

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LYDNEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lydney

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115635

Headteacher: Ms L Lawson

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims  
28899

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 188879

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Mainwaring
Date of previous inspection:	17 <sup>th</sup> June 1996

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Lydney Church of England Primary School is an average-sized primary school, educating 233 boys and girls from the ages of 4 to 11. The school is over-subscribed. Since the last inspection, internal conversion of the buildings has added two new classrooms and further office facilities, and the number of pupils on roll has risen by about 50. On the same site is the Early Years Opportunity Centre which is an amalgamation of the school's own private nursery and a unit for pre-school children with special educational needs, funded by the local authority. The unit caters for 24 children who attend for either the morning or the afternoon session. The school is situated in the town of Lydney, on the edge of the Forest of Dean. The attainment of children when they start in the Reception class, their socio-economic backgrounds, the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (18 per cent), and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (just over 10 per cent) are generally average. Two pupils have statements of special educational need. At the time of the inspection, there were six children under the age of five in the Reception class. Only one pupil comes from an ethnic minority background and from a home where English is not the main spoken language. This is below the national average.

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

Lydney Church of England Primary School is a very good school. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are very high. The overall quality of the teaching is good, and the teaching at the top end of the school is exceptionally good. Many aspects of the school have improved since the last inspection. The school is very well led by a headteacher who has not only secured high academic standards by the time pupils leave, but has successfully given a very high priority to developing pupils' creativity and very good personal relationships. Under her leadership, the staff have united into a hard-working, cooperative and happy team, providing a caring, joyful and friendly atmosphere, to which the pupils respond very well. Although expenditure per pupil is above average, the school provides good value for money.

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

- The pupils achieve very high standards by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The quality of the teaching is good throughout the school, and it is particularly good at the top end of the school.
- The school is very successful in the way it promotes the pupils' personal development, resulting in mature and responsible attitudes and very good relationships.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Staff are good at developing pupils' creativity.

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

- Standards in writing at Key Stage 1.
- The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

There has been a very good degree of improvement since the last inspection, which took place in June 1996. The school responded well to the previous key issues. Standards in

science have improved significantly. Good attention has been given to the planning and resourcing of design and technology and a separate teaching area for the subject has been created. Much has been done to improve the provision for information technology. All classes now have regular teaching slots in the new computer centre; curricular planning has improved; training has been provided for staff, and the coordinators are providing good leadership. As a result, standards are improving throughout the school, although the oldest pupils still do not reach the nationally expected standards in all aspects. Staff still need to make greater use of information and communication technology when teaching other subjects. The balance of time allocated to all subjects has been revised and pupils are now receiving a broad and balanced curriculum. Subjects are now coordinated much more effectively. The quality of the teaching has improved as a result of good quality training, better procedures for planning, the staff's receptive attitude to new ideas and their willingness to examine their own practice. Although there has been little visible improvement in results at Key Stage 1, the school's results have improved dramatically at Key Stage 2.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			similar schools	Key
	all schools				
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	A	A	A	Very high A* Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E Very low E*
Mathematics	D	D	A	A*	
Science	E	C	A*	A*	

The school's results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 were well above the national average. The overall results were amongst the top five per cent of schools, whose pupils come from similar backgrounds. Standards are much higher than they were at the time of the last inspection, and the improvement since 1997 has been dramatic – in 1997, overall results were well below the national average; in 1999, they were well above average. Results in mathematics and science were particularly good, with over half of the pupils exceeding the national expectations by achieving Level 5. In view of the very good results achieved and the high standards observed during the inspection, the school's targets for the future are too low.

The work seen during the inspection confirms that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above average and that pupils make very good progress during their time at the school. The pupils express themselves clearly in writing, using a good range of vocabulary and making good use of their imagination. Their speaking and listening skills are very good. In mathematics, they have a very good knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and tackle problems confidently. In science, they understand the concept of fair testing very well and, overall, have a very good knowledge of scientific principles. Standards in art are above average; the pupils' drawings and paintings demonstrate good technical and creative skills. Standards in information technology are below the expected level, although the pupils are making good progress now that they have access to better facilities.

