

INSPECTION REPORT

SHEARS GREEN JUNIOR SCHOOL

Northfleet, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118436

Head teacher: Mr Chris Guy

Reporting inspector: Fran Gillam
21498

Dates of inspection: 7th – 8th May 2002

Inspection number: 191948

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	White Avenue Northfleet Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Glen Handley
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shears Green Junior is bigger than most other junior schools. It caters for pupils aged from seven to eleven years. Almost all of the pupils transfer from the adjacent infant school. There are 495 pupils on roll of which 254 are boys and 241 are girls. There are 16 classes; four in each year group. Most pupils are of a white British background; 21 pupils come from ethnic minorities including Indian, Pakistani and Chinese. Four per cent of pupils do not come from homes where English is the first language spoken; just over half of the 21 pupils are in the early stages of English language acquisition. The standard of attainment of the present Year 3 pupils was above average in English and average in mathematics when they started in the juniors. The attainment on entry has risen over the last four years and is now generally above average. Ten per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is just below average. Approximately 25 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is broadly average. Six pupils have statements of special educational need, 1.2 per cent, which is broadly average. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils attending the school has risen. The school is popular within the locality and at present is oversubscribed.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Shears Green Junior School is very effective because pupils do well during their time in the school because teaching is good. Standards in the present Year 6 are above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Pupils have very good attitudes towards school and they work hard because lessons are exciting and interesting; teachers often make learning fun. The head teacher gives excellent leadership because he successfully builds on the expertise and experience of his staff. The senior managers and governors support the work of the head teacher very well. The school has a very clear view of its strengths and the areas for improvement due to its very good arrangements for monitoring teaching and evaluating the effect it has on pupils' learning. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching of mathematics is effective; pupils make good progress and standards are above average.
- Literacy is taught well; pupils use their writing skills effectively to support their learning in other subjects and they make good progress.
- The pupils enjoy school very much; they work hard, behave very well and have very good relationships with each other and with the adults who work with them.
- The head teacher provides excellent leadership; he is ably supported by a hard-working staff and a committed governing body.
- The school is very successful in managing change to bring about improvement.

What could be improved

- Teachers' skills in seeking answers and developing discussion with pupils who are reluctant talkers.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in February 1997 improvement has been excellent. Standards have been maintained against an improving national picture. Teaching is now much better than it was and is now good. Teachers challenge more able pupils successfully and this shows in the number of pupils that are now attaining the higher levels in mathematics and English tests. The school has put in place very good systems to track how well pupils are doing. The analysis of this information, as well as that from the tests pupils take in Year 6, is used very well to focus support for individuals and for groups of pupils. In addition, the arrangements to evaluate the quality of teaching and its influence upon learning are very effective in identifying areas for improvement. Senior managers and subject co-ordinators are now fully involved in this work. The head teacher and governors use this information very well to provide training for the whole staff as well as individuals. The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) reflects the improved skills and confidence the staff now have and standards in ICT have risen as a result. The school now meets statutory requirements for teaching religious education and in the acts of collective worship.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	B	B	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	B	B	B	
Science	C	B	C	C	

In the national tests in 2001, Shears Green Junior achieved above average standards in English and mathematics compared with all schools and those of a similar background. In science, standards were average compared with all schools and similar schools. The school's trend in standards has kept pace with that of the national trend. Standards in the present Year 6 are above average in mathematics and science and average in English. This group of pupils started school in Year 3 with standards below average in English and mathematics. They have done well in their time in the school and have made good progress in English and very good progress in mathematics. The school has set realistic but challenging targets for the tests this year, based upon the secure knowledge of how well pupils in Year 6 have progressed and the standards they are expected to attain.

