

INSPECTION REPORT

WOOTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wootton

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121875

Headteacher: Mrs Lorraine Schofield

Reporting inspector: Elisabeth de Lancey
22272

Dates of inspection: 11 – 12 June 2001

Inspection number: 190565

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | High Street Wootton |
| Postcode: | Northampton NN4 6LW |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Dr R. H. Carter |
| Date of previous inspection: | 2 – 5 December 1996 |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wootton Primary School is situated on the southern edge of Northampton and serves the villages of Wootton, Wootton Fields, Quinton and Courteenhall. It caters for pupils between the ages of four and eleven. It is located in an area where unemployment is below the national average. It is bigger than other primary schools with a current roll of 299 pupils of whom 154 are girls and 145 are boys. Since the last inspection a new school has been built in the area and the pupil roll is slightly smaller. Pupils are admitted to the school in the autumn term following their fourth birthday. They are organised into two single-aged reception classes and nine mixed-aged classes. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school, measured by their performance in base-line assessments, is average. The school's population is predominantly white British. Five per cent of pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic groups which include black, black-African heritage and Chinese. Although a few pupils speak English as an additional language, only one is at an early stage of language acquisition. The number of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Of the 82 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, for a variety of moderate learning difficulties and behavioural problems, four have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a successful school which has made considerable improvements during the past year. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics. The overall quality of teaching is good and pupils are enthusiastic learners. There is a variation in the quality of teaching within the key stages and as a result progress varies. The school has effective strategies to promote educational inclusion and equal opportunities for all pupils. It is very well led by the headteacher and key staff who are supported by an effective governing body. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement, and the targets set are ambitious but realistic. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain high standards in reading and mathematics.
- The pupils' good attitudes to school contribute significantly to their high achievements.
- The quality of teaching is good overall; in some lessons it is excellent.
- The close links with parents greatly enhance pupils' learning.
- The headteacher and key staff offer strong leadership and give the school a clear vision for development.
- Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage which gives them an effective basis for future learning.

What could be improved

- The range of writing at Key Stage 1 and pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation at Key Stage 2.
- The development and consolidation of recent gains in pupils' capability in information and communication technology.
- The implementation of the school's teaching and learning policy to ensure that the best teaching methods are shared to achieve high standards of learning across all classes.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996 and a number of significant weaknesses were identified at that time. Most of these have been addressed and many are now areas of strengths. Issues relating to health and safety have been fully addressed. Governors fulfil their statutory requirements. Assessment procedures are now very good and data is used very effectively to identify individual pupils or groups of pupils who need further support or who need further challenge. There is strong senior management team and its members have clear roles and responsibilities. High standards have been maintained and the quality of teaching has improved, largely because of a good programme of staff development. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is better and there

are more opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and traditions. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved markedly, pupils' capability is better, staff are currently undergoing training and standards have improved.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | Compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|--|
| | All schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 | |
| English | A | C | A | B | well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E |
| mathematics | A | C | A | C | |
| science | A | C | B | C | |

The most recent National Curriculum test results for eleven-year olds represent a significant improvement over the previous year when standards in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science dipped from their previously high levels. Compared with all schools pupils' results were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. The school's targets, based on current assessments of pupils' attainment, indicate that standards are likely to be maintained this year.

Pupils' results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year olds also improved. Compared with all schools pupils' results in reading and mathematics were well above average and were above average in writing. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results were well above average in mathematics, above average in reading, and average in writing. At both key stages, pupils' results in writing were lower than those in reading.