Children under the age of five reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes in most areas of learning. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 do not reflect the same high standards as those achieved in Key Stage 2. In 1999, results were below the national average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. Evidence from the inspection shows that

standards are improving in reading and mathematics and are now close to the national average. Standards in writing are also improving gradually, but are still below average. Even though the school's results at Key Stage 1 have been below average, the pupils nevertheless develop very positive attitudes to learning and, in many other respects, receive a good foundation for their learning in Key Stage 2.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning and show a willingness to participate in all aspects of school life. They listen attentively and enjoy taking an active part in lessons. They approach their work with commitment and a sense of enjoyment.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils have a keen awareness of the school's high expectations. They are courteous, friendly and helpful, and behave well in lessons and around the school. They are fully aware of the school rules and code of conduct and try hard at all times to adhere to them. There is no oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very good throughout the school and staff do much to encourage and promote pupils' personal development. Pupils of all ages enjoy celebrating the success of others and are able to comment positively and sensitively when asked to evaluate the work of others. They eagerly accept any responsibilities given to them. The older pupils show a particularly mature and responsible approach to their work, and to the way they undertake their responsibilities on the School Council.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually and lessons start on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
19 lessons seen overall	Good	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.*

The teaching was satisfactory or better in all of the lessons seen. It was very good in 37 per cent of lessons and good in a further 53 per cent. The remaining 10 per cent were satisfactory.

The overall quality of teaching in English and mathematics lessons is good. Implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has led to improvements in the teaching of mathematics, where lessons are well planned, proceed at a brisk pace and provide suitable opportunities for pupils to participate orally in mental work. Literacy hours are well planned, and the teachers promote positive attitudes to reading and a desire to write. However, not enough attention is given to teaching pupils how to spell words at Key Stage 1. Writing skills are developed well through other subjects at Key Stage 2. Good attention is given to pupils with special educational needs. The very good relationships which exist between teachers and pupils throughout the school are a significant factor in helping the pupils to make progress and develop positive attitudes to learning. Much of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is very good, and in Year 6 it is outstanding. Lessons in this class are particularly challenging, and the pupils are well motivated by the teacher's high expectations. The teaching in this class contributes significantly to the high standards achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides pupils with a very good range of stimulating learning opportunities. It is enriched through a good variety of visits to places of interest, visitors to the school, links with the community, and a very good range of after-school activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The work is very well co-ordinated. Detailed records of pupils' attainment and progress are regularly reviewed and appropriate support made available. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Parents are kept well informed. The school is well resourced, and links with the secondary school are well established.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Staff provide very good role models. They encourage pupils to express their innermost thoughts and feelings, and this helps pupils to develop their self-awareness and self-respect. There are good opportunities for pupils to accept responsibilities. The school nurtures in its pupils an appreciation of their own cultural traditions and those of other world cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides a supportive and caring environment, which promotes the welfare, academic progress, personal development and self-worth of all pupils. Good attention is given to health and safety. The school has very good procedures for dealing with accidents and illness.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads by personal example and is committed to providing high-quality learning experiences for all pupils. She has built a dedicated staff team who work well together, and she is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Subject coordinators fulfil their roles very well, providing clear guidance and good support for other staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and provide good support for the headteacher. They are committed to the school and have a good understanding of the school and its priorities for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The staff are committed to ongoing improvement. Subject coordinators are now taking a greater role in monitoring and evaluating their subject areas. The school has identified appropriate areas for development and monitors its progress well.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its available funds well, applying the principles of best value in the purchase and use of resources and services. Staff and governors are appropriately involved in making decisions about expenditure, and the care and use of resources.

