

INSPECTION REPORT

Chalfont St. Giles Middle School.

Chalfont St. Giles.

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110287

Headteacher: Mr James Gillard

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Huard
27290

Dates of inspection: 31st January – 2nd February 2000.

Inspection number: 183398

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Parsonage Road Chalfont St. Giles Bucks.
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Toon
Date of previous inspection:	June 1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chalfont St Giles Middle School is a junior school with 236 pupils on roll. It has grown considerably since its previous inspection. The school was re-organised in 1998 and now takes pupils from 7 (Year 3) to 11 (Year 6). This means that the current Years 5 and 6 will only spend three years in the school. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority groups attending the school. There are 19 (6.9%) pupils on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs and no pupils have statements. These figures are well below the national averages. Most of the pupils attend the school from the local area and the majority has previously attended the nearby first school. The attainment of children on entry to the school, based on Key Stage 1 test results, is above average. The school is divided into 8 single age group classes. There are a large number of pupils in Year 5 and these classes are set for literacy and numeracy in order to preserve smaller teaching groups. The average class size is 29.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with some excellent features. The pupils achieve high standards in literacy and numeracy, and good standards in most other subjects. The overall quality of teaching is high with pupils of all abilities being challenged and stretched. The school provides a particularly broad curriculum, which includes French. It also provides very well for pupils' personal development through a well-structured and comprehensive personal and social education programme. There are a wide range of residential visits and extra-curricular activities. The overall leadership and management of the school are strong. The headteacher is industrious. The governors and staff working together with him, create an interesting and stimulating learning environment. Pupils' attainments are monitored carefully to ensure that high standards are maintained and improvement is an on-going feature. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils' achieve high standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics, and standards in science have improved.
- The quality of teaching and learning is high.
- The personal and social development of pupils, and the quality of relationships they form, are excellent.
- The quality and breadth of the curriculum provided are excellent.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology could be raised through the more effective use of the recently installed equipment.
- The school should provide more opportunities for parents' to discuss their children's progress.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1995. At that time standards were said to be generally good, with those for English and mathematics being good and science sound. Pupils now achieve standards well above the national average in all three subjects. The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably from sound to very good overall. This is because staff have a commitment to high standards and the pupils have very good attitudes to learning. The management and efficiency of the school were good in 1995 and are now very good. The headteacher provides strong leadership; the governors are fully aware of their responsibilities and carry them out conscientiously. Issues from the last inspection included 'to maintain high standards'. This the school has done effectively and made a consistent improvement in line with the national trend overall but at a significantly higher level. The school has a range of monitoring systems in place to track pupils' achievements. Individual targets are set in literacy and are planned in numeracy. The school has made very good improvements in its provision for information technology and standards are now satisfactory. However, planning for the curriculum, use of the new computer suite and staff training are incomplete as yet – partly because of problems with the installation of the new equipment. The role of subject co-ordinators has been

improved. They now monitor planning and pupils' work and numeracy and literacy lessons have also been evaluated. Overall the school has made good progress since the last inspection and has handled changes professionally and competently.

