

INSPECTION REPORT

LITTLE BOWDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Little Bowden, Market Harborough

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119936

Headteacher: Mr Bleddyn Jones

Reporting inspector: Mrs E Pickford
23128

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 23rd May 2000

Inspection number: 192047

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Scotland Road Market Harborough Leicestershire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Howe
Date of previous inspection:	17 th February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Little Bowden is a large primary school situated in the south of Market Harborough. The 377 pupils come from the new and established owner occupied housing in this area. Due to considerable building development there has been a rapid increase in pupil numbers and the school can no longer accept pupils from outside the catchment area who previously made up a quarter of the school. A new primary school is scheduled to open in the area next year. Most of the families moving to the new estates are new to the locality and many parents commute to London or Birmingham. There is a 10 per cent turnover of pupils during the year as families move in and out of the area and this is above average. Unemployment is low and 4 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average nationally. The pupils are organised in fourteen single age classes. There are more boys than girls and a considerable gender imbalance in some year groups. Children join the reception class at the start of the term in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, there were 17 children under five in the two reception classes. The majority of these children have previously attended playgroups or nurseries. Attainment on entry to the reception classes is generally above the nationally expected level. There are 54 pupils on the register of special educational needs, including one with a statement; this is lower than the national average. The 1.3 per cent of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than in most schools, although none of these is at an early stage of English language acquisition. The majority of pupils are of white ethnic origin.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Little Bowden is an effective school with many very good features and provides good value for money. Pupils achieve high standards in National Curriculum tests and have very good attitudes towards their work; they are courteous, respectful and behave very well. The majority of teaching is good with over a quarter being very good. The staff are hard working and committed to improvement and raising standards. The headteacher, governing body and senior management team provide very good leadership and deserve credit for the very good all round improvement made since the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management is very good because the school looks carefully at how it can improve and plans effectively to raise standards.
- Good teaching and well structured planning ensure that more able pupils are effectively challenged and achieve their potential.
- By the age of 11, pupils achieve standards well above those expected for their age in science and mathematics as a result of the good quality of teaching and target setting.
- The majority of pupils are keen to learn because the work is interesting and relevant. They make good progress and are proud of their achievements.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good because of the opportunities provided to develop confidence and maturity.

What could be improved

- Pupils could do better in information technology; their progress is restricted by the lack of teachers' expertise and too few resources.
- The targets set for pupils with special educational needs are often too vague and the work is not suitably adapted in some lessons.
- Classroom assistants are not always led effectively to support pupils' learning.
- Standards in handwriting are too low because teachers do not insist that pupils do their best.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Very good improvement has been made since the school was inspected in February 1997. All the key issues previously identified have been tackled very effectively. There is more challenge for higher attaining pupils and good opportunities given to investigate and solve problems. Standards in design and technology and religious education are now at least as high as expected by the age of 11. In information technology standards have risen and are satisfactory by age seven but are still not high enough by age 11. Good and manageable systems of assessment are in place which influence the planning of future lessons and target setting. The school development plan now covers a three year period, is carefully monitored and evaluated. Governors carefully consider the cost effectiveness of spending decisions. The school has clarified its aims, which are fully reflected in its everyday work and make a strong contribution to high standards. There have been considerable improvements in leadership and management as a result of the key appointments that have been made and the development of the senior management team. Standards of teaching have improved considerably as a result of regular monitoring and evaluation, the sharing of expertise and carefully targeted staff training. The school is well placed to continue to improve in the areas of teaching, learning and leadership and management.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	B	B	D
Mathematics	B	A	A*	A
Science	A	A	A	A

