

INSPECTION REPORT

GASTRELLS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stroud

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115573

Headteacher: Ms Cottia Howard

Reporting inspector: Neil McAllister
22220

Dates of inspection: 14 - 16 February 2000

Inspection number: 186145

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Oosthuysen
Date of previous inspection:	6 - 10 November 1995

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	11
Standards in reading, mathematics and science	
Pupils have positive attitudes to school	
Standards in design technology	
The quality of teaching is good	
The school is led and managed well by the headteacher	
The school's partnership with parents is very good and parents	
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	15
Standards in information technology	
Standards of pupils' writing	
Classrooms are poorly ventilated	
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gastrells is a smaller than average-sized community primary school with 174 pupils on roll. Unusually this comprises 59% boys compared with 41% girls, with a particularly high proportion of boys in Years 1 to 4. Virtually all pupils speak English as their first language and very few come from minority ethnic families. A Language Centre caters for 10 pupils with specific language difficulties who come from beyond the school's immediate local area. All these pupils have a statement of special educational need. The number of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes is above the national average and includes an additional four pupils with statements. Attainment on entry to the school varies widely but is broadly average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Gastrells is a well led and well managed school in which standards in English, mathematics and science have improved substantially since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress through the school. Provision for information technology has not kept pace with improvements nationally and the oldest pupils are achieving below expected levels of attainment. The school achieves very high standards in design and technology and pupils produce good quality work in art. Pupils develop positive attitudes to school, behave well and relationships are very good. Their personal development is promoted well and the school is particularly successful in encouraging pupils' social development. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and develop very good relationships, supported by the school's good promotion of their personal development.
- Standards in design technology are very good and standards in art are good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The school is led and managed well by the headteacher and the governing body and this is promoting the good standards achieved by the pupils.
- The school's partnership with parents is very good and parents are actively involved within the school and in their children's education.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology are below expectations for the oldest pupils and have not kept pace with national improvements.
- Standards of pupils' writing are broadly average but lag behind their good skills and understanding in reading.
- Classrooms are poorly ventilated, with the result that, even in relatively cold weather, there is a stuffy atmosphere and pupils become hot and lose concentration.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When Gastrells was last inspected in November 1995, the standards achieved by pupils were generally satisfactory, although there were weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 2 and, subsequently, in the standards of work achieved in English and mathematics. Since then, substantial improvements have been made and standards have risen significantly. All the action points from the last inspection report have been addressed effectively. Much work has been done on using information from pupils' assessments to ensure work is appropriately matched to their needs. This has resulted in more success for the higher attaining pupils in particular. The staff and governing body are now actively monitoring and analysing pupils' performance and take effective action to address the issues raised. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy initiatives has provided a framework for ensuring progression in pupils' learning in English and mathematics. There has been a

significant improvement in the quality of teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, where it is now good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved significantly. Satisfactory improvements have been made in the involvement of those staff with extra responsibilities. The input from the co-ordinator for science and design and technology, for example, has led to substantial improvements in the standards achieved in these subjects. The school is well placed to improve this aspect further with the recent appointments of a new deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators.

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

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

The results show that standards in the latest tests were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The school is doing well in mathematics and very well in science when compared with schools with similar intakes, although the results in English are average compared with similar schools. Pupils' reading is above average but their writing, while average, is not as strong. The school's targets set for 1999 were exceeded. The overall trend in performance over recent years has been upwards and in line with the national trend, with variations usually reflecting differences in individual cohorts. The 1999 cohort, for example, contained a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than the previous year. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' achievements are above average. The current Year 6 cohort includes fewer higher attaining pupils and the school's predictions indicate that, although fewer will achieve the higher Level 5 grade, the percentage achieving the expected Level 4 will be maintained. Targets for the following two years are realistic and suitably ambitious; they reflect careful predictions based on pupils' current attainment.

Pupils enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment and make good progress, overall, in the early years and through both key stages, although they are not achieving well enough in writing. Standards in information technology are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 but are below expectations at the end of the Key Stage 2. Levels of achievement are good in art and very good in design and technology throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are attentive, generally sustain concentration well and work enthusiastically.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are generally polite to each other and adults. They are clear about expectations and follow the agreed rules.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are actively involved in the daily routines of the school and grow in confidence as they get older. They work and play well together and form very good relationships.
Attendance	Very good. Well above the national average.