More pupils than in the past are attaining the higher levels in the tests and this reflects the better teaching and the grouping of pupils in sets according to ability for mathematics, English and science, which is effective. Throughout the school pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the effective support they receive. Pupils use their writing skills well in other subjects such as history and geography. Pupils with English as an additional language do as well as their classmates because they are fully involved in lessons. By Year 6, pupils redraft their work effectively to include more powerful words, which add interest for the reader. In mathematics, pupils calculate answers with speed, both in their heads and on paper. They use mathematical language correctly to explain the methods they use, for example, to find the average of a set of numbers. In science, pupils record their investigations accurately; they draw sensible conclusions from their results and use this knowledge well to help them with further scientific investigations. Standards in ICT are average. They have improved since the time of the last inspection because teaching is now more effective and the school has a good range of resources; pupils now make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils put a great deal of effort into their work; they take pride in what they are doing and enjoy school very much.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good – pupils behave very well because they know it is the right thing to do. They are polite and friendly and work and play together very well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good – pupils work very effectively in groups and with partners. They respond quickly to adults, share equipment sensibly and respect the views of others. There are excellent relationships between teachers and pupils.
Attendance	Good – the attendance rate is slightly above average and pupils love coming to school.

Pupils take a pride in their work; their work is often neat and illustrated attractively. They enjoy being given responsibility. Older pupils are caring and supportive of those younger than themselves. In some lessons a number of pupils are reluctant to answer and put forward their views and teachers could do more to encourage them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good. The teaching of English and mathematics is effective. Teachers have a very good grasp of teaching both literacy and numeracy and so pupils quickly learn the basic skills. Pupils respond very well in lessons because teachers develop excellent relationships with their pupils. Lessons are often humorous and teachers inspire pupils with their snappy and lively introductions. In most lessons pupils behave extremely well because the teachers manage them most effectively. Praise is focused well and pupils respond well to the teachers' comments. Pupils take on new learning quickly because teaching is methodical and planned effectively to meet their differing needs, and lessons move at a brisk pace. Pupils are able to consolidate, extend or increase their learning effectively because of the way that teachers share information clearly and precisely. This ensures that pupils know what to do and they settle quickly to their work. Chances for pupils to use writing skills across the curriculum are good. This reflects in a number of subjects such as science, history and geography. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons because teachers set the work at the right level for these pupils to make small steps of success. This builds self-esteem and helps these pupils to be more confident and to make good progress; teachers and learning support assistants give effective help. Pupils with English as an additional language are fully involved; almost all of them have a good grasp of the English language and there are plenty of chances for them to work within groups or with a partner, which provides good opportunities for them to listen to others and join in discussions. Pupils are motivated because teachers make learning fun and ensure that both boys and girls enjoy the activities. The difference between satisfactory and good teaching is linked to the way in which the most effective teaching encourages all pupils to take part, volunteer answers and explain the strategies they use to solve problems. Where this is not as effective, teachers are not always checking, either through questioning or discussion, what pupils know or if they have any difficulties. This information would help teachers to be more precise in directing support and in moving on, for example, the more competent pupils at a faster rate.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good – activities are relevant to the interests and ages of the pupils. The excellent range of clubs, visits and sporting events helps pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding further.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good – pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they have good support in lessons and work is well matched to their level of attainment.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good – these pupils are fully involved in lessons; they do as well as their classmates and have a good grasp of the English language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good – partner and group work promotes pupils' social and moral development most effectively; this reflects in the way pupils relate to one another and how they work together constructively.
How well the school cares	Very good – there is a most effective system in place to track pupils' progress

for its pupils	and set targets for improvement.
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The effective links between subjects ensure that much of the pupils' learning has clear purpose. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills effectively in other subjects. The provision for pupils' cultural development is better than it was and is reflected in pupils' art, history and geography work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good – the head teacher provides excellent leadership, together with the senior managers; he provides a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good – the governors are well informed and have suitable committees to deal with decision making. They have a clear view of what needs to be done, and why, and fulfil their responsibilities very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good – there is a very effective system for monitoring and evaluating the strengths and areas for improvement in the school's work. The school's strategies for managing the changes resulting from this evaluation are working well and reflect in the good teaching and the pupils' progress.
The strategic use of resources	Good – there is a clear link between the school's drive to raise standards and the way it uses funding and resources.

