

INSPECTION REPORT

FLETCHING CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Uckfield

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114503

Headteacher: Miss S Dale

Reporting inspector: Mrs P C Cox
19178

Dates of inspection: 30 January 2001

Inspection number: 185631

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 category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fletching Uckfield East Sussex
Postcode:	TN22 3SP
Telephone/fax number:	01825 722356
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Hayes
Date of previous inspection:	16 October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Fletching CE Primary School is situated in a village close to Uckfield in East Sussex. The school serves the village and the surrounding area. There are 53 pupils in the school, which is very small compared with other primary schools. At the moment about three-fifths of the pupils are boys. Pupils are taught in three classes and the school is about the same size as it was at the time of the last inspection in 1995. All pupils are of white ethnic heritage and have English as their first language. About 10 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Eleven per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, none of whom have Statements of Special Educational Needs. This proportion is below the national average. Children enter the school with levels of attainment that are generally above those common for their age.

The quality of arrangements for worship is inspected separately by a diocesan team.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a sound school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, as is teaching. Leadership and management are satisfactory and pupils behave well. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average for the children under five and at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is good for the older pupils.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and consequently they have good attitudes and behave well.

What could be improved

- The standard of pupils' writing at both key stages.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators.

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 October 1995 and has made satisfactory progress in maintaining the strengths seen previously and addressing the issues identified at that time. Pupils continue to attain levels generally higher than average and they behave well. The quality of teaching is similar to that observed during the last inspection. Curriculum planning has improved and there are now schemes of work for all subjects. The school's development planning is more flexible and linked more closely to the budget and governors are developing their role in strategic planning.

STANDARDS

The table showing the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests has been omitted as there were fewer than 11 pupils in the year group, which makes the use of statistics unreliable. The results of these tests in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 in the last five years have fluctuated, but have broadly been above the national average and above the average of similar schools. Results of the tests in mathematics have improved considerably since 1997. Test results at Key Stage 1 have shown similar fluctuation but, again, have been broadly above the national average, particularly in reading.

Children enter the school with attainment that is generally higher than average. They make satisfactory progress in the reception class and, by the time they are five, most are reaching standards above those expected.

The standards of the pupils presently at Key Stage 1 are broadly similar to the average in English, mathematics and science and their achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Year 2 this year are lower than those reflected in the test results in 2000 because there is a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. At Key Stage 2 standards are higher than average in English, mathematics and information and communication technology and pupils are making satisfactory progress. They are covering work in science at an above-average level. However, pupils' written work is not developed well enough at either key stage. The more able pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall and reach appropriate standards.

The school sets suitable targets for achievement in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The attitudes of the oldest pupils are very good: they enjoy their work and concentrate well. However, there are a few pupils in the middle of the school who occasionally lose their concentration in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The oldest pupils behave very well, showing courtesy and respect for each other and for adults, and the behaviour of the other pupils is good. Behaviour around the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good in almost all instances. Personal development is satisfactory: pupils take responsibility well when given the opportunity.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils come to school regularly and on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	satisfactory	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.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are at least satisfactory in almost all lessons and good in a third. Teaching for the children who are under five is always satisfactory. The teacher shows a sound understanding of the needs of children of this age.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and occasionally good at Key Stage 1. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only one lesson observed, in the class for pupils in Years 2 and 3. Teaching is good in most lessons for the older pupils at Key Stage 2. When teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and attainment. They set interesting and challenging activities and transmit their own enthusiasm well. The different age groups and levels of attainment in the class are catered for well so that pupils' learning is effective. When teaching is unsatisfactory it is because pupils are not prepared sufficiently for their work and their behaviour is not controlled well enough when they become restless.

Teaching of mathematics is satisfactory and sometimes good. In English, teaching is satisfactory in almost all lessons and is sometimes good. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively through the school, but those in writing are not developed to a high enough level throughout the curriculum.

The teachers for the oldest and youngest pupils use day-to-day assessments appropriately to plan further work, but this is not consistent for those in Years 2 and 3.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school plans very carefully to ensure that pupils build on their skills and knowledge and do not repeat work. However, timetables are not always designed well enough to ensure that all time during the school day is used efficiently.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils have appropriate work set for them and receive suitable support, enabling them to make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory and for moral and social development it is good. The school has effective procedures to ensure that pupils behave well and encourage them to work together co-operatively.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is a safe and caring environment and has good procedures for health and safety and child protection. Any rare instances of bullying are tackled sensitively and rapidly.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides sound leadership and the school runs efficiently. Subject co-ordinators are hard-working and committed to maintaining standards, but have not been able to develop their management role sufficiently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors have recently taken a more active role in strategic planning and are beginning use performance data in order to hold the school to account for the standards it achieves.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Senior staff and governors are aware of the broad strengths and weaknesses of the school and use this information to identify appropriate priorities for improvement. Monitoring of teaching and standards is being undertaken and the information used to support improvements. However, evaluation is not yet rigorous enough to give a detailed picture of what needs to be improved.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses its resources suitably to support the priorities that have been set for improvement.