Inspection evidence confirms that pupils of all abilities are achieving well and making good progress. High standards in reading and mathematics have been maintained but there is scope for further improvement in writing. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning and many exceed them. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good: pupils respond enthusiastically to the learning opportunities they are offered. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good: pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The occasional distracting behaviour of a few pupils in Year 6 sometimes slows the pace of lessons. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good: all members of the school community are considerate to one another. Pupils are confident and self-reliant. They take their responsibilities seriously. |
| Attendance | Very good: it is above the national average and there is very little unauthorised absence. |

The school successfully promotes self-worth and respect for others. Pupils work and play well together, learning the skills of collaboration with the encouragement of the staff with whom they

sustain very good relationships. They support and help one another in class. Their attitudes to work and their good behaviour make a significant contribution to the high standards they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in the school is good overall. There is some very good teaching at each key stage and, in some lessons at Key Stage 1, it is excellent. The quality of teaching varies from class to class but it is good overall and only one instance of unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching was graded excellent in nine per cent of lessons, very good in a further nine per cent, good in 50 per cent, satisfactory in 27 per cent and unsatisfactory in the remaining five per cent. Examples of high quality teaching were seen in English and mathematics at both key stages. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was consistently good, with the support assistant making a significant contribution. Whilst pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced satisfactorily across the subjects of the curriculum, the school recognises that there is scope for further improvement.

Teachers are very successful in planning lessons and use assessment well to inform that planning. Basic skills are taught systematically following the guidance from the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. In the most successful teaching, staff have high expectations of their pupils and pupils respond well because they know what to do and how to do it successfully. Questions are used skilfully to engage and challenge pupils of all abilities and discussions at the end of lessons are used well to reinforce and extend what has been learned. Not all lessons are of this high quality, in some, lessons objectives are not clear, teachers do not use the group sessions effectively to guide pupils' learning and plenary sessions are not used constructively to consolidate learning and inform planning. Individual targets for literacy and numeracy are shared with parents and pupils are proud of their achievements. Staff sustain very good relationships with their pupils and provide valuable opportunities for them to work together. Support assistants give effective help to pupils in their care to ensure that they are included in all activities and to enable them to make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good: the school provides a broad curriculum which offers many interesting and stimulating learning opportunities. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. A good range of additional activities and educational visits is offered which extends pupils' experiences and understanding. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good: pupils receive additional support from teachers and learning support assistants which helps them to make good progress and ensures that they are included in all school activities. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good: the school provides a welcoming environment. There are very good opportunities for pupils to acquire new vocabulary through participation in a wide range of activities. When appropriate, additional support is provided from specialist teachers. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good: the provision for all aspects of pupils' personal development is good. The school is very successful at promoting pupils' confidence and self-esteem. |

| | |
|--|--|
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Good: staff demonstrate a high level of consideration and care. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are very good and their health, safety and welfare are given a high priority. |
|--|--|

The school has reviewed the timetable and makes effective use of the time available during the school day.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good: the headteacher and key staff offer strong leadership and have a clear vision for the development of the school. They monitor standards effectively and are committed to raising achievement through educational inclusion. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Good: the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. It plays an active part in shaping the direction of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Very good: the school successfully monitors and evaluates its progress. It makes very good use of comparative information to enable all pupils to benefit from the provision it offers. This has a positive impact on the achievement of pupils. |
| The strategic use of resources | Very good: financial planning is very good, and educational priorities are appropriately funded. Spending decisions are made according to the principles of best value. |

The headteacher, senior management team, literacy and numeracy co-ordinators play a very positive role in guiding the work of the staff. The headteacher and co-ordinators evaluate effectively the quality of teaching and learning. The school deploys its staff and resources well and good use is made of their individual strengths.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • Their children are making good progress. • The school expects their children to work hard. • They feel comfortable approaching the school. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The improvement in the partnership with parents. • The celebratory assemblies, and coffee afterwards. • The 'Look at my work evenings'. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More activities provided outside lessons. • The amount of homework given. |

The inspection evidence supports the positive comments made by parents. The range of activities outside lessons and the amount of homework pupils are asked to do compares well with that in most similar schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils attain high standards in reading and mathematics

