

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FARNHAM COMMON JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Farnham Common, Buckinghamshire

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110265

Headteacher: Mr M Paice

Reporting inspector: Mr J Heap  
18824

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2000

Inspection number: 187188

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sherbourne Walk Farnham Common Bucks
Postcode:	SL2 3TZ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr B Letchford
Date of previous inspection:	February 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Number of pupils on roll	266 (broadly average)
Pupils with English as an additional language	6 (above average)
Pupils entitled to free school meals	17 (below average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	39
Average class size	29.6

The school serves pupils aged 7-11 years from a diverse range of social backgrounds, most of whom live in Farnham Common, which is near to Slough. There are 135 boys and 131 girls on roll. The size of the school roll has increased since the last inspection and the nature of the school has changed in that time, because in 1996 the school catered for pupils in the middle school range of 8-12 years. The majority of the pupils are white, and a small minority come from several ethnic heritages. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need and this is below the average for similar schools. A significant number of pupils come from high social class homes, while the rest of the children come from a range of social settings: local authority estates to private housing. The levels of attainment of the seven year olds when they start school are above average. Each of the nine classes is organised to cater for a single age-group.

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

This is a good school with some very good features. It has improved standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science since the last inspection and they are being maintained. Skills in literacy and numeracy are being used well in other subjects; particularly literacy skills in history and religious education. However, this is not true in information technology, which is underused across the curriculum. Pupils enter the school at the above average level; they are provided with good teaching which leads to well above average attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. The leadership and management are effective and seeking further improvement. The costs of running the school are low, consequently the school provides very good value for money.

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

- By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average.
- Overall, teaching is good with about 14 per cent of lessons observed being very good. This enables pupils to learn well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they are supported by very well developed social skills and a strong moral code.
- Pupils' behaviour, personal development and relationships are very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. The school promotes moral and social development very well.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is extensive.
- Leadership and management are effective. The governing body is supportive and has a lot of relevant expertise to call upon.

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

- Attainment in information technology is below average and there is insufficient use of information technology skills and resources across the curriculum.
- Class groups in Year 3 are large and available accommodation and financial resources are not fully utilised.
- Parents do not receive sufficient information about the content and purpose of the curriculum.

*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 February 1996. At that time it was a middle school and described as being very good. Overall, the school has made good improvement in important areas of its work, despite the significant changes to the nature of the school that have required a reappraisal of some working practices, particularly with the introduction of Year 3 pupils. The standards in English, mathematics and science have shown a good improvement, most particularly in the higher than expected Level 5 results in mathematics. The school's organisation has been successfully adjusted to include the use of small 'booster' groups to improve further the attainment of both the higher and lower attaining groups. The quality of teaching has improved: over half of the lessons were good, or very good in the 1996 inspection, whereas three-quarters of teaching is good, or very good this time. In relation to the key issues from the last inspection; the computer room and the range and quality of computers and software have been improved greatly. Time for music has been increased to an adequate level and the role of the specialist has also been increased; the systems to monitor attainment and cost-effectiveness are now more rigorous and tightly focussed; the role of coordinators has improved, most particularly in the monitoring and support given to other staff; the headteacher and senior staff have gone further than the key issues identified in the last report and have appropriately analysed far more of the work of the school. For example, there was no formal procedure for monitoring the equal opportunities policy. As a good response to the need to monitor the school's performance, test results are now comprehensively analysed. This process includes study of the progress of groups which differ by age, gender, ethnicity and first language. The equal opportunities policy is monitored at staff meetings. Targets for improvement are challenging and open to adjustment when assessment procedures provide evidence of faster progress. The school remains appropriately responsive. Insufficient progress has been made in maintaining the previously average levels of attainment in information technology, most particularly in its use across the curriculum. However, the improvements in information technology resources mean that the school is now well placed to achieve the appropriate improvements in standards. The school has not kept pace with the need and expectations of parents to know what their child is doing, and how they can assist them in their learning.

