

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BLACKWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

East Grinstead

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125963

Headteacher: Mr A. Markham

Reporting inspector: Mrs G. Crew  
22837

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 January 2000

Inspection number: 192114

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Blackwell Farm Road East Grinstead West Sussex
Postcode:	RH19 3JL
Telephone number:	01342 323906/321013
Fax number:	01342 300676
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D. Brownbridge
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Mrs G. Crew	Registered inspector
Mr D. Heath	Lay inspector
Mrs V. Miller	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

QAA Ltd  
Herrington Barn  
Herrington  
Dorchester  
Dorset

DT2 9PU

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The number of pupils on roll is 314 full time equivalent and this is lower than at the time of the last inspection. Since the beginning of the Autumn Term 1997, the school has experienced a falling roll. As a result, the characteristics of the school have changed making mixed age classes in Key Stage 1 a necessity. In addition, there has been a rise in the number of children joining the school during Key Stage 2. A significant number of these pupils have already been identified as having special educational needs. The attainment of children on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national average, having fallen to this level over several years. Fifteen pupils are eligible for free-school meals and this is below national average. Fifty-three pupils are on the register of special educational needs and five pupils have statements of special need, which is broadly in line with the national average. There have been a small number of changes to the teaching staff since the last inspection and this has enabled stability in staffing.

## HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school that is managed well. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Pupils of all abilities achieve high standards. The school provides good value for money.

### What the school does well

- Achievement in English, mathematics, science, music and art is high. Challenge is provided for all pupils in these subjects.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities is very good.
- Teaching is very good overall. Planning is of high quality.
- Assessment and monitoring of academic progress and personal development is very effective.
- The school is very effective in monitoring and evaluating its strengths and areas for development.
- Pupils enjoy school, are eager to learn and always try to do their very best.

### What could be improved

- Standards in information and control technology.
- Planning for long term developments, including increasing the number of children in the school.
- Provision of a heating system that would improve temperatures for pupils and staff to work in.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The developments made since the last inspection in January 1997 have been sufficient to maintain and improve standards in the majority of subjects. High emphasis has been placed on literacy and numeracy and the current focus is on writing. Work has been undertaken to improve provision for information and control technology and design and technology. The quality of teachers' planning has improved and is consistent across the school. Learning intentions are clear and work is set to challenge pupils of all abilities and differing gender. Improvement in the procedures for assessment and monitoring progress and personal development ensure that pupils make the best progress that can be expected. The use of assessment to inform future planning for the class, groups or individuals is improving. Procedures for monitoring to identify effectiveness are very well established. The outcomes are used to promote school improvement. The school development plan is a very good tool for promoting short-term developments and has well defined success criteria that relate to improving the quality of education. The school is well placed to continue to improve providing the number of children on roll is maintained.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	Year 1997	Year 1998	Year 1999	Year 1999	
English	C	D	C	E	well above average    A above average        B Average                C below average        D well below average    E
Mathematics	C	B	A	B	
Science	A	C	A	A	

The attainment of children on entry to the school is below the county average, having fallen to this level over several years. However, it is broadly in line with the national average. By the time they are five, children achieve what is expected for their age. In 1999 end of Key Stage 1 tests, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the age of eleven, standards are well above average in mathematics and science and close to the national average in English. However, in comparison with similar schools attainment in English is well below average. The school has identified a weakness in standards of writing and is addressing this successfully. Revised targets have been set at a more challenging level for performance in writing. Trends over time show an improvement in the school's performance. Work seen in the inspection was of a high standard in English, mathematics, science, music and art.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are eager to learn and enthusiastic about their work. They are responsive and responsible and show very good attitudes to all they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils have respect for each other, for adults and the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Pupils take responsibility and show initiative. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good and pupils enjoy coming to school.

The very positive attitudes and values of pupils reflect the ethos of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very good	Very 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 is very good overall. One excellent lesson was seen. Teaching is very effective in promoting high standards. In very good and excellent lessons, the learning intentions teachers' plan are shared with the children and this helps them to understand what to do. Teachers set appropriate challenges for pupils of all abilities and have high expectations of achievement. There are occasions when some pupils become distracted from the activity as it is not matched so well to the objective of the lesson and pace is slow. However, this does not detract from the overall satisfactory nature of the lesson. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good. Teachers are enthusiastic and are very clear about what they expect children to learn.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities provided is very good ensuring the curriculum is broad, relevant and interesting for all pupils. Residential visits, trips and a wide range of extra-curricular activities for the older children extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision. Work designed especially for pupils needs helps them to make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal development is good. Moral and social development is cultivated well and reflects the aims of the school. Pupils are provided with good knowledge and insights into values and beliefs of others through history, religious education and through the richness of art and music provision. Provision for spiritual development is good. Self-knowledge and esteem are promoted through planned opportunities for personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know the pupils very well and have rigorous systems and procedures to track progress. Individuals and groups are supported very well in their learning and personal development.