1. The children's attainment on entry to the reception class represents a wide range of ability but is average overall. Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress and most children are likely to reach or exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development by the end of the reception year.
2. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils' results were well above average in reading and mathematics. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results were above average in reading and mathematics.
3. In the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds, pupils' results were well above average in English and mathematics. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results were above average in English and average in mathematics. The results for seven-and eleven-year olds show a significant improvement from the previous year when standards fell from their former high levels. This was because of the higher number of pupils with special educational needs in both years.
4. The recent rise in standards follows determined efforts by the school, supported by funding from the local authority, to raise standards. In-service training, analysis of pupils' work and of test results have helped identify pupils in need of extra help. Additional literacy and numeracy support is given to these pupils. In Year 6, pupils have the advantage of working in smaller groups with those of a similar ability to ensure that they fulfil their potential in English and mathematics. The school's targets, based on the school's analysis of current attainment, indicate that the higher standards are likely to be maintained this year.
5. Pupils achieve particularly well at the higher level. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the proportion of seven-year-olds gaining level 3, which is above that expected of pupils of their age, was above average in reading and well above average in mathematics. Similarly, the proportion of eleven-year-olds reaching level 5, which is above expected level, was well above average in English and above average in mathematics.
6. Inspection evidence broadly reflects the national test results. Throughout the school pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Their skills in reading and mathematics are particularly strong and reflect the good quality of much of the teaching observed. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
7. The school's strategies to promote inclusion encompass positive support for all pupils. Lessons and, where appropriate, withdrawal sessions for extension work in English and additional support for English and mathematics are well structured to meet the specific needs of pupils and to enable them make good progress. In Year 6, the school has taken action to challenge the higher-attaining pupils, to encourage them to take more initiative and it provides extra help for those pupils who would benefit from carefully targeted teaching to secure the expected level in the national tests.

8. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support to encourage good behaviour and to improve their skills in literacy and numeracy. As a result, they meet the targets set in their individual education plans. Teachers take care to ensure that the work they give them is matched to their individual needs. They benefit from the additional learning materials including those from the National Literacy Strategy that are designed for their particular needs.
9. In reading, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. Pupils are enthusiastic readers who talk confidently about the books they are reading. They read aloud accurately, with good expression using different ways to work out the words they do not know. This is because teachers demonstrate how to read expressively, teach them a range of strategies to help them read new words and present reading as an enjoyable activity. Pupils take books home regularly to read to their parents and there is good communication through the reading diary. Parents are fully aware of their children's targets and this liaison between home and school is making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
10. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are well above average in reading. This is because teachers promote the pleasures of reading, they help pupils extend their range of reading material and develop their understanding of significant ideas, themes and characters. Many pupils are keen readers who read extensively at home and are frequent library users. Pupils in Year 6 talk lucidly about the plot and characters of an impressive range of popular and classic fiction by a variety of authors. Many are reading the latest Harry Potter book by J.K. Rowling. Their favourite authors include Jacqueline Wilson, Philip Pullman and J.R.R. Tolkien. They develop advanced reading skills such as skimming and scanning, and their research skills are good. Pupils have a wide vocabulary and are confident speaking and reading aloud to a range of audiences.
11. In mathematics, pupils attain high standards by the end of each key stage. Seven-year-olds, for example rapidly add and subtract simple numbers in their heads, recall doubles and order three digits to make the smallest or biggest number. Higher-attaining pupils explain confidently the way they calculate their answers. By the time they are eleven, pupils have developed a good range of mental computational strategies which they apply successfully to everyday situations. They collect discrete data and use a frequency table to record their findings. They use the mode and range correctly to describe their work and construct simple line graphs accurately. Higher-attaining pupils understand and use the probability concepts effectively to predict likely outcomes.

The pupils' good attitudes to school contribute significantly to their high achievements

12. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They enjoy their work and are keen to learn, responding well to the stimulating and challenging activities which are offered in a high proportion of lessons. They are keen to contribute their ideas to class and group discussions. Pupils settle to work well sustaining good levels of concentration.
13. From an early age, pupils work well both on their own and with one another, learning the skills of collaboration with the encouragement of the teaching staff. The youngest pupils listen intently, wait for their turn and work and play sensibly together. Older

pupils work constructively in pairs; for example, they share equipment sensibly and discuss their work productively with one another.

14. Pupils greatly appreciate the opportunities to take part in out-of-school activities. All of these are well attended. Some, such as the production of a school newspaper and the model motor racing club have been formed at their own suggestion. They speak enthusiastically about aspects of school they particularly enjoy, such as residential visits, school trips and visits to the theatre.