## 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	B
mathematics	B	A	A	A
science	B	A	A	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

By the end of Key Stage 2, results are well above the average in English, mathematics and science when compared to all schools nationally. In comparison to similar schools, the results in mathematics are well above average, above average in English and average in science. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher than expected Level 5 is well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics (in line with the top five per cent of schools). Over the last four years, the results have been well above the national average. The targets set are challenging and the school has set out to push up the attainment of higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics to Level 6. Standards are satisfyingly high.

The standards of work seen during the inspection are well above average in English mathematics and science by the end of the key stage. Standards in information technology are below average, although pupils use word processing to an acceptable standard. Insufficient opportunities are provided for data analysis in mathematics. There is too little evidence of control or monitoring work in science. Pupils are developing useful graphics skills. In religious education, standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school; invariably they are keen and eager. They have very good attitudes to school and the work they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and outside is very good. On very rare occasions the level of noise can become high.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop very good relationships with each other. Older pupils, in particular, show initiative and are very responsible. Pupils' moral and social development is very good.
Attendance	Good. However, there are a few families who are regularly late for school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	NA	NA	Good

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

The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good. The practice of grouping together pupils of similar levels of attainment is a useful approach to meeting the needs of all of the pupils through highly focussed teaching. It gives a first-rate opportunity to raise standards at both the higher and lower levels of attainment. In fact, on a fortnightly basis, the higher attainers are being targeted as potential Level 6 writers and mathematicians. A significant number has already reached that standard in speaking and listening. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well.

Overall, pupils learn well. Older pupils are developing their skills to a high level in speaking and listening. Writing is boosted by the good work done in subjects like history. Pupils have good opportunities here for writing longer pieces and using a range of literacy skills to find information and use it to develop writing. In Year 3, the size of teaching groups sometimes leads to an over-reliance on prepared worksheets that have a limited challenge for the pupils. This occasionally means that pupils learn less than they should, especially the higher attaining pupils.

Of the lessons seen 100 per cent were satisfactory, or better. In 14.3 per cent the teaching was very good, and in 60.7 per cent it was good.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. Particular strengths are the use of a wide curriculum to develop writing and the use of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. Provision for information technology is not sufficiently broad-based and not all of the elements of the national curriculum are taught, most particularly in its application in other subjects such as science. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Procedures are good. Identification of need is satisfactory. Individual education plans are well written and have targets for development that successfully support achievement.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. The appropriate arrangement is for pupils to spend a block of time with the teacher from Ethnic Minority Achievement Service. There is no one at present that needs the support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The headteacher and staff provide good role models. The school provides very well for pupils' moral and social development. The provision for cultural and spiritual development is good. Overall this is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Overall, the school caters for its pupils well. Monitoring and assessment of individuals are good.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is an effective leader and manager. He is looking all the time for opportunities to improve monitoring and the subsequent analysis of the work of the school. He is ably supported by the recently appointed deputy headteacher and by the special needs co-ordinator.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school has a newly constituted governing body which is making an effective start to its term in office and has a great deal of relevant expertise to call upon. Plans to improve the quality of the school development plan through wider consultation are good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is developing this area of its work well. Since the last inspection, an increasing focus on monitoring has gone further than the demands of the previous report. The school takes plenty of opportunities to compare itself to other schools as benchmarks.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school has successful practices to ensure that it receives value for money in its purchasing. Grants and earmarked funding are appropriately deployed. Attention needs to be paid to the use of all parts of the building and the fullest use of financial resources, particularly in relation to Year 3.

Overall, levels of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The expectations of hard work and achievement.</li><li>• The behaviour in the school.</li><li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li><li>• The progress their children are making.</li><li>• Leadership and management.</li><li>• The approachability of the school.</li><li>• The quality of teaching.</li><li>• The way the school helps their children to become more mature and responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of information which they receive about their children.</li></ul>

The inspectors entirely agree with parents' positive comments. The amount of information about pupils is adequate. Annual reports of pupils' progress are good. However, parents do not receive sufficient information about the content and purpose of the curriculum. Greater detail about the programmes of work sent to parents on a regular basis (termly) would provide parents with even greater opportunities to be more effective in helping their children to learn.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average.**