Pupils show great respect for other people's differences and gladly accept responsibility when it is given. Although they are generally attentive and enjoy their lessons, the stuffy atmosphere in classes sometimes causes pupils to become listless and lose concentration. Attendance continues to be a great strength of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	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.

All the teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory. Thirty-eight per cent of lessons were good and 29 per cent were very good. The skills of numeracy and reading are taught effectively although there is room for improvement in the teaching of writing. Teaching in science and design and technology is good; teaching in information technology is satisfactory but some teachers lack confidence and expertise. The school meets the needs of all pupils, including the higher attainers and those with special educational needs. The good quality of teaching, especially the teaching evident in the upper part of Key Stage 2, promotes pupils' learning well and enables them to make good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Due to the nature of a short inspection, the teaching of most non-core subjects was not observed.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Broad and balanced for all age groups with good attention to the development of literacy and numeracy skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good for pupils in the language centre and in mainstream classes. Pupils in the centre are integrated effectively into mainstream classes and supported well. Good support from classroom assistants and voluntary helpers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good provision for social development; good provision for spiritual, moral and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' overall development are good and there are effective systems for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety.

The statutory curriculum is in place and enhanced by well-planned provision for personal, social and health education and by a good range of extra-curricular activities and community links. The good relationships with parents and their positive views of the school are particular strengths and reflected in the very high level of parental involvement and support in classes.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Strong and effective leadership by the headteacher; increasing involvement of senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is actively involved in all aspects of the school's development and provides very good support. It increasingly holds the school to account.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Careful analysis of pupils' attainment in tests and teachers' assessments with appropriate action taken to address issues raised. Teaching is monitored and supported appropriately.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Effective financial planning with a suitable long-term strategy to support priority areas. Some weaknesses in the planning and use of information technology resources.

The headteacher and governing body have managed the school well through a difficult period due to many changes of teaching staff, caused by factors outside the school's control. A very positive ethos has been created which underpins the improved standards. The principles of best value are applied very well. For example, the school questions what it is doing and relates this to the impact on the standards achieved by the pupils. The governing body increasingly seeks objective measures of success and maintains a good overview of the school's development and its strengths and weaknesses.

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 expects children to work hard and is helping them to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good. • Their children like school. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • Behaviour in the school is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like more information about the school's expectations for homework and more consistency in the amounts of work sent home. • They would like more information about how their children are getting on. • A minority feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Homework is not consistent but is being used increasingly to support work in lessons. A well-structured programme has recently been developed and is under trial in one class; a new homework policy is ready for parental consultation and subsequent implementation. Pupils' annual reports provide satisfactory levels of information but do not always set clear targets for improvement. Most parents feel that additional information is readily available from teachers should they need it but some feel that the reports are sent out too late in the summer term. Inspectors judge the extent and range of extra-curricular activities to be good for a school of this size. A number of teachers and some parents give up their time voluntarily to provide these.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in reading, mathematics and science are above average

1. Reading is a stronger element within English and inspection evidence indicates that attainment in reading is above average at the end of the key stage and that pupils have made good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The teaching is good and a strong emphasis is placed on reading throughout the school. Pupils in Year 6 read confidently from a wide range of literature including classics such as *Treasure Island* and original works by Dickens. They develop good levels of comprehension, being able to interpret and deduce by reading 'between the lines' to discover the meaning of the complex and archaic language used. Very few pupils in this class are working below the level expected for their age. In Year 5, pupils describe in detail the setting and characterisation of the poem *The Highwayman* and discuss its complex vocabulary. Pupils' research skills are secure and this supports their work in other subjects well. Reading skills are taught well through structured literacy sessions. Good use is made of high quality literature and poetry. The needs of different abilities are catered for well and the high level of voluntary support provides pupils with regular opportunities to read to adults.
2. In mathematics, by the end of the key stage, pupils have a secure grasp of place value and the four operations of number and have developed good numeracy skills. They handle negative numbers and fractions confidently and the higher attainers successfully convert fractions to decimals and percentages. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a secure knowledge of shape and measures, describing the properties of parallelograms and isosceles triangles and calculating missing angles in various shapes. The subject is taught well throughout the school and ensures that pupils make good progress. Teachers' expectations are high and lessons start with a lively mental/oral session and effective questioning which consolidates pupils' knowledge and challenges their thinking. The obvious enthusiasm for the subject shown by many teachers encourages pupils' positive attitudes. The needs of all pupils, including the higher attainers, are met well through carefully graded activities and opportunities for focused support for different groups in turn.
3. Pupils are introduced to challenging scientific concepts such as fair testing at an early age. Pupils in Year 2, for example, confidently explain how to control variables when carrying out a fair test. This strong emphasis on scientific investigation is evident in pupils' work throughout the school. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are able to plan and carry out investigations when, for example, testing different materials for solubility. They record and present their results in appropriate forms, such as bar charts and line graphs and make conclusions based on the evidence found. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding in their recent work on life process and living things. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject and has developed effective planning systems that ensure pupils make good progress through the school.