The school makes very good use of information from test results to compare how well they measure up to other schools. The governors and head teacher use the findings to focus their attention upon areas that appear weaker in comparison and then challenge what they are offering pupils. They direct funding wisely to ensure that the areas for improvement can be dealt with effectively, and base their decisions firmly upon raising standards in the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good and their children make good progress. • Their children like school and it is helping their children to become mature and sensible. • The school is well led and managed and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school working more closely with parents.

The inspection team agrees with the positive view of parents but not with the minority of parents who do not feel that the school works closely with them. The school organises meetings for parents to come in to discuss their children's work. Most parents feel that teachers are always very approachable and willing to listen to their views. Meetings are organised that provide information for parents about what is taught in school and they are kept well informed about events happening over the term.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The teaching of mathematics is effective; pupils make good progress and standards are above average.

1. During their time in the school pupils make good progress in mathematics. This is because the teachers use the school's strategy for numeracy very well. They have a very good understanding of how to teach the basic skills and ensure that pupils of all attainments have time to consolidate their understanding before moving on to more complex work. This provides a firm base from which pupils extend their mathematical knowledge and understanding.
2. In each year group, pupils are grouped by ability and this helps to focus the teaching upon pupils that have similar strengths and similar needs. This makes planning easier for teachers because they concentrate upon a narrower band of attainment. It also means that the school can focus support and help for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs more effectively.
3. Teachers share mathematical information clearly and pupils gain a good understanding of how to calculate, solve and arrange numbers to work out problems and explain their answers. Pupils are interested and concentrate well because lessons are often lively and brisk. In addition, teachers share with pupils what they want them to learn and this gives purpose to activities and captures the pupils' interest.
4. Pupils do well in solving mathematical problems in their heads. In the most effective lessons, teachers' questions range in difficulty and involve increasingly larger numbers. This challenges and encourages pupils because the questions have the right level of demand. For pupils in the lower attaining sets, or those with special educational needs, well-paced questions supported by explanation and visual resources help them to grow in confidence. For example, pupils in Year 6, when learning to calculate time differences, had the relevance of this work strengthened when the teacher explained how this could be used to program a video recorder. In lessons, these pupils benefit from the gentle prompting and guidance they receive which is helping to build their self-esteem and challenging them to have a go.
5. Higher attaining pupils have speedy recall, for example, of multiplication facts, which they use to help them solve problems. Pupils of all abilities are developing ways to calculate totals in their heads. They use strategies to achieve this not just in mathematics lessons but also in other subjects. For example, in a Year 5 ICT lesson, some pupils roughly calculated the cost of a camping trip to check whether the formula they had used in their spreadsheet was accurate.
6. By Year 6 pupils are becoming competent and skilled mathematicians. During their time in the school this group of pupils has made very good progress. They entered school with below average attainment in mathematics and few were attaining the higher levels. Teachers make high demands on pupils, so these pupils have increased their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding at a quicker pace than expected. A small number of more able pupils are working well above the level expected for their age. These pupils have a very secure knowledge of how to calculate answers, for example, by multiplying and dividing by 100 or 1000. They fully understand how to solve problems involving decimals and percentages and how to check their results using approximates. Average attaining and most of the lower attaining pupils are also secure in multiplying or dividing numbers by 100. They know how to find the perimeters and areas of irregular shapes and show a clear understanding of probability by being able to express outcomes as 'likely', 'certain' and 'impossible'.
7. In most lessons, teachers recap previous learning effectively to encourage pupils to try out different ways to solve problems. This helps learning because it encourages pupils to trust in

their instincts and draw upon what they already know. Throughout lessons, pupils work purposefully; their mathematics work is often set within a problem-solving context and pupils of all abilities and also both boys and girls enjoy the challenge this provides. This, along with the pupils' obvious enjoyment of mathematics, contributes to the standards the school achieves by Year 6.

Literacy is taught well; pupils use their writing skills effectively to support their learning in other subjects and they make good progress.

