

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HURST DRIVE JMI SCHOOL**

WALTHAM CROSS

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117180

Headteacher: A Skinner

Reporting inspector: P Orr  
16007

Dates of inspection: 28-30 June 2000

Inspection number: 191775

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary (Junior and Infant)
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hurst Drive Waltham Cross Hertfordshire
Postcode:	EN8 8DH
Telephone number:	01992 624099
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Thorp
Date of previous inspection:	18 November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hurst Drive School is of about average size but is growing because the annual intake has been increased from 30 to 45. The school is over-subscribed. There are 289 pupils on roll, aged 4 to 11, with slightly more girls than boys. Most pupils live close to the school. Seventeen per cent of pupils have English as an additional language, an above-average proportion, but relatively few of these are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average, although the proportion having a statement of special educational needs is close to the national average. About 30 per cent of pupils are entitled to a free school meal, higher than the national average. The school population is relatively stable, although the proportion joining or leaving during the school year is rising. Attainment on entry to the school varies considerably from year to year but is, overall, below average. Most pupils coming to Hurst Drive have previously attended the nursery next door.

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

Hurst Drive has many good and some very good features. It is led purposefully and efficiently, has the confidence of parents and provides very high standards of care for the pupils. Overall, standards of achievement are satisfactory or better, except in mathematics. Pupils behave very well. Teachers work hard and are committed to the pupils. Although there are weaknesses requiring attention, strengths considerably outweigh weaknesses and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- In English and science achievement at the age of 11 is satisfactory or better, and often good.
- Good leadership gives the school a strong sense of purpose and direction.
- Almost two-thirds of the teaching is at least good and one-third is very good or better.
- Most pupils have very good attitudes to work and behave in a mature and considerate fashion; the school provides very well for their social and moral development.
- Since the last inspection, the school has adapted very well to new buildings, changes in staff and an increased roll.
- Provision in the reception year is of a high standard.

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

- Standards in mathematics, although improving, are not as high as they should be.
- Because pupils' attainment varies considerably in different years and subjects, the governors' and teachers' roles in monitoring standards and progress need to be more detailed and precise.

*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, it has maintained its strengths in leadership and the very good provision for pupils' personal development. Key issues for improvement have been followed up and assessment is used more effectively to plan teaching. However, the monitoring of standards and pupils' progress is not yet precise enough. At Key Stage 1, standards against national averages have fallen, reflecting change in the attainment of pupils on entry to the school. At Key Stage 2, standards in English have been maintained. In mathematics they have gone down recently, although they were rising until 1998 and are currently improving again. Nevertheless, at Key Stage 2 standards in mathematics do not match those in English and science. Standards have risen in science and are now good. Overall, the teaching has improved since 1996. In particular, there is more good and very good teaching. Marking of pupils' work is regular but, as at the time of the last inspection, often does not indicate clearly what is needed for improvement. The number of mixed-age classes has increased. The school now has one and a half forms rather than one form of entry: this makes the presence of some mixed-age classes unavoidable. The curriculum is better matched to pupils' needs in that the national frameworks for the teaching of literacy and numeracy have been introduced. Provision for science is very well planned, and provision for information technology has improved. Pupils with special educational needs are supported more effectively. The amount of in-class support has increased since the last inspection. Membership of the governing body has

changed. Governors are very supportive, but are not well enough informed about the school to be able to monitor standards effectively. New buildings have brought considerable benefits. The school has coped well with the extensive changes affecting it since the last inspection, and is well placed to improve further.

## 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	C	B	B	A	well above average    A above average        B average                    C below average          D well below average    E
Mathematics	D	B	E	E	
Science	D	C	B	A	

Since the last inspection, standards in the National Curriculum tests have, in relative terms, been higher at age 11 than at age 7, where they have weakened to well below average. There are, however, signs of improvement in the provisional results for 7 year olds in 2000. Test results at the age of 11, if English, mathematics and science are considered in combination, improved between 1996 and 1999 at a rate broadly equivalent to the national improvement. Except in mathematics, the individual subject results at age 11 represent progress from the age of 7 that is at least satisfactory and, in many cases, good. In 1999, the school met its target for English at age 11, exceeded it in science, but missed it by a long way in mathematics. The provisional mathematics results for 2000 are better, but still lower than the school's target. At the time of the inspection, the provisional test results for 11 year olds in English and science in 2000 had not been received by the school, but the teacher assessments anticipate that performance in these subjects will, as in previous years, be better than in mathematics.

