

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Applecroft School**

**A Community Nursery and Primary School**

Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117355

Headteacher: Len Edwards

Reporting inspector: Mrs K Beck  
10090

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> April 2000

Inspection number: 190004

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery, Infant and Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Applecroft Road Welwyn Garden City Herts.
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E-mail	admin.applecroft@thegrid.org.uk
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Paul Boulton
Date of previous inspection:	14 <sup>th</sup> October 1996

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Applecroft is a very large community school for children aged three to eleven. 60 children attend the nursery part-time, from the age of three. There are 497 children on roll in the main school, aged from four to eleven years. Four and a half percent of children come from ethnic minority groups. This is higher than in most schools. All speak and write English well. No children come from travellers' families. 150 children are on the register of special educational needs. Nine have physical, speech and communication and learning difficulties and a statement of special educational need, which is above the national average. In the past year 17 children joined the school other than at the time of first admission and three left before the usual time of transfer to secondary school. Children's social and academic skills are good when they start in the nursery and very good on entry to full time schooling. The inspection concentrated on standards in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and the nursery. Work from every class was scrutinised. Teaching was observed in all year groups except Years 4 and 5.

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

Applecroft is a very effective school. The headteacher and staff promote an excellent climate for learning in which children are valued individuals and feel all their efforts to learn are important. Excellent relationships, and an enthusiasm and excitement for learning enable children to achieve high standards because their individual needs receive careful attention. This means children have high self-esteem and confidence in their ability to do very well. Teaching is very good. The work children do challenges them to think hard and use their initiative. The governors, headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff work very well together to maintain high standards. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards are high, especially in English and mathematics at age eleven.
- Excellent leadership which promotes teamwork and high standards.
- The school's mission statement; 'striving to excel' is evident in all aspects of its work. The school provides a high quality climate for learning; checks children's academic progress thoroughly; offers excellent support and guidance to all children, to assist their personal development, and makes excellent provision for children with special educational needs.
- All teaching observed in the nursery was excellent. Most teaching in Year 6 and all teaching that was observed in Year 1 was very good.
- Children have excellent social skills and a strong sense of moral responsibility.

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

- The achievement of boys, especially in English, at the age of eleven.
- Achievement in information and communication technology and its use to enhance learning across the curriculum.
- The way children are asked to record their work in mathematics in Years 2 and 3.

In all cases, the areas for improvement have been identified in the school's development plan.

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

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

Key issues from the previous inspection and developments since 1996 have been tackled very well so that high standards in relation to all and similar schools have been maintained. The subject co-ordinators' role has been enhanced significantly so that all staff share a common purpose. They put children and their achievement first. Information from thorough checks of what children know and can do is used very effectively to set high goals for them to achieve. Schemes of work set out a rich and varied curriculum and enable teachers to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding systematically across all subjects of the National Curriculum, except information and communication technology. An excellent nursery, established in 1997, is having a significant impact on children's achievements. Excellent provision for the increasing number of children with special educational needs means these children make very good progress. Sharp checking of the quality of teaching has brought about

significant improvements in teaching. Weak teaching is tackled very effectively.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A*	B	A	B
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	A	A	A	A

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

\* means very high results

Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above the national averages for children aged eleven in all schools. In mathematics and science they are well above average when compared to schools with children from similar backgrounds. The percentage of children reaching levels of the National Curriculum usually expected in secondary schools, such as level 5 in English and level 6 in mathematics is well above the average for similar schools. Taken over the four years since 1996, the school's results have remained well above the national average and well above those of similar schools<sup>1</sup>. The school's targets are challenging and realistic for children in each year group. The school is very well placed to achieve these.

The scrutiny of work reflected very high standards in English and mathematics at age eleven. About half the children in Year 6 are already on their way to achieving levels well above the national average. In national tests, there is a significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. At the end of Year 6, the performance of girls exceeds that of boys in English, mathematics and science. At the end of Year 2, boys do better than girls. In Year 6, children are articulate and adept at explaining their ideas and justifying their points of view. The boys state that they prefer subjects such as mathematics and science as they like practical work and the competition when working in mental arithmetic. Writing holds less interest for them. Even so, children read and write well, giving good attention to accurate use of grammar, punctuation and paragraphs. In mathematics, children have substantial strengths in problem solving and investigations, rapid mental calculations and recall of patterns of numbers.

