

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Claremont Primary School**

Royal Tunbridge Wells

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118456

Headteacher: Richard René

Reporting inspector: Michael J Cahill  
19623

Dates of inspection: 19 – 20 March 2001

Inspection number: 192276

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Banner Farm Road  
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Kent

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Deborah Bruce

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is above average in size, with 422 full-time pupils (192 boys and 230 girls) taught in 14 classes. Thirty-three of the children in the two reception classes were under five years of age at the time of the inspection. There are 89 pupils on the school's register of special educational need; at 21.1 per cent this proportion is close to the national average. Two pupils have full statements of special educational need; this is below the national average for the size of school. Ten pupils speak English as an additional language. The attainment of most children on entry to the school is above national expectations. Eleven pupils take a free school meal; at 2.6 per cent this is well below the national average. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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

Very good leadership and management and high quality teaching have created a pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere in which children develop very good attitudes towards themselves as learners and achieve high standards both personally and academically. Claremont Primary School provides very good value for money.

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

- The school is very well led and managed.
- The quality of teaching is high and pupils make good progress.
- The school is very successful at promoting pupils' personal development, including very good attitudes to learning, very good behaviour and relationships.
- Pupils achieve above average standards throughout the school in English, mathematics, science and the skills of information and communication technology.
- The school has developed and uses very good procedures for keeping track of pupils' personal and academic progress.

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

**In the context of its many strengths and its current priorities for development the school recognises the need to deal with the following matters:**

- Aspects of the organisation and administration of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and the involvement of their parents.
- Aspects of the accommodation and resources, including teaching spaces throughout the school and the provision of climbing equipment and wheeled toys for children in the reception classes.
- The use of information and communication technology to support and extend learning in the other subjects of the National Curriculum.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in March 1997. At that time, the quality of education provided, the climate for learning created and the school's management and efficiency were all judged to be good. The standards achieved by pupils were very good. However, 15 per cent of teaching was less than satisfactory, the most able pupils were not sufficiently challenged and pupils did not have enough opportunity to develop the skills of investigation and enquiry. Teachers did not always use assessment information effectively when planning future work. The school has made such good progress in dealing with these issues that some are now strengths. The very good partnership between the headteacher, staff, governing body and the majority of parents provides a good basis for further 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A*	A*	A	A	very high A*
Mathematics	A*	A*	A	B	well above average A
Science	A	A	B	C	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

Schools are described as similar when they fall into the same band with respect to the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, in this case between 0 and 8 per cent (the current figure is 2.6 per cent). National standards have risen over the last five years and the school's standards, although still high, are not as far above national averages as they were.

Inspection evidence based on lesson observations and examination of pupils' work for this school year indicates that the standards achieved by seven-year-olds are above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Key Stage 2, as the table above shows, standards in English and mathematics are well above the national average and in science they are above it. During this short inspection, there was evidence of work of above average quality in other subjects of the National Curriculum, notably in the skills of information and communication technology.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are confident, well motivated and keen to achieve success. They throw themselves wholeheartedly into all that the school offers both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well throughout the school day. They listen well to their teachers, other adults and each other. They follow the school's code of conduct well, showing good awareness of the effect of their behaviour on others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are a strength of the school. Pupils are provided with a very good range of opportunities for personal development, including residential visits.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the average for primary schools and almost all absences are explained and authorised. The punctuality of almost all pupils is also very good.

As well as the very good relationships commented on above, the very responsible behaviour and the pupils' very positive views of themselves as learners are further strengths 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	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.*

The overall quality of teaching is high. More than two-thirds of lessons were good or better, including one in six that were very good or excellent. In total, the standard of teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of the lessons observed and unsatisfactory in only 4 per cent. This represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection. The high quality of teaching is a major reason for pupils' very good attitudes to their learning and the good progress that they make as they move through the school. The teaching of mathematics, including the skills of numeracy, was good or very good in four of the five lessons observed. The teaching of English, including the skills of literacy, was at least satisfactory in four out of five lessons, with two judged to be good or better.

Particular strengths of the best teaching throughout the school include very good management of pupils, with very good classroom routines based on common sense and consideration for others. Pupils are given every encouragement to work together on well-planned activities focused on improving their skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers keep careful track of pupils' learning, using this information to set further targets for individuals, groups or whole classes.