Particular strengths in the curriculum are the literacy and numeracy strategies, art and music. The planned curriculum and initiatives for improving writing are raising standards. The quality of work and presentation is high for all children. There is inconsistency in the coverage of the information and control technology scheme of work. It is yet to be fully implemented in the area of control and modelling. Detailed observations of what pupils' know understand and can do are kept by teaching and non-teaching staff. These are used to set individual targets for all pupils, which may include targets for improving behaviour if this is appropriate. Both of these features contribute most effectively to the way the school provides appropriate learning opportunities for all pupils.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is led well and there is efficient and effective management. Delegation of roles and responsibilities between the senior management team and the effect of their teamwork has a significant impact on standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities effectively. Governors are well informed and play a good role in accounting for performance and improvement. They are clear about the financial implications of the falling roll and the need to promote the school in order to address the issue.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very effective in identifying strengths and areas for development. Very good strategies have been put in place to further raise standards especially in writing and information and control technology.
The strategic use of resources	Strategic planning is unsatisfactory. The school is not planning for long term developments, including increasing the number of pupils on roll.

A strength in leadership is the use of the individual expertise of the senior management team. School managers recognised the serious problem of the falling roll at the beginning of the academic year 1997/1998, but this has not been resolved as yet. The school applies the principles of best value very well. The governing body regularly balances the costs of the school against the performance and quality of what is provided and relates this to the impact on standards.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching is good.</li> <li>The school is approachable.</li> <li>Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>Children like school.</li> <li>Children make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The range of activities outside of lessons.</li> <li>The amount of homework.</li> <li>That the school should work more closely with parents.</li> <li>The way the school is led and managed.</li> <li>Information about children's progress.</li> </ul>

Inspector's judgements support the positive views of the parents. Inspectors judge the range of activities outside of lessons to be very good. The school has given due consideration to the group of children these are offered to. Inspection findings show the amount of homework to be appropriate. The home/school agreement includes a clear outline of the homework arrangements and the school takes trouble to advise parents about what homework is given in each year group. Inspection evidence shows that there are good links between parents and the school. Links make an important contribution to the standard of education. Parents are given detailed information about children's progress at parent consultations, when progress sheets are shared with parents and targets are agreed, and in the annual reports. The inspector's judge that the headteacher and key staff lead and manage the school well.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Achievement in English, mathematics, science, music and art is high. Challenge is provided for all pupils in these subjects.**

1 Pupils achieve above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in tests at the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is close to the national average in English and well above the national average in mathematics and science. The school has identified that writing is the weakest area in English and has put effective procedures in place to raise standards. Examples of these are additional time allocated to writing and dedicated weeks when writing is the main focus across the school. The profile of writing has been raised. During the inspection, work seen was of a high standard by the end of Key Stage 2. The impact of strategies to raise standards is not yet reflected in the end of key stage tests and assessments. The high standards in reading, writing and mathematics contribute significantly to the pupils' learning across the curriculum. Attainment in art and music is high. The subjects make a great contribution to developing pupils' self-esteem and personal development and to promoting their understanding of culture.

2 In all lessons, teachers plan carefully and consider the differing abilities of all the children in their class. Work is planned on the basis of what each group knows, understands and can do. Assessment is carefully carried out and progress children make is monitored. Individual targets are set for pupils, when appropriate, to help them improve. These are shared with pupils and their parents so that they know what is expected of them and they can contribute to the learning process. Assessment is also used to inform planning and as a consequence children are set challenging work. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans that identify additional literacy, numeracy and behaviour targets as appropriate. Specific programmes of work, that may include individual support, are carefully planned in order that pupils can make good progress towards achieving their targets. Teachers pay good attention to these targets when planning in all curriculum areas.

3 Throughout the school, a high emphasis is given to reading and it is used effectively to support learning across the curriculum. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to read as a class and in groups according to their ability in literacy lessons. They pay good attention to assessing what pupils' know. As a result of this, they can challenge pupils and extend their knowledge and understanding. Activities planned are related well to the text that is being studied and are presented at a level that ensures pupils are learning something new or reinforcing prior learning. Targets are set for individual pupils as a result of assessment and appropriate programmes of work are planned that build on what pupils' know and can do. If appropriate, additional support is provided for pupils, particularly those with special educational needs or those who need short term focused input to raise levels of achievement.

4 In the reception classes, the pupils love stories and learn to read quickly. By the age of seven, they know how to tackle unfamiliar words and enjoy reading. They are challenged to read different forms of writing. As a result, pupils of all abilities talk with confidence about different characters, the way in which the plot unfolds and how the story develops. In lower Key Stage 2, pupils look at text in depth and consider the style in which it is written. Work is matched well to the level of pupils' understanding and they read with expression and characterisation. For example, all pupils read with surprise when there is an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils keep reading journals as part of the homework programme. They are required to apply the skills they have learned in

lessons and this challenges pupils to apply their knowledge creatively. As a result, pupils record detailed information about the books they have read at their own level of understanding. Teachers use the journals very effectively as an indicator of achievement and use this assessment to plan future work for groups or individuals.

5 The teaching of writing skills is the current focus of the school. Teachers plan for very good opportunities for writing in the literacy hour and within the context of other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are taught in ability groups based on knowledge gained from secure assessment of pupils' knowledge and skill. Teachers give very good consideration to the needs of individual and groups of pupils when planning challenging tasks. The progress pupils make is carefully monitored through regular assessment and future work is planned that builds on current levels of attainment. Individual targets are set for pupils as appropriate. Those with special educational needs have individual programmes of work planned to help them achieve their targets, with suitable adult support provided if that is required to help the child make progress. In Key Stage 2, reading journals provide teachers with very good opportunities to assess what pupils have learned and understood. They then use this information to plan subsequent activities or programmes of work for individual pupils that build on their skills.

