

# INSPECTION REPORT

Queensgate Primary School

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106072

Headteacher: Mrs Helen White

Reporting inspector: Roger Gill  
4074

Dates of inspection: 10/1/00-11/1/00

Inspection number: 182020

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Albany Road  
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Bramhall  
Stockport  
Cheshire  
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Doherty

Date of previous inspection: 16/10/95 - 19/10/95

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This school is an average sized primary school for boys and girls aged between 3 and 11 years old. It has 229 pupils in its main school and 40 pupils in its nursery class who attend on a part-time basis. Taken together, pupils' attainment on entry is above that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well below the national average. There are three pupils with statements of special educational needs; a figure that is broadly in-line with the national average. Very few of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, but four pupils have English as an additional language which is higher than the number in most schools. Less than one per cent of pupils have free school meals.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Queensgate primary school is a very effective school. It is an exciting place in which to learn. Pupils achieve high standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching is very good. The headteacher, governors and staff provide strong and energetic leadership. They are particularly strong at self-review: evaluating standards and deciding on improvements that need to be made. The school's expenditure for pupils is relatively high but the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school has maintained high standards over the last four years in English, mathematics and science.
- Overall teaching is very good with sixteen per cent of lessons observed being excellent.
- The headteacher, with the strong and active support of the governors and staff, has introduced many valuable improvements since the last inspection.
- The school has a strong link with parents that benefits children's learning, for example where a child has a special educational need.
- The ethos of the school is very positive and relationships are excellent.
- The pupils respond very well to the school's wide and varied programme for personal development and standards are very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The use and application of mental arithmetic.
- The guidance given to pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, about how to improve their standards of writing.
- The particular provision for high attaining pupils in lessons in order to make standards even higher.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The developments made since the last inspection in October 1995 have not only been sufficient to maintain high standards achieved by pupils but have improved greatly on the issues identified in the last inspection report. The present headteacher and the governors have introduced many new ideas that have made the school more effective. The new approach to subject teaching, the very good procedures to support pupils with a special educational need and the strategies for evaluating pupils' performance have all been very well managed and have led to substantial improvements. The school has a clear idea of how it needs to make progress in the next few years and is well placed to improve even further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	B	A*	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	B
Science	B	A	A	A

Key	
Very high	A*
well above average	A B
above average	
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Assessments made in the reception class show that children's attainment, on entry to school, is generally above that which would normally be expected in language and literacy and in mathematics. At the age of seven, pupils' attainment, over three years, is often well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards could improve further, particularly in writing and mathematics if more pupils reached the higher levels. By the time pupils are eleven, standards are often well above average, as shown by the table, and in English they were very high in 1999. The school's results compare favourably with similar schools, but in mathematics the number of pupils scoring at the higher levels could still improve, but was still above the national average for similar schools. The school has successfully maintained high standards over a number of years at the end of Key Stage 2 and is successful in meeting its targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy their lessons. They are very willing to learn and apply themselves well to tasks. They work effectively in groups or as individuals.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour during lessons and around school is very good. Relationships between pupils and with adults in school are excellent.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. The pupils respond very well to the school's planned programme of responsibilities. Just occasionally some younger pupils lack the skills of independence in their learning.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. Pupils are punctual and enjoy coming to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	very good	good	very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The teaching of English and mathematics is most effective and pupils generally achieve high results. The National Literacy Strategy has been very well introduced over a period of a year. The National Numeracy Strategy has only just been introduced into some classes owing to staffing difficulties, but already much of the teaching is good. Mental arithmetic is the least successful aspect of many mathematics lessons and could be improved. Teachers, particularly in Key Stage 1, do not provide enough guidance and support to help average and higher attainers improve their writing. There is, by contrast, some very good guidance given in Key Stage 2, particularly at the end of the key stage. Teachers think very carefully about meeting the needs of all pupils. For example, provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those with English as an additional language, is strong. Some methods have been devised to extend the opportunities for higher attaining pupils, but there is room for even further improvement in this respect. Teaching has a strong influence on pupils' learning. The majority of pupils apply themselves very well. They concentrate hard and acquire new knowledge in an enthusiastic fashion.