8. The school has reorganised how they teach literacy and provided more time for pupils to develop their writing skills. This is proving successful because pupils have greater chances to practise the skills learned in literacy lessons across a range of subjects such as history, geography, science and design and technology. These opportunities also give pupils a better chance, for example, to develop their ideas or characters in stories, redraft and improve their work and write for different reasons.
9. The whole-class session at the start of literacy lessons is often lively, brisk and sharply focused upon what the pupils are to learn in the lesson and why. This is a strong feature in Year 6 where the mixture of activities includes opportunities for pupils to listen to the teacher, contribute to discussions and do short focused tasks such as scanning text to find certain words. This is particularly effective in keeping pupils interested, involved and motivated to do well.
10. Throughout the school, teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and during literacy lessons there is a high level of very good behaviour and close attention to what is being taught. Teachers value pupils' efforts and seek their ideas and so they respond well, although it is often the higher attaining pupils who are more willing to share their views. These pupils often ask questions to clarify what they are learning or to increase their understanding. This is not so evident with the average attaining and lower attaining pupils.
11. Pupils quickly settle to individual work because teachers organise lessons well. This leads to either group or independent work being well paced, and pupils of different abilities are prepared effectively for the work. This is because teachers have resources readily available, the work is at the right level of demand for the pupils and expectations of work rate are high. Teachers remind pupils of what they are learning, and why, and how important it is to use what they already know or can do to help them further. Pupils draw upon this well to support their writing; for example, in Year 5, higher attaining pupils' use of powerful language provided a detailed description of the wicked magician in Aladdin, "The ruby glinted on the Moor's turban and illuminated his cold grey eyes." They used complex sentences effectively and organised their writing into paragraphs. The lower attaining pupils, whilst less adventurous in their choice of words, wrote descriptions that were punctuated correctly and their writing was legible and joined.
12. Pupils with English as an additional language are able to work as well as their classmates because, like those of different abilities, they have well-focused tasks that challenge them effectively. Chances to redraft their writing, and use dictionaries and thesauri allow them to develop their English language through writing as well as in discussions in lessons. For example, acting a short scene from 'Computerella' in Year 6 provided a good opportunity for a pupil with English as an additional language to try out their expressive reading. In addition, reading aloud, for example, in Year 5, gave pupils with English as an additional language a good model for them to listen and to copy.
13. Throughout the school, the work in pupils' books reflects the consistent approach used in teaching literacy. The shared sense of high expectations is reflected in the pride pupils take in their work. Pupils of all abilities write clearly, are often accurate in spelling and punctuation and present their work neatly. This consistent approach reflects in much of the written work in other subjects. Project books in Year 5, covering aspects of history and geography, also show that pupils use their reading skills effectively to gather information. This independent research work

not only develops pupils' historical or geographical knowledge and understanding, it provides a relevant and interesting way for pupils to develop their writing skills. In science, more able and average attaining pupils make good use of their writing skills to record their investigations. By Year 6, their writing is separated into paragraphs; spelling is accurate and scientific findings are explained clearly. The framework provided for scientific writing is effective because it helps pupils to record what they did logically. Opportunities to write instructions in design and technology also provide chances for pupils to write for different reasons.

14. The standards in Year 6 are average but set against the below average attainment when these pupils started school this is good progress. The school identified this year group as one that needed support for learning. Over time this support has proved effective. The year group has a much larger proportion of boys compared with girls. Focused support and changes to teaching styles to develop activities more attractive to boys reflect in how well these pupils have done. In other year groups, standards are above average in English and pupils throughout the school are developing their writing skills successfully.

The pupils enjoy school very much; they work hard, behave very well and have very good relationships with each other and with the adults who work with them.