From the time that they enter the school, children are very effectively encouraged to work together and, when appropriate, independently of adults. They quickly develop good skills of concentration and most take pride in the presentation of their work as they move up the school. They are greatly helped in taking ownership of their learning through being involved in setting their own targets for improvement.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a broad curriculum that is planned well and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and by the teaching of French to pupils in Years 5 and 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The strength of the provision is the work of the learning support assistants both within lessons and in separate sessions. Weaknesses include imprecise targets for pupils in their individual education plans and too little involvement of parents in reviewing them and in helping their children to meet their targets. The school has already recognised the need to create an action plan to improve this area of its work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school supports well the relatively small number of its pupils who speak English as an additional language and these pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Assemblies are carefully planned so that they make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. There is a very good range of opportunities for social development, including residential experiences and the chance to take responsibility for themselves and for others. There is good provision for cultural, including multicultural, development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a safe and happy school in which staff ensure that all pupils are supported and helped to develop. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and their personal and academic progress is carefully tracked.

A particular strength of the curriculum and care provision is the detailed assessment of pupils' progress and their involvement in setting targets for improvement. The weakness is in certain aspects of the provision for pupils with special educational needs.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership that is clearly focused on raising the levels of achievements of the pupils by improving the quality of education that the school provides. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior management team, subject co-ordinators and the other adults in the school community, including the office and caretaking staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is knowledgeable and committed to the development of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil major statutory requirements well. Financial planning in line with the school's agenda for improvement is very good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The governing body, headteacher and staff keep all aspects of the school's performance under review. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is strong with respect to English and mathematics, but less developed in other areas. There is no development plan for special educational needs.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its existing resources well and specific grants are targeted accurately at raising standards of achievement. The school actively seeks to obtain best value for its expenditure.

Staffing, resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall. However, there are too few teaching spaces for the amount of small group work that the school seeks to provide and too little central storage for resources. In addition, the size, age and condition of the longstanding temporary classrooms make them unsuitable for meeting present day National Curriculum requirements.

The strengths of the school's leadership and management include the clearly identified direction for improvement, the development of a harmonious and hardworking staff team and the strong sense of common purpose among headteacher, staff and governors.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The views of the 126 parents who returned completed questionnaires and of the 32 who attended the pre-inspection meeting with members of the inspection team were taken into account.

What pleases more than 90 per cent of parents	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is approachable and well led and managed.</li> <li>Behaviour is good and the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>Children like school and they make good progress.</li> <li>Teaching is good and the school has high expectations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of homework (16 per cent).</li> <li>The information they receive about their children's progress (16 per cent).</li> <li>The degree to which the school works closely with parents (23 per cent).</li> <li>The range of extra-curricular activities offered (20 per cent).</li> </ul>

The inspection team fully supports the positive views of parents. The provision for extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, is very good. The school provides sufficient information and opportunities for consultation for parents to be aware of their children's progress. The inspection team agrees that in addition to the overview with which they are provided at the start of the school year, there would be benefit in parents having more information about what their children are going to learn on a termly basis. Homework is making a valuable contribution to raising standards. The school recognises the need to make sure that parents are aware of what is expected.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The school is very well led and managed**

1. The headteacher provides strong leadership, sharply focused on raising standards of achievement, and has very good management skills. The management structure that he has created has clear role definition and matches well the needs of a large school. Senior posts are filled by people with skills and imagination and the headteacher is supported well by a harmonious and hardworking group of colleagues. Parents are right to feel that the school is well led and managed.
2. The senior management team individually and collectively provides strong leadership and members take responsibility for significant aspects of the day-to-day running of the school and its strategic development. There is a clear sense of direction for the work of the school and staff and governors share a commitment to working as a team to achieve improvement across all aspects of the work of the school. Teachers with responsibility for areas of the curriculum display commendable enthusiasm and commitment. They have a clear idea of what is needed to improve standards in their subjects.
3. Improvement with respect to the issues identified at the time of the last inspection has been good. The headteacher rightly saw improving the quality of teaching as the key and through his monitoring and that of senior colleagues the intended improvement has been achieved.
4. Governors are fully involved and committed to the development of the school. They are acutely aware of the issues that the school faces, for example the need to improve the accommodation with respect to the provision of permanent classrooms and teaching spaces for small groups. The governing body works effectively through a number of committees that have clear terms of reference. The governing body reviews its own effectiveness and identifies its strengths and areas where work is needed.
5. The school development and action plan is the key working document for the school. It covers the present school year in detail and the following two in outline. Priorities for the current year include improving the quality of teaching and learning through curriculum and staff development, continuing efforts to improve progress in mathematics and in writing through target setting. In-service training in information and communication technology has been a recent priority and this has contributed greatly to raising standards.
6. Financial planning and control are strong. Allocation of finances closely follows the priorities identified. Funds allocated for specific purposes, for example for raising standards or for supporting pupils with special educational needs, are spent well.
7. The question of special educational needs does not, however, figure as largely as it should on the agenda of meetings of the governing body or in the school development plan. Around one fifth of the pupils on the school roll are on the school's register of special educational need and providing for their learning needs should have a higher priority than it does at present.
8. The school uses its existing accommodation to the full. Improvements such as the new computer suite have been carefully planned and brought into use. The governing body is aware of the difficulties that the two temporary classrooms present in terms of meeting all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Plans for replacing them have been carefully considered and the financial implications taken fully into account.