6 In the reception class, pupils quickly develop an understanding that marks on paper have a meaning. They are then given a good range of tasks, which require them to match and order sentences. As pupils progress through Key Stage 1, they are presented with purposeful activities that require them to use writing skills and letter formation improves. As a result, all pupils in Key Stage 1 are confident to write independently. For example, lower attaining pupils have a go at spelling words like 'mtirrey' for material and 'wisad' for wizard. As a result of the very good range of opportunities planned, pupils write in a range of styles including descriptive poetry, instructions and creative stories by the end of the key stage. In Key Stage 2, early writing skills are extended as very good attention continues to be given to planning a range of opportunities for writing. Teachers place a very good emphasis on the need to write for different purposes and pupils understand that writing is an important aspect of communication. As a result of teachers' high expectations, pupils are aware of the need to consider the audience when writing and teachers encourage them to adopt different styles accordingly. By the age of 11, pupils express their ideas imaginatively and select appropriate forms of writing for different purposes. The use of reading journals to develop individualised writing skills is exemplary. There is clear expectation that pupils will work in these independently at home. The flair and initiative and knowledge and understanding of English language used is of a high standard.

7 Mathematics is taught daily throughout the school in the numeracy hour. All lessons are planned considering the ability of the pupils and they are grouped according to prior attainment. Throughout both key stages, teachers set activities and tasks that challenge pupils developing their knowledge and skills progressively whatever their level of attainment. Pupils develop their agility with numbers during a daily mental mathematics session. They use the skills they have in a variety of different contexts. Teachers are adept at focusing key questions to individual pupils. Due to this, they are challenged at a level that is appropriate for extending their individual understanding of concepts. This helps them to explain the strategies they have used to work out a problem with confidence. Thorough assessment of what pupils' knowledge and skill is undertaken at regular intervals. As a result, teachers plan work that continues to extend pupils' knowledge, skill and understanding of mathematics systematically and set targets for individual pupils.

8 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs have relevant targets set in relation to mathematics. Specific work programmes are planned and additional support is

given if the needs of an individual child cannot be met through the work planned for a group. Similarly, work for higher attaining pupils is planned on an individual basis if they need further challenge. In the reception classes, pupils are challenged to learn about mathematics by experiencing practical tasks. They learn about number, shape, pattern and sequencing. Following activities, pupils record their work carefully at a level appropriate to their ability. All pupils set simple sums out correctly. Higher attaining pupils are expected to apply the knowledge they have about recording and think of a variety of ways to record their results. This leads to higher levels of attainment. As they move through the school, pupils develop their mathematical vocabulary and are encouraged to use it when they answer questions. For example, pupils in Year 3 talk about digits and partitioning in relation to the task they were carrying out. By the age of 11, pupils of all abilities are confident and competent mathematicians. The high expectations of teachers are reflected in the way that pupils rise to challenges, their enjoyment in mathematics and the high standards achieved.

9 In Key Stage 1, science is taught through a topic approach and pupils are frequently grouped by similar ability. This ensures that teachers plan activities that take into account prior attainment. The work pupils do is regularly assessed and teachers use the results of this effectively to plan challenging work that builds progressively on what pupils can do. Pupils of all abilities are introduced to challenging scientific concepts, such as fair testing. All pupils are expected to record the results of investigative work. They use 'mind maps' effectively to record their ideas at a level that is appropriate to their prior attainment. By the age of seven, pupils of all abilities make very good use of literacy and numeracy skills to record the results of experiments in a variety of ways. Higher attaining pupils are expected to describe the prediction, the method used and what they found out in depth. If pupils need support in recording these results this is given. At times, pupils with special educational needs use pictures to record information. However, suitable emphasis is placed on the assessment of their understanding of the scientific concept being taught so that subsequent work can be planned to extend learning.

10 In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop the way in which they record their work. If they require support in presenting information and results they are supported by adults who have a very good knowledge of pupils' prior achievements from the detailed assessment that takes place. This is exemplified in the way in which pupils present their work either graphically, in sequential drawings or in written logs. In Year 4, work is planned for pupils of all abilities using the CD-ROM to gather information about animal types. All pupils speak with confidence when describing the characteristics of carnivores and herbivores. Teachers plan a good range of activities for groups of pupils depending on their ability. As a result, lower attaining pupils use key vocabulary, for example predator and prey in context, and understand the animal groups to which they were referring. Higher attaining pupils work to gather information about food chains and talk confidently in scientific terms about the relationships in certain chains. They give valid reasons to explain their findings. Due to the work that is planned to match the ability of groups, all pupils are competent in investigation and experimentation by the time they are eleven. They have a secure knowledge base and use scientific language with confidence. They have a very good understanding of scientific concepts. Across the school, pupils do not have individual education plans with targets related specifically to science, although literacy or numeracy targets are sometimes achieved within the context of science lessons. However, the staff know the children very well and regular assessment ensures that they know what needs to be planned next for the class, groups or individuals to build on learning. Individual pupils are set targets for improvement at times. This presents them with challenge as they understand what they need to do next and can take responsibility for their learning.

