

INSPECTION REPORT

TWYNING SCHOOL

TWYNING

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115547

Headteacher: Mrs Caroline Dray

Reporting inspector: Mr Fred Riches
23235

Dates of inspection: 14-16 February 2000

Inspection number: 188406

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Twyning Green
Twyning
Tewkesbury

Postcode: GL20 8DF

Telephone number: 01684 293577

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Graham Wood

Date of previous inspection: 22 - 25 April 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This community primary school has 119 pupils on roll aged from four to eleven years. There are no pupils from any ethnic minority backgrounds. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds and there is considerable movement in and out of the village. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average overall, but this masks a wide range and varies considerably from year to year. Just 4.2 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. The school has approximately 28 per cent of pupils on its register of special educational needs. This is above average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties and a few have emotional and behavioural needs. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Twyning is a very effective school. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is well supported by the governing body and staff. The quality of teaching and learning is good and standards are high. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science;
- Very good focus on pupils' personal development at Key Stages 1 and 2 results in very good behaviour and attitudes to learning;
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with particular strengths in Years 5 and 6;
- Excellent leadership by the headteacher and very positive, thoughtful support from the governing body;
- Staff, pupils and parents work successfully together to track pupils' progress and set targets for improvement. This has a significant impact on pupils' learning;
- A stimulating curriculum for older pupils.

What could be improved

- The curriculum for children under five;
- Time spent on teaching, learning and applying skills in information technology;
- Cramped accommodation and some old, worn resources;
- Communication through newsletters, prospectus and reports.

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

The school's many strengths far outweigh its weaknesses.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection, in April 1996, found standards, teaching and leadership at Twyning School satisfactory. Since then standards have risen considerably at both key stages in English and mathematics and the quality of teaching is much better. The drive for these improvements stems from the school's high quality leadership. Improvements in monitoring, focused teaching, the provision of greater challenge for higher attainers and in standards of writing have been excellent. The headteacher, staff and governors have addressed these key issues very successfully. There has been steady improvement in information technology, but pupils still spend insufficient time developing and applying their skills in this subject. The school has plans to improve this situation, once it has surmounted current accommodation difficulties. Overall, the school has made very good improvement. It is in a very good position to maintain and build on the high standards and good provision now in place.

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

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

The table shows that the school has sustained well above average results in science over the past three years and improved results in English and mathematics. In 1999, compared with schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. In English and mathematics, standards have risen faster than nationally over the past three years. It is important to note, however, that with small numbers of pupils, results may vary considerably from year to year. The school has set realistic, but challenging targets for end of Key Stage 2 results for the next two years. It is clearly set to meet these. Results of national tests taken at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show standards well above average in reading and mathematics, while the school's performance in writing tests was among the top five per cent in the country. Standards in science were also very high.

Standards seen during the inspection confirm pupils' attainment overall as well above average at the end of both key stages. Standards in speaking and listening are also particularly high, as teachers encourage pupils to participate fully in active listening and discussion during lessons. Standards in art throughout the school and in design and technology and religious education in Years 5 and 6 are also high. Standards in information technology are satisfactory throughout the school, but the school is sure that these can be improved, once additional resources and time are allocated to this subject. Over the past four years, children's attainment on entry to the school has been broadly average. Children make good progress in language and literacy and in mathematics, so that standards at age five are above average in these areas. They are satisfactory in other areas of learning. The results achieved at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 show that pupils are achieving very well and reaching standards beyond what might be expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy their work, concentrate well and are proud to show and explain their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good - both in lessons and during breaks. Occasionally excellent, as in assemblies and some outstanding lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The oldest pupils set an excellent example for younger ones. All pupils show respect for each other's opinions and values.
Attendance	Very good. Well above the national average.

Overall, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are a 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	Satisfactory	Good	Very good

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

Teaching is good in over two thirds of lessons, including a third in which it is very good or excellent. The remaining third is almost always satisfactory. Just one lesson was not. This marks a considerable improvement in teaching quality since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well because teachers have high expectations and share these with them. They learn successfully because teachers choose stimulating and imaginative activities in lessons. They use expressive, thoughtful questioning to involve pupils in active listening and thinking, enabling them to participate fully.