At the age of five, most children have exceeded standards expected for their age<sup>2</sup>. Early literacy and numeracy skills are firmly established by the time children enter Year 1. At the age of seven, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics in comparison to all schools. When compared to similar schools, standards are well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics at age seven. Achievements in information and communication technology are appropriate for children at age seven but lower than they ought to be at age eleven. This is because computer resources are insufficient to allow children the time they need to enhance their information and communication technology skills and enhance achievements across the curriculum.

<sup>1</sup> Similar schools - schools with up to 8% free school meals, and children from similar backgrounds.

<sup>2</sup> Expectations at age 5 compared to the desirable learning outcomes - language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development and personal and social development.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes towards their work and have a keen sense of pride in its presentation.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, especially at lunchtime. Children are mature and respectful to one another and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Children are trusted to take responsibility for their actions, to work independently, and to carry out duties in class or around the school. Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Very good. Children are keen to attend. Unauthorised absence is low.

During the inspection, severe weather prevented children playing outside during the breaks from lessons. Their attitudes remained positive and mature. At lunchtime, children of all ages were absorbed in a variety of activities behaving responsibly at all times.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

In lessons observed 11% of teaching was excellent, 47% very good, 21% good and 21% satisfactory. Teaching in the nursery is excellent. English is taught very well, especially in Years 1, 2 and 6. Mathematics is taught very well in Years 1 and 6. Children use their literacy and numeracy skills very effectively across the curriculum. Strengths in teaching stem from very high expectations that children can achieve a very high standard. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and knowledge of the children, including children with special educational needs, means work is very well matched to children's precise needs. Work challenges children do their best. In the nursery, children quickly learn to work with other children, gain confidence and read, write and count very well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A rich curriculum makes learning exciting and real for children of all abilities. Residential visits, field trips, visitors to the school and extra curricular activities give children a very good understanding of the wider world.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent provision enables children to make very good progress. All children are fully integrated into the life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent in all aspects. The school is very successful in promoting children's confidence and self-esteem. Displays of work reflect many opportunities for children to express opinions, ideas, values and beliefs, especially in writing and art. Music and drama do much to enhance children's spiritual development. A strong moral code for behaviour



	centres on trusting children. Moral values are considered in discussions about issues such as pollution and capital punishment. Teachers are excellent role models.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. The care and interest the school takes in each child makes them feel valued, important and secure so that they can learn well.

Residential visits for children in different age groups play an important part in the children's personal and social development, in learning how to live as effective members of a small community.

The excellent nursery curriculum promotes children's independence, social, literacy and numeracy skills plus the ability to make decisions for themselves, from a very early age. In Key Stage 1 and 2, much of the work challenges children to think hard and record their learning in a variety of ways. The frequent use of worksheets, in mathematics in Years 2 and 3, reduces opportunities for children to demonstrate clearly what they know and can do. Reading programmes have less appeal for older boys. Thorough checks on children's academic performance and personal development from the time they start in the nursery is used very well to set individual, year group and school targets for improvement. Very high standards of care enable children to make an excellent start to their education and transfer smoothly to secondary school. Children and parents are very confident that problems are dealt with quickly.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The ethos created by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is supported very effectively by all members of the school community. This gives everyone a very clear sense of direction and common purpose to do their very best for the children.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very clear view of the school's long term, strategic development, its strengths and areas for development. Governors are very well informed, supportive yet challenging and very effective.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a very good understanding of what works well and why. It takes very positive action to resolve weaknesses to ensure high standards of teaching and achievement are sustained.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing, accommodation and resources are deployed very well.

