

INSPECTION REPORT

PORTISHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Portishead

LEA area: North Somerset

Unique reference number: 109074

Headteacher: Mr M Scriven

Reporting inspector: Mrs J M Jones
23097

Dates of inspection: 3 - 5 April 2000

Inspection number: 190657

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Slade Road Portishead Bristol
Postcode:	BS20 6BD
Telephone number:	01275 843360
Fax number:	01275 843360
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Heath
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Mrs J M Jones	Registered inspector
Mr J Zachary	Lay inspector
Mrs V Emery	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Zachary Associates
23 White Cliff Mill Street
Blandford
Dorset
DT11 7BQ

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Portishead Primary School is a community school for 184 pupils aged 4 to 11 years old. It is slightly smaller than most other primary schools but the numbers are rising steadily and a new eleven-class school is planned for 2002. In national socio-economic terms the intake is above average. About five per cent of pupils claim free school meals, which is below the national average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language and very few from ethnic minority communities. There are 28 pupils on the register of special educational needs with a wide range of needs. Four pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The overall attainment of children on entry exceeds what is expected for children of their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in raising standards. By the time pupils leave school their attainment exceeds national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Despite the poor accommodation, which restricts the quality and range of their learning opportunities, the pupils achieve well because they have positive attitudes to their work and are well taught. The leadership and management have a shared commitment to further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading, mathematics and science are high because teaching is challenging.
- There is much good and often very good teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, with the result that the pupils make good progress.
- The headteacher and staff have a shared sense of purpose and work very well as a team to create a positive and caring ethos with the result that the pupils are very eager to come to school. The pupils are keen to learn and are interested in their work. They have very good relationships with each other, behave well and are very mature for their age.
- The leadership and management are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified through the school improvement plan the right priorities for continuing to raise the pupils' standards.
- The school successfully promotes a strong partnership with parents who are very supportive of the school and make a valuable contribution to their children's learning.

What could be improved

- Standards of writing, including spelling, and information technology are not as high as they should be. The requirements of the National Curriculum are not met in information technology.
- The quality of curricular planning is very variable through the school. Teachers' lesson planning does not always identify specific learning objectives and ensure that work is set to meet pupils' differing needs.
- Teachers' assessments are not sufficiently accurate to provide a clear picture of pupils' attainment and to enable challenging but achievable targets to be set for individual pupils and year groups.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of agreed policies, curricular planning, the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work are not systematic, formal and rigorous enough to ensure consistency through the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in November 1996, results in Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science have risen at a faster rate than national trends, especially in mathematics and science. However, standards in writing have fallen. At the end of Key Stage 1,

the proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the nationally expected level has risen in reading and writing and has remained high in mathematics. The quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning have remained good. The governors and headteacher continue to provide effective leadership and the very good partnership with parents has been maintained.

The school has made satisfactory overall progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous inspection. The quality of written reports to parents about their children's progress and of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs has improved. Although the recently appointed deputy headteacher does not yet have regular management time, her current priority is to teach her class, as is appropriate at this stage. The school has worked hard to address the concerns about health and safety and conducts regular checks. The situation has worsened since the fire but plans are now in place to replace the classroom that was destroyed. It has not been possible for the school to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum for physical education are covered because of the lack of indoor facilities for teaching dance and gymnastics. The school compensates for this deficiency by concentrating on games and outdoor activities that can be taught, such as handball. A temporary classroom was converted into a library but the increase in pupil numbers necessitated its change of use to a teaching area. The school has not been successful in ensuring that the National Curriculum requirements for information technology are met and this remains a key issue.

