

INSPECTION REPORT

ABOYNE LODGE SCHOOL

Etna Road St. Albans

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117141

Headteacher: Mrs. L. Crawley

Reporting inspector: Mr. A. Everix
23079

Dates of inspection: 22nd– 23rd January 2001

Inspection number: 192269

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Jane Harris-Matthews
Date of previous inspection:	9 th December 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Aboyne Lodge School teaches children between the ages of 3 and 11. At the time of the inspection there were 206 full-time pupils and 52 attending part-time in the nursery. The school is situated near the centre of St. Albans. Most full-time pupils come from areas near the school. Children attending part-time in the nursery include a third from other areas where there is no nursery provision. Most of these children return to their local schools when they begin full-time education. The school admits pupils from a wide range of social backgrounds, including about one-quarter from minority ethnic groups. Twenty-eight pupils speak English as an additional language, which is a high proportion when compared with most schools nationally. Approximately 26 per cent of all pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs. Two pupils have statements for their needs. Overall, children's achievements when they start school are typical for their ages. However, they vary from year to year, especially when there are higher proportions of non-English speakers starting school. For a variety of reasons, including promotion and long-term illness, there has been a high turnover of teaching staff in the last two years. The school was awarded "Beacon" status by the government in September 2000 for its successful educational practice. It shares various areas of expertise with other schools and with teachers in training.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with some very good features. By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average. The headteacher is providing very good leadership, which is clearly focused on improving the education offered by the school. The quality of teaching is good overall. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average.
- Overall, teaching is good, with over a third of lessons being very good.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good and are focused clearly on what can be done to improve further.
- The pupils learn to get on well with each other and to contribute responsibly to the school community.
- Pupils' progress and personal development are carefully monitored and clear targets set for improvement.
- A range of well-planned activities helps to make learning interesting.

What could be improved

- The achievements of infant and younger junior pupils in science.
- Homework and written reports of pupils' progress so that parents are in a better position to help their children at home.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has developed well since it was last inspected in December 1996. Although there have been several changes of staff, including a new headteacher, the school has built on the above average attainment achieved by pupils by the end of Year 6. For example, test results for 11 year olds are significantly higher than those of 1997. The positive features reported at the last inspection, including the good quality of teaching and effective leadership, have been maintained. Overall, the issues identified in the last inspection have been successfully addressed and continue to form part of the school's ongoing plan for improvement.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	A	C	A	A

Key

well above A

average above B

average C

below average D

well below E

average

The school's test results for 11 year olds over the past few years have improved at a faster rate than those nationally. Nearly all Year 6 pupils achieved national standards in the 2000 tests with approximately a half achieving above average grades. The work of the oldest pupils seen during the inspection indicates that these levels of attainment are likely to be maintained. The school has set challenging targets for its 2001 test results for 11 year olds which show a rise in its expectations. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the age of 7 is in line with that expected nationally. Recent successful strategies to raise the younger pupils' achievements in reading and writing are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' standards. Although they achieve well, pupils who start school with little or no English influence the overall national test results at this age. Infants and younger junior pupils, especially the most able, do not achieve high enough standards in science. Teacher assessments for 7 year olds in 2000 showed that most pupils achieved national standards but very few scored above this level.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn and nearly all enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils' behaviour was judged to be good or better in ninety per cent of lessons observed and was never less than satisfactory. Movement around the school is calm and orderly. There has been one temporary exclusion during this school year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on well with each other and have a mature respect for adults. The positive relationships amongst members of the school community contribute significantly to the quality of pupils' learning. As they get older, pupils take additional responsibilities seriously and carry them out sensibly.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance rates are well above the national average.

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.