Teaching is satisfactory for children under five, good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Teachers challenge higher attainers particularly well in Years 5 and 6. They meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs well throughout the school by providing very good additional support teaching and assistance.

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. In lessons seen during the inspection the highest quality observed was in English. Two excellent lessons were observed, one developing pupils' speaking and listening skills at Key Stage 1 and one developing writing skills at Key Stage 2. Teachers are implementing the literacy strategy very successfully at both Key Stages 1 and 2. The teaching of numeracy is at least satisfactory and results of tests show it is often better.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum for children under five addresses early literacy and numeracy, but does not offer sufficiently broad coverage of the other four areas of learning. In Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2, the curriculum is broad and balanced. It is especially stimulating in upper Key Stage 2. Information technology is improving, but still needs development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Staff identify pupils' needs appropriately, share planning and reviews of progress with parents and children, and provide high quality teaching and support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Circle times at Key Stage 2 develop understanding and respect for values and beliefs. Assemblies and religious education lessons offer very good opportunities for all pupils. The school offers fewer opportunities for the youngest pupils to make choices and develop social skills.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Procedures for child protection, health and safety are fully in place. Staff know pupils well. Systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress are a major strength.

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and the school provides a good range of lunchtime and after-school activities for older pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. Through her drive, example and enthusiasm, the headteacher has created a team that strives for excellence. Initiatives in assessment and target setting, linked with termly 'profiling' meetings, result in the whole school community having a clear sense of educational direction and a strong ethos.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body gives positive support to the school by offering reflective comment, sharing in well-considered strategic planning and contributing considerable time and expertise in monitoring and decision-making.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. Staff and governors analyse the school's strengths and weaknesses critically. They celebrate the school's successes during annual development planning and set appropriate priorities to make desired improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning and day-to-day administration are of high quality. The school deploys staff well and uses the cramped accommodation and current resources to best advantage. Plans to improve resources for information technology are in hand. Some other equipment, particularly for children under five, is worn and unattractive.

Overall, leadership and management are strong and make a very positive contribution to raising standards. The headteacher and governors ensure that they consider cost-effectiveness carefully in their decisions on all school budget headings.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • Children make good progress and parents are well informed • Teaching is good and the school expects pupils to work hard and do their best • Children behave well; staff are helping them become mature and responsible • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant minority feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons • A small minority feel children do not receive the right amount of work to do at home • A small minority feel the school does not work closely enough with parents

The inspection team agrees fully with the positive views expressed by almost all parents both through questionnaire responses and at the meeting held before the inspection. The majority of parents who feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons have younger children at the school. It is common for primary schools to provide additional activities for Key Stage 2 pupils and the school does provide a good range. The inspection finds that the school has considered carefully the amount of work to be sent home for pupils of all year groups and that this is appropriate. Consultations with parents about children's progress are a major strength of the school and the work of the Parents Teachers and Friends Association is much appreciated by the whole school community. The minority dissatisfaction about the way the school works with parents relates to the sharing of general information. The inspection agrees that the school could improve the layout of its prospectus and governors' report and improve the notice given to parents about events.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science

1 Results of national tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in English, mathematics and science have shown continued improvement during the period since the last inspection.

2 In 1999, compared with both national statistics and those of schools with similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, Twynning's performance was well above average in mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. Pupils' attainment in both reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 was among the top five per cent when compared with similar schools. Nationally, it was well above average in reading and in the top five per cent in writing. At Key Stage 2, the English tests showed standards above the national average and also above those of similar schools. The school met its performance target set for the end of Key Stage 2 in numeracy and exceeded the target set for literacy. It is typical of the school's ethos that this 'above average' attainment in English, although recognised as good, was seen as an area still requiring improvement.

3 Standards seen during the inspection confirm that the high levels of attainment continue in English, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. Results show no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The school's year by year assessments show that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are higher attainers, make good progress at Key Stages 1 and 2. This is as a result of good teaching which is well matched to pupils' learning needs.