11 The teachers expect high standards from the pupils in their artwork and the activities

they provide present challenge. As a result, all pupils are expected to apply the skills they have and new ones that are taught to build on their prior achievement. This is evident in the outcome of all pupils' work regardless of their prior level of attainment. The quality of achievement is exemplified by the beautiful printing work carried out in Years 1 and 2 that displays high levels of achievement. Teachers assess the outcome of pupils' achievement and, as a result, plan challenging opportunities to extend pupils' skills in each element of the art curriculum. The way in which pupils can talk about their views of their work is indicative of the value the school places on the subject. In Key Stage 2, all pupils talk about the work of great masters and use technical language with sophistication. Pupils in Year 6, show their enthusiasm about their visit to the National Gallery through a high level of understanding of the different styles and periods of painting whatever their ability. Assessment of what the pupils know and understand is carried out through skilful questioning and future work is planned as a result of this. Teachers use displays around the school to celebrate the high standards pupils reach both in skill and presentation. This encourages pupils of all abilities to do their very best. Pupils with special educational needs do not have targets specifically related to improving standards in artwork, but all pupils are given opportunities to practise and refine their skills in order that they make progress. If pupils require additional time or support in order for them to achieve this, it is made available.

12 Music is given a high priority within the school and pupils benefit from the personal expertise of the staff. Teachers are competent in assessing group or individual needs and, as a result, programmes of work are matched to meet the needs of classes, groups or individuals and challenge is provided. All teachers have a music session within their class base. They use a variety of teaching strategies to maintain the pupils' interest and extend their learning. For example, interspersing the use of a taped broadcast with the opportunity to watch the teacher demonstrate how to play a 'talking drum'. Teachers ask key questions that provide them with information about what the pupils have understood. They then use this information to plan future work at an appropriate level of challenge. Good opportunities to develop pupils' skills in playing instruments are given in class lessons, lessons in specific instruments and during extra-curricular activities. Teachers observe children closely while they play and give support to those who find an activity difficult, so that they achieve success, and pose further challenge for those who are adept. This ensures that all pupils reach the standards they are capable of achieving. Pupils of all abilities are given good opportunities to perform. This encourages their self-esteem and provides the teachers with information about individuals that they use to plan future work or to set individual targets. This is developed further in the 'music club', which children choose to attend in Years 5 and 6 as an additional music lesson. During the inspection, they were practising singing in rounds in order to develop pitch and control. This work had been planned as a result of previous assessment in order to build achievement. As a result, the quality of performance was improved alongside pupils' ability to sing in a controlled way. Individual pupils are asked challenging questions such as, "what do you think you need to do to sing back pitched rhythmic sounds?" They use their knowledge to answer and use subject specific language appropriate to their understanding. During the session, the teacher placed high value on the quality of performance and all pupils are encouraged to 'be performers'. Individual pupils are given targets to help them improve if this is appropriate.

### **The quality and range of learning opportunities is very good.**

13 There is a wide range of opportunities for learning provided for all pupils that stimulate their interest and aptitudes. These are very good overall. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The curriculum is adapted very well to meet individual or group needs and individual education plans are written for pupils on the

register of special need. The curriculum is broad and balanced with particular strengths in the English, mathematics, science, art and music. The school meets statutory requirements and uses the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus effectively to teach religious education.

14 The curriculum for the youngest children is good and takes into account the areas of learning set out in the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age. The school has yet to consider the new national guidance. Planning is very good and ensures that all children have practical experiences to develop their knowledge and understanding. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught daily and the children have the opportunity to practise these in activities throughout the day.

15 In Key Stage 1 and 2, the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very effective. The staff have adopted the national frameworks as the basis for their planning and they adapt these very well to meet the needs of the pupils in their class. The curriculum for both subjects is taught with imagination and staff take care to make the activities interesting by varying the way in which they present material. The planned curriculum for writing has had an impact on standards achieved and the quality of work and presentation is high. Additional literacy support is given to pupils in order to boost their learning. This is planned using national material.

16 The school provides satisfactory opportunities for personal, social and health education through the science curriculum and activities, such as circle time, when pupils discuss issues. However, there is not a scheme of work to complement this area of the school's work and therefore it is more difficult to track progression of learning. Personal development is promoted through spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and provision is good. Pupils are clearly taught the difference between right and wrong and are encouraged to take responsibility and develop the understanding of living in a community. Opportunities to develop knowledge and insights into values and beliefs are offered through history, religious education, literacy, art and music.

17 The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for the older pupils in the school. They have considered extending this to other year groups, but feel it is a privilege that pupils can aspire to. Inspection findings support this decision as the pupils have many opportunities to be involved in activities as they move through the school. At the time of the inspection, children were involved in football, netball, dance, keep-fit and music clubs. A particular feature of extra-curricular activities is the 'Friday club' specifically for Year 6 where they organise the programme themselves. The curriculum is also supported by a wide range of visits and visitors and the oldest pupils benefit from a residential journey.

18 Monitoring the curriculum is well developed and includes the monitoring of time allocation, coverage and planning. Co-ordinators regularly review policies and present very good progress reports for the subject they manage. The monitoring procedures have had a very good impact on standards by ensuring pupils' knowledge, skill and understanding are built on progressively as they move through the school. Additionally, it has informed the planning and target setting processes.

### **Teaching is very good overall. Planning is of a high quality.**

19 The quality of teaching is enhanced by detailed planning of the curriculum and individual lessons. The school has revised the way in which it plans the curriculum and how it will be taught. Long, medium and short term planning is of a high quality and identifies precisely what it is children need to know and the skills they will require to achieve this.