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The majority of the five year olds in the current reception classes achieve beyond what is normally expected for their age in language and literacy and numeracy. At seven years of age, standards in the 1999 National Curriculum tests were well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. During the inspection, similar standards were observed in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics were judged to be above average as a result of teaching the National Numeracy Strategy and the introduction of ability grouping in Year 2. By the age of 11, in the 1999 tests, standards in mathematics are very high and in the top five per cent nationally. A small percentage of the most able pupils achieve the standards in National Tests expected of 16 year olds. Standards in science are also well above average when compared to all schools and those with similar intakes. In English, standards are above average, but a lower percentage of pupils achieved the higher grades than in mathematics and science. This was due to lower standards in writing which caused the results to drop below average when compared to similar schools. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in National Tests. The school has employed a variety of successful strategies to improve the motivation of boys in English. The work pupils were doing during the inspection confirmed the high standards in mathematics and science. In English, standards were judged to be higher as a result of the school's focus on improving extended writing and the benefits of following the National Literacy Strategy for a two year period. The school has set challenging targets for the National Curriculum tests in 2000, but the recent turnover of pupils in Year 6 may affect the results. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils achieve their best, develop good self-esteem and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils with special educational needs could achieve more if their targets were precise.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are eager to come to school and show enthusiasm for learning. They concentrate well and enjoy taking part in the wide range of activities offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in class. They are keen to contribute their ideas and express their feelings. At break and lunchtime they move around the school and playground sensibly, having regard for others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are kind and considerate and work co-operatively with others. They respond very well to the very good opportunities given for them to take responsibility and show independence and initiative.
Attendance	Very good. The school scrupulously monitors attendance, although a significant number of families take holidays in term time. Pupils arrive punctually.

The school has grown rapidly since the previous inspection and over half the staff are new to the school. However, harmonious relationships and the community spirit have successfully been maintained.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, teaching is good; there is no unsatisfactory teaching in the school. Twenty eight per cent of teaching is very good, 48 per cent is good and 24 per cent is satisfactory. Teaching of children under five in the reception classes is always good. The teachers have a good understanding of the children's needs and use support staff and parents efficiently. They provide well structured, interesting activities which promote good progress for pupils of all abilities. Teachers in Key Stage 1 have a good understanding of how to teach basic numeracy and literacy skills and successfully apply these to other curriculum areas such as science. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and a good working ethos is established. In Key Stage 2, teachers build effectively on the skills and knowledge acquired in Key Stage 1 and teach literacy and numeracy effectively. A good variety of methods are used to encourage pupils to recall and use specialist subject vocabulary. At the end of Key Stage 2, teaching is consistently very good as a result of the very high expectations of staff. Teachers' good subject knowledge and good questioning skills challenge pupils to think for themselves and move their learning forward. Activities in all lessons are well matched to the differing needs of the pupils and very good progress is made. The school meets the needs of the majority of its pupils most effectively; however, pupils with special educational needs do not always have appropriate targets in their individual educational plans which restricts the progress they make. Higher attaining pupils achieve very well within their 'set' groups and through targets set in other lessons. This also has the effect of raising the achievement of the 'average' pupils. Teachers' high expectations and the structured curriculum coupled with parental support for homework, enables average pupils to make good progress and achieve high standards. In both key stages, classroom support is not used to the full to support learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is well structured and managed, satisfying the requirements regarding numeracy and literacy, whilst giving pupils good access to the other subjects. It is demanding for higher attaining pupils. A very good range of extra-curricular activities and residential visits are offered. Not all aspects of the information technology curriculum are addressed in Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for statemented pupils is satisfactory. However, some pupils' needs are not clearly identified nor are their difficulties formally assessed in Key Stage 1 to ensure that they make the best possible progress. Targets in some individual education plans are not precise enough as a consequence. Some parents are not sufficiently involved in supporting their children's learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. Many aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and enable them to develop self-confidence and maturity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's procedures for child protection and ensuring the health and safety of its pupils are good. All pupils are valued as individuals and are well cared for by the staff.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good; there is a clear sense of direction for future improvement which is shared by all staff. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide exceptionally good leadership and are committed to sustaining and raising the high standards achieved. Staff work extremely well together to fulfil the school's aims.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is extremely supportive and provides a very good oversight of the school. They carefully consider the cost effectiveness of the decisions they make and find best value for money.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good systems are developing to identify strengths and weaknesses and inform long term planning. Very good use is made of the analyses of National Curriculum results and other school test data. The information from these analyses is used to set targets for groups of pupils. The quality of teaching and planning is monitored on a regular basis; the findings are used to help teachers improve their good practice and identify training needs.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the funding it receives and contributes additional funding to improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The overspend carried forward from 1998 has been reduced by funding released for the increasing numbers of pupils. Very good use is made of the accommodation available. Classroom resources are of good quality and adequate for the increasing numbers. Support staff are not always used as efficiently as they could be. Information technology resources are limited and this restricts progress.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy coming to school. • The welcoming atmosphere. • The openness and fair-mindedness of the headteacher. • The formation of the single age classes. • The reward system and the gold certificates. • They are well informed about the progress the children are making. • The high expectations of work and behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for children with special educational needs. • Reception classes of more than 30. • The outside play areas. • The teaching spaces for small groups which have been created in the corridor.

Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views of the school. They do not support parental concern about the large class sizes in reception. Strong teaching, coupled with full time classroom support, ensures that reception children make good progress. It is very difficult for the school to forecast class sizes when pupils are moving into the area on a daily basis. When the new school is completed this will no longer be a problem. The spacious classrooms and adequate play areas do not restrict the range of activities the pupils enjoy, even though numbers continue to increase. Inspectors support some of the concerns expressed about the special educational needs provision. However, the small groups of pupils who are taught in the bays which have been created in the wide corridors concentrate well on their work. Pupils commented that they liked working in these areas. Inspectors considered that the bays made best use of the available space.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Leadership and management is very good because the school looks carefully at how it can improve and plans effectively to raise standards.

1. The headteacher has skilfully guided the school through a period of rapid growth and staff changes and standards have risen. He is committed to staff development and delegates effectively to staff with management responsibilities, making best use of their talents. The school became accredited as an 'Investor in People' in February 2000 and this has helped to build a strong, hardworking team who are committed to raising standards and improving learning. Several key staff have been appointed since the last inspection to strengthen the senior management team. They have been welcomed for their expertise and the fresh ideas they have brought to the school. In response to the previous inspection, the new deputy headteacher has worked with staff to implement policies for assessment and to challenge and monitor the progress of more able pupils. Both of these initiatives have made a significant contribution to the raising of standards, especially in Key Stage 2. She has led by example and quickly gained the respect of all as both a teacher and manager. Assessment evidence is now used very well to set challenging annual targets for staff and pupils.
2. All subject co-ordinators are given release time to monitor teaching and assess the progress made through the analysis of test results and work sampling and take action as a result. They prepare annual action plans for improving and promoting their specialist subject, are responsible for a budget and ensuring best value for money. The school has worked hard to improve standards in Literacy and Numeracy by setting challenging targets. The literacy co-ordinator identified areas for staff development through audit, monitoring and appraisal. As a result of the training that followed, the teaching of phonics has improved and has raised standards in reading and spelling. The current focus of development is the teaching of extended writing where standards could be higher. The co-ordinator has used her very good subject knowledge to support and train colleagues and develop their skills in this area. She manages the subject enthusiastically and acknowledges the excellent support given by the local authority link advisor. The numeracy co-ordinator was appointed after the last inspection and has been responsible for identifying areas for improvement and leading training that has led to the very high standards now achieved by the age of 11. Some newer and less experienced members of staff 'shadow' a co-ordinator as part of their professional development, with a view to taking over the responsibility later. Co-ordinators of religious education and design and technology have made a significant contribution to the improved standards in those subjects since the last inspection by providing training for colleagues and writing detailed schemes of work to structure planning.
3. Governors plan for improvement and are very well informed about the work of the school and current educational developments. Co-ordinators submit a verbal and written report to governors at their meetings. Governors are proactive and use this information to set the appropriate priorities in the school's development plan and delegate financial resources. As well as focused termly visits, each governor 'adopts' a class, annually spends a day with them and attends class assemblies. The partnership continues as the class moves through the school and they develop a good overview. The talents and expertise of the governing body are used well for the benefit of the school in finance and sponsorship. They contribute substantially to the school's success by monitoring performance and reflecting critically. The Chair of governors has long associations with the school and feels that 'the ethos has never been better' and is proud of what has been achieved.

Good teaching and well structured planning ensure that more able pupils are effectively challenged and achieve their potential.