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	A*	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	B
Science	B	A	B	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The majority of children who join the school in Year 3 are achieving above the standards normally expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. At eleven years of age, standards in English and mathematics are well above the national average and above average in science. When compared with schools of a similar kind (based on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals) the school achieves standards well above average in English, above average in mathematics and in line with the average in science. The trend over time is one of steady improvement in line with the rate of national improvement but at a higher level. Over the last four years the performance of pupils in the core subjects has been well above the national average overall, with standards in English shown to be very high, and those in mathematics and science well above the national average. From work examined during the inspection and lessons observed, standards in English continue to be very high, and well above average in both mathematics and science. Standards in science have risen during the last twelve months because the school has carefully analysed pupils' work to identify areas of comparative weakness and taken positive steps to remedy this within the curriculum. Targets set are challenging, but realistic, and reflect the ability of the current group of pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes towards their work and the school are very good. They are highly motivated and eager to learn because lessons are made interesting and stimulating. They are very attentive and responsive and show a delight at being in school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good overall. Pupils are polite to their teachers and each other. They move around the school showing due care for others and playtimes are harmonious occasions.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have developed excellent learning skills and work independently on class and individual project work. They co-operate well. They take responsibility for a number of tasks around the classroom and school. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and well above the national average. Pupils are eager to attend school. Pupils arrive on time and sessions start promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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 quality of teaching overall in all lessons was at least satisfactory. Nearly half of all lessons observed were very good. The teaching of English and mathematics is particularly successful because teachers are knowledgeable and provide tasks that are challenging and inspire the pupils. This enables them to do their best and learn effectively because their interest is aroused and maintained. The teaching of literacy and numeracy has been successfully implemented and teachers are confident and enthusiastic. The strategies, particularly that in literacy, have been adapted appropriately to meet the needs of the school. For example, the school has maintained an emphasis on extended writing. Pupils' attitudes help them learn effectively because they concentrate well, work and research independently, and listen carefully to the teacher and each other. They show enthusiasm for the tasks set because they are matched well to their individual abilities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides an excellent curriculum. It includes French and an outstanding programme of personal and social education for the pupils. The wide range of residential visits and extra curricular activities provided by the school are of an exceptionally high quality. Curriculum planning is of a high standard and teachers include cross-curricular elements that enrich pupils' learning. The teaching of numeracy and literacy are major strengths.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school purchases extra time above that allocated to ensure pupils are well supported. Individual education plans are of a very good quality, highly specific to each pupil and set relevant and achievable targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall provision. The staff are very good role models and social and moral development are both very strong. Pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development and pupils have time to reflect on wider issues during assemblies and in lessons. Very good opportunities are given for pupils to appreciate a range of music and art. Opportunities to explore the multi-cultural aspects of our society are more limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Generally good overall. There are regular health and safety checks. Behaviour and discipline policies are in place and consistently applied by all staff and adults in the school. The house system works well. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place, although the staff handbook requires updating to include relevant information.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management	The headteacher is strong, experienced and has insight and vision for the

by the headteacher and other key staff	future of the school. He is very well supported by the whole staff team. The deputy headteacher, and co-ordinators make a major contribution to the smooth running of the school and take responsibility for their subjects by monitoring planning and pupils' work. Literacy and numeracy lessons have appropriately been the priority for monitoring of lessons. All share the commitment to on-going improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Committed governors support the Headteacher and school effectively. They are keen and enthusiastic and aware of their responsibilities, which they carry out effectively and efficiently.
The school's evaluation of its performance	School has an effective overall monitoring and evaluation strategy although this has largely been the responsibility of two staff who have left recently. Pupils' performance is carefully tracked and monitored on an individual and year group basis with close attention being paid to the achievements of higher and lower attaining pupils. The curriculum is also monitored through regular discussion and whole staff meetings. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies has been well monitored through classroom observations. Needs have been identified and appropriate priorities set.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of all resources – staff, financial and material. Staffing resources are the school's priority and are well utilised so that specialist teaching is a feature of the school's success. The school has installed a suite of computers for information technology. However, plans have not yet been developed for its use and effectiveness to be carefully monitored in order to ensure the policy of best value incorporated into other ventures.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has very high expectations for all its pupils regardless of ability. • The pupils behave very well in and out of the classroom. • The teaching is very good and the teachers are really interested in their pupils. • The school provides very good extra curricular activities and the residential visits are excellent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents would like more opportunities to meet with teachers about their children's progress. • They would like to see school reports issued sooner in the summer term. • Some parents were concerned about the timing and amount of homework.