## 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 vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school and are very pleased with the education their children are receiving.</li> <li>• The staff are supportive, helpful and approachable.</li> <li>• They are pleased with the standards their children achieve and the progress they are making.</li> <li>• Standards of behaviour are good.</li> <li>• The school is well led.</li> <li>• They are particularly pleased with the support and guidance offered to the children in Year 6.</li> <li>• Their children enjoy school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very small number of parents said that they would like:</li> <li>• to be better informed about their children's progress</li> <li>• to receive clearer information about National Curriculum tests, staff changes and what their children are going to be learning.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all of the positive views voiced by parents. The governors and headteacher are concerned that there is a small number of parents who feel that the school's relationships with parents could improve. From the views received and observations made during the inspection, inspectors felt that this small group was not representative of the majority, who are pleased with what the school provides in every respect. Lydney Church of England Primary School is a very good school, where the staff are very concerned to provide the best opportunities possible for every child. Governors, headteacher and staff are approachable and keep parents well informed about what is happening within school. If parents do have any concerns, the headteacher and staff are very willing to listen and to respond to what parents have to say.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The pupils achieve very high standards by the end of Key Stage 2**

1. In the 1999 National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the school's results in English, mathematics and science were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. The results in science were amongst the top five per cent of schools in the country, and the overall results were amongst the top five per cent of schools, whose pupils come from a similar background. In mathematics and science, nearly all pupils reached the nationally expected standard of Level 4, and over half of the pupils achieved the higher Level 5. In English, only a handful of pupils failed to reach Level 4, and almost a third achieved the higher Level 5.
2. The school's results have improved dramatically over the last three years, and standards are now significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection. In 1997, the pupils' overall performance in English, mathematics and science was well below average, and in 1999 it was well above the national average. These results represent the culmination of the school's efforts in recent years to improve the quality of its teaching and the learning experiences offered to pupils. Most children enter the school with average levels of attainment, so these results represent very good progress, which is achieved through good quality teaching throughout the school, and some particularly good teaching as pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2.
3. When compared to other schools, the results at Key Stage 1 are much less favourable. Indeed, the overall results in 1999 were well below the national average. However, the teaching at Key Stage 1 is good and helps the pupils to develop vitally important foundations for their future work, such as the ability to work both independently and cooperatively, the development of inquisitive minds and positive attitudes to learning. The teachers help the pupils to develop creative imaginations and to acquire a desire to write. Even though pupils are slow to learn the mechanics of writing, the preparation the pupils receive in Key Stage 1 enables them to develop good quality writing because of their receptivity and desire to write. The rapid progress made at Key Stage 2 shows that the school's approach to teaching English is successful.
4. By the time they leave the school, most pupils write very well. Although there are occasional inaccuracies in their written work, their writing reflects fertile imaginations, good individuality and an adventurous use of vocabulary. From an early age, the pupils are taught to use descriptive language. In a collective effort in Year 2, for example, pupils describe beech woods in the autumn as "colours dripping to a leafy floor, golden fire soaking onto the leaves, raindrops sparkling like tiny diamonds, leaves floating and gliding like paper aeroplanes." Through such experiences, the pupils acquire the ability to write independently. In Year 5, for example, a pupil builds up tension in a well-written imaginative legend set in India, and another shows great enjoyment turning her narrative writing based on a book by Roald Dahl into a play. Pupils in Year 6 produce a very good range of writing, from very good attempts at rhyming poetry, an exploration of how to use connectives to vary the structure and style of writing, to writing amusing alternatives of well-known fairy tales.
5. The teachers provide a rich variety of experiences which result in positive approaches to and enjoyment of reading. Pupils in Year 3, for example, enjoy exploring the use of humour and variety in poetry as they learn about limericks, riddles, calligrams and nonsense rhymes. In Year 5, the pupils have produced a compendium of their

favourite poems, with examples which have been carefully copied and illustrated, followed by explanations as to why they enjoy the poems. This sort of preparation enables pupils in Year 6 to appreciate the language of Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream" and to offer sensible opinions on the contrasting styles and effectiveness of the writings of Rumer Godden and Jamila Gavin.

6. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good. Their enthusiasm, maturity and very good standards of behaviour ensure that the various opportunities for discussion provided by the teachers are used effectively.
7. In mathematics, the pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts and are able to tackle problems of a complex nature. This results from the challenging tasks they are set by their teachers in lessons and the encouragement they are given to seek the necessary information and to search for solutions. More able pupils in the Year 3 group, for example, can select the specific information they require for their calculations and learn not to be distracted by information that is not relevant. By Year 4, pupils are able to devise suitable strategies to calculate the area of irregular shapes, as when calculating the floor area of a house plan. In Year 6, pupils use mathematical symbols to simplify their calculations. They are able to do this confidently, as the teaching has shown them how such a formula has been derived, as when calculating the area of triangles. Pupils understand that some triangles are half the area of a rectangle and consequently appreciate how the formula relates to the area of the triangle formed by the diagonal. Their mental ability is well developed.
8. Through a series of well-planned investigative activities, pupils in Key Stage 2 acquire a good understanding of experimental and investigative science. Pupils in Year 3 use planning boards to guide them through the proper steps in scientific investigations, as when determining the best soil for growing seeds. They can identify key factors and which variables need to be controlled, for example the amount of water that should be provided for each investigation. In the latter years of Key Stage 2, pupils have a well-established understanding of the concept of fair testing. They are capable of making realistic predictions and, without prompting, they recognise which variables need to be controlled, for example, when investigating the brightness of bulbs in electrical circuits. More able pupils also realise the importance of accurate and repeated measurements, as when investigating the distance objects travel on different surfaces. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a very good understanding of basic life processes and, in particular, the adaptations of living plants and animals in local habitats. Through pond investigation and subsequent studies, the pupils have acquired a detailed knowledge of a range of aquatic animals and plants. In their studies of human systems, they have developed a very good understanding of the idea of healthy living and know the importance and consequences of food and exercise on a healthy life style and the possible harmful effects of other substances, such as tobacco.
9. High standards are not just limited to the three core subjects. Classroom displays in Year 6 show that pupils have a very good understanding of life in ancient Egypt and that they derive a great deal of interest and pleasure from their studies in history. Art-work is of a high quality, and a living bookcase produced in a design and technology project shows meticulous attention to detail.

**The quality of the teaching is good throughout the school, and it is particularly good at the top end of the school**

10. Of the 19 lessons seen during the inspection, seven were very good, ten were good and two were satisfactory. Good teaching was observed in every class, but almost all

of the teaching observed in Years 5 and 6 was very good. The quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection as a result of in-service training, better planning procedures, implementation of key curriculum initiatives and the school's efforts to examine its own practice by observing other teachers' lessons and moderating the standard of pupils' work.

11. In many lessons, the teacher's very good subject knowledge forms an important bedrock for the lesson. In a very good geography lesson in Year 4, for example, the teacher had a very clear understanding of the differences between the contrasting localities of Cardiff and Lydney, and drew on this knowledge to ask pupils probing questions which increased their understanding. The teacher's good understanding of the structure and uses of a computer database enabled her to guide pupils in Years 3 and 4 to an appreciation of the different ways in which a computer database can be used and the importance of framing questions precisely when searching records. In a physical education lesson in Year 5, the teacher's own skills were evident as she demonstrated different ways to strike a volleyball, analysed where pupils were making mistakes and gave them very good advice about positioning when playing a small-sided game. Pupils were then encouraged to develop their understanding by observing what their partner was doing and offering critical and helpful advice. In many cases, this was done perceptively and sensitively, and helped the partner to improve their action.
12. Lessons are carefully planned, thoroughly prepared and feature a good variety of teaching methods. In an English lesson in Year 3, for example, the teacher used a big book to introduce nonsense poems to the pupils. These were contrasted with a number of calligrams displayed on very large cards, which provided a good focus for the pupils, maintaining their interest as each new card was displayed. In the information technology lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher built effectively on the work pupils had covered in the previous week, providing systematic development of pupils' skills and extending their understanding of the structure and function of a database. The lesson also linked very well with work pupils were undertaking in science. In an English lesson in the Reception class, purposeful use of the role-play area helped pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, with occasional prompting and guidance from a student. The pupils enjoyed putting on dressing-up clothes as they visited the café, playing their parts well as the waiter wrote down their orders and then took coins in payment for the meal. In a geography lesson in Year 4, the pupils were motivated because the teacher was very thorough in the way she questioned the pupils, drawing even the quietest pupils into discussion by providing well-targeted questions. An English lesson in Year 2 provided a very good variety of activities, all of which motivated the pupils. Whilst one group engaged in animated discussion with the teacher about captions they were going to write under pictures of slugs and snails, another group used a good variety of information books to consolidate their understanding of how to use tables of contents, glossaries and indexes. Another group worked with a parent helper on a similar task, and other individuals completed spelling tasks or listened to stories through headphones.
13. The very good teaching at the end of Key Stage 2 combines many important characteristics. The foundations for a very good English lesson in Year 5 were the teacher's analysis of written work produced by the pupils, her own secure understanding of how to make writing more persuasive and good planning which provided a clear teaching focus, appropriately targeted written tasks and a concluding session to draw together what had been learnt during the lesson. When marking the pupils' written work, it had become clear that many of their sentences were very short and lacked persuasion. At the start of the lesson, a number of examples from their work had been written on the board, and pupils were asked to modify these by using different connectives to join two shorter sentences together in order to make them

