in lessons. All, including those with statements, make good progress towards their individual learning, social and behaviour targets.

Higher-attaining pupils

9. Higher-attaining pupils do well at Wickhambreaux. They respond well to the challenges set for them, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Boys and girls

10. There was no significant difference between the overall attainment of boys and girls in the lessons seen, although there are significantly more boys in some year groups than girls. The school monitors the progress of boys and girls and is alert to the need to investigate any differences should they arise.

Literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum

11. Opportunities to promote literacy through topics in other subjects are satisfactory, but not yet used extensively to enhance pupils' writing skills. Mathematics is used well in other subjects as pupils record data, make calculations or measure materials. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is developing very well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and school and behave very well. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. As a result of the school's efforts, attendance levels are now satisfactory.

Main strengths and weakness

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very good attitudes to their work.
- Pupils behave very well in classrooms and around the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are fostered very well.

Commentary

Relationships

12. Pupils say they enjoy coming to this school and would recommend it to other children because it is a 'very friendly place'. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their work. In lessons they listen and concentrate very well and are keen to answer questions. Pupils behave very well in lessons, around the school and at playtimes. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and are confident that, should an incident occur, staff will deal with it quickly and effectively. Lunchtimes are well organised, pleasant and orderly. In the playground pupils happily use the good range of activities provided for them and all play together purposefully. Pupils' social skills are constantly and successfully promoted throughout their time in the school. The reward system is highly valued by pupils and works well. Pupils are friendly, courteous and outgoing with visitors and always keen to discuss their work. The many pupils given responsibilities around the school hold them with great confidence and pride. Relationships are very good in the school and pupils treat each other with much kindness and respect. Older pupils are particularly thoughtful and helpful to younger children and the playground buddies play a very important role in supporting any of their peers who may be feeling lonely. There is an excellent sense of community within the school.

Personal development

13. Staff work hard to build pupils' self-esteem throughout the school. Praise is used very effectively in lessons to build confidence and encourage pupils' efforts. Pupils' spiritual development is developed very effectively through the well planned assemblies. Pupils are frequently encouraged to reflect on matters during lessons and assemblies. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and discuss moral issues thoughtfully in lessons and in circle times. Very good opportunities for pupils to develop socially are provided throughout the school. A small minority of pupils have been experiencing difficulties in getting on with each other and this has been handled very well by staff, in particular through the use of the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils are strongly encouraged to work together and play together well and through the school council pupils learn to express their opinions and listen to those of others. Pupils' cultural development is fostered well in curriculum areas such as art, music and nature study. Good use of visitors is made to promote this area. Pupils have some experiences of other cultures and faiths through the curriculum for religious education and the school is planning to develop links with other faith communities.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	65	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

14. Most pupils arrive punctually in the mornings. Attendance levels in the reporting year were below national averages, due mainly to parents removing their children during term time for family holidays. The school has worked hard to improve this situation and levels are now satisfactory.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.03
National data	5.4	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 school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good overall and ensures that pupils move forward well. The curriculum is broad and enriched by very good links with the community and after-school activities. Very good assessment procedures have been introduced since the last inspection. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, with plans agreed for a new building to replace three old modular buildings. Parents work very well with the school to support their children.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall throughout the school, with almost half the lessons seen being very good or excellent. This marks a significant improvement since the last inspection. Procedures for using information about pupils' progress to plan more carefully for the needs of individuals have also improved. Expectations have been raised about what pupils can achieve.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning of interesting and relevant activities.
- Teachers use questioning very well to help pupils think carefully and learn.
- Teachers use a widening range of innovative and thoughtful approaches to further motivate and stimulate pupils to learn.
- Teaching assistants work very well to include pupils and move them forward.
- Teachers have good subject expertise and knowledge of pupils' individual needs.
- Lessons have a very good level of challenge and high expectations.
- Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs is very good.
- Pupils engage very well in learning.

Commentary

15. The table below indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school. Both parents and pupils are very positive about the teaching staff. Pupils especially feel that their teachers help them learn effectively.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	7	8	3	0	0	0

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

Teaching in the Foundation Stage

16. The positive picture from the last inspection has been maintained in the work in the Reception class. The classroom is well organised, with lively displays and a range of stimulating activities to capture children's imagination and interest. The teacher and her assistant are well established and they work together very well. Children achieve well because tasks are very well matched to their interests and capabilities. Staff are encouraging and supportive and this helps children to feel confident and try their best.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2

17. Overall, the teaching in these year groups is good and this helps pupils to move forward in their learning. Year 1 pupils are taught in the same class as Reception children and Year 2 share a classroom with Year 3 pupils. The teachers of these two classes ensure that work is regularly differentiated in order to cater for the wide spread of ages and capabilities. Their approach to planning is thorough and lively tasks are organised to stimulate the pupils' interests and thirst for knowledge. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic and approach their work with a determination to succeed.

Teaching in Years 3 to 6

18. The same thoroughness of planning and organising lively learning tasks exists in the older pupils' classes and pupils achieve well. Years 4, 5 and 6 are all in the same class and planning in all lessons reflects the difference in ages and capabilities extremely well. Homework is used effectively to help pupils consolidate what they have learnt in class.

Common strengths

19. There are some common strengths underpinning all the teaching. These include:
- Very good lesson planning that sets a clear focus for learning in each lesson, takes into account the needs of all pupils and provides interesting and relevant activities.
 - Teachers have a good grasp of the subjects they teach and are using a widening range of innovative methods and approaches to further motivate and inspire pupils.
 - Teaching assistants are very well deployed and help to include and support individuals and groups of pupils.
 - Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and make for a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere.
 - Pupils behave very well and all are fully included in lessons.

Characteristics in very good and excellent lessons

20. In the best lessons interesting activities and a lively approach grip pupils' interest and help them to move forward quickly.

Example of outstanding practice

The outstanding use of PSHE to encourage good relationships.