4 This short inspection focused particularly on standards in English. The previous inspection found that writing was a weakness at Key Stage 1. The pupils who were at the end of Key Stage 1 for the previous inspection are now at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has been giving particularly close attention to all aspects of literacy following this key issue.

5 Particularly notable at the end of Key Stage 1 are pupils' speaking and listening skills. Though not tested and reported, the skilful way pupils express themselves underpins their work in literacy. This will stand them in good stead as they move through the educational system. The fact that teachers plan for and encourage the development of oracy skills shows the school's recognition of the importance of this aspect of English. During the inspection, one pupil held the class spellbound for a full ten minutes while retelling the tale of Goldilocks, adding her own garnish. The teacher recognised and praised the storyteller's skills. She used them to draw out from all other pupils their understanding of oral traditions and the way tales are told and developed with individual interpretations and additions. In Year 6, pupils also showed extremely well-developed discussion skills as they considered the literary style and techniques of H.G. Wells, while discussing an excerpt from 'War of the Worlds'. After acting as 'literacy detectives', pupils then redrafted and edited their own story drafts, using some of the author's devices, such as 'flashbacks' and the use of a short sentence to create suspense. Pupils valued each other's writings as they discussed these, looking for improved use of connectives and various options in uses of vocabulary and phrasing. When sharing their own writings, they read with dramatic expression, using phrases such as 'we were engulfed in green smoke'...'these superior beings were invincible'... and 'I wasn't sure whether I was solid or not'. The quality of many such samples was of the highest order, with pupils showing lively awareness of audience and reader in their writing styles, one tale ending 'pretty ironic, isn't it?'

Very good focus on pupils' personal development at Key Stages 1 and 2 results in very good behaviour and attitudes to learning

6 The school draws pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. As in all schools, some pupils find it easier to adjust to school routines than others. There is also considerable mobility in the area, with a number of families moving in and out of the village. Pupils have therefore joined the school at various stages of their school life, each needing to adapt and settle quickly into the school's routines.

7 Arrangements for children under five are considered elsewhere in this report. The school was happy with informal support and guidance arrangements from class teachers for pupils at Key Stage 1, but recognised a need to help pupils in Key Stage 2 develop greater self-esteem and mutual regard and care for each other.

8 Staff attended training on positive behaviour reinforcement and on the use of 'Circle Time'. These initiatives have led to the development of a very positive caring ethos. Pupils' writings about the way they value the circle times as an opportunity to voice their views and feelings without fear of being laughed at show their recognition of the value of these weekly sessions. The older pupils' positive attitudes to work stem from the high expectations teachers share with them and from the sense of trust established through such times of sharing as those described. These pupils now set a caring example and tradition for all younger pupils, who learn from them and imitate their approach to work and their patterns of behaviour.

9 Staff offer an effective range of opportunities for these older pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and to feel mature in the context of their small school community. As a result, pupils develop a true sense of citizenship and of their own worth as individuals. They contribute to the community by helping on a rota basis at lunchtimes and in assemblies and through their participation in additional activities organised partly by the staff and partly on pupils' own initiative. One pupil suggested support for the Kosovo Appeal, another for the Blue Peter 'Special Baby Care Unit'. The school readily supported them in these initiatives, which won the support of their classmates and the whole community.

The quality of teaching is good overall, with particular strengths in Years 5 and 6

10 In a high proportion of lessons, pupils make good, very good or excellent progress in their learning and enjoy the activities. This is because the teaching in these lessons is thoroughly planned and prepared, because teachers know their subject matter well and because they present their subject matter in an interesting and often imaginative way. In the best lessons, teachers show their enthusiasm and pupils catch it. In Years 5 and 6, four lessons were observed, one of which was excellent, two very good and one good.

11 One teacher fascinated pupils by providing detailed information about practices in Judaism, developing pupils' awareness of reverence for holy scriptures by relating this to their genuine pride in writings they have created themselves. The quality of the teacher's questioning and the use of precise, subject-related vocabulary challenged pupils to discuss and report using similarly precise words. In a lower Key Stage 2 lesson, both teacher and assistant involved groups in organising experiments to test the power of a range of magnets, to record measurements and draw conclusions. Their succinct explanations of the tasks and calm manner led to all pupils collaborating successfully in conducting their tests and recording their results. Again, in this lesson, staff made good use of precise, subject-related vocabulary, such as 'attract', 'repel' and 'forces', and encouraged pupils to

follow their example.