4. The teachers work well as a team and use their skills to support each other. They are committed to raising standards and care that their pupils achieve their best. Relationships in the classrooms are very good, pupils are confident to answer and ask questions and all contributions are valued. The good quality of the displays in classrooms and around the school reflect the commitment of staff to provide a stimulating learning environment where pupils' achievements are celebrated and self-esteem is raised. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and work rate and, consequently, pupils make good progress. They establish a strong partnership in learning with the pupils in their class by working alongside them and exploring ideas.
5. Literacy and numeracy are taught separately, whilst other subjects are often combined into topics. Topics are carefully organised to develop pupils' skills and knowledge as they move through the school and ensure that the National Curriculum is covered. Teachers are quite clear what they are expected to cover each term. Pairs of teachers in the same year group plan together, sharing expertise and ensuring that pupils in the different classes have similar experiences. Lesson preparation is thorough, precise learning objectives are identified, activities are varied, pupils are carefully grouped and the ways in which learning will be assessed are decided. Lessons move at a brisk pace and are well structured to maintain pupils' interest.
6. Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm contribute significantly to the high standards achieved and the challenges set for the most able. At the start of lessons, teachers share the purpose of the lesson with the pupils and often remind them how this lesson contributes to the overall plan. For example, Year 5 pupils were studying a newspaper article and looking at the use of persuasion, bias and opinion and were reminded that this was one of a series of lessons on arguing a point of view and they were able to put this lesson in context. The majority of staff are highly skilled at asking probing questions which challenge pupils' thinking. They also effectively direct questions to pupils to assess their understanding and ensure that all contribute to the lesson. Lessons build well on what has gone before and pupils enjoy demonstrating their knowledge and recalling the relevant subject vocabulary. Teachers make very good use of the time at the end of sessions for pupils to share their work with others and assess the learning that takes place. This helps to deepen pupils' understanding of their work.
7. Good use is made of the resources available for research, including the classroom computers. In a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils used local publicity material, the Yellow Pages telephone directories and CD ROM to research amenities in the local area. At the end of the lesson the groups reported back confidently on their findings, showing that they could form opinions and draw conclusions. The teacher then encouraged the pupils to think about the difference between 'services' and 'needs' because there was some confusion and following a discussion they were able to provide excellent definitions of both. Pupils are given very good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. Year 3 pupils had to use precise measurements when making slotted structures in an art lesson. Year 5 pupils were able to follow written instructions and accurately construct a parachute for a science investigation. In religious education, Year 6 pupils used their literacy skills to write detailed and informative accounts following a series of talks by a Jewish visitor. In science, there are well planned opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills and solve problems. Year 2 pupils know that compare means 'what is the same and what is different'. The same pupils were encouraged to observe two bean seeds carefully and pose their own questions for investigation. Pupils in Year 5 have a clear understanding of how to devise a fair test and understand that there must be only one difference between the two parachutes they make.

By the age of 11, pupils achieve standards well above those expected for their age in mathematics and science as a result of the good quality of teaching and target setting.

8. Pupils achieve very high standards in mathematics and well above average science results in the National Curriculum tests by the age of 11.
9. An emphasis on investigation and applying knowledge is evident throughout the school and by the time pupils reach Year 6 they have a good understanding of scientific concepts. In Key Stage 1 classes, much of the science is practical and experimental. Year 1 pupils confidently find magnetic and non-magnetic materials around their classroom. Year 2 pupils are introduced to the challenging concept of fair testing and suggest that they should give both the seeds they are comparing the same amount of water. In Year 3, pupils were able to make a pin hole camera and observed that objects viewed were turned upside down. Pupils used their knowledge from previous experiments with light to understand and explain this, with the help of the teacher's model. Pupils in Year 6 were able to use their knowledge of forces, such as friction and air resistance when building a self-propelled vehicle.
10. Standards in Mathematics by the age of 11 are very high and the most able pupils achieve levels expected of 16 year olds. The mathematics co-ordinator has made a significant contribution to the improvements made since the last inspection. The careful analysis of standardised tests and National Curriculum results has enabled the school to identify trends and patterns, adjust teaching and to purchase resources to meet the needs of particular classes as well as the school. A considerable amount of staff training has taken place. The school adopted a system of setting in Year 6 two years ago and standards have risen as a result. In Year 2 setting has been introduced this year in order to raise standards above the average achieved in 1999. Results of the tests in 2000 show a considerable improvement, especially in the numbers achieving the higher grades and indicate that this re-organisation has been beneficial.
11. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading and writing are well above average. In Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in English is above average, overall, and higher in reading than in writing. In order to raise these standards further the school has given particular attention to improving writing this year and all staff have had additional training. Special 'booster' classes have been organised to help particular pupils achieve their potential. Standards are better now and it is expected that test results will show improvement. Some of the most able pupils for the first time are expected to achieve Level 6 (average for 16 year olds).
12. Good systems of assessing pupils' work and the analysis of test results enable teachers to judge pupils' progress over time and set individual targets. New assessment procedures and their use have been a significant factor in the improvement made since the last inspection. Criteria have been established for identifying the more able pupils and names are recorded on a register. These pupils are set annual targets and their progress is carefully monitored by the deputy headteacher. As a group, teachers regularly visit other classrooms to look at planning and samples of work and discuss the teaching methods used in a curriculum area. In this way, expertise is shared, staff agree standards and discuss what has worked well and what should happen next. Teachers collectively assess pieces of written work which are then collected in a reference portfolio. The written work of older pupils is assessed each half term, given a level and clear targets are set for improvement. Pupils are being increasingly encouraged to evaluate their own work and become involved in the target setting process and, where this is happening, standards are improving.