During an excellent PSHE lesson in a class where some pupils have difficulty working with each other, the teacher provided a very carefully planned programme of activities to encourage team building. All pupils were carefully grouped to be with those with whom they do not normally socialise. With skilled support from the teacher, assistant and two student teachers pupils were encouraged to co-operate with each other in order to achieve their group's goal. To round off the lesson a clip from the cartoon film 'Finding Nemo' was shown. Pupils watched enraptured as the many small fish caught in a trawler's net swam downwards together, finally setting themselves free. When asked to identify the message behind this clip every pupil's hand went up and one very movingly told the class 'you need to work as a team and have belief in each other'. On leaving the lesson one pupil was heard to remark 'I really enjoyed working with different people today'.

Other strengths

21. Pupils are seen as individuals, which means that all, including higher- and lower-attaining pupils are given the support they need. Teachers use questioning very well to include pupils of all capabilities, challenging them to think and learn. Expectations are high, and as a result pupils make good progress. A very good knowledge of pupils as individuals underpins all teaching and helps teachers match their very good subject expertise to the stage of learning for individuals in their class. As a result, pupils engage very well in lessons, joining in well with group activities and working with growing independence in individual tasks as they get older. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. Teaching assistants work closely with these pupils to ensure that they make good progress. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is developing very well. ICT skills are used to support work in most subjects as, for example, Year 3 pupils with special educational needs examined a text on 'Summer' on laptops. The pupils successfully spotted errors in tenses and were able to change these on the computer. ICT was very well used in a Year 4/5/6 session where pupils consolidated and extended their understanding of angles by using 'Maths 1' software to practise angle estimation and calculation. The use of numeracy in other subjects is also good. In literacy, opportunities to enhance pupils' writing skills are not as well developed.

Assessing pupils' progress

22. Assessment procedures have significantly improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to need improvement by using information about pupils' progress more effectively in planning lessons. In the Foundation Stage, teachers assess their children well in all activities. These assessments are then used to plan future activities. Pupils in the rest of the school are assessed regularly in English, mathematics and science. A highly effective tracking system is used to show the progress that pupils make and whether this is good enough. The statutory tests are carefully analysed so that staff have a clear picture of the patterns in pupil attainment. This data is then used to plan subsequent work and intervention on an individual basis if, for example, a pupil is judged to be under-achieving.
23. In lessons, teachers give pupils good verbal feedback on their work. Marking is used well to celebrate pupils' achievements and efforts.

Homework

24. Homework is regularly set throughout the school and pupils tackle it conscientiously. Some home projects, for example, in mathematics, have enabled pupils to extend and apply ideas learned at school through enjoyable activities undertaken with their parents. Good curriculum information sheets are sent home and suggest a wide range of ways that parents can support and extend learning at school.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good programme for personal, social and health education.
- There is a stimulating range of well-planned activities across all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- This is a very inclusive school. Equality of access and opportunity to curricular provision for all pupils is a strong feature of teachers' planning.
- Opportunities for enrichment linked to classroom learning and out-of-school hours are very good.
- There are a good number of well-qualified teachers and support staff.
- Insufficient planned opportunities for writing at length and across other subjects.

Commentary

25. Curricular planning across the school ensures a broad range of activities and experiences covering all National Curriculum subjects. Religious education is taught in line with the locally agreed syllabus. The curriculum provision marks a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, especially for information and communication technology (ICT). There is an improved provision of ICT resources in the form of more laptops for pupils' use in lessons for all subjects.

Planning for work in the Reception year

26. The curricular provision for the Reception children is good and meets requirements set out by the latest national guidance on the six areas of learning. There is a range of interesting experiences suitably aimed at developing children's skills, knowledge and understanding in each area of learning, both indoors and outside.

Planning for work in Years 1 to 6

27. There is a well-considered whole-school approach to planning for all pupils. Schemes of work for each subject are mostly based on the national guidance, but well adapted to pupils' needs and experiences. Provision for all aspects of the curriculum is good. It is underpinned by thorough assessment supporting planning for pupils' different learning needs. Teachers follow guidance for the National Literacy Strategy with planning imaginatively modified and linked to school priorities. However, there is potential for enhanced opportunities for writing at length, and developing pupils' writing skills across other subjects further.
28. The National Numeracy Strategy is also adapted suitably to school needs and is well geared to raising standards. Teachers plan effectively for pupils with different needs and capabilities. They make very good use of the opening mental and oral sessions and the final part of lessons to bring together what pupils understand by their new learning.

Links between subjects

29. The school is committed to links between subjects as an important way of making planned activities meaningful. Useful links are made, for example, between science and design and technology, when pupils work on pneumatics, and geography and history, as well as religious education and art and design. A rolling programme of topics ensures provision for the mixed-age groups.

Pupils with special educational needs

30. Careful deployment of support staff ensures that all pupils with additional learning needs take a full part in planned work to the best of their capability. The teaching ensures that targets in the individual education plans for pupils on the Code of Practice register of special needs are taken into account.

Personal, social and health education

31. There is a very good programme for personal, social and health education with citizenship planned for regular sessions. Issues linked to sex and relationships education are dealt with during science lessons as appropriate. There are a good number of well-planned opportunities in lessons for developing pupils' thinking skills and problem-solving capacities. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of education is developed well.

Extra-curricular activities

32. There is a very good range of activities organised at lunchtimes and outside lessons. After school clubs are well attended and greatly enjoyed. They include musical tuition in wind instruments and recorders, and sports clubs for example, judo, gymnastics, football, netball, hockey and cricket. Other clubs include sewing, chess computers and French. The curriculum provision is further enhanced with pupils participating in theme weeks, such as science and design and technology. Pupils benefit from visits to an art exhibition at a local barn and a visit to the Canterbury Environmental centre. Visitors to school, for example, an artist in residence, are regular features of the school's provision. Older pupils have several opportunities to attend residential visits, including the very recent trip to Osmington Bay in Dorset.