## The quality of teaching is high and pupils make good progress

9. Of the lessons observed, 16 per cent were judged to be very good or excellent, a further 52 per cent were good, 28 per cent were satisfactory and only 4 per cent were unsatisfactory. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The high quality of teaching is a major reason for the very good attitudes to learning that pupils develop and for the good progress that they make. Responses to the questionnaire show that parents believe that the standard of teaching is good and that their children make good progress. Inspection findings fully support this view.
10. Examples of teaching that was good or better were observed in all three key stages; in fact all of the teaching in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>, 86 per cent in Key Stage 1 and 53 per cent in Key Stage 2 fell into that category. All of the teaching that was judged to be very good or excellent was observed in Key Stage 2. In 68 per cent of lessons, pupils made progress that was good or very good. In 92 per cent of lessons, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work were at least good; in 48 per cent of lessons, they were very good. These figures speak for themselves.
11. The teaching of English, including the literacy hour, was at least satisfactory in four out of five lessons, with two judged to be good or better. In mathematics, including the skills of numeracy, teaching was good or very good in four of the five lessons observed. The good standard of teaching promotes good progress throughout the school, leading to well above average results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2.

### There are a number of features common to the good or better teaching seen during the inspection and these include:

12. **Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and manage their classes and classrooms well.** Teachers and learning support assistants work very well together to create and maintain a pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere. Classroom routines are based on common sense and consideration for others and contribute to the smooth running of lessons. In Year 6 lessons in information and communication technology, pupils are used to working in computer partner pairs. They work together very productively both when planning the design of their theatre trip invitations and when using the facilities of the computer suite. The quality of learning is enhanced and pupils make good progress as a result of the teacher's very good organisation. Other Year 6 pupils work independently and without interruption when writing at length because they are familiar with their teacher's routines and respond well to her very good management and control.
13. **Teachers have high expectations of standards of work and behaviour.** From the reception classes onwards, pupils are expected to be co-operative and, where appropriate, independent. In a reception class, for example, children help each other, take responsibility for finding the equipment and resources that they need and for returning them to the right place when they have finished. They listen very carefully to a radio broadcast, prompted by their teacher quickly switching the tape off when some children were talking.
14. Throughout the school there is an expectation that pupils will be attentive, work hard and behave well. Because of the consistency of this expectation pupils know where they are and respond positively.

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

15. **Teachers use questions well throughout the course of most lessons.** In a science lesson with pupils in Year 4, the teacher used questions very effectively to revise earlier learning about shapes moving through water and skilfully moved the class on to considering air resistance. Through further questioning the teacher drew out very clearly from the class what were the key points of their future experimental design. Teachers also made good use of questions when checking for understanding, for example, when pupils in Year 1 were sorting sounds according to how they are produced. In the concluding part of some lessons, for example a mathematics lesson with more able pupils from Year 5, teachers use questions well to help pupils consolidate what they have learned during the session.
16. **Lessons proceed at a good pace with a good balance of demands on pupils and are focused on improvement.** Many of the better lessons seen were planned well and included a good balance of whole class, group and individual work and of listening, writing and, sometimes, practical work. The good planning combined with the well-established classroom routines meant that pupils' interest and motivation were successfully maintained and the time available was used to capacity. In a music lesson with pupils from Year 4, for example, the lesson started very briskly with an African call and response song. The next task, planning and rehearsing narration with sounds and movement was very clearly set, pupils knew exactly what they had to do and what the criteria to be met were. The entire focus of the lesson was on improvement and, in commenting on the performance of different groups, the teacher gave a clear lead as to how pupils could do even better next time. The teacher's enthusiasm communicated itself clearly to the pupils. There were many examples of teachers setting time deadlines for the completion of tasks and this practice served to maintain pace and challenge.
17. **There were other good features of lessons observed during the inspection.** A mathematics lesson with a small group of pupils from Year 6 was notable for the imaginative and skilled way in which the teacher used her skills in information and communication technology to stimulate and motivate the pupils.
18. In most lessons teachers set work that is matched well to the learning needs of pupils of differing abilities. Pupils from Year 1, for example, who were acting as history detectives finding out about the toys that their parents had brought in, benefited from their teacher's preparation of detective prompt sheets at different levels. In a well-planned mathematics lesson with pupils in Year 2 who were learning about division as sharing, the teacher had prepared worksheets at three different levels. These varied in terms of the number chosen and the level of demand in terms of recording the results of the investigation. In this lesson, the teacher was very careful to direct questions of appropriate difficulty at pupils with special educational needs. This was good practice. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with full statements, are often helped to benefit from what teachers have planned by the skilled learning support assistants.