In the lessons and other work seen, standards varied considerably in different years but, overall, broadly matched the pattern of recent National Curriculum test results.

If English, mathematics and science are considered together, standards in 1999 in the National Curriculum tests at age 11 were below those in most schools with pupils of similar prior attainment. The shortfall was caused by mathematics. In English and science, standards were higher than in schools with pupils of similar prior attainment. Despite some improvement in mathematics, a similar pattern appears to apply in the provisional results for 2000. When comparisons are made with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards in the national tests in 1999 at Hurst Drive are above average at age 11, but well below average at the age of 7.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils' attitudes are very good; they are enthusiastic about work and extra-curricular activities and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	With a small number of exceptions, pupils' behaviour is very good in classrooms and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils become more mature, self-confident and considerate and by the time they leave are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory overall. Poor attendance is restricted to a very small number of pupils. Pupils almost always arrive at school

	punctually and are punctual around school.
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Relationships between pupils and staff, and among pupils, are particular strengths. Most pupils work well collaboratively and the majority work well independently.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall: 25	Very good	Satisfactory overall, and often good	Mainly good

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

The teaching was at least good in 64 per cent of the lessons seen, and very good or excellent in 32 per cent. It was at least satisfactory in 92 per cent of lessons. The unsatisfactory lessons were the result of low expectations and inadequate subject knowledge. Pupils' learning is mostly good and often very good; they are keen to learn, ask questions willingly and usually listen very carefully. In the lessons seen, learning was best when objectives for pupils' learning were clear, and when teachers checked and reinforced pupils' learning carefully. The teaching of English is mainly good, although there are weaknesses that need attention. The science teaching seen was very good. The teaching of mathematics is more varied and, although improving, needs to be reviewed in some important respects, to raise expectations and achieve greater consistency. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught conscientiously and with increasing effectiveness. However, skills in mental arithmetic are not developed effectively enough. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well supported, and particularly so when they receive specialist support in the classroom or in withdrawal groups. High-attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently, although there is also good practice in this regard.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets statutory requirements. The numeracy and literacy strategies have been introduced, but are not applied with equal consistency in all classes. Sufficient attention is given to all subjects, including information technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs and procedures for identification and review are mostly good. However, in-class support is not always used efficiently.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Their progress is monitored carefully.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good as, in most respects, is provision for their cultural development. However, cultural diversity in the school population is not celebrated as widely as it might be. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is at least satisfactory and often good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The high quality of care for pupils is a central strength of the school. There are thorough procedures to ensure their health and safety.

Caretaking and maintenance are of a high standard. Standards of catering are good and the administrative staff serve the school well.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership gives the school a strong overall sense of purpose and direction. Senior staff work well together and form an effective team. The deputy head provides a good role model as a teacher in the classroom and in sustaining the high standards of pastoral care. The school improvement plan provides a good basis for most aspects of school planning, but is not focussed precisely enough on the raising of standards in areas where there is underachievement. Most subjects are managed competently, except that coordinators do too little monitoring of standards across the age range. Mathematics lacks clear direction.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body, which has undergone changes of membership recently, provides important help in managing change and monitoring the school's finances. Governors support the school well and ensure that statutory requirements are met. They need now to give greater priority to monitoring standards of achievement, and to be better informed in order to do so effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Staff share a commitment to raising standards and improving the quality of work across the curriculum. The headteacher has a good knowledge of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. However, the monitoring of standards achieved and the setting of targets for improvement are not precise enough and governors and teachers are not involved fully enough in this process.
The strategic use of resources	The school manages its finances very carefully. Decisions about spending are made after alternatives have been considered carefully. Staff are mainly used efficiently. 'Best value' is sought in all contexts.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• Behaviour is good</li> <li>• Staff are approachable</li> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• Pupils are cared for very well</li> <li>• The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible</li> <li>• Teachers are hard working and committed to the pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about pupils' progress</li> <li>• Information about what is taught</li> <li>• Lack of extra-curricular activities</li> <li>• Some inconsistency in setting homework</li> <li>• The impersonal nature of some comments in reports</li> <li>• The unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes of a small minority of pupils</li> <li>• The lack of 'induction' for parents when children move up from the nursery</li> </ul>