Accommodation and resources

33. The accommodation is in need of improving, but is made interesting and environmentally attractive, with a wild area and a pond. Plans have already been agreed to remove the old modular buildings and build a new extension. The provision in physical education is affected by the lack of outdoor field for games and sports, but the school overcomes these difficulties by using the village hall and the nearby field. Good quality learning resources support curricular planning well. There is no appropriate space for the library. This is overcome by providing sufficient stocks of books to all classes.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are very good. Good systems are in place for the induction of new pupils. Very good monitoring systems help staff to support pupils' progress. The school council seeks and values pupils' views very effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a very caring place.
- Good child protection procedures.
- Very effective monitoring systems.
- School council is well organised and effective.
- Good induction procedures.

Commentary

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety

34. Staff have a caring approach and look after pupils very well. This ensures pupils' welfare and general well-being and is much appreciated by parents. Pupils know who to see if hurt or feeling unwell and appreciate the care they receive from staff. Due in part to its small size, the school has a happy, family atmosphere where pupils feel safe and secure. The headteacher is the person designated to deal with any child protection concerns and both she and the designated governor have received full training in this area recently. As a result all staff have now been made aware of the necessary steps to follow should an issue arise.

Support and advice

35. Staff work closely with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils are well supported. Arrangements are in place for ensuring the health and safety of all in the school, with all necessary risk assessments and safety checks taking place. Two members of staff are trained in administering first aid. The school has very good systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress. Very effective systems for recording pupils' progress have been established and staff use the results to support pupils' progress. Staff get to know pupils well personally and monitor their personal development as they progress through the school. Entry into the school is managed well by staff in the Foundation Stage. Children are made very welcome by staff and have good opportunities to get to know them and the school before they arrive. As a result, pupils settle quickly into school life.

Involving pupils

36. The school council is well established and successfully promotes pupils' independence and confidence. Members of the council meet regularly to discuss suggestions and concerns and take pride in having their say about the running of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents are very happy with the care and education received. Partnerships with parents are very good. Excellent information is provided for parents. Links with the local community are very good. Very good links exist with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with the school.
- Very effective partnerships with parents.
- Excellent information provided for parents.
- Very good links with the local community.
- Very good links with local schools.

Commentary

Partnership with parents

37. Parents are very satisfied with the education and care their children receive at the school. The school works very hard to build and maintain its very good partnerships with them. Parents receive excellent information on general matters through the school's website, frequent newsletters and personal contact with staff. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report are very clearly written, well presented and meet all the legal requirements for their content. Consultation meetings are effective and the use of target setting and homework helps parents to support their children's learning outside of school. Annual reports are issued in the summer term. These give detailed information on work pupils have covered, progress

made and suggestions of ways in which they could improve. The school listens carefully to parents and actively seeks their views on the school and its future. Staff respond positively to any suggestions or concerns raised and parents are aware of and satisfied with the arrangements for dealing with complaints. Regular meetings to explain different areas of the curriculum are held. Attendance at these meetings is high. The hard-working Friends of Wickhambreaux School provides frequent well-supported fund-raising and social events for parents and the local community. Funds raised have helped to provide useful extra resources for the school.

Example of outstanding practice

The excellent use of the school's website to keep parents informed when their children are on residential trips.

On a recent residential trip with a group of Year 6 pupils to Dorset, staff took great pains each day to take photographs of pupils which were then posted on the school's website. Therefore, as the week progressed, parents were able to see and be reassured daily that their children were happy and having fun. This indicates the high level of the partnerships in this school.

Links with other schools

38. The school has good links with the local community and plays a central role in its local village. This supports pupils' attainment and personal development well as they take part in local events and meet important local people such as the Lord Mayor of Canterbury, who visited the school and chaired a school council meeting. The school frequently uses the village hall for assemblies and lunches and a nearby playing field for sports lessons. Very good links have been established with the local church. The vicar, who is also chair of governors, is very supportive of the school's work as well as regularly leading assemblies at the school. Pupils regularly take part in fund-raising events for local and national charities. Very good use of the local area is made for visits and projects, for instance, Key Stage 2 pupils recently painted different buildings and views of the village as part of an art project. The school's very good sporting links have enabled pupils to take part, often very successfully, in many local sports tournaments. Very good links have been established with other schools in the area, particularly through the headteacher's chairmanship of a large local cluster of schools. This has enabled her to work very closely with other schools in the area, ensuring, for instance, that transition between phases is carefully handled.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's very good leadership has established a vision and sense of purpose. The headteacher is well supported by the senior teacher and subject leaders. Very effective management structures ensure the school is highly effective and applications of the principles of best value are good. Governors make a significant contribution to the school, and the governing body undertakes its work very well. Financial management is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is highly effective.
- Very good support from governors.
- The headteacher and senior teacher have created a united and highly effective staff team.
- Fully inclusive school; leadership and management of the work with pupils who have special educational needs are very effective.
- Excellent procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- Very effective identification and use of professional development in all areas of the school.

Commentary

Leadership

39. *'Providing the education children deserve!'* These aims, proudly displayed on the school improvement plan, very successfully underpin the work of the school. The key to this good school is the very good leadership by the headteacher, who has guided the school during the last two years. She has a strong educational vision, linked closely to providing a broad education that enables pupils to develop as well-rounded people. She has a very firm grip on all that goes on at Wickhambreaux and has a clear picture of the strengths of the school and areas for development. This is based on her careful monitoring of teaching and learning and her very good analysis of assessment data. She works very sensitively with staff and governors and enables them to develop their own roles through a programme of training and support. Parents refer very positively to the headteacher's leadership and they, like pupils and staff, appreciate her approachability. She has a leadership style that aims very successfully for ongoing school improvement through purposeful direction, engendering team spirit and showing respect for the views of pupils, parents and staff.
40. The senior teacher also works extremely enthusiastically and effectively. The senior teacher, with the headteacher, has created a highly effective staff team with a shared sense of purpose and vision. All pupils are valued at Wickhambreaux, and staff are mindful of the needs of all pupils.
41. All teaching staff have responsibility for leading at least one subject area. These roles are well developed, especially in relation to monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in their particular areas. Strategic planning in individual subjects is good because action plans clearly identify what needs to be done to push standards higher.