- 1 By the end of Key Stage 2, the results of the National Curriculum tests in 1999 are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. When these results are compared with schools that have a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, English is above the average, mathematics is well above the average and the science results are in line with the average scores. Overall, results are well above average when compared with similar schools and above average when compared to all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 is well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics, where it is in line with the top five per cent of schools. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. This good picture of pupils' achievements is an improvement on the standards reported at the last inspection, particularly in mathematics and science.
- 2 Scrutiny of pupils' work and observation of lessons confirm that the standards are being maintained in English, mathematics and science. This is despite the lowering of targets for Year 6 this year. The school's assessments and subsequent analysis suggest that fewer pupils than usual are expected to achieve Level 4. It is to the school's credit that the quality and regularity of assessment have meant that the targets have been increased since they were originally set.
- 3 The above average standards seen in lessons and pupils' books are due to good teaching, pupils' good attitudes to learning, high expectations and effective management. For example, the practice of forming sets of pupils with similar levels of attainment means that pupils are challenged in their thinking and learning at the level which is appropriate to them. In English, this is very apparent in the quality of speaking and listening, in which high attainers in Year 6 are reaching the much higher than expected Level 6. Higher attaining pupils studying the poem, 'Flannan Isle', talked and listened with high confidence; used Standard English well, and maintained an active part in the discussion. Writing standards are not as high, but they are improving. This is due in no small measure to the use of pupils' literacy skills in subjects such as history. Standards in reading are generally high, with the majority of pupils exhibiting good levels of accuracy, fluency and a clear understanding of the books they read.
- 4 Furthermore, the school rightly uses the extra financial resources for Year 6 'booster' groups to enhance the learning of both higher and lower attainers. This is done on a rota basis, with higher attainers receiving extra support one week and lower attainers the following week. Consequently, in mathematics, the number of pupils who are on course to achieve the higher than expected Level 5 is well above average in all aspects.
- 5 Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving the expected Level 4 in science. These good standards are supported by the school's emphasis on pupils predicting, experimenting, drawing sensible conclusions and developing specific knowledge, such as the parts of a plant. Again, the use of literacy and numeracy skills is very important in supporting well above average achievement in science; for example, the use of pupils' own language to describe experiments and the use of line graphs to illustrate results.

**Overall, teaching is good, with about 14 per cent of lessons being very good. This enables pupils to learn well.**

- 6 The school underwent a significant change to its profile eighteen months ago when it changed from a middle school (8 to 12 years) to a junior school (7 to 11 years). Although this change appears slight, it has meant that younger pupils now come to the school and there has been a loss of a significant number of more mature pupils. The quality of teaching has been maintained at a consistently good standard overall. It is a credit to the school that all teachers produced some good teaching during the inspection. The majority of those parents who returned a questionnaire are confident that teaching is good and that the provision of homework is about right, and the vast majority feel that each child is expected to work hard. All teachers are hard working and committed.
- 7 Very good lessons were seen in Years 3,4 and 6. The particular strengths of these sessions were the detailed planning, brisk pace and high expectations through questioning. In a Year 6 history lesson, pupils were asked questions that required them to think about, empathise with and explain what life was like for a Victorian servant:
- "Which servant would you rather be and why?"  
"Which part of a servant role would you like most?"
- 8 This led to good learning and above average attainment, most particularly in their descriptions of significant characteristics of the period and their confidence in producing work drawn from several sources. Pupils' literacy and oracy skills were used to great effect, and many have a pleasing line in self-mockery.
- 9 Throughout the school, classes are managed well and lessons have clear objectives. These are returned to at the end of the lesson, when a check is made on the quality of learning. A Year 5 literacy lesson showed these attributes well: pupils studying antonyms and synonyms were intrigued by the use of prefixes and suffixes to form them. The teacher was able to draw out pupils' extensive knowledge of the words and focus their learning because she knew what she wanted to achieve. The pupils were challenged by the fact that more than one attribute was being explored. The pupils' excitement led to a lot of noise, but this was well controlled.
- 10 Pupils who experience difficulties in learning and have special educational needs are taught well. Particular strengths include: the 'booster' groups, the use of assessment and the support provided by learning support assistants. Individual education plans have succinct targets that promote achievement and provide lots of guidance on giving support, using resources and recognising outcomes. The additional literacy support is satisfactory.

**Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they are supported by the very well developed social skills and a strong moral code.**

- 11 The vast majority of parents who returned questionnaires and attended the meeting with inspectors say that their children like coming to school. Several made comments about the interest in learning that their children show at home. Nine out of ten parents believe that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible.

- 12 Pupils are very interested in the activities on offer and are highly motivated learners. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson, pupils identifying plants in the extensive grounds are very keen, enthusiastic and confident about the activity. They look closely at the plant, discuss its attributes and match it to a picture accurately. Particularly impressive is the way that the more confident and knowledgeable give leadership in the discussion. These pupils are tolerant and helpful towards those who do not know as much as they do. Furthermore, all pupils are tolerant and respectful towards natural phenomena and courteous to each other. In a Year 3 science lesson about dental care, the pupils were so involved in the challenging and enjoyable work that they just get on, do not distract others and lose track of time. Throughout the school pupils show a capacity for hard work that is commendable. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, concentrate very well and for long periods.
- 13 Pupils have a very good understanding of the need to co-operate, collaborate and understand the views, values and beliefs of others. Courtesy and mutual respect underpin the very good relationships and add to the rounded individual, of which the high academic standards are also a major part. The majority of pupils are mature in their outlook and this is recognised by the parents as a significant strength of the school. Older pupils run clubs for the youngest pupils and these help them settle into school and begin to enjoy the opportunities beyond the formal curriculum. The house system successfully emphasises belonging. Those pupils fortunate enough to become a captain of house, are expected to do some public speaking, which is a challenge for their character and a very useful life skill. Pupils contribute to charity, including the proceeds of the cookery club, which sells what it makes. The school is clear that pupils need to be prepared for living in a society which is characterised by the diversity of faiths and beliefs.
- 14 Underpinning the very good behaviour of pupils is a comprehensive moral code, which is characterised by a very clear understanding of what is right and wrong. Moral issues are raised in classroom activities, such as discussion, and in assembly. For example, the head teacher talked to pupils about rules and commandments and used references from Islam and both books of the Christian Bible. Particular reference was made to the story of 'The Good Samaritan' and appropriate moral messages were emphasised about racism and the importance of all citizens being responsible for their actions and reactions.

### **Pupils' behaviour, personal development and relationships are very good**

- 15 Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils are courteous and well mannered. In discussion, pupils from all year groups paint a picture of high standards for the majority of time and by the vast majority of pupils. They tell of a small minority of pupils "talking too much" on occasions. In a Year 6 information technology and history lesson, the pupils show very good manners and high standards of behaviour when they work in the new computer room. They thank the teacher at the end of the session. Movement about the school is orderly, most noticeably at assembly times, when they enter and leave the hall in a respectful and quiet manner. Pupils are well-behaved on the playground. They play together well and respect each other's right to space and choice.
- 16 Pupils' personal development and the relationships they build are very good. There are plenty of examples on display and in their books, of their ability to understand, respect and tolerate the values beliefs and feelings of others. In Year 5, a pupil began his work on the death of Charles I:

"This has been a shocking day....."

A pupil imagining the misery felt by oppressed people wrote:

I am lost in an unknown place to me,  
My home I cannot see.  
These people, monsters, killers  
Have stolen all my freedom.  
Six men watch as I struggle  
With boulders  
I am worried not for me  
But my family  
No religion for me.

- 17 Equally impressive is the way that pupils rallied to support and sympathise with pupils who had recently lost close family members.