12 The variation and pace of activities is another strength in teaching, with staff aware of the attention spans of pupils and planning carefully, for the most part, a judicious mix of collaborative and individual work, discussion, practical work and written recording. Though not always a strength in lessons with the youngest children, one good example of a lesson showing this planned variety was in religious education with the four and five-year-olds. The teacher used story-telling, singing, art and writing during a forty-minute look at the story of Zacchaeus. She successfully involved all pupils in good listening, an action song, a sketch of the main image of the story and a few words of description to extend those who could achieve this. Careful planning for pupils with different levels of attainment is another feature of the best teaching. There is particularly good challenge for higher attainers, who enjoy responding to their teachers' expectations. Pupils with special educational needs also learn successfully, as all staff use their individual education plans to ensure well-focused support. Some pupils have lessons in small groups once or twice a week and in these the teacher provides equally stimulating and imaginative teaching. In one mathematics session, three pupils kept running out of fuel as their spaceship travelled through a 100-square set in space. They rapidly developed greater understanding of 'rounding up or down to the nearest ten, when each space station was situated on a number ending in zero.

Excellent leadership by the headteacher and very positive, thoughtful support from the governing body

13 The headteacher fulfils a demanding and pivotal role as a 'teaching head' with outstanding success in this small, but recently expanding school. Both headteacher and chair of governors convey a sense of shared commitment and purposeful resolve to do their best for all pupils at Twynning School. The headteacher has led through example as an excellent teacher and through her clearly shared convictions about the value of careful assessment and target setting. As a result of her drive and enthusiasm, and with the sensitive support of the deputy headteacher, the staff work, plan and analyse together with that same shared purpose. They have a shared educational direction and are putting this into practice. As a result of the headteacher's industrious involvement of governors, the school's monitoring systems have changed from being a weakness at the time of the last inspection to being a current strength. The school's aims and values are fully reflected in its practice and the school's ethos is clearly one of striving for improvement.

14 The school improvement plan celebrates the strengths recognised ('the good things this school is already doing in these areas'), before setting clear priorities for the current year. This recognition shows the high regard governors have for the staff and sets plans for improvement within a positive and supportive context, building on strengths, rather than focusing purely on weaknesses. It is through such reflective attention to detail that the governors show their sensitivity and support. Many contribute considerable time and expertise to their work for the school. The governing body and staff, with valued support from the local education authority, have ensured that all key issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been addressed successfully. The school has completed tasks in most areas and is working to a well-planned time scale on other, longer-term issues, such as the development of information technology and the monitoring of teaching.

15 The excellent working relationships between the staff and governing body have led to very positive use of target setting for staff as well as pupils. The governors set clear performance targets for the headteacher during the past year and these have been met. A further set of targets drawn up for the current year relate closely to the main priorities in the

school's improvement plan. The role of the headteacher is therefore fully focused on the recognised and agreed priorities of the school.

Staff, pupils and parents work successfully together to track pupils' progress and set targets for improvement and this has a significant impact on pupils' learning;

16 This area constitutes the major improvement in the school's provision since the last inspection. The previous inspection highlighted monitoring procedures as a key issue to be addressed. One aspect of these procedures is the monitoring of standards and it is this area which is now extremely effective. The headteacher has spearheaded the action to address this previous weakness and has received the full support of all staff and governors. The governing body noted the key nature of the target setting processes, which arose from this work, and allocated a specific monitoring role to one governor, who has acted as a critical friend throughout the developments and assists the headteacher in reporting progress to the full governing body. The school's monitoring of standards and pupils' progress is now excellent. Governors have a clear picture of each year group's standards and targets, provided by the headteacher. Teachers have a clear picture of each individual pupil in their class and ensure that every child has clear targets for improvement. Parents know how their children are getting on, because teachers share with them at termly 'profiling meetings' a review of children's progress towards the current term's targets and the setting of the next term's targets.