### **Areas for further improvement**

19. Where lessons were less successful or stimulating, the reason was usually the absence of some of the above qualities. In both Key Stages 1 and 2, there were examples of lessons where the teacher did not display sufficient enthusiasm or promote a sense of pace and challenge. Sometimes deadlines for completing tasks were not set or the level of teacher intervention in group or individual work was too low. On one occasion, although the planning for the lesson was appropriate it was not followed, with the result that focus was lost and the purpose of the lesson was only partly achieved.
20. There is a relatively low level of provision by class teachers for helping pupils on the special educational needs register to meet the targets in their individual education plan. In some cases, the targets themselves are not sufficiently precise.

21. Although there were a few good examples, mostly in English and mathematics, of the use of information and communication technology, its potential for supporting and extending learning across the curriculum has yet to be realised. There are further references to teaching and learning in the following sections of this report, for example in paragraphs 28 to 51.

**The school is very successful at promoting pupils' personal development, including very good attitudes to learning, very good behaviour and relationships**

22. Observations in lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and around the school confirm that the behaviour of pupils and their relationships with each other and with adults are very good. This supports the very positive views of parents in this respect. There are several reasons why behaviour, relationships and pupils' attitudes to school and learning are so good. First and foremost is the pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere that the headteacher and his colleagues have created over a number of years. A sense of calmness and order exists and is consciously maintained by the adults in the community through adherence to simple and well-understood routines.
23. Registrations at the start of day are conducted in a brisk and pleasant manner. Children in one of the reception classes, for example, arrived cheerfully and had time to talk about the tadpoles and the beans that had sprouted over the weekend, while handing in their reading records. The Foundation Stage plays an important part in establishing routines and good attitudes to school.
24. Assemblies are used well to promote reflection and consideration for others and the notion of individual responsibility. In an assembly with pupils in Key Stage 2, the deputy headteacher was very successful in getting them to consider value and what they valued. Music and story were used well to create an atmosphere and convey a message. Pupils had raised over £400 for *Comic Relief* on the Friday before the inspection and the deputy headteacher made a point of identifying individual pupils who were helping to bring about change.
25. Lessons are prepared well, relationships between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils are very good. As a result, pupils' positive attitudes towards themselves as learners and towards the school are reinforced on a daily basis. The adults in the school community provide a very good model for pupils to follow.
26. The school provides many opportunities for promoting pupils' personal development. Pupils in Year 6, in particular, readily take responsibility. They operate Hi-fi equipment in assemblies, act as house captains and assist the pupil traffic flow to and from assemblies by holding the doors open. Very importantly they also work with children in the reception classes on a paired reading scheme and often take responsibility for younger pupils at lunchtime. There is, in fact, a list of 14 different areas in which they are given responsibility. The school's extensive programme of after school activities and visits, including residential experiences, also promotes pupils' personal, including social, development.
27. Pupils are actively encouraged to be fully involved in their own learning. Self-assessment is promoted through the *My Achievements* booklets and this is making an increasingly important contribution not only to raising standards in general, but also to increasing pupils' independence.

**Pupils achieve above average levels of achievement throughout the school in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology**

## Foundation Stage

28. Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start to their full time education. The standard of teaching and of curriculum planning are good, recent government guidelines being used well. Almost all the children have attended private nursery schools either full or part time. On entry to the school the achievements of most children are above what is expected for their age. The school sees clearly the importance of the reception year in ensuring that children's learning needs across the Foundation Stage curriculum are met. At present, some aspects of the provision for physical development are inadequate. Children make good progress across the different areas of learning and are on track to exceed what is expected on entry to Key Stage 1.

## Progress through Key Stages 1 and 2

29. As reported in the section on teaching (paragraph 10), progress in individual lessons is frequently good and very good in a significant proportion of lessons. As pupils move through Key Stage 1, they make consistently good progress. Over the four years of Key Stage 2, many pupils make very good progress in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding in the subjects of the National curriculum and religious education.