Of the teaching observed, 96 per cent was satisfactory or better. Thirty-nine per cent was very good, 31 per cent good and 26 per cent satisfactory. There were examples of very good teaching in each of the above age groups. The teaching of English and mathematics was good or better in most lessons. Overall, teachers' expectations of pupils are high. This is reflected in the good quality and amount of work especially in older pupils' books. Work is usually well matched to challenge all pupils, including the most able. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are effectively supported to make good gains in their learning. In the very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, tasks were not structured well enough to ensure pupils made maximum gains in their learning. Strong features of pupils' learning are the high levels of interest in their work and, particularly as they get older, their concentration and application to tasks. These reflect the successful management of classes and teachers' skills in motivating pupils in nearly all of the lessons observed.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A broad and well-planned curriculum is significantly enriched by other learning opportunities. These include clubs after school and at lunchtime, visits to places of educational interest and visitors to the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The individual education plans for these pupils have clear targets, which are very helpful in guiding their learning. Teachers and learning assistants provide good quality support in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils benefit from high quality specialist teaching. Detailed ongoing records and reviews of pupils' progress result in precise teaching very well matched to individual needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, very good with particular strengths in pupils' social, moral and cultural development. Pupils are clearly taught why actions are right or wrong. There is a wide range of opportunities in and out of lessons for pupils to learn the skills for playing and working together constructively. Pupils learn to appreciate a range of lifestyles, music, art and literature from their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures for child protection, health and safety. Pupils' are provided with very good, caring support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides effective leadership and management. Senior staff provide strong support in guiding school improvements and establishing a very good ethos for learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory duties. Their monitoring procedures, including regular focused visits to observe learning, enable them to have a very good understanding of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very effective in analysing its successes and areas for development. National and other test results are analysed to guide improvements in teaching and the school's curriculum. Senior staff and governors prepare and closely monitor a detailed plan for the school's development.
The strategic use of resources	Financial and learning resources are used well to support pupils' learning. The school endeavours to get best value when making purchases. Parents' and pupils' suggestions are taken into account when deciding spending priorities.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • There are high expectations of what children can achieve. • The school is well managed and well led. • Their children like school. • Standards are high. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quantity and frequency of homework in some year groups. • The information they receive about their children's progress. • The range of activities outside lessons. • Many parents of Year 3 children are unhappy with the number of "supply" teachers employed during the last autumn term.

Inspectors support the positive points that were made by nearly all parents in their responses to the questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meeting. There are too many inconsistencies amongst teachers in the setting of homework which reduce its effectiveness. Appropriate arrangements are made for parents to consult teachers during the year. However, due to changes of teacher, there was not a parents' evening for Year 3 parents in the autumn term. Pupils' reports do not give clear information on pupils' standards, especially in comparing them with those expected nationally. The Year 3 class now has a permanent teacher for the rest of the school year. Attempts to secure a suitable temporary teacher in this class, to cover for long term illness in the autumn term, had resulted in several "supply" teachers being employed. Although the school has acted in the best interest of its pupils, the situation has inevitably affected pupils' learning. Inspectors judge that the range of activities outside lessons, including clubs, is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average.

1. Over the past three years, pupils have achieved well-above average results in English and mathematics. Results in 2000 were well above average compared with similar schools, i.e. those with a similar proportion of free school meals. Nearly all pupils achieved nationally expected levels, with significant proportions scoring higher than this. Above average levels were attained by 51 per cent of pupils in English and 43 per cent in mathematics.

2. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening develop well and are important factors in their learning. Year 6 pupils take turns to show adults, including inspectors, around the school. They speak with confidence and maturity about all the activities taking place. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to share ideas with adults and other children. A good example of this was observed in a Year 5 lesson where groups of pupils took part in role-play on the theme of "being in charge". They shared ideas in their groups about their feelings and discussed these with the whole class.

3. Reading has a high profile throughout the school. Many displays of books, and writing about books, generate interest. "Story sacks" used in role-play by infants, and attractively presented writing about books by older pupils, are examples of this. Year 6 pupils use a variety of skills to help them understand text. One explained: "I read the text around a sentence if I am not sure what it means". Another pupil explained the use of glossaries in reference books and how to scan factual writing prior to making notes. Pupils express preferences for certain books. One able reader discussed the merits of books about "parallel universes", referring to such authors as Diana Wynne Jones and Philip Pullman. Pupils' writing is of a high quality. Older pupils write sustained, lively pieces of writing with good attention to punctuation, spelling and an interesting vocabulary. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils demonstrated their knowledge of present and past tense when writing amusing diaries comparing an advertised holiday with the reality. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils suggested "imperious" to describe a leader and "Queendom" when there was not a king. High quality writing is evident in displays around the school. For example, at the start of a mystery story, a Year 6 pupil described, "A pale and wispy figure standing by the grave weeping silently....".