more persuasive. This gave them a very clear idea of how to improve their writing. While they worked on their individual tasks, the teacher asked individual pupils pertinent questions which helped them to think more carefully about what they were doing. She looked perceptively at what pupils had written and offered detailed and helpful criticism. She then picked out some good examples which she read to the rest of the group as illustrations of good practice. The context for the written exercise linked well with the pupils' topic in geography and, as some further examples were read out by pupils during the concluding part of the lesson, pupils agreed that their letters had now become much more persuasive and powerful.

14. High expectations, constant challenge, meticulous planning and an excellent relationship with the pupils lie at the heart of the outstanding teaching in Year 6. The pupils have a clear understanding of the very high standards of behaviour and response to work expected by their teacher. Because these have been so firmly established, a good and expectant atmosphere for learning is established at the start of every lesson and no time is wasted. The very positive response of the pupils is based on mutual respect. They know that their teacher values their efforts, treats everybody's contributions seriously, and is willing to help those who struggle, while challenging those who are able to achieve more highly. In a very good English lesson, the teacher's force of personality engaged the pupils' interest and succeeded in making a comparison of two sample texts interesting and alive. Whilst most of the class then worked in pairs to examine the two texts more closely, the teacher worked with a small group of pupils who had difficulty in reading, thereby enabling them to access the same texts as the other pupils and to play an effective part in the lesson. Evidence of the high quality work in all subjects is seen in the stimulating and vibrant displays around the room. A picture gallery contains examples of a range of drawings, each one very different in style and indicating the variety of work undertaken at various times. Reviews of books by Roald Dahl indicate enthusiasm for his writing. An interesting and informative display on Ancient Egypt shows that pupils have learnt much about life in ancient Egypt. A science display on life in fresh water, and a large variety of cards, posters and notices throughout the classroom give testimony to the wide variety of work covered by the pupils in all subjects. The standard is very high and indicative of a quality learning environment which stimulates the pupils' imaginations and provokes positive and enthusiastic responses.

**The school is very successful in the way it promotes the pupils' personal development, resulting in mature and responsible attitudes and very good relationships.**

15. The school gives high priority to the pupils' personal development. Staff who have been at the school for a number of years comment on how much the pupils' behaviour and attitudes have improved as a result of the emphasis given to this aspect of the pupils' education. Through the school's personal, social and health education programme, teachers aim to give pupils confidence and the ability to look after themselves and make decisions. The teachers emphasise the importance of good relationships, healthy lifestyles and involvement within the community. The programme is an integral part of the curriculum which covers aspects such as behaviour, self-esteem and citizenship. Pupils learn to consider how their behaviour affects others and how people react in different situations. The teachers themselves provide very good role models for the pupils in the way they work well together, share their ideas and support one another in helpful ways. Their dealings with pupils are consistent and fair.
16. There are various formal mechanisms which encourage pupils to accept responsibilities. Each class has a weekly form captain, and pupils throughout the school are asked to carry out helpful tasks within the classroom. Pupils have put