The majority of pupils are keen to learn because the work is interesting and relevant. They make good progress and are proud of their achievements.

13. Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning. They show enthusiasm for the interesting experiences planned for them. In lessons, they respond very well to the teachers' high expectations of hard work and good behaviour. Pupils listen intently and concentrate well for appropriate lengths of time. They are keen to answer questions and listen to and respect each other's contributions. Pupils of all ages are confident enough to question the teacher and

contribute new ideas to a class discussion. The majority of pupils, including the youngest were seen to work co-operatively in pairs and small groupings even when these were not of their own choosing. This has a positive effect on their social development and helps to build the school community.

14. Parents play an important part in their children's learning and give support and encouragement with homework. Parents read with their children on a regular basis and help them to learn spellings and number facts. In Year 5, as part of their homework, pupils had to research and prepare a talk about their favourite author. Parents are encouraged to get involved. One pupil's presentation was well researched and organised and she brought along a collection of books to illustrate the talk and had borrowed some from the public library. Extracts were read from the books and the pupil confidently answered class questions. It was obvious that a great deal had been learnt from this task.
15. There is an excellent range of extra curricular activities and a large number of pupils take part. Sixteen of the clubs are organised by the teaching staff and French and Karate are provided by outside agencies. There are clubs for recorders, art and craft, writing and publishing a magazine as well as a variety of dance and games groups. All the activities are very well supported and provide a good opportunity for pupils to get to know each other and enjoy themselves whilst extending their learning. Pupils with musical talent are able to learn instruments and play together in the accomplished school orchestra which meets in school time.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good because of the opportunities provided to develop confidence and maturity.

16. Pupils are encouraged to develop self-respect, self-confidence and self-reliance. Good opportunities are given for pupils to express their opinions through the elected School Council, which has brought about changes in the school environment and raised money to fund these. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for their own equipment and clearing away. They are keen to collect rewards for good work and behaviour and proudly receive certificates in assembly when they complete the album of stickers. Older pupils answer the phone at lunchtime and efficiently relay messages. Residential visits and regular visits to local places of interest improve pupils' knowledge of their own environment and develop their social skills and confidence. The school works hard to develop citizenship by taking the school into the community to perform for the elderly and through involvement in local societies. Those who move into the area soon feel a sense of belonging.
17. All adults provide good role models for pupils, are interested in them as individuals and listen to what they have to say. Staff show the respect and courtesy towards pupils that they expect them to show elsewhere. The school operates as an orderly community, behaviour is very good and the pupils know and follow the rules which are clearly displayed in the corridors and classrooms. Pupils' behaviour in the lunch hall is extremely civilised and they show good table manners. Older pupils help younger pupils with reading and at lunch time and are sensitive to the space they need for their playground games. Pupils are encouraged to be polite, inquisitive, friendly and welcoming to visitors. Behaviour during assemblies is very good despite the cramped conditions and a sense of community is again emphasised.
18. Older pupils comment that they enjoy expressing their feelings through poetry and both orally and in writing during religious education lessons. Opinions are valued by staff and other pupils. In discussion with inspectors, pupils were keen to share their written work about what makes them angry. A pupil stated, with some maturity, that individuals were important and had discovered that there were things she could do to make the world a better place to live in. Pupils are encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others beyond the school community. A Year 1 pupil initiated a successful fund raising event to help flood victims in Africa. Pupils learn about different religious beliefs and can relate their understanding. Younger pupils talked knowledgeably about the Muslim religion and the artefacts on display around the school. They told how they had been able to recognise members of other faith groups when they were shopping in a nearby town and able to share their knowledge with their parents. Pupils are given good direct experiences to learn about other cultures through the visits that are arranged and