4. Pupils develop good mental arithmetic skills and apply these successfully in the multiplication of large numbers, or in solving equations such as " $6a=36$ ". Pupils in Year 6 use a variety of mathematical techniques. For example, in one lesson, pupils explained how they were using "Napier's Bones" and the "Egyptian method" to solve a multiplication problem. Older pupils have a good understanding of numbers. One group explained how decimals increase or decrease by ten-times when they are moved one place to the left or right. Their level of understanding was highlighted when they explained how a supply teacher had once got it wrong when telling them to "move the decimal point". Pupils use and apply their mathematical knowledge well, for example, they investigated the reasons why a double six is difficult to achieve when throwing dice, and why seven occurs most frequently. Pupils' past work in Year 6 shows high levels of attainment in other aspects of mathematics. This includes the calculation of angles in geometrical shapes.

5. Pupils' attainment in the 2000 science tests for 11-year-olds was well above that expected when compared nationally and with similar schools. All pupils achieved nationally expected standards with 61 per cent achieving above average levels. Older pupils use scientific vocabulary with confidence. In a Year 6 lesson, a pupil explained the workings of the digestive system correctly, using such terms as "oesophagus" and "small intestine". When writing about their own "group" experiments they correctly use "soluble", "dissolve" and "suspension". Pupils record their results in different ways, as shown in their diagrams illustrating the different electrical circuits they have constructed. Accurate tests are supported by the use of information technology. Year 5 pupils use a temperature sensor linked to a computer to investigate the effectiveness of various insulating materials for hot water. Print-outs of graphs illustrate the differences.

Overall, teaching is good, with over a third of lessons being very good.

6. In the majority of lessons, activities are varied and tasks well matched to build on what pupils already know. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. In a Year 6 information technology lesson, the teacher explained clearly the use of the local authority "intranet" system, and quickly solved the problems pupils encountered when sending E-mails. In a Year 4 music lesson, the teacher responded to a pupil's comment on the sounds made by a cymbal, using it to clearly explain the difference between "volume" and "timbre".

7. Lessons are nearly always introduced well and capture pupils' interest. A Year 2 geography lesson began with the teacher dressed in Egyptian clothing which generated a lively discussion amongst the pupils on the reasons for its design and colouring. Teachers make learning enjoyable and this is a significant factor in the very good management of pupils in most lessons. Pupils described a lesson on long multiplication as "fun" because they could use a range of techniques to solve the problems. In a physical education lesson in the reception class, the activities were cleverly based around the story of a rocket. The children were totally absorbed in enacting the story, which involved a range of vigorous exercises. Older pupils explained that: "work is varied, it is mostly challenging but fun....teachers are good at explaining things when you are stuck and don't make you feel stupid".

8. Time is usually used well in lessons. From a young age, pupils are expected to work as soon as they enter the classroom. Year 2 pupils started working on handwriting tasks as soon as they sat down at the start of school. Teachers often set time limits for completing work and regularly remind pupils of these during the lesson. This helps pupils to remain focused and productive. Teachers give very good help to pupils when they are working independently. In a Year 5 lesson the teacher helped individual pupils to improve the quality of their writing through good quality questioning and discussion. Pupils became aware of improvements needed in punctuation through reading parts of their work aloud. In a lively session at the end of another literacy lesson, the teacher asked pupils to read their writing and helped them to identify various techniques such as past and present tense and the use of direct or reported speech.

9. Pupils are expected to work hard and try their best. The quality and amount of work produced in books, especially by older pupils, reflects their teachers' high expectations. During lessons, pupils understand that they must remain focused on their work to achieve high standards. In Year 6, pupils worked for long periods of silence producing imaginative and amusing diaries about their experiences at a holiday centre. Teachers value pupils' work. This is reflected in the high quality displays of work around the school. These help pupils to take pride in what they do and create an ethos where high standards are celebrated. All areas of the curriculum are represented, including some very creative artwork. Marking is usually

helpful, giving pupils good information on what they are doing well and indicating how they can improve.

10. Support staff are fully aware of the aims of lessons and are deployed well, especially to enhance the learning of pupils with special educational needs, or those who are learning English as an additional language. This was evident, for example, in the reception class where clear planning ensured that the classroom assistant was very well briefed on what her group should be learning. Consequently, the group made very good progress in their understanding of numbers to five.