together the top ten rules for the school which appear in the school prospectus. In Year 6, all pupils have the opportunity to serve on the School Council for a term. They meet fortnightly with the headteacher, and both formally and informally with each other on a regular basis. The Council provides a forum for discussion, taking in the views of all pupils. It is a very worthwhile initiative which is valued by pupils, and helps them to learn to exercise responsibility and appreciate the value of democracy. The Council has initiated action which has led to improvements in the school grounds and produced play equipment for break-times. They have raised funds to support pupils in Kenya. Their concern for others is demonstrated through the 'friendship stop', where older pupils are available at lunch and breaktimes for younger pupils to talk with them. Members of the School Council have also participated in the school's formal risk assessment.

17. Good opportunities are offered through the formal curriculum to help pupils to develop socially. The teachers value the contributions of all pupils during class discussions, and encourage the more silent pupils to contribute. They give praise where it is due, but also let the pupils know when they have done wrong. As a result, the pupils develop a healthy self-esteem and confidence, knowing that they are accepted and valued. Annual residential visits for pupils in Years 5 and 6 reinforce important social messages as pupils learn to live together for longer periods of time than the hours of the school day.
18. The school's efforts to promote personal development result in very positive attitudes to learning and an enjoyment of school life. The pupils speak warmly about their school and feel their teachers are friendly and helpful. They feel safe because there is no bullying or unpleasant behaviour, and secure because they have the confidence that their teachers will resolve any problems if they do occur. They work hard and are keen to please their teachers by listening to what they have to say and trying their best. In Year 1, for example, the pupils were keen to answer their teacher's questions during a mathematics lesson. In Year 4, even the most reluctant pupils were drawn into the discussion as a result of the teacher's well-directed questions. In Year 5, pupils made a very conscious effort to alter their writing in the light of the comments made by their teacher. Work on display shows very clearly that the pupils take a pride in their work. This positive approach to work contributes significantly to the high standards which they achieve.
19. The behaviour of the pupils is very good, both within the classroom and around the school. While the teachers spend more time reinforcing the school's expectations with the younger pupils, the older pupils show that they have taken the messages on board. They are polite and courteous, and behave consistently well towards each other. They take on responsibilities willingly and have very mature and responsible attitudes. When collecting dinner registers at the start of the day, they come into the classroom politely and unobtrusively. When asked to give out resources, the response is immediate, and cooperation is willingly given, enabling the lesson to proceed with minimal interruption. The pupils in Year 6 undertake their roles on the School Council very seriously. They are developing into independent learners who are self-sufficient, and confident about selecting resources or making decisions about their work. Once a task has been set, they get on with their work conscientiously without the need for constant prompting from their teachers. The pupils know that their ideas are valued, and this gives them a sense of worth, and contributes to their confident approach to learning. The pupils' relationships with one another are very good. Within the classroom, they listen politely and with interest to the views of others. When asked to work with one another they are cooperative and helpful. Very good relationships and rapport are evident between the teachers and pupils during lessons in all classes.



### **The headteacher provides very good leadership**

20. The headteacher is very well respected by governors and staff and provides very good leadership. This is based on a deep-rooted belief in the importance and ability of each member of staff and the desire to provide the best possible environment and learning opportunities for the pupils. The headteacher is extremely well supported in her work by the deputy headteacher who shares her vision and philosophy of education.
21. The headteacher has done much to improve the formal systems which guide the school's work. On her arrival in the school some years ago, there were no written policies. Under her guidance, the staff have developed clear and helpful policies by looking at each aspect of school life and evaluating their practice. The headteacher has improved the leadership structure and the way subjects are coordinated. Two members of staff now share responsibility for each subject. They have clear job descriptions and, as a result of the changes, their confidence has grown and their effectiveness increased. They have become more involved in monitoring the teaching throughout the school through lesson observations and have taken an active part in disseminating good practice.
22. It is in the less formal, day-to-day interaction with staff that the headteacher's leadership style has proved particularly effective. Consultation and collaboration are seen as important principles which are carried out in practice, and the staff value this approach. They feel that their views are taken into consideration, and that everybody has an important part to play within the school. As a result, the staff work very well together as a united, committed and hard-working team.
23. There have been many improvements under the leadership of the headteacher. Most noticeable has been the change in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and their response to work. Standards have risen. Staff work well together. Improvements to the school's facilities have been imaginatively pursued as the school has increased in size due to its growing popularity. The addition of a mezzanine floor has provided two bright new classrooms. Conversion of an outside toilet block has provided a new music room. More recently, imaginative proposals have been suggested to the school's local benefactor, resulting in collaboration and financial support to provide an exciting, large new environmental area and millennium orchard.