The inspection team agrees with the positive points made by parents. It has investigated and found there is some cause for concern regarding the timing and frequency of opportunities to find out about and discuss their children's progress. Some school reports were issued right at the end of the summer term, which meant parents were unable to meet teachers to discuss any particular issues. Homework is generally issued and a date given for handing it in. The homework diaries are generally well used for this and the inspection team found the system was appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The pupils achieve high standards in English and mathematics and standards in science have improved greatly.

1. The pupils achieve high standards in English and mathematics in their National Curriculum tests. Pupils' achievements in the science tests last summer showed an improvement over the previous year much higher than that achieved nationally.
2. The school has adapted the literacy strategy and is using the framework in a way that meets the needs of the pupils in the school. Because writing was an issue at the previous inspection the school has decided to make special provision for this and ensure that it is a major integral part of its own literacy strategy. Through careful planning the school now has a programme for English that is varied and matches the needs of all the pupils. It provides a stimulating curriculum, which challenges and excites the pupils and enables them to tackle texts, such as *Nicholas Nickleby* in Year 6, with confidence and enthusiasm.
3. The focus on achieving high standards is apparent from Year 3. Here pupils take a joy in reading and follow the texts used in the literacy hour with real interest. Fiction and non-fiction texts are used and received with equal pleasure. Pupils in Year 3 studying the book 'How Babies Grow' were fascinated. They knowledgeably compared the factual information given in the book with progress made by their own younger siblings without drifting off into irrelevant anecdotes. The class teacher ensured that all pupils fully understood the vocabulary used by appropriate questioning – 'What does fragile mean here?' Pupils confidently went on to use the information they had gained from the book to construct flow charts to illustrate the growth of a baby thus effectively using what they had gained through reading to support the science topic they were studying.
4. In Year 6 pupils were studying extracts from the text of *Nicholas Nickleby*. They compared an abridged version with the original. They discovered for themselves the changes made and why the abridged version was easier to understand. The levels of concentration were very high in the lessons observed and pupils displayed an ability to recall previous learning and put it to good use in class discussion. Pupils were able to note about the original that 'Complex sentences are used, they all have more than one clause'. Pupils are encouraged to express themselves clearly. Teachers encourage them to experiment with new and more complex vocabulary – a wide variety of possibilities were explored to define 'distended' and to this end dictionaries and thesauri are always available for them to use. Higher-attaining pupils were able to simplify a paragraph describing Mr Squeers trip to London whilst keeping the essential essence of Dickens' style and showing a good understanding of the vocabulary used by him.
5. The variety within the English curriculum stimulates the imagination of pupils. Year 5 was provided with the challenge of writing and dramatising a text based on a book they had been studying. The class teacher offered herself in an advisory role whilst circulating, offering sound and well measured help often through well worded questions 'where will your audience be?' Pupils wrote their own scripts, cast the scene and performed it. The quality of performance was high. Diction was clear and pupils were confident, articulate and mature in their presentation.
6. Earlier in the year the same year group had written 'thrillers' as part of their extended writing programme. They had explored the use of language to suggest emotion, particularly anger, tension and fear. Understanding of writing for a specific audience was shown and the sheer joy of

experimenting with the language showed through – particularly in one story with a character speaking less than standard English – where the writer had experimented effectively with spelling to best express his intentions!