An inclusive school

42. Wickhambreaux is a highly inclusive school and all pupils are valued. This is evident in the way that staff respond to their particular needs, including the proportion of pupils that reach above-average levels in the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are also very well provided for and fully integrated into lessons and after-school clubs and activities. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school follows the Code of Practice guidance fully and is successfully improving procedures for identifying pupils' learning needs earlier. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) manages and monitors provision very efficiently. Leadership is very good.
43. Effective procedures for the induction of new staff are in place. Students training to teach are regularly welcomed into the school and supported very well.

Planning for improvement

44. Based on her vision of collaborative leadership, the headteacher consults widely on the school's priorities for development. These have included a training day in which governors and staff worked together in the early stages of formulating the school improvement plan. Building on recent improvements in ICT and continuing to raise standards in writing and mathematics are quite rightly among current priorities and very good progress is being made in these areas. Clear links have been established with the performance management cycle and the school priorities are reflected in the headteacher's and teachers' performance objectives.

Management

45. The school is managed very well. Very good procedures enable the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Roles have been clarified, and tasks and responsibilities have been

carefully delegated to match staff expertise as far as possible. The headteacher supports staff very well and encourages their professional development. This helps to ensure that they are happy to remain at Wickhambreaux. The experienced secretary provides efficient administrative support.

Monitoring and evaluating how well the school is doing

46. The monitoring of how well the pupils are doing is excellent. Test results are carefully analysed to provide a clear picture of standards for staff and governors. This includes very good use of national and local data to compare its performance with that of other schools. In addition, lesson observations identify areas for improvement. These have been key factors in the improvement of teaching and learning since the last inspection.

Financial management

47. The management of the school's finances is good. The governors are very active at all stages of planning and monitor outcomes well. They plan annual expenditure, taking into account information on standards achieved. A high priority is given to maintaining a good level of very good quality staffing. Funding is tight, as it is in most small schools. A deficit budget has had to be set this year. However, it is anticipated that this will be removed by the end of the next term with prudent cutbacks in some areas and support from parents.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	245,094	Balance from previous year	3,290
Total expenditure	250,985	Balance carried forward to the next year	-2,602
Expenditure per pupil	3,803		

48. Balances are very low and currently stand at almost six per cent below the recommended contingency. The headteacher and governors are aware of this and regularly seek ways to reduce spending in one area to support it in another. The school carefully applies the principles of best value in its expenditure decisions. Full competitive tendering is employed and the school seeks and uses comparative information effectively. The school is giving good value for money.

Governance

49. Overall, the governance of the school is very good. Present governors have a wide range of talents and expertise, which they use very well in the best interests of the school. All are frequent visitors to the school. Governors' involvement with the school is very good and they effectively work with the school staff to monitor what the school is doing and plan for improvements. All governors have a curriculum responsibility and meet regularly with the subject co-ordinators to discuss progress with individual subject action plans. A range of committees has been established and much of the work is undertaken in these and then reported to the full governing body. Discussions with governors show that they are wholly committed to the school and very supportive of the headteacher and staff. Their monitoring of the work of the school by finding out for themselves how things are going and providing an appropriate challenge for the headteacher are well developed. All statutory requirements related to governors are met.

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** overall.

Children are well prepared for transfer to Year 1. Fifteen Foundation Stage children are admitted to the mixed Reception and Year 1 class at the start of the academic year. Most have had pre-school experience before starting full-time school. Children's attainment on entry is below the expected levels for this age group, particularly in the areas of language and communication, and personal, social and emotional development.

Children are well prepared for their start in the Reception class, with frequent visits beforehand. There are good links with parents, who feel welcome and consider that they receive good information. The teacher and parents work in partnership to improve children's learning.

By the time they reach Year 1, all children have made steady progress and have achieved well. All children attain as expected in relation to the nationally-set Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. They exceed expectations in personal, social and emotional development. This year one child has made very good progress in mathematical development and achieved well above that normally expected. Both the teacher and classroom assistant have good understanding of how young children learn and they work together as an effective team. There is an effective approach to monitoring children's progress on a regular basis.

The curriculum is carefully based on the recommended areas of learning, and good planning ensures that children are provided with a wide range of challenging and interesting activities. The curriculum is closely linked with the work that children will encounter in Year 1 with a good balance of child initiated and teacher-directed activities. The Foundation Stage is well led with a clear action plan identifying areas for development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of good teaching and very clear expectations.
- Most children are well on course to exceed goals set for this area of learning.
- Very good relationships at all levels are to the fore and children feel secure and happy.
- Good emphasis is placed on developing children's independence.

Commentary

50. Some children have less well-developed personal and social skills on entry to school than others. They settle down quickly and feel both happy and secure. This includes those children with special educational needs. Adults are good role models for children, explaining clearly what is expected of them. Most children are attentive and eager to learn because of a supportive atmosphere where each child feels very special. They find it easy to conform to the high standards set by the staff and want to please them. Children know routines well, settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss and behave sensibly.
51. Most children show developing confidence in trying out new activities. They are helped to form very good relationships with others through many good opportunities for working in pairs or as part of a group. Teaching is good. Children are purposefully engaged and helped to become independent, for example, through 'Peg-time' tasks, where children select their own activities and play co-operatively. They show consideration and respect for property and for

each other. The 'buddy system' in school further supports this development. Children enjoy coming to school and take pride in their work.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well. Most are judged likely to reach the relevant early learning goals by the end of the year, with some doing better.
- Adults are good role models in their use of language and focus well on developing children's speaking and listening skills.
- Children have ample opportunities to learn new words during purposeful play.
- The home-school reading system is well established to enhance progress in reading.
- Few opportunities for children to write independently or to explore writing for different purposes were seen.