The success of the school rests on the strong and complementary partnership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Together with staff they create an ethos in which children of all abilities want to succeed and to do their very best. The governors apply the principles of best value to all aspects of the school. For example, they use data about standards achieved to compare with staffing costs and value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What a few parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The high standards the school achieves.</li> <li>• Excellent leadership and very good teaching.</li> <li>• The very warm, friendly, welcoming, 'spirit and atmosphere' in the school.</li> <li>• High standards of behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller class sizes.</li> <li>• More information about what children know and can do in their school reports.</li> <li>• The number of after school activities.</li> <li>• Level of supervision in the playground.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects the children to work hard.</li> <li>• Residential visits.</li> <li>• The high quality of the nursery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children eating their lunch in the classrooms.</li> </ul>
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Inspectors fully support the positive comments of the parents. The school reduces the impact of larger class sizes by employing additional staff. They assist in setting the children in smaller groups according to their ability in English from Year 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Detailed, informative reports are specific to each child. Targets give parents a good idea about what their child needs to do to improve. The range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting activities, is good. Children are supervised well during their breaks from lessons. They enjoy eating their lunch in the classrooms. It is made an enjoyable social occasion for them and is part of the school's ethos of trust. Children do not betray this trust as they know it is a privilege that can be withdrawn.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Standards are high, especially in English and mathematics at age eleven.**

- 1 Children achieve high standards in English and mathematics in National Curriculum Tests at age seven and eleven. In current work there are examples of very high standards in English and mathematics.
- 2 Children throughout the school are articulate. This is because teachers plan challenging opportunities to extend children's skills in this aspect of English. Nursery children increase their vocabulary through a wide variety of activities, which capture their interest. Adults help the children to take on the role of a travel agent by modelling the language they use or extending children's experience of holidays. Their curiosity about tadpoles encourages them to ask questions such as, 'Why don't they have legs?' Older children use words precisely to explain their ideas in an imaginative and meaningful way and convey this in their writing. For example in Year 6, one child wrote, 'instinct took over'. Debates and dramatic presentations significantly enhance children's achievements in public speaking. They present arguments clearly, justifying opinions and sustain the interest of an audience with clear diction and expression. In each subject they use particular vocabulary correctly, such as in mathematics, the words 'mode' and 'median'.
- 3 Young children love stories and quickly learn to read. Often they have made a very good start in the nursery. By the age of seven, children know many strategies to work out words they do not recognise immediately. They read regularly at home and in school. By the age of eleven, children use their skills effectively to find information from the library, CD-ROMs and the Internet. They read fluently with expression to show good understanding of the plot and the different characters.
- 4 Writing skills are taught very well across the school. Teachers give children very good advice about how to improve what they write. For example, 'You need to use the word 'too' such as 'too fast', 'too slow'. I am sure you will remember this in future'. Children are taught to form and later to join their letters correctly. Spelling is taught very well by placing strong emphasis on the sounds letters make. At age eleven, the children express their ideas confidently and imaginatively in poetry, stories, letters and reports. Written work is presented very well. Some, mostly girls, draw on imaginative vocabulary from books they have read. They spell complex words correctly and organise sentences well into paragraphs using punctuation accurately.
- 5 The strong emphasis on the acquisition of number skills in the nursery and reception gives children a very good start for their work in Year 1. They recall the addition and subtraction of numbers quickly up to and beyond 20. Much of their work is oral but written work is accurate and well presented. At age seven, children have very good knowledge of mathematical vocabulary, the properties of shapes, symmetrical shapes, fractions such as halves and quarters, numbers up to and beyond 100, weight up to 1 kilogram, capacity to 1 litre, and the recording of information as a graph. For example, recording the colours of children's eyes.
- 6 High expectations of achievement continue through the school. At age eleven, some children are working at levels normally expected in secondary school. Children have very good skills in mental arithmetic, know well, how to solve problems using algebra, work with negative numbers, draw graphs accurately and calculate the area and perimeter of complex shapes, and triangles.

- 7 High standards in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics contribute significantly to children's learning across the curriculum.