The leadership and management of the school are very good and are focused clearly on what can be done to improve further.

11. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction for the work of the school. Despite the many staff changes she has established very good teamwork, which ensures all staff work towards the same aims. The senior management team is clear about the school's priorities and takes effective action to meet them. For example, high quality detailed planning for the new Foundation Stage has been successfully completed. The school has a positive learning atmosphere and a strong sense of community. The aims of the school are based on high academic achievement and the personal development of all pupils. These are evident in the general life of the school and the successful strategies used to analyse performance and set targets for improvement.

12. The school improvement plan, based on consultation with staff, governors, pupils and parents, provides very good, detailed guidance on how the school will develop over the next few years. The school's forward-looking approach is evident in several aspects of its work. Following an analysis of the school's test results for 7 year olds, the school is raising attainment in English through a focus on early opportunities for speaking and listening, and by the introduction of "Story sacks" to encourage early interest in reading. Improvements in science, an issue identified by the inspection team, are already targeted in the school's improvement plan. The school has been awarded "Beacon" status by the government for some of its successful approaches. These include raising standards in literacy, boys' writing, community links and initial teacher training. It has also been awarded a substantial grant by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths to support its work with children's writing.

13. The governors are fully involved in the management of the school and show a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They work very well with the headteacher and staff to sustain the school's improvement. As well as a general overview, governors have special curriculum interests which they monitor. Using an agreed code of conduct, governors make regular visits to the school to observe pupils at work. A group of governors recently observed different numeracy lessons and discussed what they saw with the teachers and headteacher. Their findings were shared with the full governing body. Governors refer knowledgeably to such documents as the PANDA (a government publication which compares the school's performance with others) when discussing the school's performance. Governors' procedures enable them to have a very good knowledge of the school.

The pupils learn to get on well with each other and to contribute responsibly to the school community.

14. The very good relationships in the school are based on a range of successful strategies to promote pupils' self-esteem and respect for one another. In the younger classes, teachers develop these aspects when selecting a pupil to be a "special person" for the day. A wide range of issues is discussed during "circle time" including those concerned with friendship and bullying. This helps pupils of all ages to understand how to deal with

conflict and ways of getting on better with each other. In lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to work together, exchange ideas and respect each other's views. In a Year 5 lesson on "being in charge", pupils acted out roles in small groups and learned to discuss, in an orderly way, the social issues that arose. The many educational trips and extra activities, including a residential trip in Year 6, all contribute well to pupils' social skills. Respect for other cultures and beliefs is promoted well. This is reflected in the lively displays of other cultures and faiths around the school, and in the pupils' positive views of each other. Pupils reflect on others less fortunate than themselves in the community. A group of older pupils distributed gifts to a drug rehabilitation centre and commented on life there. Writing about "sleeping rough" shows how the plight of the homeless had been sensitively considered.

15. The school has clear rules that are respected and understood by the pupils. The rules, most of which are based on care for one another and the environment, are agreed by pupils and clearly displayed around the school. The school council, made up of representatives from Year R to Year 6, makes a significant contribution to decision making in the school. A pupil suggestion box enables all ages to submit ideas. For example, pupils decided that rules for the adventure playground were needed. Subsequently, the council agreed rules based on fairness and safety. All items brought up by the school council are seriously considered and formally responded to in writing by the headteacher. This helps pupils to develop a responsible approach to decision making.

16. Pupils are given increasing responsibilities as they get older. In younger classes, pupils are routinely given jobs and are encouraged, when appropriate, to use their initiative. In the reception class, more able children independently select simple words from a bank to help them with their writing. Older pupils undertake a range of jobs which help in the running of the school. For example, Year 6 pupils are assigned as "monitors" to each teacher and report to him/her during the day. They organise a "scrabble" club and willingly help nursery and reception pupils to play constructively during wet playtimes. Older pupils take it in turns to show visitors around the school. Inspectors found them to be polite, informative and clearly proud of their school when carrying out this task. Pupils respond well to the trust placed in them. During break-times the oldest pupils sensibly complete work, or enjoy such activities as playing chess or using computers. Teachers help pupils to understand the reasons for responsible behaviour. In an information technology lesson the teacher clearly explained the reasons why pupils would be prevented from using computers unsupervised if they sent unpleasant E-mails.