The school makes sound use of performance and financial information to compare its standards with those in similar schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers have high expectations and children make good progress. The school helps their children to become mature and responsible and behaviour in the school is good. Teaching is good and their children like school. They feel able to approach the school with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of extra-curricular activities. Some parents expressed concerns about the size of the class for the oldest pupils.

Twenty six questionnaires were returned and 23 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors. Parents have a high regard for the school. They particularly appreciate the way in which the school supports them and their families. It is an integral part of their community. The very positive views expressed by parents are broadly reflected in the findings of the inspection, although teaching and progress are not as good as parents' views suggested. Although the class for Years 4, 5 and 6 is larger than the other classes, pupils of all ages and abilities are catered for well. The range of extra-curricular activities is similar to that provided by other schools of this size.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are above average for children under five and at the end of Key Stage 2

1. Children enter the school with attainment that is generally higher than is usual for their age. They maintain this advantage through their year in the reception class and by the time they enter Year 1 almost all children have exceeded the expectations for their age. Almost all speak confidently and clearly, with a mature vocabulary. They listen attentively to stories and demonstrate good understanding in their responses. Children take on the roles in '*Little Red Riding Hood*' with enthusiasm, playing their parts with a clear awareness of the plot and characters. They became so involved in their dramatic work that they changed the ending in imaginative ways, working well together and discussing their ideas.
2. Children are able to write their own names independently and many write both names. They know many letter sounds and most are beginning to write simple sentences on their own. Almost all children recognise and write numbers to at least 10 and are able to sort by size and colour. They know the names of common two- and three-dimensional shapes. They count forwards and backwards and know whether they are younger or older than their brothers and sisters. One is developing more complex understanding, saying '*I am my brother's sister*'. The more able children add three numbers to at least 20, writing their numbers carefully and correctly.
3. Children are working at a high level in science. They identify the basic necessities for life and label the parts of the body. Children understand that different animals have different habitats and they know what animals in their locality eat.
4. By the end of Year 6 pupils are also working at an above average level in many areas. They speak articulately, demonstrating a wide vocabulary and good general knowledge. In a debate about fox hunting pupils were able to put forward a reasoned argument based on research they had undertaken. They listened attentively to the views of others and responded to them with understanding.
5. Pupils read fluently and with expression and understanding. They act in plays with confidence, reading their parts expressively and with clarity. They are aware of the effects of emotive language and identify specific words used to create an effect. Pupils show a high level of understanding of plot and character and use a range of sophisticated strategies to read unknown words. They make imaginative but logical predictions about what might happen next. Pupils are able to skim and scan the text for specific information and quote from it to confirm their views.
6. Standards in mathematics, particularly in number, are high. Pupils work confidently and accurately with very large numbers and apply the appropriate methods to mathematical problems. They work competently with ratios and negative numbers. Pupils use prime and triangular numbers with a good understanding. Their knowledge of regular and irregular shapes and their properties is secure. Pupils work well with proportion, changing fractions to decimals and percentages with ease. They grasped the 'easy' method of working out 17.5 per cent very rapidly and were soon working this method with very large numbers.
7. Pupils use computers naturally as a tool in many areas of the curriculum. They are expert in finding their way into the programs they need and using their potential.

They use many methods to present data using a computer program and use spreadsheets with understanding. Pupils have very competent keyboard skills and use desktop publishing programs well to design and produce their own newspaper pages. They choose imaginative titles, designed to catch the eye, with interesting use of font and colour. Pupils turn naturally to the Internet when researching information in other subjects and have developed their own web page with adult support. Many pupils have developed their skills well at home and support others in increasing their competence. However, they do not have sufficient opportunity to use the control aspect of the technology.

Teaching is good for the older pupils

8. The teaching for the older pupils is good and enables them to learn effectively. A major strength of the teaching is the enthusiasm shown by the teacher and transmitted to the pupils so that they are swept along rapidly by the energy of the lessons. Lessons are planned well so that the needs of all pupils, of three age groups and a wide range of attainment, are met effectively. The time of the classroom assistant is used appropriately: she is prepared well for the work and gives good support to individuals and groups.
9. The teacher displays good subject knowledge, so that she is able to promote the learning of the most able pupils at the higher levels. Resources are chosen well and challenge and stimulate pupils. In a mathematics lesson where pupils were using decimals and percentages, the tasks became increasingly difficult so that pupils were stimulated to apply their newly acquired knowledge and to have higher expectations of themselves. The lesson generated a real buzz of mental activity as pupils gained confidence and were spurred to greater efforts.
10. There is a supportive, relaxed atmosphere in the class: pupils feel secure and confident to risk expressing their opinions and taking new approaches. Question and answer sessions are used well to promote thinking and explore whether pupils have understood. The teacher shares the purposes of the lesson and ensures that pupils know what they are to learn.

Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and consequently they have good attitudes and behave well

11. The school has a clear code of behaviour that is mainly applied consistently so that pupils know what is expected of them throughout the school. All adults in the school promote pupils' understanding of the difference between right and wrong and expect them to make the correct decision themselves. Consequently, the school is a quiet and orderly place, where pupils enjoy themselves. They are enthusiastic about coming to school and taking part in their lessons, but many of their workbooks reflect too little care.
12. Behaviour is good in most lessons and the oldest and youngest pupils often behave very well. There is little bullying or antisocial behaviour and parents report that, on the rare occasions it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly and sensitively. However, the behaviour of a few of the middle age group of pupils deteriorated in one lesson and they became noisy and unco-operative. Behaviour around school and in the playground is very good. Pupils play together well and respond politely to the instructions of their dinner time supervisors, even when having to stay inside during wet weather.
13. Pupils, particularly the youngest and oldest, are encouraged to work together

constructively and co-operatively. They appreciate the 'family' atmosphere where everyone knows one another. Year 6 pupils say that 'everyone gets noticed', so none feel isolated or left out. The reception children work together well when performing their play or sharing paints, although a few have difficulty in taking turns when playing games. Year 1 pupils work very co-operatively on the computers when using mathematics programs, or with the programmable robots.

14. Older pupils support each other with their work and co-operate well when writing together. They share resources and discuss their findings sensibly in science. They take turns well and are sensitive to the younger pupils in the playground. However, when they are working in groups of two or three at the computer, the activity tends to be dominated by one pupil, usually a boy, at each machine and therefore girls do not always have sufficient opportunity to use the resources or practise their skills.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The standards of pupils' writing at both key stages

15. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a wide vocabulary and are beginning to use it well in interesting ways. The more able use speech marks, commas and apostrophes accurately and are developing a variety of sentence structures to create an effect. Almost all are using language at or above the expected level but they do not have enough opportunity to write at any length or in a range of styles for different audiences.
16. Pupils' use of interesting language develops well at Key Stage 2. By the time they are 11 they employ similes and metaphors naturally, particularly when writing poetry. Working from the structure of Masefield's 'Cargoes', pupils produced thoughtful and imaginative poems of their own about other methods of water transport. The evocative imagery and language used by three boys to write a poem on the theme of 'The Perfect Storm' was of a particularly high standard. Pupils understand the use of emotive language and use it well in their own arguments. Almost all Year 6 pupils write well thought out accounts, stories and plays of some length.
17. However, the presentation of written work lowers the overall standards and the school has rightly identified writing standards as a priority for development. In Year 2, pupils' writing is not well formed and many do not write consistently on the lines of the page. By Year 6 many pupils have not yet developed a clear cursive style and some still do not join their writing. Although they are able to spell and punctuate reasonably accurately at both key stages, pupils do not take enough care to do so consistently in their own writing. Their work is untidy and at Key Stage 2 it is not set out in a structured way, using paragraphs and standard forms of presenting speech. However, when pupils use word processing programs to write or redraft their work, presentation is of a higher quality.

The role of the subject co-ordinators

18. In this very small school, the few teachers carry heavy responsibilities for subjects and for ensuring that work in those subjects is planned to cater for a range of age and attainment in the classes. Responsibilities at Fletching School are shared out equitably and teachers take their responsibilities seriously, attending training and supporting their colleagues with problems. Pupils' work is planned in detail and co-ordinators take care to ensure that there are appropriate schemes of work for all subjects. Teachers work closely together and share their planning, so that co-ordinators are able to monitor what is planned for their subjects. Each term teachers

compare written work to establish a common understanding of the standards being achieved.

19. Results of national tests are analysed each year so that weaknesses can be identified and adjustments made to the curriculum. However, co-ordinators have not been enabled to develop their roles fully in order to take responsibility for the standards and improvement in their subjects. They have had little opportunity as yet to monitor, or work with, their colleagues in order to analyse strengths and weaknesses in detail and make plans to improve. The school has identified this issue and has appropriate plans to address it in the near future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

20. In order to raise standards further, the governors, in partnership with the headteacher and staff, should:
 - (1) raise standards in writing at both key stages, particularly its presentation;
 - (2) develop the management role of subject co-ordinators so that they are able to take greater responsibility for raising standards in those subjects.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	0	4	7	1	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	53
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	5
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6
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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

The tables that usually appear here to show the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels at the end of each key stage have been omitted because there were fewer than 11 pupils in each of those year groups.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	53
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
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 of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.9
Average class size	18

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	178,148
Total expenditure	177,309
Expenditure per pupil	3,284
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,444
Balance carried forward to next year	11,283

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 49%

Number of questionnaires sent out

53

Number of questionnaires returned

26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	31	4	0	7
My child is making good progress in school.	54	38	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	27	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	57	8	4	0
The teaching is good.	63	33	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	53	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	11	4	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	34	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	53	8	8	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	32	14	5	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	38	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	8	46	17	13	16