### **Excellent leadership which promotes teamwork and high standards.**

- 8 One of the main reasons for the sustained success of the school is the excellent leadership provided by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and staff. The headteacher brings a very clear vision that centres on the promotion of children's achievements and their high self-esteem and confidence in learning. This ensures children consistently achieve of their best and are proud of their efforts. Staff and children are committed to learning and have high expectations of success.
- 9 All staff and governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the challenges it faces. This results in decisive action to maintain high standards through staff changes or leave of absence. The governors have researched fully the school's long term development, looking carefully at changes to the features of the area in which it is situated. They know very well the nature of the school's intake and how this has changed over the last four years. There is an increasing number of children with special educational needs on roll. The economic circumstances of many families in the area have changed and more children have entered the school with speech and language difficulties. The school has been under pressure to increase the number of children to admit. In doing so the achievements of children in early literacy and numeracy skills on entry to school have broadened. To overcome this and give all children the very best start to their education the nursery was established three years ago. This is having a significant impact on children's achievement on entry to the reception classes. Teachers in these classes have raised their expectations of the children and build very well on the routines and children's achievements established in the nursery.
- 10 Within the school there is a strong climate for improvement. Governors, headteacher and deputy headteacher have high expectations of subject leaders who take pride in their responsibility for driving up standards. This has been very successful, especially in 1998 and 1999 where the number of children in Key Stage 2 reaching the expected standard rose much faster than in other schools. Staff reflect critically on what they can do to improve learning and develop more effective ways of teaching. This is done through detailed analysis of information about the school's performance in comparison to all and similar schools. From this, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and subject leaders:
- research and gain a very good overview of why standards are the way they are. They observe lessons, which are analysed and discussed with individual teachers. Strengths are praised while weaknesses are tackled immediately. Weak teaching is not tolerated;
  - enable teachers to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their lessons to improve practice. For example, during the inspection one teacher identified the need to improve the open nature of the questions he asked to improve children's contribution to discussions. In doing so he prepared high quality questions beginning with 'Why do you think...?' and 'How do you know that...?' in advance to ensure the discussion related clearly to the purpose of the lesson, to identify differences between fact and opinion;
  - ensure thorough and careful implementation and effectiveness of new initiatives, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to find the impact on achievement in English and mathematics throughout the school.
- 11 The school was awarded the Investors in People Award in 1997 and is seeking this recognition again. The award recognises that the school places considerable importance on teamwork and raising the skills of all staff. New teachers are introduced very well into the school to ensure policies and procedures are fully implemented. This means all staff and governors work very well together to share a common purpose and promote high standards of achievement. High

quality teachers are retained, sometimes working part-time, until they are in a position to return to full time teaching in the school. The success of the leadership and management is evident in sustained high standards.

- **The school's mission statement; 'striving to excel' is evident in all aspects of its work. The school provides a high quality climate for learning; checks children's academic progress thoroughly; offers excellent support and guidance to all children, to assist their personal development, and makes excellent provision for children with special educational needs.**

- 12 The aim of the school is reflected in its daily life and contributes strongly to high standards. Parents, governors, staff and children know how important they are to Applecroft School. All know the part they are expected to play and do their best to enable the aim 'striving to excel' to become a reality. Children know very well that the whole community values their individual contribution to the school. This stems from the headteacher's belief that learning is exciting and that each individual is important. Parents value highly the work of the headteacher in providing the high quality climate for learning. Parents at the meeting before the inspection and in written comments on the questionnaires spoke of the high regard the children have for the headteacher. One said, 'the spirit of the school just has to be felt'.
- 13 The headteacher and staff ensure that all children have opportunities to excel. This is achieved by providing rich and varied experiences in:
- children's academic work. Children are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics in Key Stage 2. This means work is very well matched to their needs and challenges them very well. Children change groups if their achievement improves or declines substantially;
  - the nursery. Children have every opportunity to demonstrate and share their developing literacy and numeracy skills. Bright children write imaginative stories and record their mathematical knowledge well;
  - residential visits to Norfolk, York and Snowdonia, where children learn to live in a small community and are challenged intellectually and physically;
  - instrumental music. Children learn to play the violin, trombone, recorder, clarinet, flute, 'cello, saxophone and become members of the school orchestra. In assemblies, children demonstrate and celebrate their developing musical skills. All children enjoy singing tunefully and with expression to reflect the mood of the song.
  - Christmas presentations. In these, children's speaking and listening, dramatic and musical skills are promoted, extended and celebrated, which enables them to build high levels of confidence and self-worth, performing in front of friends and family;
  - after school clubs such as football, lacrosse, netball, country dancing, chess, and environmental studies;
  - art work. Children use a very wide range of art materials to express their ideas from their imagination, observations of flowers or places and to work in the style of famous artists.
- 14 To enable children to achieve high standards, teachers check their progress thoroughly. Children receive very clear guidance about how to improve their work and targets are set for specific improvement. For example in Year 1, 'Try to remember your full stops and capital letters'. In Year 6, 'Work out percentages accurately'. These give children a clear view of what they must learn and provide checks for teachers when they have been completed. Children's work is marked very carefully with detailed comments about what the child has done well and what needs to be worked on. Comments such as 'Congratulations you have reached your goal!' motivate children to do their best and increase the pace of learning.
- 15 In all activities children have the opportunity to express views, opinions and ideas, which are valued. In one lesson in Year 6, children discussed facts and opinions in the debate about