the visitors who help with topic work. For example, a group of Indian musicians visited the school and pupils took part in a dance workshop. These experiences enable pupils to develop a good understanding and tolerance of the diversity of society outside Market Harborough.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Pupils could do better in information technology; their progress is restricted by teachers' lack of expertise and too few resources.

19. Standards in information technology are satisfactory by the age of seven. They remain similar to those at the time of the last inspection, but improvements have been made. Teachers effectively use whole class lessons to explain and demonstrate the task for the week. Year 2 pupils learn how to draw a picture in the style of Mondrian using 'Paint shop'. The frequency with which pupils use the classroom computers is monitored, but the learning is not. Pupils with computers at home show more skill and confidence, but the tasks set do not challenge them sufficiently.
20. Standards by 11 are below what is expected because the teachers' lack of subject knowledge and resources limit pupils' progress. The monitoring and modelling elements of the National Curriculum are not covered due to lack of equipment. The majority of 11 year olds are about a year behind. The school is aware of this and is working hard to raise standards. Currently, there is no system of assessment to match tasks to pupils' ability and this restricts progress. Several improvements have been made since the last inspection and the co-ordinator is clear about what needs to be done. All the classroom computers have recently been upgraded and replaced by PC's. Staff have been given training in their use. During the inspection, computers were efficiently used in most lessons for word processing and research. Following professional interviews, many staff expressed concern about their lack of confidence and a skills audit took place. The staff with good skills usefully trained and supported others in their section of the school and this has helped to raise standards and boost confidence. The need for more staff training is recognised. A new scheme of work is being developed and is well structured to support staff planning. Adjustments will be made to the scheme and the expectations for each year group raised as pupils' skills develop. The school is in the last phase of government funding for equipment and training to access and use the Internet. This has restricted the school's development in this area. There is no suitable space at present for computers to be grouped together for whole class teaching, something the school knows would be beneficial. The school has recently established a video link with the local high school. Pupils have only a limited knowledge of the wider use of information technology in everyday life and this is an area for development.

The targets set for pupils with special educational needs are often too vague and the work is not suitably adapted in some lessons.

21. At the time of the last inspection the provision for special education needs was good. However, current provision does not allow all pupils to achieve their potential. There are now more pupils identified as having learning difficulties than at the time of the last inspection, there are more classes and the outside support given to the school has decreased. The school uses its own funding to provide additional support for these pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the part-time teaching support and maintains good links with several outside specialists, such as the educational psychologist. She also has responsibility for additional curriculum areas and is a full time class teacher. It is impossible for the co-ordinator to maintain a clear overview of the provision and the quality of teaching provided for these pupils in the time available. More of the responsibility for the special educational needs pupils has had to be taken by the class teachers whose expertise and experience varies. The register of special educational needs is efficiently maintained and pupils move up and down the stages appropriately.
22. The assessment given when pupils join the reception class is initially used to identify pupils with difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs observed in the reception lessons are given good support. Tasks are well matched to their learning needs and good progress is made. At present, there are no formal systems used to identify the nature of pupils' difficulties in Key

Stage 1 and this prevents some pupils making the progress they are capable of. The bulk of pupils on the special educational needs register are in Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 1, the results of the National Tests at seven are analysed. A group of pupils now in Year 3 were found to have fallen further behind with reading and spelling than was realised and are now being given additional structured support to help them catch up. Pupils who join the school during the year and have difficulties may also wait some time for assessment. As a result some parents are unhappy with the provision.