**Teaching is at least satisfactory in 100 per cent of lessons. In 16 per cent it is excellent, in 21 per cent very good and in a further 47 per cent good.**



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well balanced between basic skills in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and a wide range of interesting activities in the other subjects. Extra curricular activities and residential and other educational visits are very helpful in extending pupils' awareness and understanding.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school possesses very effective systems to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and these pupils make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The pupils for whom English is an additional language are mostly very able and pick up English very quickly. They are very well integrated into classes. Teachers provide a good role model in their speech and other pupils include them in all that they do.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Role models of staff and relationships created are excellent. These provide a very secure basis for the provision of personal development, particularly in the respect of social and moral responsibilities. The wide range of cultural activities ensure that pupils appreciate many cultural traditions. Sound provision is made for spiritual development mainly through collective worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils receive a high level of care and support as soon as they enter the school nursery. The school works very well with parents to extend this support. Health, safety and child protection are all effectively managed.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, governors and staff have worked very hard to create an excellent ethos in which the whole school community is involved. Methods to monitor and evaluate pupils' standards and the quality of teaching are very well advanced. Some co-ordinators have not yet had the chance to judge teaching for themselves as part of the school's rolling programme of review.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is very active in its involvement in school life. They fulfil their responsibilities very well. The school applies the principles of best practice well in its course of school development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is a strength of the school. The headteacher leads the staff very well in this aspect of management.
The strategic use of resources	Resources in the form of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are used very well to help raise standards and improve achievements. There are very good plans to extend and develop the current limited library facilities.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the school's success in national tests is achieved without undue pressure on the pupils.</li> <li>• The approachability of the headteacher and staff.</li> <li>• That links with parents are established effectively through, for example, regular parent surgeries.</li> <li>• The provision of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• The improved provision for special educational needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrangements for next year for the large class currently in Year 2.</li> <li>• Some higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged.</li> <li>• The play ground where pupils of all ages play together.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with what parents like about the school. The governors treat the large class issue seriously and are currently thinking of ways to improve the situation. The school already has a plan to enrich provision for higher attainers. There were no particular problems associated with the playground during the inspection, but it was evident that pupils would prefer a different arrangement and they want this to be discussed at the new Queensgate parliament. This is the school's version of a School's Council to which pupils are elected by their classmates to become a Queensgate member of parliament to represent the class and effect changes within the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**The school has maintained high standards over the last four years in English, mathematics and science.**