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	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	B	B	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	B	A	B	
science	C	C	A	A	

This information shows, for example, that in 1999, standards in English were above average compared with schools nationally and in line with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The work of Year 6 pupils that was seen by the inspection team confirmed that standards in reading, mathematics and science exceed national expectations but are in line with them in writing and spelling. In 1999, the school exceeded its targets for English and met them in mathematics. Targets for 2000 are very challenging and will be hard to achieve. In the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 1, when compared with national results, pupils' scores were well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and average in writing. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is in line with national expectations in English and mathematics. This is not as high as that of last year's cohort but an analysis of the pupils' results in the baseline assessments shows that they have made good progress through Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, pupils' skills are good in number, reading, handwriting, speaking and listening but are not as well developed in writing and spelling. Standards in information technology are low because pupils have had too few opportunities to use computers. Handball is a particular strength of the school. The school teams perform well in the national championships.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are well motivated and apply effort to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are friendly, courteous and trustworthy. They behave well at playtime despite the difficulties caused by the cramped playground and the poor working conditions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There is a real sense of a school community within which pupils are valued and feel confident.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive promptly.

The pupils' attitudes to their learning and behaviour were never less than satisfactory and were good or better in nearly nine in ten lessons seen. They enjoy challenges, listen attentively to each other and their teachers and persevere with their work. Even the pupils working in the hall sustain concentration well in lessons. Exclusions have been used appropriately.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed, good or better in 64 per cent and very good in 11 per cent. All teachers contributed to the good teaching and in Key Stage 2, teaching was consistently good in English, mathematics and science. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which all teachers establish very good relationships with pupils based on mutual respect. They manage pupils well, often using humour and making deliberate mistakes to maintain pupils' interest. They teach basic skills effectively and explain tasks and concepts clearly. Teaching is most effective when teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils, make good use of additional adults, tailor questions to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and expect pupils to explain their answers clearly. Weaker aspects of teaching are the quality of teachers' normal lesson planning and learning objectives that are too broad. In the reception class and Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils are not always set work that challenges them. Most teachers complete marking conscientiously but it does not always give pupils useful feedback about their work to help them improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory overall. Although provision is good for literacy, numeracy and science, it is unsatisfactory for information technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive effective support and make good progress but targets in their individual education plans are not specific enough.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Good provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss social and moral issues. Assemblies usually make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. The welfare of pupils is a high priority but the procedures for assessing pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.

The school is beginning to consider the implications of the new National Curriculum that comes into effect in September 2000. Long-term planning for English, mathematics and science is satisfactory but in other subjects it does not take sufficient account of the mixed age and split year group classes. Although the school has agreed formats for planning they are not used consistently through the school. Planning for children under five is not firmly based on the areas of learning, does not show planned progression in the development of knowledge, understanding and skills and is not always translated into practice. The school makes effective use of external support for the very few pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher manages staff and pupils very well. Tasks are delegated appropriately but are not always followed up to ensure they are completed effectively. There is a strong commitment to raising standards and school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive and well informed. They are well aware of issues facing the school and act as a critical friend.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school improvement plan is very thorough and provides clear educational direction.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Additional funding is used appropriately to support pupils' achievement. The school improvement plan is properly costed.

The school checks that it obtains good value for money and makes changes where necessary. It applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school, behave well and are helped to become mature and responsible. Teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and do their best. The school is well led and managed and the headteacher and staff are approachable. The school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed about their children's progress. Children are given the right amount of work to do at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's accommodation is poor. The lack of facilities has an adverse effect on the range of learning opportunities the school can provide for their children. Some children do not make enough progress in writing. There are not enough extra-curricular activities. Resources for mathematics and science are unsatisfactory.

At the pre-inspection meeting, parents were very supportive of the school and the responses to the questionnaires show that they are pleased with almost everything about the school. The inspection team supported parents' views about the school's strengths. It agreed that the accommodation is poor and that the pupils' progress in writing should be improved. However, inspectors found that the range of extra-curricular activities and resources for mathematics and science were satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading, mathematics and science are high because teaching is challenging.