Pupils have positive attitudes to school and develop very good relationships, supported by the school's good promotion of their personal development

4. Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to their work and enjoy learning. This is reflected in the very good attendance levels and their general enthusiasm for all aspects of school life. The effective promotion of pupils' personal development is evident in the wide range of opportunities provided by the school which successfully encourage their spiritual, moral, cultural and, most notably, their social development. Staff set a very good example and promote productive relationships both in classrooms and around the school generally. Pupils respond very positively to this and relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. Teachers encourage pupils to work both independently and collaboratively. Effective collaboration was observed in science lessons in Year 2/3 and Year 6 and when pupils worked together on the computer. The youngest pupils are expected to take responsibility for planning aspects of their own work. As they move through the school, pupils subsequently gain an increasing sense of responsibility and independence in their work that benefits their learning.

Older pupils are trained to act as 'peer mediators'; they deal with minor playground conflicts and take this role very seriously. A 'Circle of Friends' initiative, introduced by the headteacher, provides opportunities for selected pupils to explore social and behavioural issues in an informal setting. Valuable social links have been established between one of these groups and a school in the Isle of Wight.

5. An effective programme of personal, social and health education is in place and this includes the use of 'Circle Time' discussion sessions covering important issues. A varied range of extra-curricular activities and visits is provided by staff, often in their spare time, to enhance the regular timetable. The School Council enables pupils of all ages to contribute their views on topics of interest. The introduction of a 'Thank You' book, which is shared in assembly, encourages pupils to appreciate the help they receive from adults and from other children. Pupils' moral development is promoted well. Adults give consistent, fair guidance and encourage pupils to establish sensible codes of conduct; these have been discussed, agreed and implemented separately in each class. Pupils are clear about the expectations represented by their agreed rules and behave well in lessons and around the school. Praise and rewards are used frequently by staff and pupils' achievements are celebrated regularly, particularly in assemblies and via the Golden Book which records outstanding efforts. An effective assembly was seen which explored themes of friendship and bullying.
6. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual development and this represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. This aspect is most evident in the regularity with which teachers relate key ideas in lessons to pupils' own experiences and encourage reflection on these. Assemblies and lessons in religious education also include frequent opportunities for reflection on life choices and on sensitive topics such as bereavement and environmental issues. Pupils are led to consider the values and beliefs of others, for example in work seen about Islam. The religious education curriculum also contributes to pupils' cultural development. This is generally promoted well, especially through high quality art education. Topics in music, history and geography extend pupils' understanding of the cultures of various times and places. Good quality literature and poetry are used extensively in English lessons; particularly effective examples were seen during the inspection when the older pupils in Key Stage 2 compared several modern poets and considered characterisation in Victorian and modern novels. An assembly with younger pupils gave all classes opportunities to experience dance forms, such as the Year 2/3 class who performed their interpretation of the story of Noah. Older pupils have the chance to learn to play a musical instrument. The orchestra perform well in assemblies and this also promotes pupils' social and cultural development.

Standards in design technology are very good and standards in art are good

7. Design and technology has a very high profile in the school and culminates in an annual event involving the whole school in a week's designing and making activities. Careful curriculum planning ensures that pupils in all classes progressively develop a wide range of skills and a secure foundation of knowledge and understanding which prepare them well for 'D&T week'. They learn to handle and use a range of materials and tools and try out different techniques for creating complex mechanisms or making structures stronger and more stable. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class explain confidently how to join different materials temporarily or permanently and how they would use this knowledge to make fastenings for a shoe. Pupils make effective use of skills learned in other lessons; for example, working out and measuring the radius accurately and then drawing a circle for a template using a pair of compasses, or using their knowledge of circuits gained in science to design and make pressure-pad switches for electronic alarm systems and robots with flashing eyes.
8. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic about the subject; their expectations are clearly high and reflected in the high quality products that pupils design and make. The designing and making process is promoted very well through careful attention to initial examination and evaluation of existing products and plenty of opportunities to develop skills through carrying out focused practical tasks. The skills and knowledge learned are then put into practice in extended design projects. Construction kits and carefully prepared examples of working mechanisms are used effectively to give pupils a range of practical experiences and to

encourage them to make choices based on what they have found out. Good quality displays of pupils' work celebrate their achievements; pupils are very proud of their designs and gain great enjoyment from their work as well as practising and consolidating their literacy and numeracy skills in a relevant and practical context.