1. In Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in National Curriculum tests has been well above the national average over the last four years in reading, writing and mathematics. This trend has been continued in Key Stage 2 where results in English and mathematics have been well above the national average and above it in science. 1999 was a particularly successful year in Key Stage 2. Attainment in English was very high and both mathematics and science were well above the national average.
2. Within this context of high attainment there are some relative weaknesses, of which the school is very aware and has plans to tackle. For example, not enough pupils gain the higher levels in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. Although attainment in mathematics at Key Stage 2 is well above the national average, there is scope for even more pupils to reach the higher levels. Moreover, despite the very high results in English, the school's own analysis shows that not enough pupils reach the higher levels in writing. This relative deficit has been tackled very well by the school and in the current Year 6 the pupils are reaching high standards in writing as a result.
3. The maintenance of high standards results in part from the school's successful evaluation of its own performance and in part from the very good quality teaching. Firm foundations are laid in the nursery and reception classes where the teaching has a strong influence on pupils' early attainment. In the nursery class some children are already learning to write and read whilst engaged in stimulating activities like singing songs and learning about the Muslim festival of Eid. In the reception class most pupils make good progress in the basic skills associated with the beginnings of the National Curriculum. For example, they successfully find rhyming words in a large version of a familiar story and they show confidence in counting up to twelve and putting the numbers in the correct sequence within a line of numbers.
4. Successful teaching in science, in the context of maintaining high standards, is characterised by getting the pupils to plan their own investigations and discuss how the tests can be as fair as possible so that results are valid. In Year 3, for example, the teacher, who possessed a very good knowledge of the scientific process, was able to question pupils in a challenging way and provide a planning schedule that helped the pupils to sequence their ideas about transparent, translucent and opaque materials. At the end of the lesson the teacher successfully promoted a discussion about consistency in testing. Pupils experience this sort of work in depth and are able to record their results in a very clear and insightful way throughout the school.
5. In many areas where the standards could be improved further, like the number of higher attainers in writing at the end of Key Stage 2, the school has analysed teaching and learning and written its own very good plans to tackle the issues.
6. The high standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening, in particular, contribute significantly to the pupils' learning across the curriculum. For example, in an excellent geography lesson in Year 6 the teacher acted in role taking the part of a member of the cabin crew giving information about St. Lucia to the pupils who were pretending that they were on an information gathering tour and about to land on the island. The teacher made the lesson come alive by peppering her talk on the photopack of commercially produced cards about the island by saying: *"Now from the window you can just see...."* and *"Just*

*imagine what it will feel like when we open the door of the aeroplane.”* The pupils responded very well by entering sensibly into the spirit of the lesson. Their discussion, reading and writing was all the more informed because of the style of the teaching. Some of their writing made the reader feel that they really were in the Caribbean.

**Overall teaching is very good with sixteen per cent of lessons observed being excellent.**

7. Throughout the school, teachers exhibit common strengths in their teaching. They all plan very carefully making sure that they know what they want the pupils to achieve by the end of the lesson. They vary the activities well so that a pupil's typical day contains a variety of interesting work. For example, some lessons have written outcomes while others are drama orientated. Teachers regularly change the focus of lessons so that pupils' interest is maintained. As a result, there is a good variety of whole class teaching, group work and individual work. One of the most telling strengths is the way in which all teachers create a lively dialogue with their pupils: asking a range of interesting questions for teaching and assessment purposes. In a Year 5 history lesson, for example, the teacher led the pupils very skilfully in a question and answer session designed to establish the differences between growing up in Ancient Greece and the present day. Many teachers possess a high level of specialist knowledge that helps to guide their work. For example, the teachers in the nursery and reception classes are very knowledgeable about how young children learn and the Year 6 teacher is a music specialist who sometimes works with other classes to share her expertise. These strengths in teaching contribute directly to the high standards achieved and the very good progress made by the pupils.
8. In Year 6, the teacher's knowledge of music helped the pupils to compose music in groups that depicted various aspects of the island of St. Lucia, for example, volcanoes, earthquakes and the wind. It was the teacher's confidence in the subject that guided the pupils through the initial choice of instruments to the performance stage where some pupils took the lead and conducted their group. In a literacy lesson in Year 3 the teacher's very good questioning helped pupils to make insightful predictions about the story of the Wooden Horse, that the class was reading together. For example, one pupil in thoughtful response to the teacher's musing replied, *"Helen is married and although she likes Paris, she may go back to her husband."*
9. A high proportion of very good and excellent teaching takes place in literacy and numeracy where teachers have not only made good use of national guidance, but have helped to create additional materials that enhance lessons. The most successful lessons are characterised by a quick pace without seeming to rush pupils, a high level of useful dialogue between teachers and pupils and very good checking procedures so that teachers can continually assure themselves that pupils are getting the most from the activities. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson the teacher had challenged the pupils to speculate about numbers and the patterns that they made and was subsequently, on occasions, willingly interrupted, by pupils who said, *"I have noticed something unusual and interesting about that number."* In Year 6 a first-rate literacy lesson was expertly led by the teacher who was using materials that she had helped to produce as a member of a local education authority's working party. The theme was 'official language' and this potentially dry topic was invigorated by the teacher's enthusiasm and the very useful example sheets, one of which was from a caretaker's cleaning manual. The pupils' response was excellent. They immediately saw the purpose of the session and set about describing the official language and inventing their own. This kind of teaching has an important impact on the standards of writing produced because pupils are being given very good guidance and have freedom to use their own ideas as well.