15. Pupils enjoy school very much because the staff make them feel valued; they praise pupils' efforts and listen to what they have to offer. This helps to make school a place where the pupils feel they can share their ideas and where they feel appreciated and happy. Pupils find school exciting because teachers often bring humour to lessons; they make purposeful links between other subjects and this makes activities interesting and relevant.
16. Pupils throughout the school listen very well because teachers explain clearly what they expect them to learn, and why. Pupils tackle activities confidently and settle quickly to their work because teachers prepare them well; resources are to hand and teachers focus support for lower attaining and pupils with special educational needs effectively.
17. Both boys and girls work hard and the teachers' efforts to inspire and motivate pupils are effective. For example, some boys in Year 6 explained how they were not looking forward to studying the story of Cinderella. They thought it would not be very interesting and it really was not a story that appealed to them. However, they quickly changed their minds when they began to compare the traditional story with other versions. The choice of lively text with high level of humour, such as that by Roald Dahl, as well as a futuristic version fired their enthusiasm. The boys were just as eager to write and comment upon the different versions as the girls were.
18. Pupils behave very well because there are excellent relationships with teachers. The pupils respond positively to the high level of respect shown to them by the staff, by being polite and eager to please. Pupils co-operate very well. For example, in ICT, the organisation of pupils encourages effective working partnerships. Higher attaining pupils are sometimes paired with a lower attaining or a special educational needs pupil to help them develop their skills. For example, they are helped to enter formulae into spreadsheets to find the largest area contained within a fence perimeter of 20 metres. The pupils discussed what they thought the sides of the shape would measure, the higher attaining making good use of their mathematical knowledge of calculating the area of a four-sided shape to make sensible suggestions. The lower attaining pupils had equal chances to enter information and alter formulas; as a result, these pupils learned well and developed a good understanding of the value of spreadsheets in calculating answers quickly. This method of pairing pupils is effective in involving pupils of differing attainment but also encourages pupils to recognise how they can help and support others. In group work, pupils work effectively, share ideas and respect the views of others; they follow instructions well.
19. Pupils with English as additional language are eager to learn and take part in lessons because teachers pose questions that they understand. There is a high level of harmony both in the classrooms and around school because of the positive way that staff interact with pupils of

different abilities, boys and girls and those from different ethnic backgrounds. This provides a very good example for the pupils to follow

20. Pupils have clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong because teachers involve them in identifying what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour; this provides a very good basis for their behaviour and the way they treat others. The pleasant and positive way that the staff behave towards the pupils encourages them to behave very well. Pupils also behave very well because they realise that it is the right thing to do. They are fully aware of the impact of their actions on others because any incidents are fully discussed and they feel that they are treated fairly. Pupils willingly play together and older pupils make a good job of looking out for those younger than themselves.
21. The pupils' very good behaviour, interest in their learning and eagerness to do well, make lessons run smoothly. These positive features aid learning and contribute well to the standards the school attains by Year 6.

The head teacher provides excellent leadership; he is ably supported by a hard-working staff and a committed governing body.

22. Since the last inspection, the head teacher has developed a team of hard-working and committed staff. He has achieved this through having a clear vision of what needs to be done to help the school move forward and, importantly, ensuring that this vision is shared with governors and staff so that all parties are aiming for the same goals. Senior managers and teachers feel supported, that their strengths are drawn upon effectively and that their needs met successfully. At all levels within the school, staff feel enabled to do their work because they are valued and respected; the head teacher motivates and inspires the staff extremely well.
23. The action taken to remedy the weaknesses at the time of the last inspection has been most effective and reflects in the standards of the pupils' work and the results in the Year 6 tests in English, mathematics and science. Standards have been maintained in English and mathematics against an improving national picture. Although standards have fluctuated in science, the school has identified the reason for this. Standards in science are above average by Year 6; results in the science tests should be higher this year based upon the school's own assessments of how well pupils are doing.
24. As a result of the leadership of the head teacher, key staff and governors, improvement since the last inspection has been excellent because:
 - Higher attaining pupils now do well in lessons; this is because teachers challenge them effectively. Pupils of all abilities use their skills and knowledge in new situations effectively, for example, drawing on the results of earlier science experiments to predict what might happen in later investigations.
 - The teachers use the information from the assessment of pupils' attainments very well to guide their planning and so focus on the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils need to learn next; this is reflected in their good progress.
 - There are very effective arrangements in place to monitor and evaluate how well pupils are taught. The support and guidance teachers receive as a result of the evaluation are effective and reflect in the much better quality of teaching. All the teaching seen was satisfactory or better and the teaching of English and mathematics is now good; at the time of the last inspection 25 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory.
 - The setting of targets as a result of the evaluation of teaching, as well analysing the results of tests carried out in each year group, is very effective and guides the school development plan successfully. Priorities are firmly based upon raising standards.
 - Subject co-ordinators and senior managers are now fully involved in identifying the strengths and areas for improvement in the school's work. With the head teacher they play an effective role in motivating staff and pupils to work hard and do well.