### **Staff are good at developing pupils' creativity**

24. The school seeks to develop pupils' creativity and does this effectively in a number of ways. The staff have given the pupils good examples of the way creativity can enhance the learning environment. For example, much thought went into the way the school is decorated. More conventional colour schemes have been replaced by bright, vibrant colours which not only provide an attractive learning environment, but encourage the pupils to be adventurous in the way they present their own work. In all classrooms, the teachers take great care over the way work is displayed. Some use their own artistic talents and others use the graphic facilities of a computer to produce clear, attractive titles, labels and banners for the displays. The pupils are encouraged to use their imagination and present their own work well. Finished articles are then given prominence in the displays, reinforcing the value and importance of the pupils' efforts.
25. In art, the pupils find inspiration in the work of famous artists. Work in Year 2, for example, illustrates the influence of Henri Matisse, and in Year 4 the influence of Antoin Gaudi, but the two and three-dimensional work also contains the hallmark of the pupils' own individuality. Art is seen as an important contributor to other subjects. In Year 6, for example, the pupils' science work contains original illustrations, over

which much care has been taken. A picture gallery and illustrative work on Egypt reinforce the current history topic. The pictures on display show great variety in style and originality. A design and technology display of a living bookcase in Year 6 shows great attention to detail and much originality in the design. The pupils' musical talents are encouraged through offering instrumental music tuition. Various pupils play clarinet, flute, recorder, saxophone and violin.

26. Very good examples of the way creativity is encouraged are seen in the school's approach to the teaching of English. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to produce original pieces of writing, rather than writing which is technically correct but little more than a dull stereotype. Written reviews of books by Roald Dahl in Year 6, for example, are completed in different ways and carefully illustrated. A writing corner contains some imaginatively persuasive writing, each piece different and individual, showing that the teacher has been very effective in encouraging the pupils to make use of their own gifts and ideas.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Standards in writing at Key Stage 1**

27. In the 1999 National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the results obtained by pupils in writing were well below the national average. Although 82 per cent of the pupils obtained the nationally expected Level 2, over half of these were at the lowest end of the scale (Level 2C), and no pupils obtained the higher Level 3. Although there has been some fluctuation, the results over the last four years have been consistently below the national average.
28. The inspection findings confirm that standards in writing at Key Stage 1 are below average. By this stage, only a few pupils have acquired the ability to write what they want to say with accuracy. Because they have yet to develop an intuitive grasp of common writing conventions, many pupils take a long time to write only a short amount of text, and few are able to write at length. Despite this, the pupils have a positive approach to writing and are keen to have a go at expressing themselves on paper. They are developing the ability to work independently, even when they do not know how to spell a word.
29. The school is aware that the pupils' performance at Key Stage 1 does not reflect the high standards obtained at Key Stage 2, and has tried to analyse why this is. The teachers believe passionately in the importance of developing a lasting interest and enjoyment of both reading and writing, and their philosophy conflicts to a certain extent with the teaching methodologies propounded in the National Literacy Strategy. The teachers do not give as much emphasis as suggested to word level work and pupils are, therefore, slow to develop their ability to write words accurately. Their pace of writing is also slow. Whilst the school's approach leaves pupils somewhat behind the national norm at this stage of their education, it does not appear to have a detrimental effect over the longer term. In Years 3 and 4, pupils catch up ground rapidly, but they retain an enjoyment of both reading and writing, and an individuality in their work which is above average.
30. Whilst the written work of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is, in many respects, well above average, the weakest aspect of their writing continues to be the accuracy of their spelling. This suggests strongly, therefore, that the school needs to examine the attention it gives to the mechanical aspects of writing, particularly when laying the foundations for this aspect of the pupils' work in Key Stage 1.