17 The school began by analysing results of national tests. The initial focus was on writing, as analyses had showed reading scores almost all higher than writing. By looking at marks achieved for grammar, style, and for the purpose and organisation of writing, staff were able to pinpoint each pupil's strengths and weaknesses within writing and note any patterns within year groups or differences in attainment by gender. The first set of analyses led to the staff putting greater emphasis on developing pupils' skills at organising their writing to meet its purpose. It is apparent from stories, poems, persuasive letter writing, reports and accounts described elsewhere in this report that many pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have developed expressive skills of very high quality through this focus.

18 The headteacher then looked at pupils' attainment in reading and spelling, comparing test scores against pupils' scores in verbal reasoning tests. Again reading was found to be higher. This led to action on spelling to address the comparative weakness. Teachers at Key Stage 1 were already using imaginative approaches to the teaching of spelling, using the concept of turning enemies into friends, for example. A set of words children could not spell were classified as 'enemies' and became 'friends' once known. Staff have put further structured approaches in place to ensure regular work on improving spelling standards, particularly involving parental support.

19 The school piloted the literacy hour a year early, not as part of the national pilot, but from a desire to use the new materials as soon as possible to drive up standards. The school is also using optional national standardised tests in English and mathematics for pupils at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. By analysing the results of these tests and breaking down the requirements in reading, writing and mathematics for each level of the National Curriculum, each teacher has a more assured assessment of each pupil's attainment. Staff relate these assessments to National Curriculum levels and work out what pupils need to do in order to begin to acquire the skills, concepts and knowledge required for the next level. By looking at the results of each year group and weighing the potential of each pupil to improve, each teacher then agrees with the headteacher targets for each year group for the end of the coming academic year. The headteacher shares these year group targets with the governing body. Not only is the school meeting the government's requirements to set percentage targets for cohorts of pupils by the end of Year 6, but it is setting targets for every year group throughout the school. For younger pupils, where no national tests are available, the school uses the baseline test information and other reading, writing and

mathematics assessments to gauge pupils' current attainment and predict their progress.

20 As a result of the measures described, the school now has a clear record of every pupil's current attainment and projected level of attainment by the end of the year. Class teachers review this picture together with the headteacher midway through the year and at the end of each year. This ensures that new targets are set for pupils who are responding particularly well and that additional support is given to those not reaching the expected targets.

21 The final vital element in the effectiveness of the school's assessment and monitoring strategy is the sharing of the process and of individual target setting with pupils and parents. As the headteacher puts it: 'Children need to know what they have to do and how to get there'. All pupils know their targets and have a copy of these. Teachers share the targets with pupils and their parents at termly 'profiling meetings'. Pupils and parents share with teachers the task of analysing where they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Through the experience of sharing such information during profiling meetings over the last two years, staff have increased their confidence in being very open with parents about their children's progress. The school is now involving parents and pupils fully in the process of tracking and checking progress. This has been a brave step and has required a step of faith on the part of the staff, as the risks of being held accountable for failure to meet targets are clear to see. The step has been rewarded and there is now a high level of trust between parents and teachers as a result of their willingness to share this kind of accurate assessment information. Pupils enjoy knowing where they are and what they have to do to improve. Parents are pleased that they have sufficient information to help their children move on. Teachers are using the full range of assessment information available to them effectively to set challenging targets for pupils of all levels of attainment and to review their own practice. The headteacher and governing body have all the information required to check the success of the school in meeting the needs of all pupils.

A stimulating curriculum for older pupils.

22 The high quality of teaching often observed in lessons at Key Stage 2 stems largely from teachers' choice of interesting and relevant subject matter and their ability to engage pupils' fascination in learning. The curriculum planned for the oldest pupils in particular contains a wide range of stimulating pursuits.