1. The school's overall results in Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests for 1999 were well above the national average because teaching is challenging. In mathematics and science they were well above the national average, with every pupil reaching the national expectation in science. In English they were above average. The proportion of pupils reaching the extended level 5 is well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. Compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' achievement is well above average in science, above average in mathematics and average in English. The school anticipates similar results this year in English and an increased proportion of pupils achieving the expected level or higher in mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils' attainment in reading, mathematics and science continues to exceed national expectations.
2. Pupils' attainment in science in Key Stage 2 is a strength of the school. In all the science lessons observed, most pupils were working at a higher than expected level and were achieving well, especially in the experimental and investigative aspect. In Year 3, in their work on magnets, pupils showed a good understanding of the principles of fair testing and the importance of altering only one variable. One pupil, for example, decided that it was important to use a paper clip and magnet of the same size. Most pupils made simple predictions and could explain what they had discovered and recorded their results in a simple table. They also considered how they would improve the experiment if they were to conduct it again. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were able to make suggestions as to how to separate solids and liquids. They selected appropriate equipment and provided instructions and explanations for their investigations. By experimenting with a variety of instruments, pupils in Year 5 built effectively on their previous learning about sound, and began to understand that the pitch and loudness of sounds can be changed by, for example, the length, thickness or tightness of a string. Pupils in Year 6 had a good knowledge of the circulatory system and understood the role of muscles in movement.
3. Pupils learn effectively in science because of the challenging teaching they receive. In all lessons seen in Key Stage 2, teaching was good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of science that enables them to ask questions that probe pupils' thinking and that encourage them to think for themselves. They provide pupils with good opportunities to hypothesise and draw conclusions. In Year 3, for instance, the teacher constantly asked pupils to explain why the magnet would or would not work through certain materials. She listened carefully to their replies and pursued their responses in order to generate extended answers. In their explanations of concepts, teachers use the correct technical vocabulary and have high expectations of pupils' understanding. They plan practical activities that are demanding but achievable with effort. They supply an imaginative choice of materials that motivate pupils and stimulate their interest, as in the lesson on separation. Lessons are carefully structured so that there is a good balance between whole-class teaching and group work.
4. Pupils' attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 2 also exceeds national expectations, especially in number. Results in the optional national tests show that the school is performing well. In the Year 4 tests, for example, about a third of the pupils achieved

the level that is expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 6. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching in mathematics. Boys have responded particularly favourably to the emphasis on mental calculations and enjoy explaining how they find the answers. In all the lessons observed in Key Stage 2, teaching was good or better and pupils' attainment was above national expectations. In Year 3, pupils have good mental recall of the ten times table and can derive the division facts from it. By Year 4, although they find it difficult, pupils develop a good understanding of equivalent fractions. Year 6 pupils use properties of numbers, such as factors and primes, with confidence and multiply three-digit numbers by two-digit numbers. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and make effective use of resources, for instance number fans and number squares, to ensure that everyone in the class participates. The plenary session is particularly well used when pupils reflect on what they have learned during the lesson. In the most successful lessons, teachers have very high expectations of the standard of pupils' work. They encourage pupils to find out answers for themselves and explain their methods by asking questions such as "Who can explain what that means?". They tailor questions to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and actively monitor pupils' responses during lessons and build on them. Pupils are keen to contribute their ideas and are not anxious about being wrong because teachers reassure them with comments like "Don't worry. We'll help you out if you don't know. "

5. The school places a high priority on teaching reading. In both key stages, in addition to whole-class shared reading and group reading in the literacy hour, time is allocated each day for quiet reading. Pupils enjoy browsing through a wide variety of books in this session while teachers work with individual pupils. Throughout the school, pupils' attainment in reading is high. In the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. Significantly, nearly half the pupils achieved the higher than expected level. Teachers in Key Stage 2 build successfully on this good start. The optional tests taken by all pupils in Key Stage 2 also show high achievement in reading with over two-thirds of the pupils in Year 5, for instance, reaching the level normally expected of pupils a year older. In the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 1999, all but two pupils reached the expected level or higher in reading.

There is much good and often very good teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, with the result that the pupils make good progress.

6. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed, good or better in 64 per cent and very good in 11 per cent. All teachers contributed to the good teaching. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and for children aged under five years. In Key Stage 2, teaching is consistently good in English, mathematics and science, which enables all pupils, including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to make good progress. The organisation of pupils into year groups for these core subjects is effective in raising standards because it reduces the range of ability within the class and enables teachers to plan lessons at a suitable level for pupils of that age.
7. A particular strength of the teaching in both key stages is the way in which teachers establish very good relationships with pupils that are based on mutual respect. In a discussion about weddings in the reception class, for instance, the teacher was very sensitive to children's particular family circumstances and encouraged them to understand that all families are different. Teachers manage pupils in a calm and consistent manner and create a positive classroom atmosphere. In Key Stage 1,

teachers often use humour well and make deliberate mistakes to maintain pupils' interest and help them become aware of some of their common errors. In a Year 2 English lesson, for example, the teacher introduced a poster about the story of milk by saying, "This shows us how to feed an elephant". In another lesson in Year 1, the teacher omitted a question mark when writing on the board and misspelled "what" as "whot". The pupils thoroughly enjoyed pointing out what the teacher had done wrong. All teachers explain tasks and concepts well so that the pupils know what needs to be done. Most lessons are conducted at an appropriate pace with the result that pupils maintain a good work rate.

8. All teachers work very hard to create bright and attractive learning environments in classrooms that are in a poor condition and could be very depressing. Much care has also been taken to make the hall a pleasant area in which to work. Teachers deploy additional adults well to support groups of pupils and ensure that everyone keeps on task. In the most effective lessons, teachers also ensured that the adults were well briefed and had a clear idea of what was expected of pupils. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, not only was work set to match the prior attainment of different groups of pupils but each adult held a separate plenary session to reinforce what had been learned. Another strong feature of teaching, which was seen at the upper end of Key Stage 2, was that teachers explained the objectives of the lesson so that the pupils were clear about what they were trying to accomplish. At the end of one English lesson, the teacher also referred back to the objectives and asked pupils whether or not they had achieved them.

The headteacher and staff have a shared sense of purpose and work very well as a team to create a positive and caring ethos with the result that the pupils are very eager to come to school. The pupils are keen to learn and are interested in their work. They have very good relationships with each other, behave well and are very mature for their age.

9. The school has a positive and caring ethos with the result that pupils are very enthusiastic about coming to school and are eager to learn. There is a strong sense of a school community where everyone, both adults and children, is valued and pupils' welfare has a high priority. The headteacher and staff work very well as a team and deal cheerfully with the poor working conditions and the many difficulties caused by the severe limitations of the accommodation, which were exacerbated by the recent fire. Parents report that they are very impressed by the way the teaching staff overcome these obstacles and handled the pupils' emotional responses to the fire.
10. Pupils' response to their learning was very good in about a quarter of the lessons observed and was nearly always good. Pupils are interested in what they are doing and apply effort to their work. They concentrate well even when working in the hall, which has a great many distractions as it is a thoroughfare to several classrooms, the office and the staffroom. Pupils work well individually and in groups and collaborate well, as was seen in a mathematics lesson in which the oldest pupils worked together to find factors. They usually persevere well to complete their tasks and take care with the presentation of their written work. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the praise and encouragement they receive from the support staff and are fully integrated into school life.
11. Children aged under five years in the reception class come into the school happily. They have consistently good attitudes to their learning and are very well behaved. They listen carefully to the teacher and each other and take turns to speak. In a circle time,

children were keen to talk about the special things they had brought to school and were very confident when speaking in front of the class and an unfamiliar adult. Most children had a great deal that they wanted to say and spoke in whole sentences. The children know the routines of the classroom, for instance sitting quietly to drink their milk and then moving to the carpet to look at books while others finish. They work and play happily with each other or on their own and share resources fairly. They treat equipment with care, clear up independently at the end of sessions and put things away in the right places.

12. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is good. They cope very well with the potential hazards of the site, inadequate classroom space and the cramped playing area. Pupils of different ages mix freely in the playground and, although their play is sometimes boisterous, no inappropriate behaviour was seen. Pupils also behave well when eating their lunches despite the appalling state of repair of the dining room. They are polite to each other and all adults, including staff and visitors. Pupils are well aware of the school's four basic rules. Although the recently developed behaviour management strategy is beginning to be implemented, the system of rewards and sanctions is not yet used consistently by all teachers. External support for the very few pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and exclusions are used effectively.
13. The very good relationship between adults and pupils and between pupils of all ages is a strength of the school. Pupils are very mature for their age and behave in a responsible manner. During a handball lesson, for instance, Year 6 pupils had to go indoors because of the unpleasant weather. Although it was very cold and wet, they cleared away the equipment without fuss and without having to be reminded by their teacher. Older pupils show concern for younger pupils at playtime and are always anxious to be helpful. However, there are few planned opportunities for pupils to take increased responsibility as they move through the school.

The leadership and management are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified through the school improvement plan the right priorities for continuing to raise the pupils' standards.

14. The leadership and management of the school have a strong commitment to school improvement. The headteacher, with the staff and governors, has completed a thorough self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including a detailed analysis of pupils' test results. This review has culminated in the production of a school improvement plan that provides the school with a clear educational direction and identifies the right priorities for moving the school forward. It emphasises the need to raise standards in writing and information and communications technology, which are areas for improvement that were confirmed by the findings of this inspection. The governors are kept well informed by the headteacher but also ask searching questions to ensure that they are fully aware of the issues facing the school. The governing body acts as a critical friend and is becoming more influential in setting the agenda for school improvement. The headteacher has been in post for nearly five terms and the deputy headteacher for less than two terms but they have the same ideas about the future development of the school.
15. Two important initiatives that form part of the school improvement plan have now been completed. Everyone involved in the school, including governors, parents and pupils, was consulted about the school's revised aims and vision statement and the behaviour management policy. The process itself, as well as the outcome, has made a significant contribution to the establishment of a shared sense of purpose. The current focus is on

completing and finalising the teaching and learning policy, which will provide a firm foundation for further curricular developments. The school's three agreed key principles of relationships, partnership and achievement are already well promoted through the day-to-day work of the school.

The school successfully promotes a strong partnership with parents who are very supportive of the school and make a valuable contribution to their children's learning.

16. The school has already successfully achieved one of its new core principles, which is to recognise parents or carers as partners in their children's education. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and the comments made at the pre-inspection meeting show that they like almost everything about the school. They report that there have been considerable recent improvements in the home-school communications, especially through the weekly bulletins, and that they have very much appreciated being more involved in the school's decision-making processes. They also feel that the headteacher and staff are accessible and handle any complaints or problems sensitively.
17. Nearly all parents support the work that their children are expected to do at home, including in reading. A number of parents also help regularly in classrooms, for example helping groups of pupils with practical science activities. They are kept well informed of their children's progress through the termly open evenings at which targets for pupils are set such as "extend the use of adjectives, adverbs and metaphors in writing" and "learn all multiplication facts to ten times ten". Parents are also appropriately involved in their children's individual education plans and discuss with teachers what the targets for their children should be and the strategies that are to be used to achieve them. The school also provides information evenings about the curriculum to help parents understand how they can help their children. All these factors have a significant impact on pupils' progress and the school's standards.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards of writing, including spelling, and information technology are not as high as they should be. The requirements of the National Curriculum are not met in information technology.

18. The 1999 Key Stage 2 national tests in English reveal a considerable difference between the percentage of pupils in last year's Year 6 who reached the expected level or higher in reading (91 per cent compared with 81 per cent nationally) and in writing (50 per cent compared with 56 per cent nationally). A similar pattern is also found in the results of the optional national tests of pupils currently in Key Stage 2. The results in the National Curriculum writing test at the end of Key Stage 1 show that the same proportion of pupils reached the expected level in writing as in reading. However, there is a significant difference in the percentage reaching the higher level 3. In reading, 43 per cent achieved level 3 but nobody achieved it in writing. This indicates that some pupils in both key stages are underachieving in writing.
19. The attainment in writing of pupils currently in the reception class exceeds what is expected for children of their age. They are beginning to write independently. Letters are well orientated and correctly formed and spaces are left between words. Higher attaining pupils are also able to use their knowledge of letter sounds to work out how words are spelt. In Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment is close to national expectations. However, in Year 2, there is no evidence of work at the higher level, as was the case