**The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. The school promotes moral and social development very well.**

- 18 Spiritual development is good and this is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. Acts of collective worship meet legal requirements, are well prepared and are led by senior staff and visitors, such as local clergy. These events offer plenty of opportunities for reflection and give pupils the chance to consider a wide range of themes. For example, in an assembly led by the head teacher, rules and commandments were discussed and related to both Christian and Islamic beliefs. The school also takes the opportunity to explore recent events in the community to emphasise appropriate values. One assembly, led by a member of the local clergy, introduced prayers for the pupils' families who had recently been bereaved. Further opportunities are explored in lesson times in subjects such as religious education and science.

- 19 The provision for cultural development is good. Teachers develop pupils' knowledge of their local culture through studies in history, geography, religious education and science. For example, by visiting local places of worship and by studying local industry in Victorian times. Pupils sense of identity is also developed by a variety of activities, including theatre visits and country dancing in summer. Knowledge and understanding of the wider culture is fostered by a suitably wide and diverse range of literature and in aspects of geography and religious education. For instance, areas of India and Europe are studied and learning about several faiths are included in the programme of work for religious education. Particularly important is the use made of comparisons between the views of one faith and another. This appeared well in pupils' views on creation and the responses to questions such as:

“ Who, or what, made the sky? “

“ How do we know that something is natural? “

- 20 The school very successfully promotes pupils' moral development. Staff provide pupils with good examples in terms of behaviour and attitudes. Pupils are expected to respect property and the talk to distinguish clearly between right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to be honest and kind in their dealings with other pupils. For example, in a Year 5 discussion session about bullying, the teacher supports and encourages pupils to articulate their experiences and any fears that they may have. These ideas are further developed into plans for short role-plays. Opportunities like these clearly help pupils who are very occasionally aggressive to recognise the error of their ways. Pupils are introduced to moral issues in assemblies and in personal, health and social education lessons. This programme is being properly reviewed in line with the changes in pupils' ages in the school. Appropriate levels of praise and rewards are employed to foster good behaviour and a positive ethos.

- 21 Provision for social development is very good. The personal and social education programme, together with the extensive range of extra curricular activities and educational visits, make very valuable contributions. There are many opportunities for all the pupils to exercise personal responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils play key roles in preparing for music and physical education lessons and run clubs at lunchtime for younger pupils. The boys often referee girls football matches. The provision of a house system gives some pupils useful experience in speech making and leadership. Teachers ensure that classrooms have monitors and that the duties are shared widely.

**The range of extra-curricular activities is extensive.**

- 22 Pupils' enthusiasm and commitment to the school are fostered by the many and varied opportunities the taught programme provides. This is also heightened by the quality of teaching. Their appetite and capacity for taking responsibility and relating well to each other and adults are further promoted by the broader curriculum and activities outside the classroom. Central to this is the breadth of the extra-curricular opportunities.
- 23 Discussion with pupils in all years highlights their appreciation for all the clubs and activities the school provides, both at lunchtime and after school. During the inspection, many staff were fully involved in lunchtime activities, which range from sport to music and chess. Pupils in Year 6 run clubs for those in Year 3. The young pupils say that this is "the best thing about the school". Parents are also highly appreciative of the staff's commitment in providing such a wide range of activities.
- 24 The curriculum is extended and enriched very well by visits and visitors. They support a range of subjects, for example history, geography, English and religious education. Museum visits support pupils' interests in a range of subjects, for instance reading at the Roald Dahl Museum. The older pupils studied the Victorians at the Slough Museum. Pupils visit the theatre and theatre groups come into school. Older pupils benefit from a residential visit to Devon.

**Leadership and management are effective. The governing body is supportive and has a lot of relevant expertise to call upon.**

- 25 The headteacher provides effective leadership and management. He is an open and honest individual who has a keen interest in all that is going on in the school. He provides a good example in his classroom work. Although the school received a highly supportive report last time, there has been no complacency. In fact, the school has continued to develop, beyond the requirements of the last set of key issues. Particularly strong have been the developments in the monitoring of teaching and standards. He is aware of the development needed for further improvements.
- 26 The school has undergone a significant change in the last two years in adjusting from a middle school to a junior school. The changes in approach have not been enormous, but they have been dealt with in a professional and positive manner. It is to the school's credit that there are very few concerns amongst the parents and even fewer amongst the pupils.