23 Despite the limitations of the site, the school ensures that many pupils achieve high standards in physical education. In swimming, they challenge pupils to improve their style and speed during weekly visits to the local borough pool. A school team's participation in a sponsored charity swim matched the school's previous record number of lengths in the time set. The school also ensures that pupils compete against other schools in football, rounders, cricket and athletics. A team of cross-country runners received warm congratulations in assembly after a run in bitterly cold weather the previous week.

24 To bring geography and history alive, pupils study the local village, making first-hand observations and using secondary sources to recognise and note changes in the locality. They link these studies with their work as artists, using pencils with deft skill to show varying textures in the materials as they represent the buildings around the village green. Pupils use their sketches and their knowledge of textures to choose materials for printing and, in this context, to learn printing techniques.

25 They consider local issues, including the needs of their school for improved accommodation. The teachers apply the curriculum imaginatively and draw pupils into full

participation in learning through their own enthusiasm for the subjects. Samples of letters displayed show how an element of the literacy curriculum called 'persuasive writing' can be transformed from a dull exercise in a book to a genuine activity with a real purpose and a real audience, as pupils use powerful language to evoke understanding, sympathy and action. Through this genuine pursuit they learn writing techniques, using an opening statement and expressing points of view clearly. Rather than requiring pupils to complete exercises from a book, teachers plan for them to write a play. Not content with this level of precision, they ask pupils to focus on the different requirements of preparing a script for a radio play and a film. Never dull, the literacy hour also offers pupils the opportunity to turn a smuggler's song from dialect into a Standard English version. Pupils are encouraged to enter poems for a 'Poetry in Print' competition; some have been entered and published.

26 As a result of the equally imaginative mathematics teaching, involving spaceships and space stations rather than merely hundred squares when learning to round figures to the nearest ten, pupils enjoy mathematics. A few participate in the national 'Maths Challenge', win certificates and achieve high levels. They apply their mathematical skills when predicting and recording in science and during their visits to the information technology suite at the local secondary school.

27 Pupils' high standards in science and design and technology also stem from their fascination with active experimentation and investigation alongside their designing and making activities. Their books show clear evidence of regular reporting of scientific enquiry, as they record their hypotheses, test these, note their findings, often using diagrams and tables, and draw their conclusions. In these subjects, the teachers have carefully planned links with literacy and always ensure precise use of subject-specific language. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are currently designing and making cam toys, using a camshaft, cam follower, plywood and dowel. They have previously tested whether the mass carried by a buggy affects the distance it travels and recorded their findings, after ensuring their test was fair.

28 While the curriculum focuses on developing skills, concepts and knowledge, teachers' planning also shows their knowledge of the importance of including provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The use of circle times is an excellent example of this. It is not a part of the National Curriculum. Such an activity could be squeezed out by the demands of all the subjects. The school has recognised the need for focus on the ethos and atmosphere of the community, on pupils' need to develop self-esteem and their need to develop mutual understanding and respect for the different values held by different people and groups. 'It's a time for putting forward your point of view without being laughed at', wrote one. The fascinating detail about other religions, use of artefacts and displays, the organisation of visits to places of worship and visitors to talk about their beliefs all help pupils in their learning **about** and **from** religions. Assemblies offer another opportunity to develop pupils' personal and social education and both of those observed succeeded in creating an atmosphere of understanding and care. One of the highlights of the curriculum for many pupils is the residential visit, during which the school offers excellent opportunities for pupils to apply and develop further their learning skills and their life skills.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The curriculum for children under five

29 The baseline assessments over the past four years show that when children start school they have a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding. Overall the assessments carried out by staff show broadly average attainment on entry to the school. By the time children reach the age of five, standards in language and literacy and in mathematics are above average. As a result of the teaching, curriculum provision, liaison with the local playgroup, profiling meetings with parents and simple target setting procedures, children are making good progress in these two areas of learning.

30 There are also examples of interesting creative development, with children's drawings, paintings and puppet models displayed around the classroom. During the inspection, both the learning support worker and class teacher involved children under five in singing and performing action songs during lessons in literacy and religious education. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through a planned variety of project activities. The inspection found less focus on physical development and on personal and social development.

31 The school is eager to develop a curriculum which more clearly addresses all the learning needs of the youngest children in the school. The headteacher, reception teacher and governing body are working together to look at ways of developing a more appropriate and rounded early years curriculum.