The quality of teaching is good overall; in some lessons it is excellent

15. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. The successful introduction of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation procedures to judge the effectiveness of teaching and learning is helping staff raise the quality of educational provision. The variation in standards at both key stages is recognised by the school. The implementation of a teaching and learning policy is the next planned step to address this inconsistency and to raise teaching standards even further. The staff's commitment to its effective implementation strengthens this drive for improvement. During the inspection, teaching was judged to be good across the school. The quality of teaching was graded excellent in nine per cent of lessons, very good in a further nine per cent, good in 50 per cent, satisfactory in 27 per cent and unsatisfactory in the remaining five per cent. Examples of high quality teaching were seen in English and mathematics at both Key Stages. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was consistently good with the support assistant making a significant contribution to the good teaching seen.
16. The teachers' planning is consistent and thorough; it makes good use of assessment information. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Support assistants know what is expected of them, they maintain good partnerships with teachers and offer effective help and encouragement to pupils. This is underpinned by the warm relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, pupils feel secure, and are confident answering questions or admitting that they do not understand.
17. The most successful teaching is characterised by clear and explicit learning objectives which are carefully explained to pupils and reviewed at the end of the lesson. These lessons begin with lively introductions that capture and sustain pupils' interest and secure a strong commitment to learning. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and achievements. They use robust questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to engage and challenge pupils of all abilities. They ensure each of them is actively involved in all aspects of the lesson. They conduct high quality end-of-lesson plenary sessions to assess pupils' learning, to help pupils recognise their achievements and what they must do to improve further. As a result, pupils have good knowledge of their own learning.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Teachers and support staff work closely together to set these pupils tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty. Consequently, they achieve well and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
19. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility and provide good opportunities for them to work independently. In the Foundation Stage, for example, the teachers expected the children to collect their own kit for physical education, change, and occupy themselves usefully while waiting for others. In Year 2, higher-attaining pupils

are encouraged to use their research skills by formulating questions related to their topic and then to find the answers by using the index and contents pages of relevant books. Teachers make good use of pupils' contributions to consolidate basic skills. A teacher, in Year 3, asked pupils to explain how they calculated their answers and then reinforced their responses with supplementary questions: 'Why did you start with that amount? Which total is the greater? What happens if ...?' Teachers select interesting books to develop pupils' reading and comprehension skills. In Year 6, for example, a teacher used Alan Gibbons book 'Whose side are you on?' very successfully to explore the role of narrator and to help pupils recognise how an author manipulates words for effect.

The close links with parents greatly enhance the pupils' learning

20. Parents are very satisfied with the education provided by the school and the progress made by their children. They report, for example, that their children like coming to school. They experience it as a friendly, caring community where their children are encouraged to work hard and achieve their best, and where they are helped to become mature and responsible. They report that their children's behaviour is good. They appreciate the good quality of much of the teaching and the high standard of leadership provided by the headteacher and key staff. Most parents feel that the school works closely with them and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or concerns. The positive views of parents are endorsed by the findings of the inspection.
21. Parents are kept well informed about the school's activities and they receive useful information in regular newsletters. In addition to the school prospectus, the governors' annual report to parents, and pupils' annual reports, each half term parents are given an outline of work to be covered in order to help them support their children. There are many opportunities for parents to make formal and informal contacts with the school. Parents' evenings are held termly. They particularly welcome the 'Look at My Work Evening' and the celebration assemblies to which they are invited which include an opportunity to talk informally over coffee afterwards.
22. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their children's progress through regular meetings, reviews of individual education programmes and reports. The close links with parents and external agencies help underpin the good quality provision for these pupils.
23. New parents and their children are well prepared for school and the quality of information they receive is good. The school provides valuable opportunities for them to visit and to meet staff and, as a result, their children settle quickly to the routines of the Reception Class. Similarly, good arrangements are made for the transfer of pupils to secondary schools.
24. The staff value the contribution parents make and the impact of parental involvement on pupils' learning is very good. A considerable number of parents are involved in school life in a variety of ways. Some help in the classroom, others with fund raising, outdoor activities, or residential visits. The school's well-planned use of homework enables parents to be involved in their child's learning.
25. Parents contribute to the school improvement plan and through the very active School Association raise significant funds for the school. These have been used effectively to support the school's priorities to help fund the new computer suite and

to enhance the school's environment. Parents are impressed by the school's support for their work and their involvement in making decisions about the way the money they raise is spent.