23. Individual education plans are written by the class teacher, often with help from the learning support teacher. Where outside specialists have been involved and the particular difficulties are identified, the educational plans are well structured and enable the pupils to achieve their potential. Elsewhere, individual education plans (IEP's) are not specific enough because some teachers have too little experience in identifying the precise nature of learning difficulties. Annual targets for reading, writing and spelling are often difficult to understand and inappropriate. Termly targets are not precise enough to be measured and, as a consequence, not all pupils make satisfactory progress. Targets for mathematics are generally sharper. The IEP's for Stage 3 pupils do not fulfil the legal requirements of the Code of Practice in several respects, including the important details of what parents can do to help pupils at home. There is a need for staff training to improve the quality of the documentation and the identification of problems if all pupils are to achieve their potential.
24. Tasks are carefully planned and matched to pupils needs in literacy and numeracy lessons. In some literacy lessons pupils do not have access to suitable dictionaries or wordlists to support their writing. In other subjects, there is no evidence in some planning to show how teachers aim to meet the needs of the lower attaining pupils in their lesson. Pupils withdrawn for group support on a weekly basis by a part-time teacher make satisfactory progress and enjoy the activities planned. The work is linked to their classwork and their individual targets, but is not regular enough to have a significant impact on learning. Some of the resources used in these sessions need renewing to improve motivation. The expertise and skills of the learning support teaching staff are not used to help class teachers identify pupils' individual learning difficulties under the present arrangements.

Classroom assistants are not always led effectively to support pupils' learning.

25. Additional staff are used well in the reception classes to work with groups and monitor progress. They are well briefed and are clear who they are working with and the learning expected. Elsewhere in the school, in the lessons observed, they had insufficient impact on pupils' learning. Classroom assistants are not involved at the planning stage and are not led effectively by most staff to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Most teachers do not detail the tasks delegated to them and set clear objectives for these in their lesson plans. Some teachers provide useful written instructions for the helpers in their lessons. In other classes, the involvement expected is too general and classroom assistants do not guide or support the learning of a particular group. No support staff were observed helping or assessing pupils working on computers. Support assistants have been provided with some training by the school, but teacher training is needed if better use is to be made of their time and skills.

Standards of handwriting are too low because teachers do not insist that pupils do their best.

26. Most pupils are taught to hold their pencil and form their letters correctly in the early years but insufficient attention is paid to building on this good practice and developing a clear joined style of writing at an early age. The school previously prided itself in the high standards of handwriting achieved but emphasis on other areas has resulted in lower standards of presentation becoming acceptable. A gradual deterioration in the handwriting of many individuals could be seen in the work sampled and this was not brought to pupils' attention by their teachers. Many pupils in Key Stage 2 had reverted to immature printing styles. In mathematics, it was noted that poor standards of presentation were leading to mistakes. The English co-ordinator has also noticed these trends through work sampling and has plans to address the problem.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(1) Raise standards in information technology by:

- developing teachers' subject knowledge to enable them to fully implement the National Curriculum
- assess pupils' knowledge and understanding so that tasks can be matched to their ability and they can make the necessary progress
- improve resources so that pupils have more opportunities to practice and develop their computer skills.

(paragraphs 19 and 20)

(2) Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:

- improving the identification and assessment of pupils difficulties in Key Stage 1
- providing training for all class teachers and support staff to ensure that individual education plans have clear targets which can be readily evaluated and understood by those involved.

(paragraphs 21 – 24)

(3) Review the use of classroom assistants and special needs support, ensure that their time is used more efficiently and that they have a greater impact on pupils' learning.

(paragraph 25)

(4) To improve standards of handwriting by ensuring that the whole school policy is consistently applied and that teachers have higher expectations of the standards of work presented.

(paragraph 26)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	28	48	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	377
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	31	20	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	26
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	45	45	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (88)	88 (89)	90 (86)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	27
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	45	46	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (89)	90 (83)	92 (96)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	36	18	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	34	35
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	44	50	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (76)	93 (76)	96 (89)
	National	70 (75)	69 (69)	78 (89)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	25	19
	Girls	26	20	26
	Total	40	45	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (64)	85 (64)	85 (91)
	National	77 (64)	69 (64)	75 (70)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	372
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	497408
Total expenditure	490402
Expenditure per pupil	1402
Balance brought forward from previous year	-10139
Balance carried forward to next year	-3133

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	360
Number of questionnaires returned	102

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	34	5	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	35	4	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	52	4	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	57	11	4	1
The teaching is good.	55	38	5	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	50	12	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	28	2	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	34	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	45	16	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	48	44	4	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	44	4	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	45	10	1	7

Other issues raised by parents

Several concerns were expressed about the provision for pupils with special educational needs.