32 The challenge has been exacerbated by a change in class organisation. The expanding numbers in the school have coincided with the national reduction of class sizes at Key Stage 1. The governors have addressed this situation thoughtfully and appropriately by organising two classes of approximately equal size for the children between the ages of four and seven, with the younger children in one class and the older in the other. Previously, children in the reception year formed a comparatively small separate teaching group, with pupils in Years 1 and 2 together in a larger teaching group for core subjects.

33 Two teachers now plan carefully and successfully together to ensure that all pupils in Year 1 have equal opportunities and equal entitlement to all subjects in the National Curriculum. In some lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy, children move classrooms to form small sets. At the same time, the governors have made some provision for classroom assistance within the early years class, to give added focus to work with the youngest children.

34 The curriculum planning systems used by the school, including those for the reception class, address the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is partly appropriate for higher attainers, whose personal and social development is also good, but it is not fully appropriate for most children just aged four. The school has already involved the local early years inspector in discussing ways of developing a more varied curriculum. During the inspection, it was apparent that one area for development is that of choice. Currently, children are dependent on the teacher or assistant to know what to do next. It is important that they learn to follow instructions and settle to tasks organised by adults, but it is also important for them to learn to use resources and organise themselves, to solve problems and make choices. These elements of education were less apparent in planning and in practice.

35 The inspection found that these very young children spend a comparatively large proportion of the day in sedentary tasks, including a high proportion listening to an adult. There is currently insufficient structured opportunity for children to undertake more active and participative pursuits and to learn through their conversation with adults and with each other alongside these.

36 Overall, while standards achieved show that most of the youngest children are benefiting from some aspects of the curriculum provided, there is not enough focus in planning on the importance of variety in teaching and learning styles. As a result, children are not receiving a sufficiently rounded education. The school's early years curriculum looks too much at what children should be achieving by the time they are seven. It does not look closely enough at the six areas of learning in which children need to be involved at the age of four, in order to create a more balanced curriculum.

Time spent on teaching, learning and applying skills in information technology

37 Currently the school has a variety of computers of different ages. The school has organised its current software to match the machines available and has set up a limited number of resources for each class. With pupils in three different buildings, it is not possible to send groups from one class regularly to use computers elsewhere. As a result, pupils currently have insufficient access to up-to-date computers and programs. Many supplement the skills they learn at school by using computers at home. Many bring advanced skills from experiences gained at home, which they apply during their use of computers in school.

38 The school makes particularly effective use of a link with the local secondary school. Staff from the school support older pupils from Twynning by working together with them and their teacher in the computer suite at the secondary school. The experience gained from these visits has led the headteacher and governors to plan for the rapid improvement of resources as soon as planned building developments are completed. Pupils explain their work on spreadsheets with real pride. The headteacher knows that they gained as much in their visit to the suite as they would in several weeks working under current conditions.

39 Governors are considering the financial implications of the school's plans. Parents and the community have already contributed generously to the school's current provision and the staff are looking forward to the opportunity to extend their own skills through training. The school is sensibly awaiting its new building before commencing training on the use of the National Grid for Learning.

Cramped accommodation and some old, worn resources

40 The school's accommodation is poor. Working in leaking, temporary buildings is morale sapping for staff. The ability of the staff, governors, parents and pupils to achieve such high standards in such difficult circumstances is a tribute to the whole school community.

41 Pupils currently use four separate buildings, two of which are temporary. Of the two temporary classrooms, housing Key Stage 2 pupils, only one has toilets. Some pupils in Years 3 and 4 have to cram their coats and bags into the narrow cloakroom occupied by 31 pupils in Years 5 and 6, as there is not enough space in their own classroom for the 34 pupils in lower Key Stage 2 to hang their coats and bags. Only the week before the inspection, one class had to move temporarily into the school hall because of leaks. Toilets throughout the school, both in the temporary classroom and the main building, have faults and emit unpleasant smells to the surrounding cloakroom areas.