Commentary

52. The teaching is mainly satisfactory. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's speaking and listening skills. Instructions for activities are very practical and the discussions about interesting artefacts support children well in their early literacy development. This was noted in a lesson where children followed a poem, 'I will put in the Box...', and had to guess what was inside a very special box shown by the teacher. Both teacher and the assistant help to develop children's ability to engage in conversation in the way they model talking to each other as well as to the children. They engage children profitably through questioning them in small groups or individually. Children are not inhibited in talking to each other or to adults as they work and show good gains in speaking and listening skills. Most children can link sounds with letters, and form letters correctly. They write their own names unaided and draw or paint with developing control. However, few instances were seen of children choosing writing activities and deciding what to write for themselves.
53. Children become familiar with a good range of stories and rhymes. They can retell a favourite story with understanding and recognise a good number of simple everyday words. The system of involving parents in exchanging books to share at home is well established, and this effectively supports children's reading skills. All children will achieve the goals expected of them by the end of their Reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children attain the early learning goals by the end of the year, and a few are on line to exceed these.
- There are sound opportunities for children to use mathematics in a range of contexts.
- Children have very good attitudes to learning.

Commentary

54. About one third of children start reception class with a good number skills relative to their abilities, and are on course to exceed the relevant early learning goals. This was noted in a lesson where, mixed with a group of Year 1, the more able children were appropriately extended to add together more than two sets of numbers within ten. Most children count reliably to ten and beyond. Children gain understanding of capacity and weight from practical

experiences with sand and water. Most can describe objects by shape, size, colour or quantity when working with construction equipment.

55. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good elements. In a lesson, the more able were suitably supported, along with their Year 1 peers, to understand the order of numbers within 30, linked to their dates of birth in the month of July. However, for the middle- and lower-ability children, the task did not match well to extend their learning. The classroom assistant is well briefed and supports small groups effectively through clear questioning.
56. Children have good attitudes and sustain interest in activities. A discussion with children found them confident in solving simple problems involving the use of vocabulary such as, 'add one more' or 'take one away', 'how many altogether?' and 'how many left?' Children recognise numerals and practice writing them correctly.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are keen and eager to find out about the world around them.
- All children achieve well and make good progress as a result of good teaching.
- All children attain expected standards in this area of learning.
- There is a good range of opportunities to explore the world around.
- Resources of a good range and quality are used well to broaden children's knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

57. As a result of good teaching, children's attainment at the start of Year 1 is likely to be above that typically found for children of this age. The outdoor facility is well used for exploring and investigating. Children explore with good interest and remain totally absorbed in the range of activities inside and outside, involving an imaginative use of resources and appropriate questioning. This was noted in a lesson where the teacher made a very effective use of the moving toy resource and successfully engaged children to learn about 'push' and 'pull', and describe what is happening. Good use was also made of the water tray to sort a variety of objects that 'float' or 'sink'. The teacher made effective interventions in activities to extend children's responses, for example, when watering the sun flowers and discussing how much water has been poured and how tall they are growing.
58. Children's use of their senses for learning is well developed through a variety of activities. Children thoroughly enjoy the experiences of working with sand and water with an appropriate range of tools for pouring and moulding. Children have regular opportunities to develop computer skills, for example, controlling the mouse to move items on the screen. Early geography and history skills are developed through interesting and varied activities including the travels of *Barnaby Bear*.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A suitable range of indoor and outdoor activities is provided.
- Most children are on course to meet the early learning goals.
- Resources are good and effectively used to enhance learning.

Commentary

59. Children have free access to an outside enclosed play area. The teaching is good. A range of opportunities is well planned in order to provide progression of skills in this area of learning. The resources such as the range of wheeled toys, tricycles and scooters are in regular use. Children are capable and active, and all are on course to attain the expected levels by the end of the year. They are aware of space and show developing co-ordination and control in movement. Children enjoy opportunities for free play outside. The classroom assistant interacts actively with children and shows good understanding of how they learn.
60. Most children demonstrate reasonable hand and eye co-ordination. They hold a pencil correctly, paint carefully with brushes and show confidence in the use of scissors and joining materials such as glue and sticky tape.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Ample opportunities for children to develop their creative skills.
- Children are provided with good quality resources.
- Children have very positive attitudes to learning and feel confident in expressing themselves creatively.

Commentary

61. Teaching and learning are good. Children draw, paint and make collages. They experiment with paint and use their observations and imagination to create pleasing results. They are given opportunities to explore colour and texture, and work with a range of materials. Some examples of collage work by younger children are particularly good. Children sing and clap favourite songs and hymns and express enjoyment. The teacher asks relevant questions to extend children's vocabulary. In one session, children were engaged in a 'road safety' role-play outside, giving tickets for parking on the double yellow lines. They thoroughly enjoyed the activity. There are sufficient resources for children to use percussion instruments and create music freely.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards continue to improve and show an upwards trend in reading, for both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.
- The quality of teaching and the way pupils learn is good.
- The teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils.
- The subject is led with rigour, and is improving fast.
- Pupils make good progress in all aspects of English, compared to their below-average start on entry.
- There are sufficient opportunities for pupils to speak at length or report back.
- Pupils write for a range of purposes, but do not sufficiently write at length in English and in other subjects.