The headteacher and key staff offer strong leadership and give the school a clear vision for development

26. The decisive leadership and clear, incisive management of the headteacher have helped the school to sustain a good pace of improvement during her first year. She has a clear vision for the school and motivates everyone to work towards it. Her effective restructuring of the school's strategic planning process and the production of a fully costed and assessable three-year school improvement plan are a testimony of this. In response to the extensive consultation process this involved, the senior management team, key staff and governors have helped the headteacher in raising expectations and developing effective management procedures throughout the school. A notable feature is the way that all members of the school community have been involved in the search for further improvements. The headteacher values these contributions and recognises they are essential to the school's growth. As a result, staff and governors work together constructively for the good of the school and effectively in their different teams to fulfil their responsibilities. All are proud of the school's success, and conscientious in their efforts to raise standards further. In 1999, the school was successful in achieving Investors in People status, the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and the Healthy School's Silver Award.
27. The headteacher has taken a key role in the introduction of an effective system for the monitoring of teaching and learning. This initiative has helped the school to identify areas of strength and weakness. It has raised the staff's awareness of the need for greater consistency in the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils are enabled to learn effectively, in particular in some aspects of the teaching of English and mathematics. The developing teaching and learning policy is helping the school to focus on this issue. The monitoring and evaluation programme's explicit aim continually to improve pupils' learning is understood fully by all staff and governors, and each is clear about their role in that process. The co-ordinator for special educational needs works closely with colleagues to ensure that these pupils have the right blend of support and challenge so that they learn effectively and have access to all aspects of the curriculum. The roles of the subject co-ordinators are clearly defined, and targets are set and regularly reviewed. Time is made available for them to monitor those areas for which they have responsibility. They review teachers' planning, scrutinise pupils' work and participate in a planned programme of lesson observation. The assessment co-ordinator analyses the test results and these are used to set targets for groups and individual pupils. The governors monitor the quality of teaching through detailed, termly reports from the headteacher.
28. The importance the school attaches to raising standards overall is reflected in the governing body's proposals for its own development which are clearly set out in the school improvement plan. These well-informed governors have a clear understanding of the school. To fulfil their statutory duties successfully they make full use of the headteacher's advice and guidance and the support they receive from the senior management team and subject co-ordinators. All governors have defined responsibilities which they carry out diligently, drawing on their own wide-ranging personal and professional expertise. Individuals have accepted the role of nominated governor for various aspects of the curriculum such as literacy and special educational needs. Through their successful fulfilment of their roles as critical friends

and in their oversight of standards they have confirmed the school's commitment to educational inclusion and equal opportunities. They have a clear vision for the school underpinned by their adherence to the principles of best value, and the thoroughness of their financial management which was acknowledged recently in the auditor's report.

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage which gives them an effective basis for future learning

29. Children have good opportunities to become familiar with their new surroundings and the routines of the school before they are admitted at the beginning of the year before their fifth birthday. They are therefore well prepared to start school feeling confident and secure.
30. The provision in all areas of learning is good. A wide range of imaginative and stimulating activities is offered, some initiated by the teachers and others which children choose for themselves. The learning environment is colourful and exciting. Planning and assessment procedures are very thorough and the children are encouraged to reflect upon their achievements. The quality of teaching is consistently good and the children receive sensitive support from all staff. As a result, children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, they are likely to have reached or exceeded the early learning goals in all areas of learning and some children will be working at the early stages of the National Curriculum.
31. There is a strong emphasis on the children's personal, social and emotional development and the importance of making decisions for themselves in order to promote their growing independence. The children demonstrate a very good level of maturity and independence for their age and this is shown as they confidently select their own activities and concentrate well on those initiated by adults. They play well together and have excellent relationships with the adults with whom they work. The children are eager to learn and to demonstrate what they can do. Their enjoyment of learning is apparent in all their work. They show a good awareness of the needs of others; for example, in knowing how to take turns, to share equipment and to offer help when needed. Their behaviour is excellent.
32. Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy through well-planned activities related to the appropriate objectives in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and through the language-rich environment of the reception classes. The children experiment with, practise and apply their communication and language learning across a wide range of play and practical activities. They develop very good skills in speaking and listening. They listen well to their teachers giving instructions, explaining procedures and reading stories and they respond enthusiastically. For example, there were squeals of delight when the children listened to a taped version of the story of 'Titch' and realised that it was their teacher's voice. They recall the stories they have heard accurately, sequencing events correctly and describing characters and their actions well. Most children form letters correctly and write their names accurately. They recognise and order the letters of the alphabet and know the sound they make. They read a good range of familiar words and take their reading books home regularly to share with their parents.