Teachers with the same aged children in their classes plan together to ensure consistency. This is a particular strength that has an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Throughout the school, teachers plan their lessons very thoroughly by identifying precise learning objectives, grouping the pupils carefully, varying the activities, choosing the best methods and deciding how to assess what the pupils learn. As a result of effective planning, teachers are clear about what it is they want children to learn.

20 Lessons proceed at a very good pace and are very well structured to maintain the pupils' interest and keep them focused on the lesson. Teachers make very good use of their own subject knowledge to support this. For example, in a music lesson in Year 4, the teacher used her personal experience very well to develop the pupils' understanding of African music and culture. The use of artifacts in this lesson provided a very good visual stimulus to maintain interest. As a result, pupils made good progress in the lesson. One teacher's very good subject knowledge and her enjoyment in teaching music in Years 5 and 6 created very high levels of concentration from the pupils. Due to her very good subject knowledge, explanations were detailed and supported by very effective demonstration, which helped the pupils understand quickly and make very good progress during the lesson.

21 Learning objectives are explained to the pupils so that they understand what is expected of them. As a result, pupils focus on the task and succeed in applying their knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 2 used their knowledge of addition patterns to describe how they use the number square to add on ten starting at different numbers. Progress pupils make in lessons is enhanced, as they know what it is the teacher wants them to achieve.

22 Appropriate challenges are set for pupils of all abilities. In very good lessons, teachers encourage pupils to think about the ways in which they learn. As a result of this, pupils have a very good understanding of their work and apply skills taught to good effect. For example, pupils in Year 1 explained about how they spell new words. Some children described how they use a 'word bank' written by the teacher, while others talked about how they "sound the words out aloud to test if they are real words". Teachers challenge pupils continually throughout lessons, but maintain a sense of fun. For example, in Year 2, high levels of challenge and the presentation of the task as a game led to pupils eagerly finding out ways in which they could make words longer. Teachers are quick to capitalise on pupils' success and develop learning opportunities. In the spelling lesson described, the pupils' quick grasp of the skill being taught led the teacher to introduce a new spelling pattern. Children were eager to practise this out aloud and in writing. Due to the challenges set in lessons, pupils make good, and frequently very good, progress in lessons.

23 Key questions that staff will ask pupils are identified in planning and this contributes to the assessment process. Teachers are skilled in asking open-ended questions that require the pupils to draw on their knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 3 were asked to explain how they solved a problem. They could identify different approaches they could use including adding and subtracting 2 or 3 digit numbers. The impact of this was that the teacher was able to assess individual skill level and use this to plan future work. Teachers effectively encourage pupils to ask questions of each other. This involves the pupils in self-assessment. Teachers also use very good strategies to involve pupils in evaluation of work. For example, in a physical education lesson in Year 3 the teacher made very good use of the children to demonstrate and evaluate each other's performance. As a result of this, pupils were able to improve the standard of their performance during the lesson. The use of assessments made to inform future planning is improving. It is frequently evident where teachers have altered their plans for the class, groups or

individual children as a result of assessment.

24 Teachers plan the work of support staff and helpers very carefully and they have personal plans provided for them that detail what it is the children should be learning. This ensures that staff are used very efficiently and pupils gain maximum support with their learning. The quality of support is very good and is enhanced as a result of the detailed planning.

25 The teachers' enthusiasm, their high expectations of achievement and their positive attitudes to managing behaviour contribute to the high standards achieved and the very good progress pupils make. Teachers also make very good use of pupils' interests. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 6, the teachers capitalised on the pupils' enjoyment of their visit to the National Gallery to promote their understanding and use of persuasive language in writing. This resulted in pupils being imaginative and inventive with ideas for making text more interesting and in choosing words which were the best fit for a particular kind of genre.

26 Teachers know the pupils well and create a learning environment based on trust and sensitivity within the classroom. Due to this, pupils are confident to express themselves openly and this allows them to achieve the standards of which they are capable. This was exemplified in an excellent lesson seen during the inspection. Pupils in Year 6 were encouraged to be open and frank during circle time when they discussed the plight of homelessness following a recent visit to London. The teacher's sensitive approach to the pupils' responses helped them to articulate their feelings.

**Assessment and monitoring of academic progress and personal development is very effective.**

27 Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to develop effective systems for assessing what pupils' know, understand and can do particularly in English, mathematics and science. This has had an impact on the standards achieved in these subjects as work is planned closely to meet the needs of pupils as a consequence of assessment. The improvements in teachers' planning and the refinements in assessment procedures have led to assessment becoming a natural part of teaching and learning. Very good procedures have also been developed to track and monitor progress and personal development and for communicating this to parents.

28 When children begin school in the reception classes their attainment is assessed using the County baseline assessments. This initial information gathered is shared with parents at consultation evenings. Staff use information from these tests effectively to plan work for the class, for groups or for individual children. Detailed observations of children are undertaken regularly and these are used very well to inform planning. As pupils progress through the school, detailed observational assessment continues. All staff identify assessment opportunities in their planning so that they can maximise opportunities for gathering information on what the pupils' know, understand and can do. Non-teaching staff have a very important role in assessment and their notes provide detailed information about the children they are working with. It is evident in teachers' planning folders that the results of assessment are sometimes used to revise planned activities. Results of assessments are also used to set targets for individual and groups of children and as a result, staff can monitor pupils' progress. These targets are shared and agreed with parents so that they can contribute to pupils' learning. The results of assessment are cross-checked regularly and teachers are very good at establishing the level of attainment in English, mathematics and science. Consistent records are produced by the staff.