last year, and in Year 6 only one piece of writing seen in the work scrutiny was at the extended level. In Year 2, most pupils write freely and at reasonable length but ideas are not sustained. Their writing conveys meaning in simple words and phrases. They use everyday words and are aware of the need for capital letters and full stops, but do not use them consistently. Very few pupils use any other punctuation. By Year 6, pupils write in a good range of styles. The majority writes stories that are organised into paragraphs and follow a logical sequence. However, the story line tends to peter out towards the end and the writing comes to a rather rapid conclusion. There are some longer sentences but the use of conjunctions is mainly limited to "and" and "but". A reasonable range of punctuation is used but there are few commas. Some interesting phrases are used such as, "he strolled by freshly cut meadows". Handwriting in both key stages is good. Pupils in Year 2 join their writing and write legibly and in Year 6 pupils use ink. However, spelling is weak. In Year 2, pupils regularly misspell common words such as "were" and "little" and, in Year 6, make many errors in words like "here", "leather" and "slammed".

20. The school has identified the issue of writing and it is a current focus of the school improvement plan. However, teachers are not sufficiently clear about what has to be done to improve the quality of individual pupil's writing. Pupils in all classes wrote one story in January and another in March with the intention of teachers evaluating them to see what progress had been made. Most of this work has yet to be levelled and moderated against National Curriculum criteria, which restricts its usefulness. At present there is no structured and whole-school approach to spelling to ensure that pupils are taught spelling in a systematic way. Targets are beginning to be set to help pupils improve their work. The Year 1 teacher, for example, has begun to set pupils individual writing targets. They are kept at the front of pupils' exercise books and state such things as, "remember spaces" and "remember to write neatly and make letters the correct size". When asked, the pupils knew what their targets were and were very keen to achieve them.
21. Information technology was a key issue in the previous inspection. The requirements of the National Curriculum for information technology are still not met because pupils do not cover all aspects of the subject that are included in the programmes of study. Standards in information and communications technology remain low because pupils have had too few opportunities to use computers. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there is a limited range of work and there is no clear progression in the development of skills. Pupils in Year 2, however, use e-mail to correspond with their teacher's husband who is travelling in Australia and America. They also access the Internet to find out extra information about the areas that he visits.
22. Progress in addressing the issue of the school's provision for information technology has been slow. The co-ordinator left and was not replaced for a year and a half. The deputy headteacher has now assumed this role and the situation is improving. An appropriate action plan has been devised, each class has acquired a multi-media computer and new software has been purchased to enable pupils to meet the requirements for control and modelling. The nationally recommended guidance has been adopted to provide a basis for curricular planning. The school also benefits from the support of an information technology teacher from the secondary school who works in the cluster schools. During the inspection, he was working in the reception class assessing pupils' baseline skills and helping them use the mouse to control the cursor and print off a picture. Staff are gradually becoming more confident as a result of increased familiarity with the computers and more intensive training is planned for the autumn. An information technology suite would have been in operation this term but the

fire delayed its installation. The school has made a successful bid for funding from business and has been awarded about £5,000. It is confident that the whole curriculum will be taught next year and that pupils' skills will improve rapidly as a result of these measures.

The quality of curricular planning is very variable through the school. Teachers' lesson planning does not always identify specific learning objectives and ensure that work is set to meet the pupils' differing needs.