7. Throughout the school the numeracy strategy has been embraced with enthusiasm. Pupils in Year 3 relish the challenge of mental arithmetic quick fire questions to start a lesson and show a well above average ability to make mental calculations such as $15+16+15$. Teachers have high expectations and the pupils respond extremely well. Positive relationships with pupils enhance teachers' abilities to maintain pupils' attention, and ensure their active participation in lessons. Pupils answer questions confidently from an early age, and share ideas and strategies for solving mathematical problems which build on previous work and methods.
8. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they are set for mathematics which considerably assists the progress of all pupils. Both groups of pupils study the same topic at an appropriate level which ensures that all pupils are challenged and can achieve high standards for their own ability level. High standards are achieved because pupils are constantly on-task; they listen attentively and respond promptly to questions. All work builds on what has gone before. Higher-attaining pupils, for example, were confident in working to hundredths converting to decimals, and tenths and hundredths converting to percentages. Lower attaining pupils were converting more basic fractions such as $1/5, 1/4, 3/4$ to percentages. They help and support each other aided by the teacher who encourages all pupils. Self esteem is raised by teachers encouraging pupils to share what they have done and the methods employed in front of the whole class.
9. Standards in science have risen over the past year because the co-ordinator has carried out an effective analysis of previous test papers to identify weaknesses and taken steps to address these.
10. The school identified that science vocabulary and terminology was insufficiently used and rectified this by the insistence on the consistent and repeated use of correct terminology in all lessons. Another major factor in the improved standards is the use of specialist teaching for Year 6. This ensures a consistency of approach for all pupils, complete and comprehensive coverage of the curriculum and the integration of investigative activities into all areas of the science curriculum. Pupils are thus able to question effectively, and develop their scientific skills and knowledge in a planned and cohesive way.

The quality of teaching and learning is high – with nearly half the lessons observed being very good.

11. The quality of teaching is very good overall and is a major strength of the school. In all the lessons observed the teaching was sound or better. The teaching and the opportunities it provides for pupils to improve their learning skills is the major contributory factor to the high standards the school is constantly striving for and achieving.
12. Teachers' planning is thorough and detailed. Teachers plan across parallel classes to ensure consistency in what is taught and this helps maintain the high standards achieved throughout the school. Lessons are carefully sequenced to ensure full coverage of a topic or programme of study. Plans outline clear learning objectives for each lesson, and teachers tell the pupils exactly what they are going to learn. Grouping is considered carefully and teachers ensure that activities are planned which match the attainment level of all pupils. A brief recap at the start of each lesson prompts pupils' memories and allows some useful assessment to take place. For example, in a Year 3 geography lesson pupils could remember appropriate technical vocabulary associated with weather forecasting before watching a forecast on television. The pace set is lively throughout and lessons

are well structured and relevant to sustain pupils' interest. Written tasks are fully explained to pupils before they carry them out and pupils record work in a variety of appropriate ways.

13. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been well implemented and all pupils are fully occupied with suitably challenging tasks during the times when the class teacher is concentrating on one group of pupils. Pupils are able to work unaided because the work is carefully matched to the pupils in each group and teachers give clear, instructions as to the work to be tackled and ensure that the pupils understand what they are to do before they start.
14. The expertise and enjoyment that teachers bring to their lessons is evident. In a mathematics lesson in Year 5 the teacher had organised a range of practical activities, using resources very well to reinforce what the lower ability group of pupils were learning about shape. She had high expectations of the pupils' abilities to achieve well, and supported learning effectively throughout the lesson. She used the correct terminology when talking about the shapes pupils were investigating, for example using the terms 'adjacent', 'vertices' and expecting the pupils to do the same. A very effective plenary at the end drew all learning together. The teacher skilfully questioned pupils about the properties of the different shapes insisting on the use of correct terminology.
15. Whole class teaching is used effectively to promote the learning of pupils with special needs and is very good overall. Careful questioning by the teachers ensures that the pupils can take a full part in all lessons. Praise and encouragement are used effectively. When pupils are involved in small group work, work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities. For example, in the Year 6 literacy lesson, lower attaining pupils were able to write their own version of the paragraph from Nicholas Nickleby with the aid of a carefully worded prompt sheets which led them by asking appropriate questions. Individual education plans are readily available and the targets for each pupil are realistic and highly individual to each pupil and designed to build on learning step by step.

The personal and social development of pupils and the quality of relationships they form are excellent.