Commentary

62. Inspection findings confirm the positive picture given in the national tests of 2003. When national comparative data for 2004 tests is available, it is likely that standards in Year 2, although showing good improvements, are average in reading and below average in writing; but in Year 6, standards, although average in writing, are likely to be above the national average overall because of the much stronger picture in reading. This represents good progress in relation to the below-average starting point for most pupils. Some good and very good achievement has been noted for most pupils across the school.
63. There have been some variations year by year because of the high mobility and very small size of the cohort, which creates a noticeable degree of instability in all year groups. A significant number of pupils start and others leave the school, and the percentage of pupils with specific learning difficulties is above average. Standards are rising because of the school's focus on improvement in this subject. These barriers to learning are overcome through good quality lesson planning which makes literacy learning meaningful. Planning highlights how the needs of all pupils are met. Learning outcomes are assessed rigorously to inform planning. As a result, all pupils do really well relative to their capability, including pupils with special educational needs. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. The school has greatly improved the standards recorded at its previous inspection.
64. Teachers pay close attention to the development of reading and writing. The standards in reading are average for Year 2 and above average for Year 6 pupils. The writing of this year's Year 6 pupils is close to average. Where teaching is strong, teachers use interesting activities that promote speaking and listening. Pupils work productively with a 'talk partner' in most lessons and listen to each other carefully or report back on what they have talked about. Opportunities for speaking are carefully planned and many pupils take a full part in whole-class discussions or class assemblies. Most pupils in Year 2 speak confidently and by Year 6, pupils begin to be aware of the appropriateness of a formal vocabulary and when to use it. Given the opportunity, most pupils can initiate ideas and speak at length to substantiate opinions with examples or reasons.
65. Pupils are heard reading regularly at school. Year 6 pupils read fluently and expressively. In general, pupils' reading is stronger than their writing. They know that there are different types of books, such as fantasy and adventure. Year 2 pupils are skilled at explaining what they like or dislike and talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors, for example, Roald Dahl and Jacqueline Wilson. Many pupils read competently at more literal levels, but often find it difficult to identify meaning beyond the text. The guided reading sessions are well structured to support pupils' achievements in reading. In all classes, pupils' standards in reading are supported by well-planned group and individual reading programme. Most pupils' research and information skills are suitably developed.
66. From an early age pupils are encouraged to write for a range of purposes. Year 2 pupils write short pieces or single sentences, although a few are still striving to express themselves clearly in writing. Some make good attempts to write their own ideas independently, for example, an account of the trip to Canterbury Museum by a higher-attaining pupil who linked ideas quite well. Pupils' knowledge and correct use of punctuation increase as they move through the school. By Year 6, pupils write for a satisfactory range of purposes, but very few pupils show adventurous uses of vocabulary and style in their work. One pupil playing with words in a poem writes, *'I screamed for my mother, when a cold and hateful shiver went up my spine'*. Handwriting through the school is legible. Spelling is developing steadily from the early use of phonetic strategies to the understanding of regular patterns in complex words.
67. Teaching is good and often very good. The classroom assistants are very well focused when working with their groups. Pupils benefit from close support and the way work is geared to their needs. The most noticeable feature of the best lessons was the fact that it raised pupils' achievement in understanding and using descriptive language to improve writing. In a Year 1

lesson, pupils were effectively helped in writing short sentences and using adjectives, supported by picture word cards. Some managed very well independently, as a more able pupil wrote, '*A wild slippery snake slid in the field*', and another wrote, '*The crafty dog skipped in the bedroom*'. A very good Year 6 lesson effectively helped pupils to include interesting elements in their extended writing of a 'quest' when planning it. Pupils were skilfully encouraged to use their art and visual skills in producing a 'quest map' for their stories.

68. The subject has continued to develop to very good effect since the previous inspection, as a result of a very clear direction and planning by the subject leader. Assessment is very well established as key to planning teaching and learning activities, helping teachers to diagnose what has been successful and where individuals may need further support. ICT is used well to enhance learning. Resources are good and used effectively to enhance learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

69. The National Literacy Strategy informs planning and is sensibly adapted to the school's priorities. Opportunities to promote literacy through topics in other subjects is satisfactory, but not yet used extensively to enhance pupils' writing skills, with the result that pupils do not all develop a self-assurance in writing at length, narrating accounts or expressing written views on a wide range of themes.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improved standards since the last inspection.
- Planning is very good and regularly evaluated.
- Strong leadership and management of the subject.
- The consistent use of mathematical vocabulary is very effective.
- On occasions there is insufficient emphasis on problem-solving techniques.
- Teachers make very effective use of brisk mental and oral starters to each lesson.
- Tasks are modified well to cater for all levels of capability.
- Very good questioning skills.

Commentary

70. The school supports all its pupils well. Ability grouping within classes and the targeted use of teaching assistants mean pupils of all abilities are suitably supported and challenged. They make good progress and achieve well. Boys and girls are currently making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by their teachers and the teaching assistants, and as a result achieve well. More-able pupils are regularly taught by the headteacher as part of the school's 'fast track' initiative. Currently, more-able pupils in Year 3 are targeted in order to raise the number of pupils achieving higher standards. Teaching and learning in these lessons are excellent and pupils are continually challenged to extend their thinking and go beyond what would normally be expected for their age.
71. Overall standards are currently average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. The National Numeracy Strategy is used very well as the basis for very effective planning and ensures a strong focus on the teaching of numeracy skills. Teachers throughout the school make very good use of quick-fire sessions with pupils to increase their understanding of number and enable them to recognise and recall number facts. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 4/5/6 class as pupils participated in a brisk introduction to their lesson. Pupils had to estimate the size of angles displayed in the 'Maths 1' software program. They had to then calculate the corresponding angle and briskly explain what strategy they had used. Pupils concentrated well and used individual strategies to find the answers in this highly enjoyable

and productive session. This imaginative use of the mental and oral starter to the lesson stimulates and captures pupils' enthusiasm.

72. In the lessons seen teaching and learning were consistently good and sometimes very good and excellent. This is because teachers work hard to plan and develop interesting activities that will motivate their pupils and help them achieve well. Particular strengths include the consistent use of mathematical vocabulary, very good questioning techniques and carefully planned lessons. In some classes there is insufficient emphasis on problem solving to enable the pupils to apply their knowledge and skills to a variety of situations.
73. The subject leader has provided strong leadership and made very good use of assessment data and the monitoring of teaching and learning to identify areas for development, and has worked to address these. Since the last inspection the school has developed the subject curriculum well and supported and improved teachers' expertise.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. Mathematics is used well in other subjects as pupils record data, make calculations or measure materials. Year 2 and 3 pupils created tables and tally charts in a science lesson to record which materials absorbed the most liquid. As a result of good use of mathematics in other subjects, pupils develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards show a dramatic improvement. By Year 6, pupils exceed the expected standards.
- Pupils' enjoyment contributes to their personal development, especially in the area of health and safety.
- Lessons are practical and investigative.
- The subject is monitored efficiently.
- Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to record their findings systematically.