23. The school has identified the need to review its curricular planning procedures and most subject co-ordinators have begun to look at the new National Curriculum that comes into effect in September 2000. However, current planning procedures are unsatisfactory. Long-term planning for English, mathematics and science is satisfactory but in other subjects it does not take sufficient account of the mixed age and split year group classes. This situation is made more complicated because the composition of classes changes each year as numbers in the school increase. The curriculum co-ordinator has thought through some strategies that make the best of the difficult situation that has arisen because pupils in the same year group have covered different work as they have moved through the school.
24. The school has agreed formats for half-termly and weekly planning but all teachers are not using them in the same way and the depth of planning is very variable. The draft teaching and learning policy does not yet provide helpful guidance about planning procedures. The quality of planning is too dependent on individual teachers at present. Time allocations for each subject are not identified in planning with the result that it is not clear whether or not they can be delivered in the teaching time available. There is also no evaluation of planning to check what has been completed, identify gaps in pupils' learning and enable decisions to be made about what to do about aspects that have not been covered sufficiently.
25. The quality of teachers' normal lesson planning is also inconsistent. Most teachers complete weekly planning sheets for literacy and numeracy but in some instances the information on them is very minimal. Lessons do not always have a sharp enough focus because learning objectives are too broad and are not clarified for each group of pupils. Even the most detailed lesson planning shows the activities that pupils will undertake rather than what pupils are expected to learn. The school uses a published scheme to help teachers with their literacy and numeracy lesson plans and to provide ideas for suitable activities. However, it is not always adapted sufficiently to ensure that it meets the needs of particular classes. Planning is generally better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics rather than English because teachers devise tasks that match pupils' differing needs more closely. Some planning sheets are very difficult for other people to understand, especially in the section for group work. It is often not clear exactly what the activities are and which group is to do what. On too many occasions the same work, for example a writing task, is planned for the whole class regardless of pupils' prior attainment.
26. Planning for children under five is not firmly based on the areas of learning and is very thin. On some occasions it is planned in National Curriculum subjects and on others reverts to areas of learning. Planning is also not always translated into practice. For example, during the inspection a lesson was seen in which pupils were investigating magnets and waterproofing. However, the long-term planning for the scientific strands of knowledge and understanding of the world showed work should have been based on finding out about things that are living, lived once or have never lived. Planning

does not show clear planned progression in the development of knowledge, understanding and skills. In mathematics, for instance, planning in September states "numbers 1 to 10" and in spring states "numbers 6 to 10". In the reception class, pupils are too often grouped according to their prior attainment and the same work is planned for everyone, which does not challenge higher attaining pupils sufficiently.

Teachers' assessments are not sufficiently accurate to provide a clear picture of pupils' attainment and to enable challenging but achievable targets to be set for individual pupils and year groups.

27. In the 1999 tests there was a huge discrepancy between pupils' test results and teachers' assessments in English, mathematics and science. In science, for example, all pupils reached the expected level whereas the teacher's assessment was that only 59 per cent of them would achieve it. The school intends to review the assessment policy as part of the teaching and learning policy because there is no up-to-date guidance about what is required of teachers in assessing pupils' progress, recording and reporting.
28. At present, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment at the end of each year are generally satisfactory. With the exception of Year 1, there have been English and mathematics tests in place for the last three years for each year group. A recent improvement has been the development of a tracking document that provides a good annual indicator of each pupil's progress and helps staff set targets for the end-of-key-stage tests. These targets are based on pupils' previous test results combined with a notional value-added figure and the teachers' knowledge of the pupils. For example, the targets for the current Year 6 group were mostly based on their results in the Key Stage 1 tests. The school knows that the levels of attainment recorded for the targets are too broad and that the more sophisticated levelling system that uses letter grades would be more useful. The lack of tests in Year 1 means that no standardised data is available to inform target setting for the national tests the following year. The school also has no objective measure on which to base an assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in science.
29. The collections of each pupils' work in writing, mathematics and science provide interesting indicators of pupils' progress but their usefulness as records of achievement is limited, especially in mathematics and science as there is a mixture of work from different strands of these subjects. The school portfolios of moderated and levelled work have not been kept up-to-date.
30. Although in most classes work is reasonably well matched to pupils' prior attainment, this is because teachers are experienced, have good levels of expertise and know the pupils very well, rather than as a result of good on-going assessment procedures. Each teacher has developed her own methods for recording what pupils can do. A particular weakness is the quality of reading records, which are not evaluative or developmental. The school has a new policy about responding to pupils' work but most teachers do not yet follow it. Although teachers' marking is encouraging and corrective, it does not refer back to the learning objectives or give pupils useful feedback about their work to help them improve, which has an adverse effect on pupils' progress especially in writing. These factors have all contributed to the inaccuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and the difficulties the school has experienced in setting challenging but achievable targets.