capital punishment. The work scrutiny showed in depth consideration of parking problems around the school and how these might be overcome. There is no school council but children are consulted about the impact of changes in school as they affect them. For example, when classes first separated into ability groups for English and mathematics, some finished earlier than others which meant children had to wait to re-enter their classrooms and some of their playtime was lost. As a result, teachers are careful to finish lessons on time. Similarly children were asked about arrangements at lunchtime. They requested a rota where children could take it in turns to go into the hall first to get a choice of all the food on the menu. This has been introduced.

- 16 Throughout the school, children are encouraged to take on responsibility and respond in a mature manner. Younger children take pride in keeping their classroom tidy and older children are proud to prepare the hall for assembly and operate an overhead projector and CD player. On residential visits all children learn to take care of themselves and each other. Children, and parents, are confident that teachers listen to and act on concerns they have about school.
- 17 Excellent provision for children with special educational needs means these children play a full part in the life of the school. To develop children's independence, teachers and learning support assistants take great care to follow advice from a variety of specialists. Very close relationships with groups, such as MENCAP and Great Ormond Street Hospital, enable the school to enhance significantly children's mobility, communication and academic skills. Sometimes this is through the use of specialist resources, such as a 'talking computer'. Individual learning programmes for children with difficulties in literacy and numeracy are very good. These are effectively carried out by learning support assistants or incorporated into lessons in literacy and numeracy. The success of these programmes is evident in the high number of children reaching appropriate standards for their age.

**All teaching observed in the nursery was excellent. Most teaching in Year 6 and all teaching that was observed in Year 1 was very good.**

- 18 Excellent teaching in the nursery stems from thorough planning and close co-operation between all adults so that each session has a very clear purpose. Children's personal and social development pervades all activities. They make decisions about the activities that they wish to take part in, such as making dough biscuits, observing and drawing tadpoles, or working on the computer. One group of children devised their own game about designing and building houses. They brought their own toys from home to play the different roles properly. In this atmosphere, in which children's views are very important, good habits of sharing resources and playing together without argument are firmly established. They sustain their interest for long periods of time and become absorbed in activities such as painting or planting seedlings into pots. Adults make the most of all opportunities to extend children's vocabulary and confidence to express their ideas clearly. Children are eager to try out their developing literacy skills, some writing short stories based on 'The tiger who came to tea'. In this way, children are prepared very well for entry into the reception classes.
- 19 Features of very good teaching in Years 1 and 6 include:
- thorough lesson plans which identify precisely what the children are to learn in their different groups, a variety of activities and the length of each section of the lesson to ensure time is used well;
  - imaginative presentation of ideas, such as the use of a puppet in Year 1, to capture children's interest and motivate them to want to learn. For example, Lenny Lamb could not say words beginning with 'fr' correctly and the children taught him to say 'frog', 'fresh' and 'fruit' with the correct pronunciation;
  - the presentation of challenging work that makes children think hard. In Year 6, children studied the poem 'Timothy Winters' and learned quickly about the Second World War, considering vocabulary such as 'bombardier', 'blitz' and 'welfare state';
  - very good use of open questions which give the children the opportunity to explain their point of view. For example in Year 6, a teacher asked, 'How do the writers use opinion or fact to justify their views about capital punishment?';

- very good advice to the children about how they can improve their work, both in lessons and when marking their books. Children take notice of teachers' comments and spend time correcting errors. When asked, children said they found the information helpful and tried hard to avoid making similar errors;
- lessons taken at a very good pace so that children cover substantial amounts of work;
- effective and clear explanations when introducing new knowledge, especially in mathematics. Teachers often take up children's ideas and use them very well to reinforce teaching points. In doing so they clarify children's thinking and deepen their understanding;
- a sense of fun and enjoyment of learning, especially in mental arithmetic which boys find particularly challenging. This motivates children to want to do well and use their skills effectively;
- enabling children to develop their skills, especially in literacy and numeracy, systematically;
- setting homework which builds on skills learned in lessons.