Pupils' progress and personal development are carefully monitored and clear targets set for improvement.

17. Teachers' careful record keeping, regular analyses of test results and the setting of individual targets strongly contribute to the good progress made by pupils. The targets are especially effective in literacy, numeracy and pupils' personal development.

18. Tests taken each term form a "baseline" upon which overall progress is measured and weaknesses in pupils' performance are identified. A good example was the identification of the need to improve some aspects of literacy. Improvements in pupils' vocabulary have been addressed through better role-play opportunities for younger pupils, handwriting is of a better quality due to the teaching of a new scheme from a young age, and wider opportunities for factual writing are raising boys' attainment.

19. Information from tests and teachers' detailed record keeping guide the setting of individual termly targets for pupils. As they get older, pupils are told precisely what they need to improve, including guidance on how to achieve a particular national curriculum level (or part of a level). Targets are written in pupils' books and teachers' marking is often appropriately based on progress towards them. Commentaries on pupils' personal

development, kept in teachers' files, are used well to set targets in this aspect of their education. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were positive about their targets and clear about their purpose.

20. Pupils with special educational needs have specific and achievable targets on their individual learning plans. The tracking of pupils with English as an additional language is of a particularly high quality. A clear analysis of test results and detailed written day-to-day assessments are used very well to guide the teaching of individuals. The information helps to make maximum use of the resources available, for example by adapting individual support and by precise targeting of specialist teaching.

A range of well-planned activities helps to make learning interesting.

21. The overall curriculum is carefully planned to ensure there is a broad range of activities. National Curriculum requirements have been adapted very well to fit into school based topics. For example, careful planning for the new Foundation Stage ensures that all the required learning opportunities are meaningfully based on themes such as Movement and Transport. Very good links with the community enrich the curriculum. Pupils make educational visits to a range of local buildings and visitors contribute a variety of expertise to pupils' learning. For example, an environmentalist and an architect have talked to pupils about the "whale" conservation area and amphitheatre, which is currently under construction. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils were preparing a questionnaire for interviewing local residents about a proposal to close a road to traffic. They were also learning to use a database to process the responses. The construction of a puppet theatre by Year 6 pupils and subsequent public performances of shows are much praised by parents. The project developed pupils' skills in many areas of learning including those involved in writing and presenting scripts. Links with other schools through, for example, E-mail, provide purpose and stimulate pupils' interest in writing, and in the use of information technology. Pupils enjoy a good range of clubs and opportunities for competitive sport. A residential trip for all pupils in Year 6 supports several aspects of learning, including geography and personal development.

22. Much is done to widen pupils' understanding of other cultures. Such activities as food tasting bring learning to life. Pupils have tasted Muslim food when learning about that culture and tried octopus during their work on the Romans. Around the school there is much evidence that pupils learn to appreciate the richness of other cultures. Lively displays, including those on Buddhism, Judaism and Islam are informative and thought provoking. Bilingual books are prominently displayed in the library and the doors to classrooms have signs in different languages.

23. Older pupils state that they are: "taught the basic skills but taught in a way that is made fun and encourages you to learn."

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The achievements of infant and younger junior pupils in science.

24. Teacher assessments for 7 year olds in 2000 show that, whilst the number of pupils judged to be reaching national expectations was average, the proportion reaching higher levels (3 per cent of the pupils) was well below the national average. Although there are some indications that teaching is improving in Year 2, overall there is not enough work targeted specifically at the most able. In Year 3, work set at one level has, at times, been too difficult for pupils who are less able.

25. Much of the recorded work in the infants, especially for the youngest pupils, is set at one level with little extra demand for those with the potential for higher attainment. The

amount and quality of written work for younger infants is not high enough. Some work sheets are undemanding and have included such tasks as “colouring in” which do little to develop scientific thinking. In Year 3, many tasks have been inappropriate and have lacked focus on experimental and investigative science. Some work, such as “The phases of the moon” was set near the start of the first term, when many of the pupils would still have been seven years old. This may be appropriate for very able pupils but is too complex for most to understand, and is not part of the National Curriculum for pupils of this age. Some work is apparently copied from research tasks and is in a language which is unlikely to develop these pupils’ scientific understanding. For example, a pupil designated as below average had copied such sentences as, “ The last of these bones rests on another membrane which forms an oval window into the inner ear”.