## **The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum**

31. The school's provision for information technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. The subject is coordinated ably and enthusiastically. Staff generally have a positive approach to the subject, and their own knowledge and expertise have improved as a result of in-service training. The most noticeable improvement has been the creation of a computer area in the school library. This now allows half a class to be taught at the same time, with each pupil having immediate access to a computer. All classes have a timetabled session to use the computer suite each week. In some classes, half of the pupils work on the computers, while the remainder undertake written or reading assignments in the library. In others, half of the pupils remain in the classroom under the supervision of an assistant, while the teacher teaches the other half in the computer area. These arrangements are proving effective in improving the pupils' information technology skills. Whilst the younger pupils show levels of skill which are in line with the national expectations, the room has not been in operation long enough for the oldest pupils to catch up what they have missed over the years and to reach the standard expected for eleven-year-olds. The current teaching program and time allocation will ensure, however, that these deficiencies are soon rectified. For example, pupils in Year 6 do not have a good understanding of data-handling using a database, but during the inspection pupils in Years 3 and 4 were learning successfully how to enter data into a database and then frame questions accurately in order to extract information. Other areas of the curriculum in which there has been little coverage are control and monitoring. Further training is planned in order to increase teachers' competence in these areas.
32. Currently, the school's efforts are being directed, appropriately, to the teaching of information technology skills. Whilst some of the contexts within which these skills are taught are of relevance to other subjects, subject coordinators have not yet given enough attention to how teachers can use information and communication technology to promote learning within other subjects. Beyond the designated lessons now held in the computer suite, very little use is made of computers situated in the classrooms. The facilities of the word processor are used occasionally in English but, generally, computers are rarely used as an aid to the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

33. The headteacher and staff should improve the accuracy and mechanical aspects of pupils' writing, particularly at Key Stage 1. In order to achieve this they should:
- re-examine the amount of time devoted to word-level work during the literacy hour;
  - ensure that there is regular and frequent re-enforcement of spelling patterns.
34. The school should make greater use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning in all areas of the curriculum. In order for this to happen:
- subject coordinators should work with the coordinators for information technology to find useful and helpful ways of incorporating information and communication technology into their own subject's scheme of work;
  - the school should provide further training in aspects of information technology in which staff expertise is still weak;

- teachers should ensure that maximum use is made of computers within the classroom, and that opportunities to use computers are regularly identified within their weekly and daily planning.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils [In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]	12

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	37	53	10	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	12	233
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	–	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18	42

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.4	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.4	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	17	25	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	16
	Girls	22	22	20
	Total	37	36	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (76)	85 (79)	85 (88)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	16
	Girls	22	21	23
	Total	36	36	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (82)	85 (91)	92 (93)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	16	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	21	21
	Girls	13	13	15
	Total	32	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (77)	89 (58)	94 (72)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	20	18
	Girls	7	9	10
	Total	23	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (77)	76 (61)	74 (61)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	232
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

Qualified teachers and classes: Y0 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Average class size	30

Education support staff: Y0 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	110

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Number of pupils per FTE adult	5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	472,941
Total expenditure	456,053
Expenditure per pupil	1,876
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,329
Balance carried forward to next year	62,217

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	233
Number of questionnaires returned	113

Percentage of responses in each category<sup>1</sup>

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	24	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	38	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	51	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	55	12	4	0
The teaching is good.	66	31	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	47	13	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	22	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	24	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	45	12	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	53	43	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	36	0	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	42	7	0	4

### Other issues raised by parents

A small group of parents feels that the school does not keep them well enough informed or work closely with them. This group is not representative of the great majority of parents.

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<sup>1</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.