33. Role-play areas are linked effectively to the class topic and are imaginatively planned to encourage children to exchange ideas, develop their communication skills and enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world. The children design attractive seed packets to sell in their garden centre. Pupils' reading and writing benefits from the display of stimulating language materials, such as labels, captions, vocabulary lists and 'class' books which include examples of children's writing.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The range of writing at Key Stage 1 and pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation at Key Stage 2.

34. Although standards in writing at both key stages have improved, they are still lower than those in reading and could be better. Improvement is due largely to the staff's increased emphasis on the teaching of writing and the effective use of the guidance and additional materials from the National Literacy Strategy.
35. By the age of seven, most pupils write in simple sentences which are correctly punctuated and use their knowledge of sounds to spell simple words accurately. Pupils have good opportunities to write recounts of significant events in their lives and stories to entertain. Higher-attaining pupils often write at length in response to stories they have read. However, teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to write independently for a range of purposes, and in some classes there is too much emphasis on pupils completing written exercises which have a limited effect on their development as writers. There are a few examples of pupils applying and developing their writing skills, and writing for different purposes in other subjects. For example, in one excellent lesson, a group of higher-attaining pupils were writing their own questions about mini-beasts, then using information books correctly to find the answers. The school recognises that it needs to extend these opportunities, to teach the full range of writing identified in the National Curriculum and to consolidate and extend the writing skills learned in literacy in other subjects.
36. At Key Stage 2, pupils write for a good range of purposes and they are good at recognising the key features of a range of genres. This is because teachers have focused on the features of different types of writing. For the oldest pupils during the current year, this included play-scripts, stories, descriptive pieces, poetry, arguments and instructions. In one very good lesson, the oldest pupils collaborated in groups to write a play. Their writing was lively, the layout correct, and dialogue used imaginatively to engage the reader. Pupils organise their work well using paragraphs appropriately to structure their writing. Their punctuation skills are generally good, but spelling is weak and there are inconsistencies in the extent to which pupils join their handwriting. Teachers' expectations of the presentation of written work are not sufficiently high.

The development and consolidation of recent gains in pupils' capability in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

37. Since the last inspection there have been major improvements in the provision for information and communication technology. However, pupils' standards of attainment need to be raised further. The school has recently acquired a well-resourced computer suite which is networked and housed in a central area. It allows whole classes to be taught together and enables all pupils to have regular lessons. The school plans its use carefully, with each class having short sessions to develop pupils'

computer capability and longer sessions for pupils to draw on these skills to develop their learning in other subjects. Additional computers have been set up to support pupils' work in classrooms. Already these arrangements are having a decisive impact on pupils' achievements. There is a useful policy to guide teachers' planning which incorporates internet and acceptable use statements, and a structured scheme of work based on a nationally published programme. An audit of teachers' information and communication technology skills has been completed and staff are currently undertaking a comprehensive training package to raise their confidence and expertise. The school plans to increase its range of computer programs. Assessment is also identified as an area for development. The school is aware of the shortcomings in the subject but these two areas do not yet have a sufficiently high priority to promote the raising of standards.