26. In contrast to literacy and numeracy lessons for younger pupils, teachers’ planning does not usually state the expectations of different groups of pupils (such as average and the most and less able). Marking is not always reflecting high expectations. For example, in response to, “What conducts electricity?” a Year 3 pupil wrote, as a part of poorly presented piece of work, “Things what are metel”. This was ticked with a “good”. The school has already identified many of the above weaknesses in science and there are clear targets on its improvement plan. Included in the overall plan to raise standards are improved staff competence in teaching experimental science, partly through the sharing of existing good practice in the upper juniors, and the closer monitoring of teaching.

Homework and written reports of pupils’ progress so that parents are in a better position to help their children at home.

27. A substantial minority of parents is not happy with the amount of homework children are set. Nearly one quarter of parents responding to the questionnaire did not agree that their children had the right amount of homework and several at the inspection meeting expressed dissatisfaction. Parents point to many inconsistencies in the frequency and quality of work set amongst year groups. Some work has been found to be too difficult and other tasks trivial. Pupils in Year 6 state that they received more homework in Year 5 and suggested that the amount set depends on the teacher. Pupils “planning” books and other communications are not used well by some teachers to record the homework set. Consequently, pupils do not have a reminder of their homework and parents are unclear about what work has been set.

28. Pupils’ reports meet legal requirements. However, the information on them does not give parents a clear picture of the standards their children are achieving, especially in relation to those expected nationally. Several parents think that there is too much detail, including unhelpful lists of what their children have done. Inspectors scrutinised a sample of reports and found some of the subject reporting (mainly in subjects other than English and mathematics) to be “bland” in content and to lack individual assessment of pupils’ attainment. Some comments, for example, “he needs to develop his experimental skills” or “he has made satisfactory progress” are too broad and do not give a clear message to parents. Parents and pupils can discuss the reports with teachers by making an appointment. However, there is no provision for pupils to write their own comments or for parents to add theirs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

29. The school should now:

1. **Raise pupils' achievements in science in the infants and lower juniors by:
 - Consistently setting work that is well matched to the needs of all pupils, especially the most able.
 - Increasing the proportion of pupils attaining above average levels (Level 3) in the National Curriculum teacher assessments for 7 year olds, so that it is at least in line with that achieved nationally.
 - Improving the quality of teaching experimental science.
 - Rigorously monitoring teaching and learning. As a result, sharing good practice and supporting teachers where improvements are needed.

2. Improve the contribution parents can make to their children's learning at home by:
 - Monitoring homework to ensure that it is set consistently and is in line with the school's policy.
 - Ensuring that parents are clear about what homework has been set and when it is to be returned.
 - Improving pupils' annual reports so that they give better information on how well pupils are achieving, especially in relation to national standards. Ensuring that the language used is clear to parents and all areas where pupils need to improve are clearly identified.

** Improvements in science teaching have been targeted on the School's Improvement Plan this year.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	39	31	26	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	206
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	61

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	28

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.1
National comparative data	5.2

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	16	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	12
	Girls	15	15	14
	Total	27	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (88)	87 (81)	87 (81)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	11	12
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	27	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (84)	87 (81)	90 (88)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	13	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	12	11	13
	Total	25	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (91)	86 (84)	100 (94)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	15
	Girls	12	10	13
	Total	23	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (66)	86 (84)	100 (94)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	19
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	19
Chinese	0
White	159
Any other minority ethnic group	9

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)	10.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	156

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	40

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	474422
Total expenditure	469804
Expenditure per pupil	2373
Balance brought forward from previous year	27832
Balance carried forward to next year	32450

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	241
Number of questionnaires returned	108

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	35	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	44	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	46	7	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	52	19	3	3
The teaching is good.	53	39	5	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	45	17	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	19	4	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	31	4	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	51	40	6	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	62	33	2	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	36	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	40	9	2	12

Other issues raised by parents

The very good environment and ethos for learning.

The way that the presentation of pupils' work has improved in the past few years.

The number of supply teachers in Year 3 which has been detrimental to their children's progress during the autumn term.