- 27 The headteacher is well supported by colleagues holding management responsibilities, including the newly appointed deputy headteacher, and by the governing body. The deputy headteacher has been at the school for a number of years, and was actually carrying out many of her management duties successfully before being made deputy headteacher. She sets a good example in the classroom. She has been deployed effectively as a monitor of teaching, and her own non-teaching time is being increased so that she can release colleagues to monitor teaching in the subjects they coordinate. The governing body is newly constituted and is making an effective start to its period in office. This group of people bring a great deal of interest and expertise to the school, not the least, in terms of management and the law. The chair of governors is an energetic and questioning retired manager, who has provided tangible assistance in the development of resources for information technology. Moreover, he has a clear vision of how to improve the quality of development planning through more detailed consultation. The governing body has trust in the headteacher and deputy headteacher, but they expect them to be fully accountable. To this end, they have set out appropriate performance criteria against which to judge their work.
- 28 Overall, the school makes satisfactory use of the finances it receives. Spending relates properly to identified targets, but there is a need, presently, to evaluate the effect of relatively large groups in Year 3 on the rate of pupils' progress. The school's approach to evaluating the management and use of resources is generally good. For example, when *comparing* the school's financial profile with schools in similar settings, the governors and management of the school realised that the provision of classroom assistants was low. This led to an increase in provision, to give more support for lower attainers and raise standards of attainment. The school responds well to the *challenges* imposed from outside: for example, the change in the nature of the school. The school consults the parents on important matters such as the provision of lunches, where it finally came to a conclusion which flew in the face of local education authority practice. Further areas for consultation with parents include homework, uniform and the home/school agreement. Nevertheless, it is surprising that the school did not hold meetings to explain the school's approach to the literacy and numeracy strategies. *Competitive* principles are used widely. For example, the governors invite tenders from several tradesmen when changes in the premises are envisaged and they have cancelled a contract when it was judged that the school was not receiving value for money.



## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

### **Attainment in information technology is below average and there is insufficient use of information technology skills and resources across the curriculum.**

- 29 Overall, the standards in information technology are below average. By the end of Year 6, pupils have good "mouse skills", load and save their own work and competently find programs that are stored in the computer's memory. An increasing amount of word-processing work is being done and pupils are producing "newspaper" reports, for instance, about sightings of the Loch Ness monster. In this work, pupils show satisfactory awareness of how to lay out text and pictures. Much of this work and the development of skills is done for homework. There is also an increase in the amount of control technology being developed, through the use of the floor turtle and programs which explore the properties of angles. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to be involved in data handling, control, monitoring and modelling. For example, the bringing together, organising and reorganising of text, tables, images and sounds; or using simulations and models to answer "What if ...?" questions. Although teachers are developing their knowledge and understanding of the subject, they are unsure of the opportunities available for pupils to review their work and its effectiveness. Furthermore, there is little evidence of the knowledge, skills and understanding of information technology being developed throughout the curriculum by supporting learning in subjects like science and mathematics.
- 30 At the time of the last inspection, the main areas for development were:
- to continue the development of the computer room;
  - to update classroom machines and ensure provision of efficient printers;
  - to provide in-house training using the coordinator.
- 31 The school has made good improvements in all of these aspects; most particularly the development of the computer room and the acquisition of new resources. Although staff have little expertise, they are making a particularly strong effort to improve their skills, often in their own time.
- 32 The school's intention to improve the quality of work and raise attainment is supported by governors and parents. For example, the chair of governors has been very helpful in the acquisition of new machinery and in the installation of new programs. The school identifies the development of staff expertise as a matter for further improvement, most particularly when the National Grid for Learning funding becomes available. Finally, the school is rightly advertising for an information technology specialist to fill a vacant position. Parents have provided a great deal of the funding for the new machines and programs.

### **Class groups in Year 3 are relatively large and available accommodation and financial resources are not fully utilised to ease the situation. For example, the dining hall is under-used and there is a significant budget surplus.**

- 33 At the meeting for parents, and in questionnaire responses, a minority of parents raised concerns about the size of class groups in Year 3. The most significant concern is about the size of the higher attaining mathematics group, which has 36 pupils in it.