Inspectors agreed with the positive points made by the parents. They accepted the suggestion that there were fewer extra-curricular activities than was previously the case, and that there were very occasional instances of disruptive behaviour. They also agreed that there was some unhelpful inconsistency in the setting of homework, as when homework was not distributed evenly across the week, but they felt that homework was mostly well managed. They did not find that the school provided insufficient information about pupils' progress or what is taught. They noted that the quality of reports to parents had recently been reviewed and improved. They understood that some parents might feel that they were not given enough information when their children moved up from the nursery, but felt that this was mainly a matter of parents not being aware of the opportunities for contact offered by the school. These might be publicised more widely by the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**In English and science achievement at the age of 11 is satisfactory or better, and often good.**

1. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds, the school's average point scores in English and science were above the national averages. These scores represent mainly good achievement when compared with the performance of the same pupils in the 1995 national assessments for 7 year olds. The results of the national tests for 11 year olds in English and science improved consistently from 1996 to 1999, and are particularly good in science. The school has improved standards of literacy, and the pupils' literacy skills contribute to their achievements in science.

2. English in Years 3 and 4 is of mixed quality although, overall, most pupils make satisfactory progress in these years in relation to their prior attainment. Achievement improves towards the end of Key Stage 2 and the work seen in English and science in Year 6 represents good progress. Pupils learn to read some ambitious texts: for example, in one lesson close study of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* had very positive results. Working in pairs and threes, many Year 6 pupils could cope well with the complexities of language in a Shakespearean sonnet. Support for a group of pupils with special educational needs was very well organised, and these pupils were enabled to take a full part. At the heart of such successful work lie the teacher's high expectations, clear explanations and ability to transmit enthusiasm for the texts studied.

3. The range of writing in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory and standards of presentation and accuracy are usually good. In most pupils' work there is an obvious concern for layout and appearance. There are also weaknesses in the written work, however. (These are described in paragraph 35). Standards of spoken English are satisfactory and often good. Pupils are very willing to answer questions, venture opinions and pick up ideas in discussion.

4. Achievement in science at the end of Key Stage 2 is good. Year 5 pupils already have good observational skills for their age – skills that in many cases would pass muster well into Key Stage 3. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from a wide range of science experiences, take part in challenging investigations and develop their awareness of the environment through use of the excellent 'wild area' the school has developed in its grounds. They make links between subjects and support their work in science by appropriate use of information technology. Year 5 and 6 pupils are encouraged to carry out an appropriate range of information technology tasks including the use of a CDROM on the human body. Work in lessons showed that Year 5 pupils know that different types of food are needed for different functions, such as carbohydrates for energy. Almost all know that the blood carries broken down food (molecules and minerals) round the body. Pupils learn well through science that is taught imaginatively by well-qualified staff who have high expectations of pupils' knowledge and understanding. The subject is well planned and coordinated.

**Good leadership gives the school a strong sense of purpose and direction.**

5. The strengths in leadership identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The headteacher has the respect of staff, pupils, governors and parents. Responses to the parental questionnaire show that almost all parents agree that the school is well managed, with the majority in strong agreement with this point of view. The headteacher knows pupils well and responds quickly to their individual needs when this is

necessary. These qualities provide a strong sense of direction and purpose for the school. The deputy head is a good role model as a teacher, supports the headteacher and other staff well and is strongly involved in maintaining the high standards of pastoral care. The third member of the senior management team, who teaches in Years 5 and 6 and coordinates science and assessment, gives a strong lead in the upper years and sets high expectations for good teaching and raising standards, particularly in science. Subject coordinators are mostly well informed about their subjects. School documentation is well produced and comprehensive.

6. Governors are very supportive of the school. They share in decision-making, ask pertinent questions and work in partnership with staff to improve the quality of pupils' education. They are anxious to make the most of their skills in supporting the management of the school, and provide valuable help in many respects. However, there have recently been extensive changes in the membership of the governing body, and development of priorities and practice is appropriate, with a sharper focus on monitoring.