## English

30. **As the most recent national test results show**, pupils achieve standards at the end of Key Stage 1 that are well above average in reading and above average in writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are well above national averages. Progress throughout both key stages is good. At Key Stage 1, results in the reading tests have fluctuated over the period 1996 to 2000, but the general trend has been to maintain high standards. In writing, standards fell consistently from 1996 to 1999 and have shown an upturn to 1997 levels as a result of the school's focus on making this happen. At Key Stage 2, the school's high standards have been maintained. The national average has risen so that the school's results are not as far above it as they were.
31. **At Key Stage 1**, examination of pupils' work, teachers' records and observation of a small number of lessons indicates that levels of attainment in English as a whole are above average, with continuing strength in reading and continuing improvement in writing. More-able pupils in Year 2, for example, make good use of descriptive language in a suitable range of work. They spell accurately and have been using joined writing competently for several months. Other pupils in the year group are at an appropriate stage of developing their skills, some have difficulty with capital letters and full stops, lower attaining pupils reverse some letters and make many spelling mistakes.
32. In a well-planned and presented lesson, pupils from Year 2 worked eagerly on the task of re-telling a story through drama. Some spoke confidently with good expression and characterisation was also good. Pupils had remembered the story, from West Africa, well and a few entered into their parts with real empathy. Pupils who are on the school's register of special educational needs took a full part in the lesson as a result of the focused help of a learning support assistant.
33. Pupils in one of the two Year 3 classes were using their desktop publishing skills to produce booklets of their poems. This was a very good example of using information and communication technology resources and skills to enhance literacy skills. In the other Year 3 class, pupils' written work shows that they understand the form of their chosen poem style and some use imaginative vocabulary, for example *a constellation painter* and *a sky be-jeweller*. These pupils have clearly enjoyed writing their poems and read them clearly to the rest of the class. All are using joined writing and many are doing this well, a few are quite fluent.

34. **Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2**, in a very well taught lesson, showed that they knew how written persuasive argument varies from oral, explaining this clearly using logical sequences of sentences in many instances. Their writing is sustained, well structured and fluent with clear arguments presented as a dialogue with good choice of vocabulary. Spelling and punctuation, including the use of speech marks, are good. The lesson made a very good contribution to the school's strategy for improving pupils' writing at length.

### Mathematics

35. **The most recent national test results** show that pupils achieve standards at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 that are well above the national average and above the average for schools in similar circumstances. Progress throughout both key stages is good, particularly in the skills of numeracy, but also in investigational work. At Key Stage 1 results have fluctuated over the period 1996 to 2000, but the trend has been one of improvement. Improving progress through Key Stage 1 was one of the key issues at the time of the last inspection and it is now possible to say that the school has dealt effectively with this. Results at Key Stage 2 have also fluctuated, but by only a small amount; the school's high standards have been maintained.
36. **At Key Stage 1**, inspection evidence indicates that levels of attainment across the mathematics curriculum are above national averages; in numeracy they are well above. In two well-taught lessons with Year 2 pupils who had been grouped by ability, good progress was made in developing understanding of division as sharing. In both lessons, good features that promoted progress included the planning of appropriate practical activities and the very correct use of mathematical language by the teachers. Learning support assistants made important contributions to the success of both lessons in terms of pupils' learning and progress. More-able pupils successfully investigated the different ways that they could partition 30. Pupils of lower ability initially had difficulty in recognising factors, but good oral and practical work led to good improvement during the lesson.
37. Examination of pupils' past work in this key stage shows that the mathematics curriculum has been covered well, with an appropriate emphasis on the skills of numeracy. Most pupils read the time correctly, keep a good record of practical work that they have carried out, for example *heavier than 1kg*, and demonstrate a good understanding of subtraction. More-able pupils recognise which nets make which solid shapes and correctly name the faces.
38. Pupils in Year 5 were grappling with problem solving strategies during the inspection. Some found it difficult to articulate their strategies while others were let down by their computation skills once they had decided what to do. Both of the two ability groups made at least satisfactory progress in problem solving and in practising basic arithmetical skills during the lessons. Progress was helped in the more-able group by the teacher's good use of the concluding part of the lesson to recap and check understanding through questions. In the other group, the teacher checked for correctness as each pupil completed the first question before allowing them to move on to whichever set of questions was appropriate to their learning needs. This was also good practice.
39. The small group of lower attaining pupils in Year 6 benefited from their teacher's imaginative use of information and communication technology (see paragraph 17). They also benefited from her very thorough planning and very clear explanations. Her own very good use of mathematical language promoted similarly good use on the part of the pupils, including *product*, *numerator* and *denominator*. Pupils also explained why adding a nought was not the correct way to go about multiplying by 10 because *of the difficulty you get into with decimals*. It is agreed in the group that referring to *adding a nought* is a *wash your mouth out* offence! The teacher keeps very good records of individual pupils' progress and

needs and pupils refer to their own targets with understanding. Although their attainment remains below the national expectation, these pupils are being skilfully helped to improve their view of themselves as learners of mathematics and are making good progress. The quality of their learning is good and it is helped by the focused and directive marking of their teacher.