9. Provision for art is good and promotes pupils' progress well in both key stages. The curriculum includes interesting and stimulating art activities for all age groups which build systematically on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. It includes attention to the development of techniques in a wide range of media and to the promotion of pupils' understanding of other artists and craftspeople. Activities include work in both two and three dimensions. Particularly good examples were seen of dough models and of wire and foil sculptures. Pupils have recently learned about the work of Degas, Van Gogh, Popova and the Cubists and had opportunities to work in similar styles. The school's attractive outdoor environment is used well for projects in observational drawing and this is reflected in recent work about wood and trees. A high standard of display is evident throughout the building which celebrates pupils' achievements, enhances the learning environment and stimulates subsequent work.

The quality of teaching is good

10. A high proportion of teaching observed during the inspection was good or very good and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when 20 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory, mainly in Key Stage 2. Particular improvements are evident in this key stage and the quality of teaching in the upper part of the key stage is especially good, although good lessons were observed in all classes. The good teaching promotes pupils' learning well and enables them to make good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. The vast majority of parents who returned questionnaires agree that teaching in the school is good.
11. In most classes, teachers have very clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and their response, both in oral work and in written tasks. Lessons are generally planned well, with clear learning intentions, although these are not always shared with pupils to ensure they are fully aware of what they are learning. Good attention is given to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the higher attainers. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the good use of an extra 'pupil' in the form of a doll who 'doesn't always understand' encourages pupils to volunteer answers without fear of being wrong. Activities are organised effectively to allow the teacher to focus on specific groups. This enabled the teacher to challenge and extend the older and more able pupils in a science lesson about planning a fair test.
12. Regular checks are made of pupils' understanding during lessons and, in many lessons, good use is made of a plenary discussion to summarise what pupils have learned. A notable strength is the way that teachers relate the introduction of new work to pupils' own experiences and their prior knowledge. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 5, the concept of the 'Five Pillars of Islam' was brought to life and made more meaningful by relating it to practical real-life examples relevant to the pupils' own experiences. Support staff are used effectively to help groups of pupils and are fully aware of what is expected. The many voluntary helpers are very well organised and their valuable support makes a significant impact on pupils' learning throughout the school.

The school is led and managed well by the headteacher and the governing body and this is promoting the good standards achieved by the pupils

13. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's continuing development and has successfully steered it through a very difficult period related to disruption caused by staff leaving and being replaced by teachers on short-term contracts. A strong commitment to pupils' personal development and to raising standards for all is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes to school and the improved results in national tests over recent years. The key issues identified in the previous report have been addressed well. A number of successful initiatives have been introduced and have underpinned the school's success in promoting pupils' social development, notably the Circle of Friends and the introduction of 'peer mediators'. Improved

monitoring and evaluating of pupils' performance through careful analysis of trends and relative strengths and weaknesses in tests has provided the impetus for reviewing provision and teaching methods, for example, in writing.

14. Following the resolving of the recent staffing difficulties, the headteacher has been able to delegate more of the school's management responsibilities to other staff. The newly-appointed deputy headteacher is becoming increasingly involved in monitoring and supporting aspects of the curriculum and is set to play a key role in the school's management. The co-ordinator for science and design and technology has successfully promoted the good standards in these subjects and is having an increasing impact on other aspects such as the school's homework programme.
15. The governing body plays an active and very important role in the school's management and governors have a good overview of the school. They receive detailed and regular reports from the headteacher and subject co-ordinators and, together with the headteacher, have established a secure structure for longer-term planning based on a five-year financial plan provided by the local authority. Budget spending is monitored with great care and the small budget deficit has been dealt with appropriately. A well organised and highly effective committee structure is in place which monitors aspects of the curriculum, financial management, premises and staffing. Governors observe the work of the school directly through informal observations and several governors help out in classes regularly. They are increasingly holding the school to account, for example, by monitoring pupils' performance, seeking objective evidence of success and considering alternatives before making decisions or agreeing policies. This represents a further improvement on the strengths identified in the previous inspection report.