42 The hall is unattractive, with cracked plaster and flaking paint, left because of expected accommodation changes which have not materialised. It is just large enough for all pupils to squeeze in for assembly. The large apparatus for physical education is not conducive to raising standards in this subject, but the school makes very good use of the outdoor activity area provided by the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association and the local borough pool.

43 It is difficult for staff to organise equipment so that it is accessible and attractively displayed. Teachers in the temporary buildings battle against mud and draughts. In one temporary building and in the main permanent building, displays of pupils' work celebrate high standards in a number of subjects, particularly art and writing. Attractive displays are extremely difficult to achieve in the temporary classroom that opens immediately onto the playground steps.

44 Resources are satisfactory for most subjects, but the limited space in the temporary classrooms restricts what can be made accessible. Resources for children under five are in particular need of renewal or replacement. The school has decided to await accommodation changes before developing resources. Unfortunately, in the meantime, boxes of old equipment and unattractive containers present a stark contrast with the lively and bright resources and surroundings associated with purpose-built provision for pupils of this age.

Communication of general information to parents

45 Communication of specific information to parents about pupils' progress is a real strength of the school. This report highlights the positive developments of the profiling meetings. It is true, as some parents commented at the meeting with inspectors, that annual reports on pupils do not provide such useful information as the profiling sessions. The school is aware that its excellent oral communication in this sphere has raised parents' expectations in the standard of written reports. The headteacher is considering ways of using the information from assessment and target setting to add to pupils' reports. It is important that such a process is manageable.

46 Both the school prospectus and annual governors' report are comprehensive and meet statutory requirements. Neither is presented in a user-friendly format, however. The prospectus lacks page references for its contents. The governors' report is very detailed, but too lengthy.

47 The school used to provide information on the curriculum for each term. This was a helpful process, which has lapsed of late. It was useful in enabling parents to support their children's studies. An aspect of home/school communication raised by parents was the short notice given by the school for some events involving their children. While some of these, such as sports day, involved an unavoidable change of date, it is apparent that a number of parents, especially those who need to obtain release from work, would welcome longer notice of events.

48 Overall, it is important to stress again that the most important information for parents, on their children's progress, is a strength. The other areas of provision mentioned are all satisfactory, but each could be improved. The school governors are eager to improve communications between home and school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49 In order to build on the current strengths in leadership, the quality of education provided and standards achieved, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Develop work begun by staff and governors to improve curriculum arrangements for children under five, especially provision for personal, social and physical development by:
 - providing opportunities for the headteacher and reception teacher to investigate early years centres of excellence in order to bring good practice into the school;
 - improving the quality and accessibility of resources;
 - looking closely at the way the areas of learning and early learning goals lead into work at the early stages of the National Curriculum and developing their findings to improve children's learning;
- (2) Allocate more time to the development and application of skills in information technology by:
 - improving the quality and quantity of hardware and software facilities available;
 - organising carefully the siting of hardware;
- (3) Improve accommodation as soon as possible to overcome overcrowding in cloakrooms, problems with toilets and inadequate indoor hall space for physical education; also cull worn-looking and outdated resources, especially those for children under five, and replace these with attractive resources, which are well organised and accessible to children;
- (4) Improve written communication to parents by:
 - Including information from profiling meetings in pupils' annual reports;
 - Making the prospectus and annual governors' report more user-friendly;
 - Improving the notice given to parents about school events.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
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
13	18	38	25	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) <i>FTE means full-time equivalent</i>	119
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	5
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	33
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
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	11	10	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	8
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	20	21	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (81)	100 (82)	86 (86)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	8	11
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	21	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (80)	86 (85)	100 (86)
	National	82	86	87

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	7	7	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (71)	86 (88)	93 (100)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86	86	86
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. N/A: Very small cohorts not reported numerically by gender.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	102
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	30.0

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	73

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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Total income	197354
Total expenditure	195974
Expenditure per pupil	1690
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	1380

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	119
Number of questionnaires returned	74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	35	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	47	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	59	4	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	58	16	3	1
The teaching is good.	54	38	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	41	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	41	8	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	28	53	15	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	46	46	3	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	53	1	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	42	27	12	4