40. Examination of the work of other pupils in Year 6 reveals that there is an appropriate emphasis on numerical skills, complemented with work on, for example, co-ordinates, bearings and quadrilaterals. This last topic was approached through an investigation and is one of several topics taught in this way. Other examples include working out how many different meals could be selected from a three-course menu, how many matches are needed in a football tournament and how many squares there are on a chessboard. This is good practice and an indication of the positive way in which the school has responded to the criticism about the lack of opportunities to develop investigational skills that was made in the last inspection report. Pupils demonstrate in the accounts that they write of their investigations that they have developed strategies and ways of organising their individual enquiry based work. There are some examples of marking that directs pupils towards further improvement, but too often the opportunity for developing a dialogue is missed.

### Science

41. **The results of teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1** show that pupils achieve standards that are well above the national expectation in materials and their properties and in physical processes. Standards are above expectation in life and living processes and in line with what is expected of seven-year-olds in experimental and investigative science. Results are in line with those achieved by pupils in schools in similar circumstances.
42. In two well-taught lessons with pupils in Year 1, good progress was made in exploring and understanding the different ways in which sounds can be made. Planning was thorough and the lessons were presented in a lively and interesting way. Pupils worked well together to categorise sound production under *blow, scrape, tap, rattle, shake* or *ping*. The tasks provided a suitable level of challenge for all pupils. Some higher attaining pupils predicted and understood that sounds are produced by vibrations. In both lessons, work proceeded at a good pace with good management of pupils and resources.
43. Pupils in Year 2 were set the task of understanding that we need exercise in order to stay healthy and to make and record observations of their heart rate after exercise. Unfortunately, although the lesson was planned well and included interesting tasks that were clearly explained, a lack of pace and urgency meant that less was achieved than should have been. Pupils successfully found a variety of ways of finding their heart rate. They said what they thought would happen and why, but do not readily use the term *predict*. A few pupils suggested good ways of making their test fair. Examination of pupils' work completed earlier in the year shows that most have a good grasp of the basic principles of electricity. Pupils of average and higher attainment can explain how a torch works and identify in which circuits a bulb will light. Lower attaining pupils often possess an appropriate level of scientific knowledge, but have difficulty in writing it down. The work seen shows appropriate coverage of aspects of the science curriculum.
44. **At the end of Key Stage 2**, national test results are above average for all schools and in line with those of similar schools nationally. Results have fluctuated slightly over the past five years and in 2000 were less above the national average than in past years. Results in science are not as good as those in English and mathematics. The reasons for this include the extra focus that the school has given to literacy and numeracy, following national initiatives. Another reason is likely to be the lack of specialist scientific knowledge among the staff which may explain why the proportion of pupils achieving the higher than average



Level 5<sup>2</sup> is only close to the national average in science while it is well above average in English and mathematics. It was noted in the examination of pupils' earlier work that there were few examples of constructive marking or insistence that pupils correct what was wrong. Spelling mistakes of key scientific words are not picked up and diagrams often left unlabelled. Directive marking is not making the contribution that it should be to raising standards, particularly in Year 6.

45. During the inspection, lessons were observed in Years 4 and 6; two lessons were of a satisfactory standard, one of the Year 4 lessons was very good. Pupils in Year 4 were finding out about air resistance by constructing different sized parachutes and timing their fall from a given height. In the very good lesson, the teacher very carefully helped pupils to revise what they knew about water resistance before guiding the class through the key stages of the experiment that they were going to design and carry out. The lesson had been very well prepared, good classroom routines were well established and the lesson proceeded at a good pace with all that had been planned being achieved. The quality of the teacher's interventions while moving round the class supporting and challenging was high and promoted good learning and progress.
46. The other science lessons observed in Key Stage 2, although of satisfactory standard, did not have the same bite, time targets were not always set for tasks with the result that pace slowed. Teacher interventions were less frequent and less well targeted on challenging or consolidating scientific learning. Pupils from Year 6 nevertheless carried out their investigation well and recorded their observations carefully, using scientific vocabulary such as *soluble* correctly. The practical tasks and resources had been prepared well and were appropriate for the intended learning, although these could have been more precisely defined and shared with the class.
47. It is clear from the examination of their earlier work that pupils in Year 6 have developed a good scientific knowledge base and have gained useful experience in planning their own investigations. Progress in both these respects is satisfactory throughout the key stage. There are few examples of the use of information and communication technology in science, although information on whether a diet is balanced or not is presented by this means.