The school's partnership with parents is very good and parents are actively involved within the school and in their children's education

16. Parents are very supportive of the school. This is reflected in the much larger than usual number of questionnaires returned, the good turnout at the pre-inspection meeting and especially in the very high level of direct parental involvement in the school. An unusually large number of parents, grandparents and other voluntary helpers regularly support activities in lessons in all classes. This is greatly appreciated by the school and is having a significant impact on pupils' learning. Voluntary support is organised effectively with helpers being briefed well and deployed carefully to make best use of their expertise and interest. Good support was observed in many literacy and numeracy sessions, and in science and design and technology lessons. Pupils throughout the school regularly read to adults and this is having a positive impact on reading standards. Other parents and volunteers assist in the school's programme of extra-curricular activities.
17. The quality of routine information for parents is very good; parents greatly appreciate the detailed weekly newsletter. Information is sent out each term regarding the work planned for each class and meetings for parents about the introduction of the literacy and numeracy initiatives have been held.
18. Pupils are encouraged to read and practise spellings at home and this supports their learning well. Homework is being used increasingly to support work in lessons in most classes. A new and well-structured programme for homework has recently been developed and is being piloted in one class. A new homework policy is ready for parental consultation and subsequent implementation.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in information technology are below expectations for the oldest pupils and have not kept pace with national improvements

19. At the time of the previous inspection, standards of achievement in information technology were judged to be good for the under fives and in Key Stage 1 and sound in Key Stage 2. The

level of computer resources and subsequently the provision for the subject has not kept pace with the improvements evident in most schools.

20. While pupils in Key Stage 1 and in the Year 3/4 class demonstrate a satisfactory range of skills and knowledge for their age when using the computer, pupils' levels of achievement in Year 6 are below expectations. Many in this year group have a suitable range of basic editing skills and can use a word processor to present written work at a simple level but very few show suitable awareness of how to combine different forms of information such as text and pictures. They describe how they use a CD-ROM based programme to develop a story book, showing some elements of computer modelling skills. They have a good understanding of how to communicate using E-mail. Pupils have little knowledge of computer databases and few have used software to handle numerical data or create graphs. They recall some basic elements of computer control from work in previous years with programmable robots but their understanding of this aspect and of how computers can be used to measure and record physical data is weak.
21. Teaching in the lessons observed was sound. Activities are introduced to groups, typically using the one computer available in the class, and opportunities are then provided for groups in turn to practise what they have been shown. Suitable short tasks are planned, with a clear focus on specific skills. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn how to select a colour and fill a pre-prepared on-screen outline; pupils in Year 3/4 practise loading a 'clip-art' picture into a word processor and then change its size and position ready for adding text at a later date. In other activities, pupils use the computer to write their research findings or type brief comments about what they have found out in religious education; these activities consolidate some literacy skills but lack a clear focus in terms of information technology development. There is no clear whole-school rationale for making the best use of the hardware available and machines are left unused for long periods in most classes.
22. The newly appointed co-ordinator is keen and provides an appropriate role model in her own classroom but some other members of staff lack confidence and expertise in planning and integrating computer-based activities into their daily lessons. Good use is made of some of the latest technology such as E-mail and digital cameras to enable groups of pupils in Year 5 to swap information and pictures with a partner school in the Isle of Wight.
23. The number of working computers available for pupils to use is below average for the size of school and many of these are older machines with different operating systems. This is severely restricting the progress pupils are making. The school is aware of the weaknesses in its provision and is actively seeking ways of addressing this issue. It has obtained nine refurbished computers and is currently preparing these for use across the school; one is already in use. These purchases represent good value and are an important step forward but are not enough to provide the level of resources needed to raise standards. Classrooms are cramped, with little room to set up individual computer stations and the school has *no* spare space to group computers together to allow the teaching of larger groups of pupils. The headteacher has only very recently received details of the level of support due under the national funding initiative. An action plan for the subject has recently been implemented but greater urgency is needed in order to improve provision and raise standards.