7. Since the last inspection, changes in the curriculum, staffing and accommodation have been well managed. The relatively few areas identified as needing improvement at the time of the last inspection have been dealt with thoroughly, although this is less true of standards in mathematics than the other areas. Teachers work well together as a team and this is a major strength. New staff are quickly integrated into the school.

8. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, although better at Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1, and further improvement is being sought. The school is developing systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils. These arrangements, which have operated at Key Stage 2 since 1997, are in some measure supplemented by analyses by members of the senior management team of school assessment data against 'benchmark' data on 'added value' supplied by the Department for Education and Employment. The systems are not yet fully operational, but senior managers hope to be able to establish clearly how much 'value' is being added to pupils' achievements during their time at the school. In addition, since the last inspection there has been improvement in the use of assessment data by individual teachers to plan lessons and make adjustments to their planning in the light of changes in pupils' attainment or gaps in their understanding. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are helped to make progress by individual 'target cards', which they keep and use. Class portfolios of pupils' work are generally well used to establish agreement across year groups about levels of attainment.

9. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis and financial affairs, as a recent audit report makes clear, are very efficiently managed. The headteacher stresses the need for continual review and development and the school development plan is an important tool in this process. Although there are weaknesses in the school's monitoring arrangements (these are dealt with in paragraphs 38 and 39), the headteacher runs a programme for monitoring teaching to clear criteria. Records are kept of visits made to classrooms, and all teachers are seen. National priorities for raising standards have been accepted as of central importance by the school. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced carefully and are already having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. The school is essentially in good heart and well placed to improve further.

**Almost two-thirds of the teaching is at least good and one-third is very good or better.**

10. Of the 25 lessons seen, nearly two-thirds were good or better and a third were very good or better. The teaching was best in the reception classes, and slightly better at Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1.

11. The teaching of the reception classes is mainly very good and in one lesson seen it was excellent. Lessons benefit from clear introductions, with good recapitulation of earlier work. Teaching is consistently patient and makes very good use of support, including that of adult helpers.

12. Although the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is of mixed quality, half the lessons seen were good. In these good lessons, pupils' desire to learn is generally well catered for and benefits from good class management and very good relationships between the teacher and the class. The group work is well organised, and the tasks set for the different groups take proper account of varying levels of attainment. Class teaching is brisk and questions are used effectively to give opportunities to those who need help at more basic levels. The good lessons are planned carefully and usually take proper account of assessment of learning in previous lessons. Time is well managed and support for pupils with special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language is effective. In the satisfactory lessons, these qualities are present less consistently.

13. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 varies widely in quality, although some very good teaching of mathematics was seen, when pupils made substantial gains in understanding the relationships between multiplication and division. Pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties are well managed.

14. The teaching of the older pupils at Key Stage 2 is at least satisfactory, and much is very good. Teachers in these years have generally good subject knowledge in English and science. Good features of much of the teaching in English and science include: introductions to lessons that engage all pupils; clear explanations, with appropriate demonstrations and illustrations; discussion of learning objectives with the pupils; and activities well matched to pupils' needs and the learning objectives of the lesson. There are similarly effective elements in the mathematics lessons, but they are present much less consistently. Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics and their awareness of teaching methodology are less certain. However, they seek to implement the numeracy strategy fully, and are benefiting from subject-specific in-service training in this context.

15. Most pupils are keen to learn and they respond well to their teachers' expectations. Across the core subjects, expectations are highest in science, where pupils' learning is most effective. The quality of learning is more varied in English, but is good overall. Learning in mathematics is sometimes unsatisfactory, although it is improving as pupils are enabled to build more consistently on their skills and understanding.

16. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language were usually supported satisfactorily in the lessons or withdrawal groups seen. Higher-attaining pupils were not always challenged sufficiently, although there were instances of good practice in this regard.