20 In all the lessons observed teachers provided a very good climate for learning in their classrooms so that children felt valued and important. Displays of children's work boost their confidence and self-esteem, reflect the high standards that are achieved and provide an attractive room for children to work in. Teachers add useful labels to the displays to enable children to find words they need to spell or remember. In Year 1, one teacher made very good use of a computer to make labels for a display of plants. They reminded children what plants needed to grow and the names of the plants, such as daffodil and hyacinth.

### **Children have excellent social skills and a strong sense of moral responsibility.**

21 Children behave very well in lessons, around the school and when taking part in out of school activities. Parents are very proud of the school's very good reputation for academic achievement and behaviour in the wider community. As a result the school is over-subscribed. Parents of children with particular physical, communication and learning difficulties, speak highly of the way their children are accepted fully by others.

22 From the nursery to Year 6, children help and support each other in lessons. They often work in small groups or pairs to share their ideas. Children of all ages are fully aware of the trust that is put in them to behave well. They are often praised for their high standard of behaviour. The weather was very wet throughout the inspection. The children had little chance to play outside and disperse built up energy. Their behaviour in classrooms was impressive as they played games such as chess, drew pictures, enjoyed conversations with their friends but without constant supervision. They know that teachers respect and trust them and they do not wish to betray that trust and 'let the school down'.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The achievement of boys, especially in English, at the age of eleven.**

23 Analysis of National Curriculum test results in previous years indicates boys do better than girls in English and mathematics at age seven, but girls do better than boys in both subjects at age eleven. The school has identified this situation. Recently staff have undergone training to look at teaching methods which have greater impact on the way boys learn. In the younger classes, the range of short, sharp activities with a clear purpose is having a greater impact, allowing boys to learn at a faster rate. Much of the work is oral. Differences begin to emerge when there is a stronger emphasis on written work across the curriculum.

24 In the current Year 6, there is little evidence of a substantial difference in achievement between boys and girls in mathematics. There is a difference in English. Discussions with boys aged eleven, found that they prefer mathematics and science as these subjects are practical and

competitive. Boys state they do not enjoy writing as much, as it takes time to complete and is less interesting. The individual reading programmes especially those of older boys, show a limited range of literature. Few read demanding stories, plays, poems or non-fiction books for pleasure. This is partly because the range of fiction and non-fiction books in school has less appeal to boys. Reading record cards show that they do not change their books often enough to cover a wide range of literature over the year. The cards ought to be improved so that they provide clear targets for children to achieve, to record their progress in a meaningful way and show attention to both fiction and non-fiction books.

- 25 The school has taken positive steps to improve boys' enthusiasm for English. For example, in one literacy session the teacher chose Shakespeare's 'Seven Ages of Man' and children wrote a version from their own point of view. In order to appeal to girls, the work included their version of the 'Seven Ages of Women'. However, this is not yet raising boys' achievements fast enough and more work is needed to promote achievement of older boys in English.