29 The school carries out National Curriculum tests at the end of each key stage and last year Year 4 test were also carried out. The headteacher has begun to undertake detailed analysis of these results in order to set school and individual targets and to track areas of strength and weaknesses. As yet, other staff are not involved in the analysis of this data although they are informed of the outcomes. They use the data to inform groupings and to plan the next stage in learning. Parents are informed about the results of end of key stage testing in annual reports and in follow up meetings with teachers.

30 Class teachers' assessments are used effectively to identify children with special educational needs in the initial stages. More detailed assessments and tests are carried out if appropriate. This information is used very well to set appropriate targets in individual education plans. Good programmes of work are planned that detail small steps in learning and these help pupils make good progress towards their targets. Parents are kept informed well through informal and formal meetings and involvement in review processes. The majority of parent's feel the school identifies needs appropriately and provides for pupils with special educational needs well.

31 Teachers know all individual pupils very well and are fully aware of their physical, emotional and intellectual needs. They respond to them in a positive and supportive way. This, combined with the very effective assessment undertaken, helps staff to identify how well pupils are making progress. This information is used to identify what groups of children or individuals need to do to improve. The school is beginning to introduce children to self-assessment so they can be more involved in assessing their progress towards their targets.

32 Teacher's use the information gathered from assessment to track the progress pupils are making. They record information on progress sheets, which are kept for each child. Academic and personal development is recorded. The information gathered is used to plan work and set future targets for the pupils. The progress sheets are used very effectively at parent consultations to report detail about pupils' achievements. Targets are shared with and agreed by parents' and their responses are logged. This helps parents to make an important contribution to pupils' learning at home and parents welcome this. If parents do not attend consultations teachers ensure that pupils are given further support at school in order to help them achieve their targets. The quality of pupils' annual reports has been improved. The new format covers all areas of learning and identifies the progress children have made. The reports are thorough and informative and identify what the child needs to do next. Parents are pleased with the change in the reports.

**The school is very effective in monitoring and evaluating its strengths and areas for development.**

33 The school's evaluation of its performance is well developed. There are well-established systems for monitoring and evaluating teachers' planning, teaching, and pupils' work. Members of the senior management team have a clear brief to carry this out. The key issue of the last inspection-develop a programme for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, to be undertaken at appropriate levels of management has been fully addressed.

34 The first stage of monitoring is teachers' planning. Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed all planning procedures and systems. These are now very good. Staff plan in year group partnerships and senior staff review this on a regular basis. This ensures that there is coverage of the curriculum at an appropriate level and that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are built on progressively. Staff are given written and verbal feedback

on the strengths and weaknesses of planning so that they know how to improve. A central file is maintained that contains annotated plans showing where planning has been refined. This is used for monitoring purposes, but also as a tool for informing future planning. Plans are also reviewed when classroom visits are carried out to ensure that recommendations have been put in place. As a result of the review of planning and regular monitoring, the quality of planning has improved and there is now very good consistency across the school. This has had an impact on standards.

35 Following the planning stage, senior staff monitor pupils' work to ensure that there has been consistency in the delivery of plans and to analyse the standards the children are achieving. From this part of the monitoring process they are able to see the benefits of improved planning. The cross section of pupils' work seen shows whether there has been sufficient coverage of the curriculum at the correct level in each year group and class. Work is sampled on a rolling programme throughout the year. All subjects of the curriculum are scrutinised and senior staff look at work of children of differing abilities. When sampling work staff also consider the standard of work in terms of presentation. If this does not match the school expectation it is followed up with the class teacher and subsequently the child. Careful consideration is given to individual children's needs at this stage. Senior staff also monitor work closely to ensure that marking is effective in giving the pupils' targets or developmental support. Feedback is given to individual staff with regard to the standards the pupils are achieving. The whole staff regularly meet together to assess standards and agree levels of attainment. This ensures that all are knowledgeable about the expected outcome for each level of attainment in the National Curriculum. Consequently, teachers are helped to analyse and draw on the approaches that work best with particular pupils.

36 Three key members of the senior management team have responsibility for monitoring teaching. This also occurs on a rolling programme and the schedule is given to teachers. The procedures for classroom observation are well established and it is part of the ethos of the school that staff will be monitored on a regular basis. From this, the school knows and uses the strengths of its best teachers to influence the rest. Individual feedback is given to each member of staff following a monitoring visit and it is usual that three recommendations are given. If necessary a follow-up visit is initiated to ensure that these have been taken up. If it is appropriate, staff are given support from the senior management or from inservice training in order to help them to improve their teaching. Common features of good teaching are shared among the staff and this helps to improve teachers' competence. An additional benefit to observing in the classroom is that the headteacher and senior staff know what is happening in the classrooms.

37 The governing body has a good role in monitoring the schools' performance. They do this through regular review of the school development plan, standards and financial planning. The headteacher and the governors discuss the outcomes of National Curriculum tests and this enables them to effectively check the school's performance and guide plans for improvement. Key governors visit the school on a regular basis. However, focused visits are less frequent at present. This is a result of the reconstitution of the governing body and the frequency of visits are planned to resume. When governors do monitor in the classrooms, they focus appropriately on key issues raised in the school development plan.