Commentary

75. The most recent reported results of Year 6 national tests in 2003 show a dramatic improvement over the previous years. The fluctuation in the results is due to the very small size of the cohort. The inspection evidence shows that current Year 6 are achieving above the national expectations, and those in Year 2 are achieving in line.
76. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teachers have begun to use the analysis of results to establish and address weaknesses, and ensure good learning. Several examples of good practice were seen during the inspection in a range of year groups. For example, pupils in Year 1 were seen investigating forces of 'push' and 'pull' as well as investigating which materials are attracted to a magnet. The teacher's use of good methods and probing questioning enabled pupils to make appropriate links, as explained by one more able pupil, that an object drops down because of 'gravity'. Another practical session in Year 2 prepared children well for carrying out a fair test to find out 'which is the most absorbent material?' The higher attaining were suitably challenged to measure the absorbency of materials accurately. The lessons were well organised to provide pupils with first hand experiences. Nearly all pupils applied their knowledge of a 'fair test' and achieved well in the lesson. Pupils develop the good use of technical vocabulary where it is appropriately highlighted and consistently used. In a Year 4, 5 and 6 lesson, all pupils learnt about 'changing states' to investigate 'reversible' and 'irreversible' changes to different materials. Pupils learn to obtain evidence by

careful observations and measurements. However, in some lessons of mixed age groups, there is too much new information for some of the youngest pupils to grasp.

77. Management of pupils and the use of resources and contributions from teaching assistants, supporting groups for particular reasons, are good elements in teaching that help pupils to enjoy the subject. Adults have very good relationships with all pupils. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are therefore good and they work well together in groups and pairs, collaborating on scientific observations or carrying out tests and experiments.
78. The analysis of pupils' work and observations made during lessons indicates that pupils enjoy science and most pupils achieve well where there is a greater emphasis on practical work; this is leading to a particular increase in pupils' enquiry skills in those lessons. However, more work is needed to develop pupils' investigational skills and their ability to set up their own experiments. Most pupils learn to present their findings systematically, but they are not well guided on how to record their work efficiently and independently. Pupils' abilities to seek patterns and evaluate results in investigations are not yet fully developed and opportunities for pupils to develop research skills and be involved in independent scientific enquiry are limited. Most of the facts are neatly copied rather than independently recorded as a result of an enquiry.
79. The co-ordinator is experienced and well aware of future developments in the subject. Leadership is good. There are very good systems to monitor teaching and learning and ensure high standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership and management of subject.
- Improvement in resources and staff expertise since last inspection.
- ICT used well to support learning in other subjects.
- Recognition of and challenge for higher-attaining pupils.
- The use of digital videoing to enable pupils to evaluate and improve their skills is very well developed.
- Ways of sharing information, particularly by e-mail, are underdeveloped.

Commentary

80. Examples of pupils' work seen and the use of ICT in lessons observed show that in Years 2 and 6, standards in ICT are above average. Pupils achieve well and are making good progress. They are highly enthusiastic and fully focused during activities involving ICT.
81. Since the last inspection the school has used national funding and its own resources to improve facilities and develop staff confidence and expertise through training. Use of several laptop computers in classrooms allows for whole-class development of ICT skills. These computers also provide opportunities for the use of ICT skills in other subjects during lessons. Very good use of the digital projector is made to draw the whole class's attention to particular teaching points both at the start and during the lesson. Discussions with pupils confirm that all computers are regularly used for research and to present work, and there were many examples of this during the inspection. Other resources, for example, the digital camera and the 'Roamer' programmable floor robot, are used very well to further extend learning.
82. Overall, teaching is good, with some very good examples. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are very well planned and teachers ensure that pupils use the correct terminology in their learning. Pupils receive very good support from their teacher and their

classmates. This ensures all achieve equally well, including those pupils with special educational needs. Older pupils regularly support younger ones, both in their own and in different classes, and higher-attaining pupils are presented with greater challenges so that they continue to make good progress. Year 6 pupils confidently use 'PowerPoint' to present findings about their history topic on World War 2 to an audience, and Year 6 pupils made very effective use of the school video camera to record classmates improving their tennis skills during a physical education lesson. The video was then used to enable pupils to evaluate and improve on their performance. Ways of developing the use of e-mail to include a wider audience have yet to be developed. All pupils clearly enjoy sessions, maintaining concentration for lengthy periods.

83. Effective leadership has ensured that the subject is moving forward well. There is a detailed action plan to support this process and the subject leader gives a very supportive lead through planning, discussion, informal training and the introduction of a very comprehensive assessment system. A portfolio of pupils' work provides clear examples of expected levels for each year group. Overall, the school has made very good improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is developing very well. The subject leader has created an overview of links, and teachers regularly structure this into their planning. Throughout the school pupils have regular opportunities to support their learning in other subjects by using the Internet to find out about famous people and different countries. ICT skills are used to support work in science, literacy, humanities and numeracy, as, for example, Year 2 pupils' work on money in a mathematics lesson. ICT was very well used in a Year 2/3 literacy session where pupils improved their understanding of tenses by examining a text on the computer.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

85. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in history and geography as no lessons were seen. A discussion with the subject co-ordinators and a review of planning indicated that the subjects were fully implemented in the curriculum.
86. In both subjects, national guidance has been modified to meet the school's needs such as mixed age classes. The subjects are taught through blocked units, with a three-year cycle throughout the school. Planning reflects a high emphasis on learning through enquiry methods.
87. In both subjects visits and visitors have a significant impact on pupils' learning. A strong emphasis is placed on the use of artefacts to enhance learning. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 had the opportunity to visit Dover Castle's tunnels as part of their study of Britain in World War II. The same pupils improved their study of mountains during their residential trip to Wales in the autumn term. On a residential visit to Dorset pupils improved their ICT skills through regular use of the facilities available to them. The local area is frequently used as a resource, for example, the pupils have studied the village and made comparisons with towns. Resources are used well to enhance learning in both subjects and teachers make good use of the facility to borrow artefacts from museums, libraries and the local college.
88. Assessment procedures are very well established and staff make effective use of the information they have to plan the next stage of learning. Both subject co-ordinators provide effective leadership of their subjects.