**Most pupils have very good attitudes to work and behave in a mature and considerate fashion; the school provides very well for their social and moral development.**

17. Pupils enjoy school. Almost all the many parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed with this perception of their child's experience. Pupils are expected to work hard and behave well at all times, and by and large they respond well to these expectations. In almost all the lessons seen, pupils listened attentively, settled quickly to work and responded thoughtfully to teachers' instructions. There were exceptions. For example, pupils in lessons in Years 1/2 were sometimes unnecessarily careless in carrying out the tasks they had been set; and some pupils sitting in an infant assembly were easily distracted and took little part. This was unusual, however. In a school assembly, pupils listened very carefully as successes in work done during the week were celebrated. Some Key Stage 2 pupils showed great pride in discussing work they had done and explaining its

purpose. The very positive attitudes to learning of most of the pupils are significant factors in the school's success; these attitudes in turn owe much to the very good relationships teachers develop with pupils. Pupils collaborate well in lessons. They work and play very well together at all times and there are almost no signs of friction between different ethnic groups. On the rare occasions when incidents occur, they are dealt with quickly and sensitively by staff.

18. The great majority of pupils are courteous and confident, and they grow in independence as they move through the school. In several contexts, older pupils were seen working well with minimum supervision. Extra-curricular activities such as camping and sailing help pupils to develop in independence. Standards of behaviour at the time of the inspection were almost always very good. A very small number of parents at the parents' meeting and in responses to the questionnaire suggested that disruptive behaviour by a small minority of pupils occasionally made learning difficult for other pupils. Only one example of such behaviour was observed, and there were particular circumstances to explain the incident. Teachers manage behaviour very well and their success in this regard makes an important contribution to the quality of pupils' work and their very good attitudes to the school.

19. The school uses personal, social and health education lessons successfully to promote pupils' personal development; for example, a Year 6 health education lesson on weight and size was observed when pupils were very willing to join in discussion and to do so considerately, showing understanding of the problem. Pupils increased their awareness of social and moral issues. Personal, social and health education is timetabled in all years, and the coordinator is well informed about the subject.

**Since the last inspection, the school has adapted very well to new buildings, changes in staff and an increased roll.**

20. The school has undergone considerable changes since the last inspection. These have been well managed to sustain good standards of behaviour and attitudes to work. Almost half the teachers, including two who were newly qualified when they came to Hurst Drive, have joined the school in the last two years. Membership of the governing body has changed, and a new Chair has been appointed. During the same period the school has introduced and implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and has extended curricular opportunities in information technology and design and technology. These developments have occurred at a time of extensive rebuilding to cater for an eventual increase in roll of up to one third. Classes up to Year 3 have already increased in size, and this has necessitated a few changes in the composition of mixed-age classes. In addition, setting by attainment has been extended at Key Stage 2. Classes have had to change rooms to allow for building works, and the library and resources centre have been re-housed and re-equipped. There is no evidence that these changes have deflected the school's normal work in providing a broad and appropriate education for pupils and in maintaining good contacts with parents. However, some initiatives, such as identifying the nature and causes of unsatisfactory achievement, and taking action to overcome such underachievement, have received less rigorous and concerted attention than might otherwise have been the case. Partly in consequence of the building work, there has been a reduction in extra-curricular activities, particularly at Key Stage 1, but the school intends to re-establish earlier patterns, and indeed, as resources allow, hopes to introduce opportunities for supervised study out of school hours.

### **Provision in the reception year is of a high standard.**

21. There is much very good work in the reception classes. As a result of very good class management and relationships, and a thorough and extensive understanding of the learning needs of young children, teachers enable the children to make rapid progress. Almost all are well on course to reach and in many cases go beyond the 'desirable learning outcomes' for five year olds.

22. In the lessons seen, children were already confident learners, able to observe closely and accurately, speculate about what they saw and draw conclusions. In work based on the school's environmental area, children treated live creatures very carefully, and showed a wide range of general knowledge. They could identify antennae, shells, the spots on a ladybird, the wings on a dragonfly, and a grasshopper. Children take part willingly in language work including shared reading and show good understanding of their earlier learning. Most make good progress in the early stages of reading and writing and develop a thorough knowledge of letters and sounds. The success of the language work in both reception classes is the result of careful planning, helpful disposition of appropriate resources, very good use of competent support staff, and a good balance between sustained 'direct' teaching and building on the children's own responses.