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of agreed policies, curricular planning, the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work are not systematic, formal and rigorous enough to ensure consistency through the school.

31. At present, the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of policies, curricular planning, teaching and standards of pupils' work are not systematic and rigorous enough. Despite this, however, as a result of his informal monitoring, the headteacher is aware of the standards of teaching and learning in the school. A policy for improving monitoring procedures has been agreed and provides a framework for a focus on one core and one foundation subject per term.

32. The headteacher has observed the teaching of literacy in all classes except reception. The deputy headteacher looks at teachers' planning but the written comments do not pick up the important areas for improvement. Subject co-ordinators are beginning to monitor planning in their subjects and look at pupils' work but this is also in its early stages. The headteacher has appropriately delegated some monitoring tasks to other members of staff but has not always followed up to ensure they are completed effectively. Decisions that are made and policies that are agreed are also not pursued to ensure that practice is consistent through the school, for example in marking pupils' work and planning lessons.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

33. The following matters should be addressed by the governors and staff in writing the action plan, in order to raise standards and improve the provision the school makes:

1. Raise standards of writing, including spelling, and information technology by:
 - regularly levelling and moderating pupils' writing, identifying what pupils need to do to improve and setting pupils individual writing targets;
 - developing a structured and whole-school approach to spelling; and
 - in information technology, ensuring that the school's provision meets statutory requirements, pupils experience all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study and pupils' skills are developed in a logical sequence.
2. Improve the quality of curricular planning by:
 - reviewing long-term planning to take greater account of the possible changes in the composition of classes as the number of pupils in the school increases;
 - providing clearer guidance for teachers about the quality and detail of planning expected at each stage in the planning process;
 - ensuring that teachers' lesson planning identifies specific learning objectives and that work is set to meet the needs of pupils of differing prior attainment; and
 - evaluating planning.
3. Improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment to provide a clear picture of pupils' progress and to enable challenging but achievable targets to be set for individual pupils and year groups by:
 - reviewing the assessment policy;
 - improving the quality of reading records and marking to give pupils useful feedback about their work so that they know what they need to do to improve; and
 - moderating pupils' work so that all teachers develop a better understanding of the standard of work expected at each level.
4. Implement systematic, formal and rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of agreed policies, curricular planning, the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work to ensure consistency through the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	54	35	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)	N/a	184
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	9

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	28

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.04
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	9	14	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	22	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (87)	96 (89)	96 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	9
	Girls	14	12	12
	Total	22	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (89)	87 (96)	91(92)
	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	11	11	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	11
	Girls	10	8	11
	Total	19	17	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (89)	77 (76)	100 (89)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	7	7
	Girls	7	6	6
	Total	15	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (78)	59 (73)	59 (67)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	155
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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	4	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	98/99
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	£
Total income	296349
Total expenditure	304842
Expenditure per pupil	1783
Balance brought forward from previous year	23144
Balance carried forward to next year	14651

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	184
Number of questionnaires returned	68

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	49	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	59	37	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	51	1	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	51	7	3	0
The teaching is good.	59	37	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	55	7	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	22	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	42	4	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	37	0	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	42	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	4	46	40	10	0

Other issues raised by parents

At the pre-inspection meeting, parents were very supportive of the school. They reported that there had been improvements since the last inspection, including in the school's communication with them and the style of leadership and approachability of the headteacher. There was general agreement that children make good progress in reading, science and mathematics. A few parents felt that their children made slower progress in writing. Parents were also happy with pupils' behaviour, the values that the school promotes, the sensitive way in which complaints are handled and the school's caring ethos. Many parents expressed concern about the severe limitations of the school's accommodation and the adverse effect on their children's learning opportunities. These views were confirmed by inspection evidence. Although an analysis of the questionnaires shows that a significant number of parents do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons, the inspection team considered that the number of extra-curricular activities are satisfactory. At the parents' meeting, a few parents commented that resources for mathematics and science were unsatisfactory but this was also not substantiated by inspection evidence.