**The headteacher, with the strong and active support of the governors and staff, has introduced many valuable improvements since the last inspection.**

10. At the time of the last inspection the school was described as providing a sound education overall. The highest performance was found in the nursery and reception classes. The use of undemanding worksheets was widespread in lessons and the lack of subject teaching, in favour of subjects being mixed together to form topics, did not allow the National Curriculum to be taught fully. The quality of teaching was generally good but better in the early years and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Leadership and management were effective in what was undertaken, but there was little to suggest that teaching and the curriculum were the subject of rigorous review and development.
11. It is the strength of the present headteacher, governors and staff that teaching and the curriculum are now at the centre of the school's continual improvement. A great deal of work has been completed as a result of monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, but the school is not insular in its approach. It has also become attached to the Basic Skills Agency and is seeking to be recognised under their Quality Mark award. The quality of teaching is now very good with some excellent teaching at the end of Key Stage 2. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1, but the team teaching arrangement currently employed in Year 2 sometimes means that pupils experience disjointed lessons as they move from one room to the other. The way that subjects are taught, in both key stages, has been radically altered. Lessons now focus on one subject at a time and in addition the staff have successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy to improve the already high standards in English. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been introduced, but more recently, and its effect is, as yet, less marked.
12. The headteacher is particularly strong at devising systems that involve staff in continual improvement. For example, all co-ordinators are now responsible for analysing, among other things, tests results, pupils' work and teachers' planning in their subject. They work successfully in pairs in order to discuss their findings before deciding what action needs to be taken. They undertake these tasks with a great sense of duty and their findings are translated immediately into an action plan and also communicated to the governing body's curriculum committee.
13. The school's development plan is now a tightly organised working document. There are very good systems in place that ensure that the plan contains the right areas for action and that these are then given the appropriate priority. For example, all staff now have an annual review of their job description during which they agree to undertake particular targets from the school's development plan. Spending is very well targeted within the school's plan to ensure that standards are maintained and improved. This entails not only the purchase of additional literacy materials that help to raise standards in writing, but also enables the high school teachers to undertake a project in the school on French and German that is proving so valuable for the Year 6 pupils in helping them to make more informed choices about which language to opt for when they arrive at the high school.
14. The headteacher has used her knowledge of special educational needs very well to improve the implementation of the school's policy in this area. Parents speak very highly of the work that has been accomplished for their children.
15. The school ethos has been improved greatly, but the school does not rest on its laurels. It plans well for the future. For example, governors, staff and pupils are all working very well together to implement an ambitious scheme to create a new library and computer learning suite.

**The school has a strong link with parents that benefits children's learning, for example where a child has a special educational need.**