- The school now meets statutory requirements regarding the collective acts of worship and in teaching religious education; the governors' report to parents now includes all the information required by law.

25. The governors are very well informed about how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to improve further. They have a clear understanding of what the analysis of test results might be suggesting and support the head teacher and senior managers in using this information to direct the school's plan for improvement. The strong link the plan has with raising standards reflects the head teacher's and senior managers' vision for success, and the governors' support and help in shaping the direction of the school. The governors hold the head teacher, senior managers and staff accountable. They regularly meet to discuss how successful the school is in meeting its goals for improvement. They also meet with subject co-ordinators, which gives them a good idea of what is happening in the subjects that the school teaches. This knowledge also helps them to prioritise which areas should be developed in order to raise standards further and make informed decisions about how funding should be used.

The school is very successful in managing change to bring about improvement.

26. The school measures its performance against all schools and those with similar backgrounds. This provides the head teacher and senior managers with a starting point for further investigation. From the analysis of this data the school identifies relative strengths and weaknesses in standards and then focuses upon which groups of pupils or subject this relates to. In addition, the assessments carried out in other year groups provide more in-depth information about pupils' achievements throughout the school and, together with the comparisons made with other schools, the head teacher and senior managers carefully and accurately identify priorities for action. For example, they recognised that:

- Raising boys' achievement was an issue for the school. Following the successful training for staff about how they could redress the imbalance between boys' and girls' performance, effective action was taken in the following areas:
 - The school now provides a wider range of books that appeal to boys and this is proving effective in motivating the reluctant reader.
 - Teachers plan a balance of fiction and non-fiction writing so that there are themes that appeal to both boys and girls. As result, boys show a greater willingness to write.
 - The monitoring of pupils' work is more focused. Teachers stress the quality and the purpose of writing with the pupils. This ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve their writing and gives relevance to what they are doing.
 - The setting of pupils in groups based upon how well they are doing ensures that teachers can focus upon a narrower band of attainment within the class and support for all pupils is more effective as a result.
 - Planning has been adapted and improved so that pupils can access the work more effectively at a level suitable to their needs; for example, the Year 5 higher attaining set have work provided normally expected for Year 6 pupils. This enables these pupils to move on more quickly with their learning and attain high standards.
- There was a relative weakness in the standards in science compared to English and mathematics in the 2001 tests; as a result the half-termly assessments have been rewritten, and in-house training regarding the assessment of pupils and how they are grouped for teaching science has been undertaken. The setting arrangements are now better than they were and standards in science are above average.

27. There are rigorous systems in place to monitor and evaluate teaching and its influence upon pupils' learning. The school's quality assurance team made up of the head teacher and senior managers undertakes this work. They systematically carry out an analysis of pupils' work, across all subjects, to ensure that the work challenges pupils of different attainments, and that

the work reflects what teachers had planned and identifies any differences from one year to the next in pupils' achievements. The reports following the analysis provide sharply focused areas for improvement and summarise the strengths in the subject effectively. The analysis of teaching and its influence upon how well pupils are learning identifies whole-school training requirements or curriculum improvements very well. The information gathered feeds successfully into the school's plan for improvement and ensures that priorities for development are consistent with training needs. The observation of lessons is also systematic; this provides a more individual view of teaching and identifies where individual teachers' expertise needs further development and ensures that strengths in teaching are shared and built upon. These arrangements for checking teaching have had a significant impact upon improving teaching but also in developing a coherent programme of improvement within the school.