38 The impact of monitoring is very good and leads to development and improvement. The improved teaching of literacy and numeracy, very good quality of teaching and motivated staff and children exemplify this. Areas for curriculum training have also been identified. As a result of monitoring, Key Stage 1 test results have been maintained and Key Stage 2 test results have been improved. There have been positive steps to address weaknesses in spelling and writing and subject specific vocabulary in Key Stage 2. In addition, senior

managers are able to maintain an overview of what is happening in each key stage, they are able to build morale, give support and advice informally and support teachers with praise.

### **Pupils enjoy school, are eager to learn and always try to do their best.**

39 Throughout the school, pupils are eager to learn, are attentive and enthusiastic about the work they carry out. They are responsive and responsible and show very good attitudes to everything they do. The very positive values and attitudes pupils' display reflect the ethos of the school. A very good example of this is the commitment of pupils in Years 5 and 6 to attending 'music club' voluntarily. During the inspection approximately 60 pupils gave a high level of attention to their learning and this was reflected in the quality of their performance.

40 Behaviour in lessons is generally very good. There are clear codes of expected behaviour. There are effective strategies in place for dealing with behaviour problems and the pupils' response to adults is immediate. Pupils in Year 6 know that bullying can happen, but are confident that action will be taken. In Year 4, pupils spontaneously clapped a child in their class who had been well behaved all day.

41 Relationships within the school are very good. The pupils are polite and courteous to each other, staff and visitors to the school. Children are keen to take responsibility and they also take initiative around the school. For example, children were seen holding doors open in the corridors without being asked to by an adult. The quality of the relationships enhances pupils' personal development. For example, during 'circle time' pupils know they speak in confidence and they learn to respect other people's feelings and beliefs. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning effectively, for example, reading journals in Key Stage 2, instrumental practise and the compilation of a school newspaper.

42 Personal development is also enhanced through the celebration of achievement. Staff and pupils value achievement and offer praise and encouragement. Pupils co-operate well and share ideas and this frequently encourages children to try harder. Pupils with special educational needs have their achievements recognised and these are celebrated by the whole school and by individual staff. Parents particularly like the way in which pupils' successes out of school are celebrated. Staff have high expectations and they place a high value on the quality of performance. Opportunities given to perform well raise the pupils' self-esteem and promote the positive attitudes to learning. For example, through the encouragement given, children see themselves as 'musicians' or 'mathematicians'.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

#### **Standards in information and control technology.**

44 A key issue of the last inspection was to develop and implement a policy and scheme of work for information technology. The co-ordinator for information technology has been in this post for less than two years. She has written a scheme of work using national guidance that has been distributed to all staff and they are beginning to use it to plan work. However, opportunities for control and modelling activities in Key Stage 2 are yet to be planned. At present, the school does not have the appropriate equipment or staff expertise to deliver these elements of the curriculum.

45 During the inspection, work seen on display in Key Stage 1 shows that pupils are working at a level in line with national expectations, although control technology is less well

developed than other areas of the curriculum. Pupils have planned opportunities to use information technology based models. They know how to give them commands to move in different directions and describe the effects of their actions. However, they do not recognise that control is integral in the use of everyday devices or of its use in the outside world.

During the inspection, pupils in Key Stage 2 were seen using information technology to support their learning. They use CD-ROMs very capably to retrieve information for their science topic. They use word processing skills efficiently and produce spreadsheets and graphs. For example, pupils in Year 4 edit their work to place labels appropriately on the axis of a graph. However, pupils do not use information technology based models and simulations to explore patterns and relationships or the effects of changing variables. As a result, they do not make predictions about the consequences of decision making or compare the use of similar packages or the use of information technology with other methods.

46 Pupils in Year 5 use the computer suite to access the Internet. They use their knowledge to quickly log on to the site they are visiting and use their notebooks effectively to jot down information that will help them in their future work. Since the pupils have been introduced to using the Internet, they carefully reflect on reasons why they might use the Internet to obtain information to support their education and life generally. However, they do not communicate knowledge and experience of using information technology and assess its use in everyday life confidently. Year 6 pupils use a variety of editing skills to refine their work. They answer questions such as “when would you use different commands?” by drawing on their previous experiences. Their response to “how can we extend and use our knowledge?” indicates that pupils have a very good understanding of the skills they are being taught and are making rapid gains in their learning now they have access to new equipment. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to create, test modify and store sequences of instructions to control events. Consequently, they do not understand the need for precision in forming or sequencing instructions.

47 The scheme of work indicates that control and modelling will be taught across both key stages, but no evidence was seen during the inspection to show that pupils have experienced this element of the required curriculum in Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils are not reaching standards in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 2 at present.

48 At the time of the last inspection, computer hardware was in need of updating. The school has replaced equipment in all classes. A computer suite has recently been established, but this is not timetabled for regular use at present. Software to support the scheme of work is currently being trailed for suitability. An audit of staff expertise has been carried out in order to prioritise training needs and the school has begun to timetable a regular slot at staff meetings so that staff can share skills. An information and control technology reference booklet, including details of software and ‘user friendly’ notes has been compiled to help staff and the co-ordinator is now writing a policy for teaching information technology. The co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the use of computers within the classroom. She has drawn up an action plan that includes this, along with a review of the scheme of work and identification of her own training needs. Staff plan to implement control and modelling activities and staff training in this area is imminent. The school is in a good position to improve standards.