16. The school has undertaken a great deal of work since the last inspection to forge better links with parents. Many parents believe that the school is now far more aware of the needs of parents and families. The headteacher has instigated an annual parental questionnaire so that parents can state their views with the expectation that something will be done to improve areas of concern. At the time of the first annual questionnaire, some parents were concerned about a lack of information about their child's progress and the lack of extension work for higher attaining pupils. The headteacher and governors took these comments seriously and introduced regular parents' surgeries whereby parents could drop in, without an appointment, and talk to teachers. Daily home-school communication booklets were introduced as well as homework diaries. The school calendar was re-arranged so that there could be three, instead of two, parents' evenings to talk about pupils' progress. The school now has a policy for higher attaining pupils in which the first phase of action is to identify a small group of "gifted" children using the services of the educational psychologist from the local education authority. This task has been completed and plans are underway to provide different and more demanding work for the children identified. The next phase of this plan is to widen the scope of the project to include higher attainers who should be reaching well above average levels in the National Curriculum tests.
17. The school has created a climate in which parents are very keen to play their part in supporting their child's learning. Comments in the home and school books and homework diaries show just how seriously many parents take this form of communication with the teacher. Parents are also appreciative of the advice given about suitable books for reading at home. The school provided a recommended reading list so that parents can know the types of book suitable for presents, for example.
18. One of the most important improved links with parents has been as a result of the work undertaken for pupils with special educational needs. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection, but now the school has a very detailed system of identifying and providing for pupils who are experiencing a difficulty with their work. Parents are involved at every stage and can play their full part in deciding the best form of support for their child.
19. Many parents have grown to appreciate the school, and form a closer bond with it, as it has become more successful. They have enjoyed reading about the school's achievements in the National Curriculum tests and knowing that the pupils achieve these results with the minimum of pressure placed upon them. The approachability of the headteacher and staff and the school's regular involvement in community projects have also caused parents to think more positively about the school.

**The ethos of the school is very positive and relationships are excellent.**

20. The daily work of the school is effectively under-pinned by its aims. These aims make a strong contribution to the ethos of the school. Whilst the school is committed to high standards in English, mathematics and science, its aims reflect a much wider commitment to community, cultural and global education. The school is well integrated into its local community. Currently, the pupils are involved in two major projects. They are rehearsing for a Millennium musical project, organised by Christians Working Together, that will be performed in the Bridgwater Hall in Manchester and are working towards another community project designed to encourage local schools and members of the community to collaborate over the re-writing of one of the gospels for a modern day audience. Pupils are encouraged, from a very young age, to learn about other faiths and other cultures. For example, the school recently buzzed with excitement when a Zulu tribe visited and taught the pupils how to dance in their traditional way. The rich and

varied extra-curricular provision and the well planned personal and social education programme make a valuable addition to the cultural aspect of the school's ethos.

21. The pupils are clear that they are very involved in the life of the school and that their thoughts and opinions are welcomed. This was demonstrated by the high degree of confidence shown by the pupils who stood up in assembly and talked about their vision of the school as expressed in their election manifesto for the children's parliament. This sense of inclusion of pupils' ideas in school policy is graphically represented in the plans for the new library area. The pupils have written very succinctly about their aspirations for the new study suite and these thoughts are placed alongside the architects plans for all to see. Moreover, the work accomplished by pupils with special educational needs shows how much the school is dedicated to including all pupils into the life of the school.
22. Pupils who transfer to the local high school feel safe in the knowledge that a great deal is done to value and extend the links that exist between the two schools. These links help to create a sense of purpose and a commitment to the pupils' longer term interests and well-being and add to the learning ethos which is so evident in the school.
23. Evidence of the ethos of the school can also be found in the very good behaviour shown by pupils, the lack of any oppressive behaviour and the excellent relationships that exist throughout the school.

**The pupils respond very well to the school's wide and varied programme for personal development and standards are very good.**