28. The head teacher and senior managers also set targets for each year group to achieve. These relate to an expectation of the standards the whole year group should attain by the end of the year. This gives teachers a goal to strive for. Teachers then accurately assess how well pupils are progressing and identify clearly what they need to do meet these goals. This is shared with the pupils in English and mathematics and they are motivated to work hard as a result. Pupils enjoy knowing how well they are doing and what they need to do to do even better. The tracking of pupils' progress is very good and this enables the school to focus support for individuals and groups of pupils more effectively. This shows in the way different groups of pupils make good progress during their time at Shears Green Junior School.
29. In order to bring about improvements, the school uses very effectively the information gathered from the analysis of test results, the tracking of how well pupils are progressing, and the arrangements for checking the quality of teaching and how well pupils are learning. This information also supports financial planning well and funding is used wisely to enable the school to achieve its priorities. The school compares and challenges its performance and so it is very effective in evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. The management of the change needed to bring about improvements is very successful because the school builds effectively upon the strengths and takes effective action to remedy the weaknesses.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Teachers' skills in seeking answers and developing discussion with pupils who are reluctant talkers.

30. The difference between teaching and learning that are satisfactory and those which are good or very good, is largely due to how well teachers involve the average attaining and lower attaining pupils in whole-class discussions. This is more often at the start of lessons when teachers ask questions to establish that pupils are ready to start work and that they have sufficient understanding to tackle the activities successfully. Although teachers pose questions that set out to check what pupils know, the pupils do not always respond as teachers expect because the questioning is too general. The more able pupils are very eager to answer but the other pupils tend to be more passive. Teachers are not always developing questions that probe the understanding of the average and lower attaining pupils well enough. For example, in one ICT lesson the teacher was surprised at how quickly and successfully the pupils completed a task. The questions asked at the start of the lesson did not encourage different groups of pupils to answer and therefore the teacher did not realise that they already had a good understanding of the work. This meant that time was not used as well as it could be because the teacher was not sufficiently prepared to extend pupils' learning even further. In another ICT lesson, the questioning was not precise enough to check whether any problems were developing and so some pupils did not get off to a quick start with their learning because they needed help first. Where staff do not use questioning effectively to highlight strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' learning, there is some mismatch of tasks in these lessons. In a few otherwise satisfactory lessons, the questions require only one-word answers, or teachers give pupils too many hints or not enough time to answer. This narrows discussion and the opportunity for

pupils to develop their ideas. In order to speed the learning of the average and lower attaining pupils even more, teachers should ensure that they develop effective strategies to involve the more reluctant talkers in answering questions and in discussion. In this way they can assess pupils' answers and comments and so gauge more precisely how well the pupils are doing and what they need to learn next.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

31. To raise standards further and improve teaching the governors, head teacher and senior managers should:

Improve the quality of teachers' questioning by:

- ensuring that teachers focus questions upon individuals and different groups in order to draw in and involve all pupils in answering questions and in discussion;
- ensuring that pupils' answers are assessed and used to help teachers plan work that builds more precisely on what pupils already know.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

18

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	7	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	33	39	28	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	495
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	88

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.72
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	57	64	121

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	43	46	53
	Girls	53	52	60
	Total	96	98	113
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (82)	81 (79)	93 (95)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	41	40	49
	Girls	53	46	55
	Total	94	86	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (83)	71 (85)	86 (95)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	19
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	473
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	31

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	266

FTE means full-time equivalent

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	823731
Total expenditure	797546
Expenditure per pupil	1628
Balance brought forward from previous year	40135
Balance carried forward to next year	66320

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	495
Number of questionnaires returned	127

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	41	3	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	51	46	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	59	6	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	62	13	1	2
The teaching is good.	51	49	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	49	12	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	37	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	46	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	26	56	16	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	44	48	2	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	49	4	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	52	4	2	1