- 16 The personal development of pupils is excellent. They show confidence and care and concern for each other's feelings, supporting each other in lessons without competitiveness. Pupils are given a high level of responsibility to which they respond extremely well. House captains are voted for by other pupils, they take the role seriously and perform conscientiously. Pupils throughout the school are given responsibility to assist in the daily life of the school and have responsibility for a number of classroom tasks. On a wider front pupils raise commendable sums for charities such as National Children's Home, and Macmillan Cancer Care, and in this way develop an understanding of the differing needs of other groups in society. The residential trips offer pupils the opportunity to live at close quarters with a wide range of people in situations that are new and challenging for most of them.
- 17 Pupils show high levels of perseverance and work well collaboratively from the time that they enter the school. They tackle new and challenging tasks with enthusiasm. For example, Year 4 pupils when asked to identify buildings and geographical features on a blank map of the local area set about the task willingly in pairs. Pupils are enthusiastic and responsible towards their work. They are confident, outgoing and keen to answer questions and take part in discussions. They develop independence and younger pupils use dictionaries and other resource material to help them with their writing. As they get older and move through the school, pupils increasingly use other reference material such as thesauri and information technology to help them with their work.

- 18 Pupils behave very well, both in the classroom and around the school. They are proud of their school and are welcoming and friendly. They respond quickly to teachers' requests for silence, are attentive and well mannered. Adults are treated with respect. Pupils appreciate the house system and are delighted to receive house points. School property is well cared for and equipment treated carefully.
- 19 Pupils form very good and constructive relationships with adults and with each other. Very good relationships permeate the life of the school and pupils' consciousness of the school community as a whole. In lessons pupils work together very effectively in pairs or small groups. Groups work well together to distribute tasks fairly amongst themselves. For instance, in a Year 5 drama session casting had to take place in each group, and responsibility for properties established. All jobs were quickly allocated before carrying on with the major task. Good relationships extend out into the dining hall where Year 6 pupils help the younger ones at lunchtimes. Pupils ensure that no one is left to play on their own at playtimes and these are generally happy and active times.

The quality and breadth of the curriculum is excellent

- 20 The school offers a very broad and well balanced curriculum which provides opportunities for pupils to make excellent progress in their academic work but also in their all round personal and social education.
- 21 Since re-organisation, the school has had to adapt the curriculum offered to pupils to accommodate the changed age range. It has not sacrificed any element of the curriculum but has taken steps to enhance it by keeping the provision for French for the pupils in Year 5 upwards. It relies on the expertise of staff including the headteacher to teach and is aided by parents who help on a voluntary basis with French conversation.
- 22 One of the major strengths of the school's curriculum is the introduction of cross-curricular themes within lessons. These are developed very well within the high quality planning which ensures consistency across parallel classes. Thus, pupils will use IT in art to explore Mondrian's ideas. They will study a book in the literacy hour to show how a baby grows and use this to develop flow charts to help with scientific activities. These carefully integrated activities are another factor in the constant striving for higher standards. Pupils are expected to carry out extensive independent research from an early stage. This skill is developed very well within the individual projects that pupils are encouraged to complete in a range of subjects.
- 23 The school has considerable strengths in music and sport. Pupils have the opportunity to learn an instrument from a wide range offered. The school further encourages pupils' enthusiasm by giving them the opportunity to perform in assemblies and concerts throughout the school year. There is a school orchestra and choir and both perform to high standards. This builds confidence and self-esteem, and has a considerable impact on pupils' social development. In sporting activities the school receives help from Wycombe Wanderers Football Club during games sessions and this is carried over into extra curricular activities where pupils can continue to develop their expertise, and also gain enjoyment from participating in team activities.
- 24 The school uses a range of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum; thus Year 5 pupils will shortly be receiving a visit from a travelling planetarium to re-inforce their studies about the earth in space. A range of residential visits are also planned to enhance pupils personal and social education. Year 4 pupils visit Thornley Hall for an activity weekend. Year 5 pupils have the opportunity to visit the Isle of Wight where a range of outdoor activities that the school is unable to

provide in its immediate locality is provided. The opportunity to live away from home even for a short while is invaluable in developing pupils' social skills and independence. In Year 6 pupils visit France, it enables them to learn at first hand the customs of another culture, and put to practical use the linguistic skills they have gained in class. Parents are extremely supportive of these trips and agreed they made a tremendous contribution to the personal development of their children.