24. The headteacher and staff enjoy working with the pupils in and out of class and this has a significant impact on how the pupils respond to the exciting opportunities presented to them. They respond enthusiastically in class. This is evident throughout the school. In fifty three per cent of lessons the pupils' attitudes were extremely positive.
25. The high degree of adult support in classes has an impact on how well pupils respond to their work. Pupils with a special educational need are very well supported by their class teacher and special needs assistants. Others are often supported by classroom assistants or parents. This regular contact with a range of adults helps the pupils to show a maturity in their studies. Pupils recognise the importance of what they do in class and respond in a sensible way. For example, children in the nursery responded to the teacher's rhyme and song session, using a glove puppet, with rapt attention. In Year 4 pupils handle equipment extremely well in physical education and work very co-operatively in groups. Pupils showed great confidence in speaking, listening and writing in a literacy lesson in Year 2. They composed their own poems around the theme of The Sea and got a great sense of satisfaction by reading their own work aloud with real expression to show the different moods of the sea.
26. Pupils are very eager to talk about their school. They demonstrate a pride in mentioning the wide range of activities on offer. They particularly enjoy the extra-curricular activities where an excellent choice of sporting, musical and academic activities is on offer. Older pupils have the opportunity to enjoy a residential venture. Pupils appreciate the way in which the school gives them chances for responsibility in each year of their education. Older pupils, for example, gain a lot from volunteering to look after younger ones at lunch-time.
27. The establishment of a children's parliament has added a new dimension to the school's programme for personal development. Pupils have responded with great enthusiasm. Many have written speeches for the hustings in which they make election promises. Apart from learning the rudiments of democracy, they are gaining a high level of

confidence in public speaking. There is a well designed curriculum for personal and social education that is enjoyed by all pupils. This includes useful work on safety, relationships, drugs awareness and sex education.

28. Standards of behaviour are very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons, around school and when taking part in out of school activities. They are all aware of the school rules and rarely need reminding of them. The vast majority of parents appreciate how well behaved the pupils are and comment favourably on how the school is working to make their children more mature and responsible.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The use and application of mental arithmetic.**

29. The pupils have achieved high levels in mathematics in the National Curriculum tests over the last few years, but not enough pupils attain the higher levels in Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. The school recognises this as an area for development and has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy to assist in this improvement. This initiative has been held up by staffing difficulties, but is now on course.
30. Mental arithmetic is a key element in the National Numeracy Strategy. Many staff are still getting used to implementing the whole lesson and consequently the mental arithmetic component is not sufficiently sharp nor productive enough at the moment. In some cases there are not enough different questions to challenge pupils of all attainment levels. This has a limiting effect on the performance of higher attainers, in particular. Sometimes pupils are not asked to describe what thought processes they used to arrive at a particular answer. This was the case, for example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson. The teaching took the form of a straight forward question and answer session without determining the different methods that pupils had used for their calculations. There are also instances where teachers fail to identify and reinforce methods that would help pupils in their future mental arithmetic work. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were tackling the problem of multiplying 300 by 20. The teaching did not allow enough time for pupils to establish a quick method to achieve the answer and then to try out that method on other questions to confirm their understanding. There is often not a strong enough link between the beginning of the lesson, where the quick-fire mental arithmetic takes place, and the group work which follows. Pupils are often trying to solve a problem and are not encouraged to estimate mentally or use mental methods in the first instance when working through the problem.
31. Teachers' plans show that the mental arithmetic session will take place, but there is often not enough detail about the type of questions that will be asked and the mathematical vocabulary that will be introduced or reinforced.

### **The guidance given to pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, about how to improve their standards of writing.**

32. The school's results in English are usually well above the national average and those in Key Stage 2 were very high in the 1999 National Curriculum tests. However, reading is usually better than writing. The school has recently introduced some very effective strategies to tackle this relative weakness. These are having a marked effect in Year 6, in particular. However, these and other ideas have not yet been adopted throughout the school and this results in an unevenness in the standard of written work produced.
33. Where pupils' written work is a weakness in lessons, teachers do not give enough guidance on how to construct, edit and redraft a successful piece of writing. In Year 1, for example, a group of higher attaining pupils were attempting to write a story using the stylistic features



of a traditional tale. The teacher helped them to choose their own opening phrase but then left the group very much to their own devices without setting any time limits or targets for the amount of writing to be achieved. The pupils did not discuss or have to hand any guidance about how they might give form and structure to their piece of writing, for example, how to manage the beginning, middle and end of the story. The stories that were eventually produced were satisfactory, but could have been improved if pupils had been given more guidance and had treated the task with a greater sense of urgency.