**Planning for long term developments, including increasing the number of children in the school.**

49 A major concern for the school is the falling roll and associated budget implications. The headteacher attributes this to a change in county boundaries, lower birth rates in the town and difficult access to the school via footpaths and a one way traffic system. There has been a sharp fall in the number of pupils entering the school at the age of four. However, the school is successful in keeping pupils on roll once they attend. There has been a rise in the number of pupils entering the school from elsewhere. A significant number come into the school during Key Stage 2 and have previously been identified as having special educational needs. An analysis of the statistics available to the school regarding entry numbers has been undertaken, but long term projections are not available.

50 The fall in numbers of children has already had an impact on the make-up of classes and there is currently mixed aged-groups in Key Stage 1. There are five unoccupied classrooms, but the costs of maintaining the building remain high, as systems cannot be isolated. The school has not maintained a contingency fund for several years. Previous contingencies were used for redecoration, but the school has not been able to maintain this on a rolling programme. As a result, there are areas of the school that now require some refurbishment. Staffing costs are high, including a large senior management team, and a substantial amount of the budget is allocated to staffing costs.

51 The school development plan is a very good management tool and relates to well established systems and procedures within the school. Current short term financial planning is very effective and linked to the development plan. The school is conscientious in applying the principles of best value in the use of the school's resources. The governing body regularly balances the costs of the school against the performance and quality of what is provided and relates this to the impact on standards. However, funding is tight and will continue to reduce if numbers on roll continue to fall. Long term strategic planning, including increasing the number of children, is unsatisfactory. The school has not been sufficiently pro-active in recruiting pupils or in finding alternative uses for empty rooms that could bring income. For example, community use.

52 The school recognised the problem of the falling roll late in the Summer Term 1997, but this has not been resolved as yet. The governing body and the headteacher have raised their concerns with the local education authority and an asset management report is being provided for the school. The governors view the issue with serious concern and are debating what to do very earnestly. Governors have a clear understanding of the consequences of the falling roll and the consequent financial implications including the efficient use of the buildings. They understand the need to promote the school to the best effect in order to address the issue. The school has not secured an opportunity to plan more strategically for getting children into school. However, the chair of the governing body has planned a strategy to gather useful information that the governors plan to implement.

**Provision of an appropriate heating system that would improve the temperatures for pupils and staff to work in.**

53 The previous inspection identified that there were health and safety issues relating to the school's heating system. At that time, there were a number of radiators that were excessively hot and needed to have controls fitted. This issue has been addressed. However, there are areas of the school that have either no heating or inadequate heating and the temperatures fall below those recommended. There are classrooms that are situated in the area of the school that is not served by an effective heating system. This does affect teaching, as staff have to consider what lessons can be taught in rooms where the temperature is low. The school gives due consideration to which rooms to use as

classrooms. Although there are areas of the school that are under-used, they are not necessarily those that are appropriate for class teaching areas. An additional problem is that the school cannot isolate particular areas of the current heating system where rooms are unused. This has implications on expenditure.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

54 In order to improve further the school should now:

- (1) improve standards in information and control technology by:
  - providing appropriate training for staff;
  - using the scheme of work to plan lessons;
  - ensuring the use of information and control technology to support all learning in the classroom;
  - devising a timetable for the computer suite that ensures that it is used sufficiently by all year groups;
  - monitoring planning and teaching and use the results to improve provision and raise standards.
- (2) improve planning for long-term developments by implementing measures for increasing the number of children who attend the school.
- (3) ensure that there are appropriate temperatures in areas of the school that are being used by the pupils.

## **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	16

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	50	42	4	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**

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	314
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	15

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	53

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### **Attendance**

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.6

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	34	28	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	26	31
	Girls	26	25	25
	Total	53	51	56
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	85 (90)	82 (86)	90 (91)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	31	30
	Girls	26	27	27
	Total	55	58	57
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	89 (86)	94 (92)	92 (91)
	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	39	14	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	28	32	38



Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	12	13	14
	Total	40	45	52
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	75 (58)	85 (68)	100 (73)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (72)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24]	33	37
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	37	45	51
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	70 (65)	85 (65)	96 (71)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	2
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	3
White	306
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	6	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

### ***Financial information***

**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.28
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	73.25

Financial year	98/99
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	£
Total income	583582
Total expenditure	593621
Expenditure per pupil	1544
Balance brought forward from previous year	21636
Balance carried forward to next year	11596

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	314
Number of questionnaires returned	101

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongl y agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagre e	Strongl y disagre e	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	37	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	48	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	60	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	45	11	3	2
The teaching is good.	54	42	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	52	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	33	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	34	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	51	7	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	41	5	5	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	52	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	38	21	9	11

### **OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY PARENTS**

At the parents meeting, one set of parents raised serious concern about the provision for their child some small points of concern were raised regarding lack of cover in the playground, non-competitive sports days and the lack of extra-curricular activities for younger children. Parents are sad that French is no longer taught. The strengths of the school were judged to be:

children are at the heart of the school  
commitment of the staff  
opportunities for extending the curriculum; visits, visiting authors  
teachers involvement in fundraising  
the orchestra and choir.