23. Proper attention is paid to mathematical activities. There is good use of computers and children benefit from a wide range of practical and creative activities: they work with patterns, colour, texture and shape. They are helped to develop good manipulative skills and make accurate use of scissors, glue and 'threading' beads. More ambitious objectives in literacy and numeracy are adopted at appropriate points. Level 1 work in the National Curriculum is introduced to meet the needs of the children who are ready for it. The teachers make the best use of their 'privileged' position with relatively small and homogeneous classes, and lay firm foundations for the children's later learning across the curriculum.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

#### **Standards in mathematics, although improving, are not as high as they should be.**

24. In 1999, the results in the National Curriculum tests for mathematics were low at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1, the results have been below those in English since the last inspection. At Key Stage 2, the 1999 results were also lower than in English but had improved until 1998, in which year they matched national standards. In 1999, they dipped sharply, particularly for boys. The Key Stage 2 results for 1999 did not represent satisfactory progress when compared with the results achieved previously by the same pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. The provisional test results for 2000 show some improvement at both key stages, but they remain lower than they should be. The standards seen in lessons and in other work largely confirmed the pattern of the test results. Although there are signs that standards are getting better as the numeracy strategy is implemented, further improvement is needed.

25. Governors and staff are aware of the weakness and of its persistent nature. They have sought to remedy matters since the last inspection, when underachievement in mathematics was identified as an issue for improvement. The school has had some success in raising standards at Key Stage 2, but less at Key Stage 1, until 2000 at least. The evidence of the inspection shows that the planning of mathematics is improving, although not enough is done to adapt the numeracy strategy to the particular needs of the school. Inspection evidence also shows that enthusiasm for the subject among pupils is increasing and that competence in key areas, such as mental mathematics, is growing.

There are considerable variations in quality across classes, however, and standards are closely related to the quality of teaching, which is uneven.

26. In the reception classes, children's attainment is at least in line with what would be expected. In Years 1 and 2, standards vary considerably and, in one lesson seen, there were clear signs of underachievement by Year 2 pupils. Group work is generally well managed in these years, with appropriate adaptation of tasks to cater for different levels of attainment. However, teachers have considerable difficulty - particularly during the class teaching and plenaries - in meeting the wide range of attainment and aptitude in each class. Classroom assistants are not always used efficiently - for example, they occasionally sit watching and make no contribution to the work.

27. Standards also vary in the lower and middle junior years, with particular weaknesses in Year 3, despite some very effective teaching in one Year 3/4 class. Support is better used in the lower junior years, mainly to enable lower-attaining pupils to keep up. Setting by attainment is also used to advantage to raise standards. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 3 have done well in making up ground since they took the national tests in Year 2. However, in general, pupils' mental work in these years still needs 'honing'. For example, only about half the Year 4/5 class could manage their seven times table: more tables practice is needed, and 'mental processes' still tend to be slow in the Year 3/4 classes. Plenary work was very well managed in one class to show that all pupils had learnt well during the lesson, and that they were now much more confident in the skills of multiplication and division.

28. As in the earlier years, standards vary in Years 5 and 6. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils made good progress as the result of enthusiastic teaching that focussed on accuracy. High-attaining pupils were working towards Level 5 in drawing and measuring angles. Most were working at Level 4, an appropriate standard since the class would not encounter the topic again before taking their Year 6 national tests. In a Year 6 lesson, many pupils were unclear about place value, multiplication and division. They took too long to double 29 and add 12. Many seemed unfamiliar with 'near-doubling', and multiplication by 100s and 1000s. Their mental calculation skills were in these respects still below expectations. Nevertheless, pupils did have a satisfactory range of ways for working out the same answer and, overall, their attainment was close to national expectations for the proportion working at Level 4 although well below for Level 5. Strengths in the teaching seen in these years included appropriate modification of tasks in group work to cater for different levels of attainment, and lively management of class sessions. Weaknesses included lack of attention to the development and logical reinforcement of skills in arithmetic, over-use of jargon that the pupils did not understand, a tendency not to challenge the high attainers sufficiently, and occasional loss of time during the lesson, so making it impossible to reinforce pupils' learning in a plenary.

29. The main weakness in mathematics provision in the school as a whole is lack of effective coordination to ensure consistency of expectations, teaching approaches and outcomes across years. Although there has been improvement since the numeracy strategy was introduced - an improvement to which the pupils testify - clearer objectives, consistent practice and more careful checking of pupils' learning are needed if standards are to match pupils' potential accurately.