### **Information and communication technology**

48. There have been major improvements in the provision for information and communication technology and in the teaching of the skills of the subject since the last inspection. These have been strongly led by the headteacher and the subject co-ordinator, who is an excellent source of support and inspiration to her colleagues. Throughout the school, there are examples of pupils producing work that is better than expected of their age group. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 confidently downloaded pictures from the Internet to include in their A5-fold invitations. They manipulated text and graphics well, drawing boxes, adding borders, varying fonts and sizes and colour at will.
49. Lower down the school, pupils in Year 4 were using a mouse to pull down a menu, select from it and enter information on a database. As a consequence of the teacher's own very good skills, pupils made good progress not only in terms of computer skills but also in designing simple questionnaires and understanding why computer databases are more efficient than pencil and paper ones.
50. Examination of work that pupils had done earlier in the year shows that pupils make good progress throughout the school in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in

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<sup>2</sup> At Key Stage 2 the nationally expected level for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6 is Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

this subject. Pupils in Year 1 have created their own *Class Big books*. In Year 2, pupils have printed their poems, used shape tools and clip art with text, achieved three-dimensional effects through using the spray can in a painting program. They have also produced very attractive laminated calendars incorporating text and pictures.

51. Pupils in Year 3 confidently save and retrieve, using their word processing skills to make a label for their geography book. They make text and picture boxes for a newspaper. Year 4 pupils have gone further with newspaper layout and have designed their own illustrations, including Christmas stamps. They have also successfully used graph-drawing packages.
52. Pupils in Year 5 have used a desktop publishing program to present recipes and instructions attractively with good use of borders and boxes. They are currently writing the story of *Theseus and the Minotaur* with illustrations. Year 6 pupils have produced a newspaper, including very well presented front page articles. Programmes produced for Christmas production and Christmas cards are very good.

**The school has developed and uses very good procedures for keeping track of pupils' personal and academic progress**

53. At the time of the last inspection, criticisms were made of the degree to which teachers used assessment information to inform their planning and ensure appropriate progress through the curriculum.
54. The position now is that the school maintains a comprehensive database of individual pupil assessment information that is used to track progress and set individual, group and class targets in literacy and numeracy. There are half-termly assessments in literacy and numeracy and assessments after the completion of each unit of work in science. In addition, pupils are involved in self-review of their own progress and this helps them to be involved in their own target setting. This is very good practice and is making a distinct contribution to raising standards.
55. It was evident during the inspection that teachers were using what they had noticed about pupils' achievements in earlier lessons in their subsequent planning. The introduction to a very good literacy lesson in Year 6, for example, indicated that the teacher had used informal assessments from previous lessons to modify her planning for future work.
56. Teachers assess pupils in all aspects of their work, behaviour and personal development. There is effective early assessment to identify children who are particularly able or have special educational needs. All assessment information including personality and academic profile checklists is passed on to the next teacher or to the secondary school.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

### Aspects of the organisation and administration of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and the involvement of their parents

57. At the time of the inspection there were 89 pupils on the school's register of special educational need; at 21.1 per cent this proportion is close to the national average. Sixteen pupils were at the later stages of assessment, including two with full statements. The school's part-time (0.4) co-ordinator for special educational needs was on long term sick leave and her work was being carried out by two temporary special educational needs teachers, one of whom acted as co-ordinator.
58. The school has a policy document, dating from 1995, that it recognises is in need of revision. The roles of the co-ordinator, headteacher and the governing body are clearly identified, but not that of parents. The document is obviously not intended for a parent audience. Its updating is the only reference to special educational needs in the current school development plan. Special educational needs does not appear as a regular agenda item at meetings of the governing body nor does it often appear in the headteacher's reports to the governing body. This aspect of the work of the school currently has a low profile.
59. Learning support assistants provide good quality support to pupils with special educational needs both in class and in separate sessions. Pupils' progress in these contexts is often good; overall their progress is satisfactory. Teachers have variable levels of skill in meeting special educational needs, especially where particular strategies are required. Although teachers usually provide work at three or more levels of attainment within their classes, lesson plans rarely refer to the targets for pupils on the register of special educational needs
60. The quality of many pupils' individual education plans is unsatisfactory. They do not include reference to the strengths of the pupil and some targets are too general and do not lend themselves to easy tracking of progress towards them. Examples include "to be able to use questions to develop critical thinking skills" and "to develop his vocabulary and ability to express ideas". These are far from the ideal of short-term achievable targets. Progress towards targets is often not evaluated until the next review so that there is insufficient information already on the table at that meeting. Targets are sometimes repeated, unaltered, in successive individual education plans. The support to be provided is always included on the plan, but it is not always clear who provides support for which target when more than one person is involved. Parents are informed of targets, but mostly not involved in the review process or in helping to meet some of the targets for their children.
61. Individual plans for pupils with full statements are satisfactory. A suitable level of support is provided and these pupils are included well in the whole curriculum. They often make good progress in lessons as a result of well-focused support.
62. The school is rightly concerned that some pupils are not at the appropriate stage of the special educational needs register because their re-assessments, to be undertaken in collaboration with other agencies, are behind schedule. As a consequence, some pupils' needs are not being fully met through the existing provision. Procedures for responding swiftly, with the necessary co-operation of the local education authority, are not securely in place.