- 25 Despite other curriculum pressures the school continues to provide an excellent range of extra curricular activities. These are mainly focused around sport and music but also include art and chess. They are sufficiently wide ranging to allow all pupils to develop an interest in at least one area. Staff offering these clubs demonstrate real expertise and enthusiasm. The school has received considerable support from sporting bodies particularly when setting up tag rugby and cricket and has useful and valuable links with Wasps RFC and Wycombe Wanderers FC amongst others.

The leadership and management of the school are very good.

- 26 The overall leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher has been in post for 15 years and provides very strong leadership and clear educational direction for the school. His main focus is to maintain and improve the already high standards, but also actively plans to fully develop the personality of the pupils in his care so they are well prepared to enter society as well rounded individuals. In this he has been particularly successful with the unstinting help and support of his staff and governors. Together they have devised a full, exciting and diverse curriculum to achieve these aims.
- 27 The role of the curriculum co-ordinator is a developing one. Each subject has an identified co-ordinator and all are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and conscientious. Some teachers are responsible for more than one subject. Strategies for monitoring achievement are on going. This is particularly evident in science where analysis of past work, test papers and results have seen positive results by a revision of the way in which the subject is taught. All co-ordinators monitor planning, and scrutinise pupils' written work and literacy and numeracy have been effectively monitored through classroom observation.
- 28 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. There is a comprehensive policy, covering all the statutory requirements. The governor for special educational needs is involved and supportive and as a staff member is fully informed about developments. The co-ordinator liaises closely with both the infant school from which the pupils come and the secondary schools to which they transfer.
- 29 The governors are knowledgeable, involved and supportive. They have termly meetings for which the headteacher provides detailed reports. They have established committees, each with agreed terms of reference, and each reports to full governing body meetings. The newly appointed chair has established a good working relationship with the headteacher and undertakes the role of 'critical friend' very successfully. They review test results and are actively involved in target setting with the staff. Governors fulfil their responsibilities successfully and their involvement in the strategic direction of the school is very effective.
- 30 The school development plan identifies relevant priorities. It shows developments in areas including curriculum, organisation and management, marketing, premises etc with expenditure identified. The main priorities currently are literacy and numeracy and information and communications technology, with a number of smaller targets. The plan provides a very good focus for continuing development.

- 31 The school aims are appropriate and are published in the prospectus for parents to share. They address a range of relevant issues including personal and social development, the curriculum and home and community links. The underlying values of celebrating achievement and promoting the individual development of every pupil are very clearly evident in the day to day life of the school. Policies reflect practice and the school provides a welcoming, friendly environment. The staff work industriously as a united team and provide very effective role models for the pupils. The ethos is very positive and reflects the school's strong commitment to on-going improvement and good relationships.
- 32 The school manages its financial resources very well overall. Financial planning is effective and supports the improvement of teaching and learning. Expenditure is carefully considered and planned to ensure cost effectiveness. One of the main priorities has been to maintain staff levels to allow for absence, specialist teaching, curriculum support and monitoring. This has had a direct impact on the level of pupils' attainment as it also means that extra staff can be deployed to assist in the teaching of, for example, setted activities. The school has reasonably sized classes but fairly high staffing costs which, because of the comparatively inexperienced nature of some of the staff are set to rise further as they move up the incremental scale. The school prudently has allowed for a reasonable carry over during the last few years which will help to mitigate the effects of heavier staffing bills. The good deployment of staff expertise promotes the development of the curriculum and the improvement of teaching and learning.

1 WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in information technology, whilst satisfactory, should be raised by more effective use of the new equipment recently installed.