**Because pupils' attainment varies considerably in different years and subjects, the governors' and teachers' roles in monitoring standards and progress need to be more detailed and precise.**

30. Attainment at the end of each key stage is less consistent than at the time of the last inspection. The report of the 1996 inspection indicated that pupils' progress across the age range was good, and sometimes very good. A judgement of similar clarity is not

possible in 2000. Between Years 1 and 6 pupils' attainment varies considerably in relation to the standards expected nationally for each year group. There is little difference between boys and girls in this respect.

31. There are various reasons for the changes since the last inspection, but all imply the need for closer monitoring by the school. The decline at Key Stage 1 since 1996 can largely be explained by decline in the attainment of pupils on entry to the school. For example, in Year 3 (the year that took the Key Stage 1 National Tests in 1999) there is an unusually high proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs; and pupils in the current reception classes gained higher scores in the 'baseline' assessments on entry to the school than pupils in the present Years 1 and 2. Other factors lead to variations in attainment. The relatively large size of the Year 1/2 classes, the very wide range of attainment and aptitude in these classes, recent changes of staff in these years and the inexperience of some of the classroom assistants working in the age group – all make the work of teachers in raising standards more problematic.

32. In the lessons seen there were some obvious weaknesses in the language work of several Year 2 pupils, in addition to the weaknesses in numeracy (already referred to in paragraph 26). Writing was sometimes marred by omissions and inaccuracies. Handwriting was occasionally surprisingly immature. A few pupils had considerable difficulty in reading back what they had written. By contrast, there were also examples of good achievement, with a minority of pupils starting to vary the structure of sentences to good effect in their writing, and reading fluently, accurately and with appropriate intonation. Most Year 2 pupils show that they can use information books to carry out simple retrieval tasks, although even here several are not careful enough and sometimes miss or misread questions or transfer information incorrectly.

33. The headteacher and governors are aware of the difficulties and have increased considerably the amount of classroom support for Years 1 and 2. There is, nevertheless, room for further evaluation of the effects on standards of class organisation and classroom support, and for coordinated target setting – to establish how attainment can be raised in these years.

34. Circumstances are similarly complex in Years 3 to 6, with relatively wide variations in attainment. For example, the school has set targets for Year 6 in 2001 that are considerably lower than the targets for 2000. Year 6 in 2001 is likely to be weaker than the present Year 6, but the school development plan does not explain clearly the validity of the lower objectives, nor relate them to longer-term intentions for raising standards in the school.

35. There are some variations in standards of literacy at Key Stage 2. Much written work (across the curriculum) in Years 3 to 6 lacks originality and vitality, for all its conscientiousness. A contributory factor is lack of width and challenge in many pupils' voluntary reading. Although reading is thoughtfully organised, and reading diaries, which often include a large number of titles, are regularly monitored, there is relatively little evidence that pupils challenge themselves sufficiently to read progressively more demanding and varied texts. In consequence, many pupils do not gain the width of language experience needed for the most successful writing.

36. In the school as a whole, despite the generally good quality of the teaching, some of the emphases in the national strategies for numeracy and literacy have not been fully understood by all staff. In numeracy, the central importance of well-taught and continuously assessed skills in arithmetic is not fully appreciated, and, although matters are improving, this weakness has a negative effect on the progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. In literacy, although there is much good practice, in

some classes there is too much emphasis on the techniques of language use in isolation from the purpose, context and effects of such techniques. In consequence, pupils are not thoroughly immersed in the language experiences they encounter, whether in reading or writing, and are not enabled to absorb, understand and use language in ways that will improve their achievement. For instance, in a Key Stage 2 lesson pupils learnt about rhyming patterns, but did not explore in any depth the language and imagery of the poems they were actually reading. In consequence, the teaching did not build on the objectives of the literacy hour, and expectations and achievement were lowered.

37. Because of weaknesses of this sort, the governors' and teachers' roles in monitoring need further development. There are indications that the school is going through a period when results in the National Curriculum tests will vary considerably because of contrasts in the attainment profile of different year groups. These variations are already evident, but governors do not have access to as much clear information as they need to be able to monitor accurately and critically the standards achieved by different groups of pupils, or individual years, in different subjects or areas of the curriculum, in relation to the standards expected nationally.