### **Aspects of the accommodation and resources, including teaching spaces throughout the school and the provision of climbing equipment and wheeled toys for children in the Foundation Stage**

63. The school has two temporary classrooms that are small and in poor condition. Since they were provided what has to be taught and how has changed. These rooms do not permit flexible use in terms of the organisation of group work and whole class carpet sessions. Nor are they adequate for the teaching of practical subjects such as art and design and technology. Lack of toilet facilities means that pupils have to be able to gain access to the main building, which is security protected. The rooms are subject to extremes of temperature, too hot in the summer and damp and cold in the winter. Leaks have already resulted in damage to resources and to pupils' work. The governing body rightly recognises that these two classrooms are not satisfactory provision and is taking appropriate action to replace them.
64. At the time of the last inspection, the attention of the school was drawn to the need to give children *access to suitable agility apparatus to develop gross motor skills and to resource the reception classes with suitable wheeled and other large scale toys*. The school responded rapidly to the need to provide a secure outdoor play area for children in the two reception classes. This is used well as an extra learning area when the weather permits. However, it is small for 60 children and the need to provide more climbing opportunities and pedal toys remains.

### **The use of information and communication technology to support and extend learning across the curriculum**

65. As mentioned above (paragraph 48), the school has made very good progress in developing pupils' skills in information and communication technology. It recognises that an important next step is to develop the use of those skills in supporting and extending learning across the curriculum. Few examples of this were seen either during the inspection or in teachers' planning. The school is also well aware of the potential of the subject for providing extra challenge and opportunities for independent research and investigation. Development of the provision is included in the outline school development plan for the next two years and needs to be energetically pursued.

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

66. In order to continue to improve the quality of education provided by the school and thereby raise further the levels of achievement of the pupils, the governing body, with the headteacher and staff should:

### **review and improve aspects of the organisation and administration of its provision for pupils with special educational needs and the involvement of their parents by:**

- raising the overall level of staff awareness and expertise in this area;
- improving the quality of individual education plans and the process by which they are constructed and reviewed, involving parents where possible;
- encouraging parents to take a more active role in helping their children to achieve their targets;

(see paragraphs 7, 18, 20 and 57-66)

### **improve aspects of the accommodation and resources, including teaching spaces throughout the school and the provision of climbing equipment and wheeled toys for children in the Foundation Stage by:**

- securing the funding and agreements needed to carry forward quickly the well-considered plans for replacing unsatisfactory temporary accommodation;
- making sure that the full requirements of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, especially with respect to physical development, are met;

(see paragraphs 8, 28 and 63-64)

### **develop further the use of information and communication technology to support and extend learning across the curriculum by:**

- accelerating the present work of identifying opportunities for using information and communication technology in the teaching of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education;
- increasing the number of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through independent research.

(see paragraphs 21 and 47)

In addition, the governing body should indicate in its action plan how it intends to work with the headteacher and staff to make better use of marking in improving pupils' attainment, particularly in science.

(see paragraphs 40 and 44)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4	12	52	28	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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	422
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	11
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	89
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10
<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	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	30	29	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	28	30
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	52	57	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (87)	97 (84)	100 (89)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	30	29
	Girls	29	28	29
	Total	53	58	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (85)	98 (84)	98 (85)
	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	33	29	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	29	32
	Girls	28	27	28
	Total	57	56	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (95)	90 (90)	97 (95)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	30	31
	Girls	28	29	28
	Total	58	59	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (98)	95 (95)	95 (97)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	345
Any other minority ethnic group	12

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	30.1

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	185

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	683,665
Total expenditure	693,919
Expenditure per pupil	1,657
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,936
Balance carried forward to next year	11,682



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 30%

Number of questionnaires sent out	422
Number of questionnaires returned	126

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	40	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	42	0	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	52	12	4	0
The teaching is good.	47	49	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	60	14	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	38	7	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	34	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	54	21	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	54	41	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	44	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	46	15	5	6

Some rows may not add to 100 because of rounding

### Other issues raised by parents

Some parents felt that communication relating to recent decisions about the provision of hot school dinners had not been good. Several commented on the deteriorating condition of the temporary classrooms.