38. The pupils successfully use the limited range of programs to produce and communicate their ideas in text and pictures, including spreadsheets and CD-ROMs. For example, Year 6 pupils type to screen and combine pictures and text to produce illustrated reference material and an informative weekly school newspaper. At each key stage sound use is made of a range of technology including tape-recorders, calculators, videos and a variety of cameras, including digital models. Pupils use a standard keyboard and mouse effectively, and save, retrieve and print their own work confidently; the younger pupils with help from an adult. There are still too few planned opportunities given to pupils for them to use information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects. Nonetheless, there are some good examples such as in Year 2, where pupils used a graphics program imaginatively to develop their use of colour, line and shape to prepare them for painting pictures in the style of Mondrian. Overall, the opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology are not broad enough to provide an adequate development of the required skills and understanding to reach expected standards. For example, pupils do not pursue sufficient activities, throughout the school, to develop systematically their skills in controlling equipment effectively, monitoring simple environmental changes and exploring decision making in a range of contexts.

The implementation of the school's teaching and learning policy to ensure that the best teaching methods are shared to achieve high standards of learning across all classes.

39. The school has recognised that standards of teaching and learning are inconsistent across the school. In order to identify the features of the best practice, the headteacher and subject co-ordinators have observed lessons in all classes. The very good practice identified in some areas has not yet been sufficiently promoted and modelled to raise the standards of all teaching and learning to that of the best. The headteacher, in collaboration with staff, has written a teaching and learning policy to support the raising of the standards of teaching, and to improve the consistency of practice across the school. The school has rightly recognised the importance of releasing teachers to observe and support their colleagues.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40. The inspection team endorses the school's current improvement programme as detailed in the school improvement plan. The following areas were also identified by the inspection team.

(1) Improve the quality of writing throughout the school by:

- increasing the range of writing at Key Stage 1;
- consolidating and extending the writing skills learned in literacy in other subjects;
- raising pupils' standards of spelling, presentation and handwriting at Key Stage 2.

(2) Raise standards further in ICT by:

- continuing to develop more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects;
- broadening the curriculum to include a systematic development of the use of control and monitoring technology and the exploration of decision making.

(3) Implement the school's teaching and learning policy:

- to ensure that the best teaching methods are shared to achieve high standards of learning across all classes.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 22 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 14 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 9 | 9 | 50 | 27 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | N/A | 299 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | N/A | 12 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | N/A | 4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | N/A | 82 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 7 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 31 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 12 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.9 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.1 |
| 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 |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2000 | 20 | 19 | 39 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 19 | 18 | 20 |
| | Girls | 17 | 17 | 18 |
| | Total | 36 | 35 | 38 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 92 (90) | 90 (88) | 97 (95) |
| | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83) | 90 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 18 | 20 | 19 |
| | Girls | 17 | 18 | 16 |
| | Total | 35 | 38 | 35 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 90 (88) | 97 (93) | 90 (88) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 88 (86) | 88 (87) |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2000 | 22 | 31 | 53 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 15 | 19 | 21 |
| | Girls | 26 | 26 | 28 |
| | Total | 41 | 45 | 49 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 77 (73) | 85 (73) | 92 (86) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 12 | 13 | 17 |
| | Girls | 25 | 24 | 25 |
| | Total | 37 | 37 | 42 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 70 (70) | 70 (75) | 79 (79) |
| | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69) | 79 (75) |

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 | 2 |
| Black – other | 3 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 2 |
| White | 252 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 5 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 13 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 23 |
| Average class size | 27.2 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 9 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 133 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | N/A |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | N/A |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | N/A |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | N/A |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | N/A |
|--------------------------------|-----|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999-2000 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 547,246 |
| Total expenditure | 551,712 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,833 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 23,130 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 18,664 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 299 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 105 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 60 | 33 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 42 | 48 | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 30 | 56 | 12 | 1 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 27 | 50 | 18 | 3 | 3 |
| The teaching is good. | 48 | 41 | 8 | 1 | 3 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 33 | 48 | 14 | 3 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 63 | 30 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 55 | 40 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 28 | 57 | 11 | 1 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 43 | 47 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 50 | 42 | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 24 | 39 | 22 | 7 | 9 |