- 34 Evidence from the inspection is that the quality of teaching in Year 3, varies from very good to satisfactory and that it is good overall. Where teaching is very good, the strengths are the very good planning, the good deployment of learning support assistants and the excellent use of pupils as exemplars. However, the large group of lower attainers makes it difficult for the teacher to deal effectively with all pupils, particularly in correcting their work; consequently some pupils make a lot of errors. In the higher attaining group, the majority of pupils consolidate their knowledge and understanding of multiplication and division, but only a small number are being stretched to higher attainment. In English, there is too great a use of pre-prepared worksheets in one of the classes. Consequently, the opportunities for writing at a greater length are limited. Furthermore, in looking at the use of literacy across the curriculum, it is clear that, again, there is an over-use of worksheets, particularly in history and religious education.
- 35 Parents are justified in being concerned about Year 3, mainly because of the large groups and the fact that some pupils need to be stretched further. In many schools, the main difficulties in these situations are the lack of areas for extra groups to be taught in, and minimal financial resources to employ more staff, at least for a part of the school day. In this school, there are sufficient resources at the school's disposal to improve provision, but these are finite. For example,
- the dining area is redundant for much of the day, and could be used for teaching;
  - there is a substantial budget surplus that ought to be spent on pupils presently in school.

**Parents do not receive sufficient information about the content and purpose of the curriculum.**

- 36 At the meeting for parents, and on the questionnaires returned, a minority of parents raised concerns about the information received about their children. A small number of parents are unhappy about the fact that annual reports are made up from a bank of statements stored on computer and some feel that this makes them impersonal. These reports are judged to be of a good standard, overall. There is good information about attainment, particularly in English and mathematics, and there are helpful targets for future learning. There are, also, useful judgements about the way pupils achieve their targets, for example

“..... has successfully met this years target to improve her handwriting. “

- 37 However, parents are justified in wanting to know more about what their children are learning in school. At present they do not receive sufficient information about the content and purpose of the curriculum. There is now a need to provide clear and regular (termly) information for parents about the programmes of work that would enable them to be even more effective in helping their children to learn. These would include the areas of teaching in subjects and the expected outcomes in pupils' learning. For example, topics being followed in history and geography and ways of using information technology and library to find and collate information.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

38 The school should now:

- \* Improve attainment and skills in all aspects of information technology by:
  - ensuring that all aspects of the information technology National Curriculum are taught
    - maximising the use of available resources;
  - planning opportunities for the use of information technology across the curriculum;
  - increasing the skills, knowledge and expertise of teachers through systematic and thorough training.
  
- \* Reduce the size of groups in the present Year 3 by:
  - making full use of available accommodation;
  - using available financial resources to benefit pupils in the school at present.
  
- \* Enable parents to be even more effective in helping their children to learn by providing more detailed information and guidance about the content and purpose of the curriculum.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14.3	60.7	25	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	NA	266
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	NA	17

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	NA	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	NA	39

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
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	38	31	69

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	34	34
	Girls	28	25	30
	Total	62	59	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (82)	86 (86)	93 (87)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	34	35
	Girls	28	28	30
	Total	62	62	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (86)	90 (86)	94 (89)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

*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	9
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	242
Any other minority ethnic group	12

*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: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.8
Average class size	29.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	

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

Number of pupils per FTE adult	
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	343458
Total expenditure	332421
Expenditure per pupil	1304
Balance brought forward from previous year	27504
Balance carried forward to next year	38541

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	266
Number of questionnaires returned	94

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	44	6	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	56	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	49	11	3	2
The teaching is good.	44	49	3	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	44	21	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	36	10	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	43	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	47	9	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	54	38	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	40	6	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	36	3	0	3

### Other issues raised by parents

The majority of issues raised in the questionnaires have been dealt with in the report. However, one issue that was raised in a written response concerned the items that parents are expected to provide for their children. The list is too long! The headteacher is going to review the situation and contact parents about the matter.