Religious education

89. The religious education curriculum is planned in accordance with the expectations set out in the local authority's agreed syllabus. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in religious education as no lessons were seen. All classes receive regular weekly lessons and study the customs and beliefs of other religions. Opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about a range of religions and begin to understand the similarities and differences between the major world religions. The work seen indicates that a range of tasks and activities is used to add variety to teaching in this subject. Pupils' recorded work shows that satisfactory use is made of literacy skills in lessons. However, most of the work covered is through oral discussions, to allow pupils to explore their own thoughts and beliefs.
90. A discussion with some pupils indicates that pupils show a positive willingness to learn about religions other than their own and share personal experiences. Most have a keen interest in the subject and a good knowledge of Christianity. Religious education is not a priority for the school at the moment; however, planning ensures that pupils receive their entitlement and staff keep abreast of the requirements to teach religious education to a sufficiently high standard.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

91. It was only possible to observe one lesson in art and design, so a judgement cannot be made about the school's provision in this subject. Curriculum plans, displays and samples of work were examined. Art and design is planned using national guidance to ensure that skills build progressively as pupils move through the school. The displays and record of children's previous achievements indicate that there are opportunities to learn the required skills and techniques. Pupils are given a chance to develop their observation skills through pencil sketching, shading and the use of watercolours. There are examples of good pencil sketches of the school and some special local buildings, developed into very effective paintings. Learning is enhanced through regular events like the *Big Arts Week* and by having artists in residence.
92. Examples of work on display and in sketchbooks indicate that what is taught follows the particular subject's characteristics and its link with other subjects, for example, the Aboriginal art by Year 2 and Year 3 pupils. In a class assembly Year 2 and 3 pupils shared a variety of artwork linked to their study of the African village, Lesotho. The work demonstrated good development of design as well as painting, drawing and collage-making skills. Pupils thoroughly enjoy exploring the visual elements to include colour, pattern, tone, line and texture. In the one lesson observed, Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils worked diligently on three-dimensional clay models of a mythical creature, with a hollow centre. The lesson was well organised, with very good guidance by the teacher for skills in handling and shaping the clay. There are resources of a satisfactory range and quality and these are used to good effect to assist pupils' learning and to engage their interest in art lessons.
93. In design and technology it was only possible to sample work, so an overall judgement on provision and the quality of teaching and learning cannot be made. Curriculum plans, displays and samples of work were examined and a discussion held with the co-ordinator. Good enthusiastic leadership by the co-ordinator is raising the profile of the subject within the curriculum. There is evidence of pupils generating ideas and designing of products, for example, 'shoe' designs by Year 2 and the finished product, and 'Joseph's coat of many colours', made out of materials of different colours, sewn together. There is ample photographic evidence of pupils in junior classes involved in designing, making and evaluating their products involving control mechanisms and electrical circuits. Pupils are encouraged to review their designs and discuss how they might improve them. There was limited evidence of food technology work. Resources are of a good range and quality, organised efficiently and used effectively.

94. Owing to the timetable arrangements, insufficient evidence was available in music to make a judgement on standards or the quality of provision. Only one lesson was observed and some extra-curricular musical activities were sampled. School documents indicate that National Curriculum requirements are met. In the one lesson observed, teaching and learning were very good and standards were as expected. Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils used a variety of percussion instruments to create their own compositions for a fantasy animal character in small groups. The lesson linked well with the current work in literacy and was thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils working productively in the mixed-age and mixed-capability groups. The quality of pupils' singing noted in the assemblies was good. Pupils sing enthusiastically, with clear diction and a very tonal quality, adding much to the spiritual element of the assemblies.
95. Other observations of small groups taught by the visiting music teachers for guitar and woodwind, noted very good teaching by the adults and very positive attitudes to learning by the pupils. Music has a good profile within the curriculum and is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. Extra enrichment is provided through recorder clubs and choir practices, attended regularly. Pupils have many opportunities to perform in assemblies, in church, talent shows and special musical events.
96. Only one lesson in physical education was observed. This lesson featured practicing skills in tennis. Pupils were well managed and the lesson developed at an appropriate pace. Pupils had a good opportunity to improve their skills by using digital videoing to record the lesson. Very effective use was made of this facility both to compare and evaluate their own and each others' performance and to add commentaries later on and share with others.
97. Strong contributions to learning are made through extra-curricular clubs, gymnastics, football, athletics, rugby, cricket and tennis. There are well-attended clubs in dance, judo and gym, open to all ages. The school is working towards acquiring the 'Active Sports Mark' award in the near future. All staff have been involved in training for Tops Football and games. The co-ordinator has actively involved different coaches coming to school and has organised activities such as the 'Sports Week' for all, including fencing, rugby, judo and other major sports. Pupils at Wickhambreaux have achieved excellent results in inter-school competitions during the last year and several pupils have continued their success in sports at both district and county level.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

98. Provision for PSHE is well integrated into other subjects, making it relevant to pupils. Although there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching and learning from specific taught sessions, the results of the school's policy, plans and practice are evident in the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils observed throughout the school.
99. Only one lesson was seen and the teaching and learning were excellent. The school sees this area as a very important part of its work. The subject co-ordinators ensure that personal, social and health education has a high profile. The school received a Healthy Schools Award in 2002 in recognition of its work. The programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship is comprehensive and includes work on diet, health, drugs, sex and relationships and alcohol abuse. Much is planned and taught through the main curriculum but 'Circle Times' provide good opportunities for pupils to consider and manage their emotions. The very good relationships at all levels and the excellent role models of the adults who work in the school enhance this area.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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