### **Standards in information and communication technology and its use to enhance learning across the curriculum.**

- 26 The school's efforts to raise standards in information and communication technology, especially in Key Stage 2, have been frustrated by technical problems and lack of resources to give all children enough time to develop their skills. The school has kept the resources it has up to date. It has recently been awarded money to build a room in which children can have regular whole class lessons in information and communication technology. It is intended to provide sufficient computers for children to learn computer skills quickly and use them immediately. At present teachers are showing particular skills to individuals who then share them with other members of the class. Occasionally, teachers demonstrate something new, such as, how to connect to the Internet, to the whole class. Children watch, but their lack of involvement makes it hard for them to remember what they have been shown.
- 27 At age seven, children use computers to draw pictures linked to their work in art, learn to spell and write simple sentences, which they present using different colours and styles of text. At eleven, children know how to use the Internet to find information about sculptors such as Henry Moore. They word process stories but make little use of spelling or grammar checks or other resources, such as pictures or different styles of text, to enhance their work. In mathematics, children use a program for drawing shapes, which draws on their knowledge and application of angles. However, the children have not covered sufficient work, as outlined in national guidelines for the subject, to give them in depth subject knowledge and skills. For example, children make little use of spreadsheets to compile graphs and interpret data.
- 28 The lack of time for work on computers makes it hard for children to develop skills systematically. Many children have computers at home but skills acquired there are not used enough in schoolwork, except in the use of the Internet. To emphasise the importance of electronic mail, children have sent e-mails to friends and family and received replies.
- 29 The school is currently evaluating the way in which computers can be used to best effect to enhance learning in both computer skills and learning across the curriculum. This process needs to be completed quickly so that teachers can improve provision for children in school at the present time. Teachers agree that their confidence and subject knowledge needs to be improved before they can make the most of new resources.

### **The way children are asked to record their work in mathematics in Years 2 and 3.**

- 30 National Curriculum Test results in mathematics are well above average at age seven when compared to all schools. In comparison to similar schools, results are above average. At age eleven, results are well above average when compared to all and similar schools. Children are very good at mental arithmetic, mathematical investigations, problem solving and know much about shapes and measurement.



- 31 Challenging, high quality work, which makes it easy for teachers to check children's progress in the acquisition of mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding is found in individual workbooks in all year groups. However, in Years 2 and 3, children are asked to complete worksheets, which require filling in the missing number or colouring in pictures. Recording the work this way makes it hard for children to show what they know and can do and for teachers to decide what children need to do next. The tasks on the worksheets make it more difficult for children to reinforce the strategies they need, to work accurately in other aspects of mathematics.

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

- 32 The headteacher, governors and staff should build on the many strengths of the school to:
- (1) Improve achievement of boys in English, especially at the end of Key Stage 2, by:
    - reviewing and discussing with the children ways to make writing more appealing;
    - tailoring children's individual reading programmes so that they read a wider range of literature;
    - increasing the range of fiction and non-fiction books, especially those which appeal to boys;
    - making the reading record card meaningful, so that it provides clear targets for children to achieve;
  
  - (2) Promote higher standards of achievement in information and communication technology, especially in Key Stage 2, and use it to enhance learning across the curriculum. This can be done by:
    - raising teachers' knowledge and skills in information and communication technology so that children are challenged according to national guide lines about what children should learn and when;
    - providing more opportunities for children to use computers in literacy and numeracy as well as other areas of the curriculum;
    - completing planned evaluations to make the best use of available and future resources;
  
  - (3) Reduce the number of worksheets, which require children to colour in or fill in the missing numbers especially in Years 2 and 3. This is to enable the children to record their work in an interesting way and reinforce the skills and knowledge they are learning.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	6

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11%	47%	21%	21%	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)	30	497
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	29

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	150

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	24

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.4
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	34	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	31	33
	Girls	30	30	30
	Total	61	61	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	94 (97)	97 (97)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	33	33
	Girls	30	30	31
	Total	61	63	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (96)	97 (97)	98 (100)
	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	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	22
	Girls	36	35	35
	Total	52	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (78)	93 (77)	98 (82)
	National	70 (64)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	19	20
	Girls	35	34	34
	Total	50	53	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (77)	91 (82)	91 (88)
	National	68 (64)	69 (64)	75 (70)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	7
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	319
Any other minority ethnic group	18

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29.1
Average class size	31.1

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.5
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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	1998
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	£
Total income	751,728
Total expenditure	765,538
Expenditure per pupil	1566
Balance brought forward from previous year	88,483
Balance carried forward to next year	74,653

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	560
Number of questionnaires returned	282

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	41	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	47	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	50	13	1	4
The teaching is good.	52	44	0	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	45	12	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	38	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	42	45	12	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	34	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	38	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	39	15	1	18