- 33 Standards in information technology were an issue at the previous inspection and the school has been successful in improving these. The school has, with considerable financial assistance from parents, installed a suite of computers in the school library to support pupils learning, this is in addition to computers already in classrooms. It has experienced time delays and many problems during the installation, which has set back the school's plans to a certain extent.
- 34 The school is currently using the suite to teach pupils computer skills in tandem with supporting learning in certain areas of the curriculum. There is no overall plan as to how the requirements of the curriculum can be dovetailed with the teaching of skills, and the school has yet to plan how IT can be integrated into each subject area in accordance with the requirements of the revised National Curriculum.
- 35 There is some expertise amongst the staff and the school is beginning to consider how this might be utilised to the benefit of all pupils. Currently the IT co-ordinator is used very successfully to support class teachers using IT within specific subjects, but the suite is used on a somewhat ad hoc basis at present with teachers selecting what they want to teach rather than adhering to a specific plan. The inspection team acknowledges that it is early days in the development of the use of the suite but it is important that a curriculum plan and teaching strategies are drawn up together with a rigorous monitoring programme to ensure best value of the investment is achieved.

The level of communication with parents, particularly concerning their children's progress.

- 36 The school's relationship with parents overall is very good, however parents expressed considerable concern both at the parents' meeting and in the questionnaire over the opportunities provided by the school to discuss their children's progress.
- 37 At the current time parents are given the chance to attend a meeting at the school early on in the school year. This has an informal 'meet the teacher' format and is regarded as being useful for parents of pupils who have entered new classes. As a getting to know measure it is successful but if parents want as specific discussion there is no time to accommodate this.
- 38 In the winter term the school holds formal consultations with parents and has timetabled slots for parents to meet specific teachers. There is an opportunity to book a late or early time. A difficulty parents have found is that a 5 minute slot is not long enough for constructive discussion. Class teachers are briefed by colleagues about pupils in their sets or subjects. However, there is no opportunity for parents to meet more than one teacher. This is frustrating for parents of children in Years 5 and 6 who may be taught by two or three different teachers.
- 39 In the summer term reports are distributed. These are full records of a child's achievement but there is currently no opportunity for parent input as there is no reply slip or space for parents or pupils to express their views. At the end of last year reports were distributed very late giving no opportunity for parents to discuss their contents, this is not satisfactory.
- 40 Parents have said that if they contact the school and ask for an appointment to meet their child's teacher this is invariably possible, but they feel that the school is reluctant to take the initiative. The school should take this opportunity to review the situation and sound out parents wishes – not just those most closely connected with the school - as 40% parents returning questionnaires were unhappy with the present system.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve further the school should now :

Raise standards in information technology, and ensure value for money by:

- planning carefully the development of essential skills with the use of the new computers.
- planning how to support learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- carefully monitoring the use of the equipment and achievement by pupils.

Improve communication with parents by :

- following up the concerns expressed by a high proportion of parents through the questionnaire.
- reviewing and improving the system for keeping parents informed of their children's progress.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

22

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	9	8	4	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

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

236

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

0

Special educational needs

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

0

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

19

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

6

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.4

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 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	28	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	23	27
	Girls	36	34	35
	Total	61	57	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92	86	94
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	23	25
	Girls	35	33	35
	Total	62	56	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94	85	91
	National	68	69	75

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	231
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	29.5

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	26

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	389325
Total expenditure	381012
Expenditure per pupil	1536
Balance brought forward from previous year	8574
Balance carried forward to next year	8313

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	236
Number of questionnaires returned	147

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	47	7	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	36	50	5	1	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	41	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	53	17	3	3
The teaching is good.	46	48	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	12	43	31	12	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	42	14	7	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	41	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	17	41	28	12	2
The school is well led and managed.	54	39	4	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	44	5	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	46	5	0	1

Other issues raised by parents

Parents were at pains to emphasise that although many were not happy about opportunities to find out about their children's progress and communications were sometimes difficult, in all other ways they fully supported the school and were very pleased with the all round education their children were receiving.