34. Occasionally, classroom support assistants are not in a strong enough position to reinforce the messages about writing and how to improve it because the task and the methods to be used have not been clearly enough explained on teachers' planning sheets. This was the case in a Year 2 writing session where pupils produced, under the guidance of a support assistant, a satisfactory piece of writing about The Sea which could have been more imaginative if the teachers' plans had been more explicit about key questions to ask the pupils that would prompt them to think of their own ideas and not depend too heavily on the examples devised by the class as a whole.

**The specific provision for high attaining pupils in lessons in order to make standards even higher.**

35. This is an aspect of school performance that has been identified by some parents and the headteacher, governors and staff as in need of improvement despite the school's very good results in National Curriculum tests. The school has identified that it needs to increase the number of pupils who achieve the higher levels in order to improve their results over time. The school's development plan contains a course of action to improve the teaching of higher attainers, but as yet only the first section of the plan, dealing with the small number of very high attaining pupils in the school, has been accomplished.
36. Inspection findings confirm that this is an area to be improved. In many respects higher attaining pupils are challenged well. They are as involved, as any other pupils, in musical projects, the school's parliament as well as normal classwork and they often produce work of a high standard, but there are occasions when teaching is not challenging enough to meet their needs. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were divided into groups to practise using money. The higher attaining group grew restless towards the end of the session because their thinking was not sufficiently challenged. The teacher did not establish with the group any sense of urgency in terms of time and allowed the pupils to slacken their pace of working. Other instances of this kind exist throughout the school. In Year 6, for example, pupils' mathematics workbooks show that whilst lower attaining pupils are set different work that is matched to their level of attainment, average and higher attaining pupils are often set the same work. Higher attainers have to cover the same ground as other pupils and they often lack the demands of extension work.
37. This issue is also evident for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 who, for example, lack the specific guidance on how to produce better writing. The school's own plans to radically improve the library with the addition of a computer study suite shows how seriously they treat the issue of research and communication skills; an aspect that higher attainers, in particular, find limited by the present arrangements for library study.

**WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

38. The headteacher, staff and governors, with the support of the local education authority should now:

Improve the teaching of mental arithmetic (Paras 30,31). To do this they should:

- ensure that teachers vary the pace and extend the range of mental arithmetic in mathematics lessons and sharpen the use of mental arithmetic when pupils are solving problems;
- make the link better between mental mathematics and the later practical work.

Improve the quality of pupils' written work, particularly in Key Stage 1 (Paras 32,33,34). To do this they should:

- give pupils more guidance on how to construct successful writing;
- set pupils targets for the amount of time to be spent;
- ensure that pupils are challenged to think of their own ideas; and
- make sure that older pupils know how to improve their writing from a first draft.

Strengthen the provision for higher attainers (Paras 35,36,37). To do this they should:

- improve the system for identifying higher attainers;
- train teachers and support staff in how to cater for these pupils; and
- ensure that group work for higher attainers contains sufficient challenge.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### **Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection**

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
16	21	47	16	0	0	0

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

### **Information about the school's pupils**

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	229
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	28

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	96.6
National comparative data	94.1

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	18	13	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	17
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	29	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (85)	97 (91)	97 (85)
	National	82 (77)	83 (89)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	17
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	27	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (82)	94 (85)	97 (85)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	13	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	25	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (85)	96 (85)	100 (100)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	12	12
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	22	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (96)	96 (88)	100 (96)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	223
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y N – Y 6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9
Average class size	25

#### **Education support staff: Y N – Y 6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	179.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/9
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	431 725
Total expenditure	420 169
Expenditure per pupil	1702
Balance brought forward from previous year	5017
Balance carried forward to next year	11556

### **Results of the survey of parents and carer**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	249
Number of questionnaires returned	125

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	67	30	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	42	4	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	54	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	50	9	2	7
The teaching is good.	51	41	4	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	48	9	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	27	4	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	43	2	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	45	44	6	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	54	34	3	1	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	40	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	40	2	0	4