38. Better coordination of monitoring is now needed, at 'school level'. At present, governors receive reports on curricular provision from subject coordinators, and general explanations of the standards achieved in different areas. Targets for improvement in the core subjects are increasingly useful at Key Stage 2, but detailed explanations are not given to governors or parents when they are exceeded or not reached. The headteacher's most recent report to governors contains relatively little information about standards, progress or targets for improvement. The school development plan lacks precision and rigour in the identification of underachievement and the setting of precise targets for improvement in standards.

39. Monitoring of teaching by subject coordinators, although some occurs, is informal and not extensive. There are necessary constraints because of lack of time and opportunity but, even so, there is relatively little monitoring to ensure consistency of practice in the teaching of subjects across the school, and not enough is done to embed across the staff an understanding of the teaching approaches that will most effectively raise standards for all pupils. Monitoring in the two central areas of the curriculum is made difficult by current staff deployment. The coordination of literacy - although the teacher concerned is well qualified for the role and gives good leadership - is problematic because the coordinator teaches in the reception year. As a result of recent staff changes, there is no coordinator for mathematics, and mathematics in consequence lacks clear direction.

40. Despite these weaknesses, the school has already done much to monitor standards, at a time of extensive staff changes and other developments affecting the school. For example, areas of weakness in mathematics have been identified, and provision for literacy has been reorganised to give pupils better opportunities for extended writing. Handwriting at Key Stage 1 has been targeted for attention. The need for further improvement, particularly in the difficult area of monitoring progress or 'added value', so that expectations can be raised, is recognised by senior staff, and assessment procedures are already under review in this context. Arrangements for monitoring the progress of individual pupils, in relation to National Curriculum criteria, have already been introduced.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41. The school should build on and extend existing good practice in order to:

(1) Raise standards in mathematics by:

- Effective coordination of the subject to ensure consistency of expectations and teaching approaches across the school.  
(See paragraphs 24,29)
- Adaptation of the numeracy strategy to meet more precisely the needs of the school.  
(See paragraph 25)
- Greater emphasis on well-structured and progressive teaching of skills.  
(See paragraphs 27,28,36)
- Building on existing good practice to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding are checked carefully from lesson to lesson.  
(See paragraph 36)
- The development of more effective teaching strategies – particularly in class teaching and 'plenaries' – to meet the wide range of attainment in mixed-age classes.  
(See paragraphs 26,31)

(2) Reduce variations in attainment and develop the roles of governors and teachers in monitoring standards by:

- Further work on coordinated strategies to raise standards in all years.  
(See paragraphs 24,30,33,34,40)
- Ensuring that the teaching in all subjects is well matched to pupils' levels of attainment, and that high-attaining pupils are challenged consistently.  
(See paragraphs 16,25,28,31)
- Better monitoring of teaching, standards and progress, particularly in English and mathematics.  
(See paragraphs 29,35,36,39)
- More extensive in-service training, for all staff, to support this monitoring.  
(See paragraph 14)
- A precise focus in the school development plan on the raising of standards.  
(See paragraphs 34,38)
- More detailed evaluation at 'school level', and across key stages, of progress made towards targets by classes and year groups.  
(See paragraph 37)
- The provision for governors and parents of precise information about standards achieved and progress made.  
(See paragraphs 6,38)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	28	32	28	8	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)		289
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		90

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		106

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	55

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	29	14	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	21	20
	Girls	11	9	8
	Total	30	30	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70	70	65
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	19	20
	Girls	10	9	11
	Total	30	28	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70	65	72
	National	82	86	87

### 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	12	26	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	4	10
	Girls	20	14	24
	Total	26	18	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68	47	89
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	4	9
	Girls	18	12	22
	Total	25	16	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66	42	81
	National	68	69	75

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	11
Black – African heritage	11
Black – other	
Indian	2
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	215
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

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

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

*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)	12.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	28.9

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	506363
Total expenditure	510788
Expenditure per pupil	1780
Balance brought forward from previous year	49413
Balance carried forward to next year	44988

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	289
Number of questionnaires returned	99

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	29	8	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	42	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	45	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	53	11	4	0
The teaching is good.	63	33	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	46	6	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	31	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	34	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	43	45	10	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	60	37	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	51	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	37	12	4	20