Standards of pupils' writing are broadly average but lag behind their good skills and understanding in reading

24. The school gives a high priority to literacy. Pupils make good progress in reading and achieve high standards. They have frequent opportunities to write and examples were seen of imaginative, well structured work, especially in Key Stage 2. This included sensitively written poetry on the theme of 'Candles' and accounts of what pupils would put into a 'Magic Box'. Good practice was also seen in factual descriptions of research about the Isle of Wight and letters about Roman times. Pupils' progress in writing is sound but not as rapid as their reading progress. The school has identified that writing skills are not developed as well as reading and this was confirmed during the inspection. The disparity was reflected in recent results in national tests in Key Stage 1 and by the standards achieved by pupils who are currently in Year 2. While the results of pupils in Year 6 in 1999 were higher than average, the number of

pupils in Year 6 this year who are likely to achieve the higher Level 5 in the writing tests is low. Pupils do not easily write at length and many of the oldest do not consistently use an even, joined style of handwriting. Pupils in Year 6 are introduced to a wide range of writing conventions such as advanced punctuation and irregular spellings and use these at the level expected for their age but do not yet use them independently at a level high enough to exceed Level 4. Their writing about literary topics is of good quality but they appear less confident overall when dealing with factual accounts. The newly-appointed co-ordinator has an appropriate vision for the development of writing. Teachers are increasingly providing activities for pupils to explore how they write about factual topics, for example by promoting the use of non-fiction books, and are ensuring that the timetable includes opportunities for extended writing.

Classrooms are poorly ventilated, with the result that, even in relatively cold weather, there is a stuffy atmosphere and pupils become hot and lose concentration

25. Although the building is new and impressive and provides a generally good learning environment, most classrooms lack an effective system for ventilation. It was observed in a significant number of lessons that, even during the cold weather prevalent during the inspection, the rooms quickly became airless. Pupils subsequently became hot and listless with many losing concentration. This adversely affected the quality of learning in these lessons. Discussions with pupils, teachers and parents indicate that conditions are far worse during hot weather.
26. While each classroom has a skylight window, only one has a manageable and effective opening and closing system. Cooling fans have been bought for each classroom but these are intrusive and have a limited effect. For security reasons, the outside doors are kept closed during the day and this restricts the flow of air through the building. There is no effective system of blinds to shield the west facing rooms from direct sunlight. The balcony areas are of limited use as teaching areas because they are often too cold or too hot and there are no partitions, resulting in disturbance to neighbouring classes.
27. The school has been aware of the problem for some time and has gathered data about temperatures in classrooms to support its concerns. It needs to continue and strengthen its efforts to seek a solution to this problem.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

28. The school has many strengths. In order to build on these and improve the overall quality of provision and raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- Raise standards in information technology by:
 - urgently seeking ways of improving access to good quality computer resources throughout the school and establishing a clear and effective rationale for making the best possible use of the existing resources and those currently being prepared for use;
 - improving teachers' own skills and confidence in integrating information technology activities within class lessons;
 - implementing a longer-term strategy for future resource improvement and its deployment.

 - Improve writing standards further by:
 - continuing to implement the plans identified by the co-ordinator;
 - ensuring that pupils of all ages receive sufficient time to practise extended writing;
 - developing the use of factual topics in writing;
 - ensuring that pupils of all ages develop and use an even and efficient style of handwriting;
 - monitoring the teaching of writing and pupils' progress.

 - Continue to seek ways to solve the problem of poor ventilation in classrooms and thus improve the working environment.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	29	38	33	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	174
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.4

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	8	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	12
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	19	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (82)	82 (78)	86 (73)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	11
	Girls	7	7	8
	Total	19	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (86)	86 (95)	86 (88)
	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	14	11	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	12
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	20	19	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (88)	76 (82)	92 (94)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	12
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	20	19	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (88)	76 (88)	92 (94)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	147
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.96
Average class size	24.86

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
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.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9
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	£
Total income*	313,771
Total expenditure*	319,299
Expenditure per pupil*	1,912
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,544
Balance carried forward to next year	-1,934

(* includes the Language Centre)

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	177
Number of questionnaires returned	115

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	35	3	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	45	44	9	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	49	6	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	41	14	8	2
The teaching is good.	54	42	1	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	43	17	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	30	4	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	38	3	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	40	46	10	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	46	42	5	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	48	3	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	46	11	4	5

Other issues raised by parents

Most parental concerns relate to the recent disruption caused by the considerable turnover of teaching staff, which has affected one year group in particular. The school has tried hard to minimise the impact of these disruptions and the staffing position is now more stable.