

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GRASVENOR AVENUE INFANT SCHOOL**

Barnet, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101284

Head teacher: Ms Georgina Alston

Reporting inspector: Mrs Barbara Doughty  
22261

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> July 2001

Inspection number: 192308

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Dave Thomas
Date of previous inspection:	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a very small infant school for boys and girls aged four to seven. There are 78 pupils on roll, taught in three single-aged classes. Twenty per cent are known to be eligible for free school meals; this is broadly similar to most other schools. There is a similar percentage of pupils with special educational needs as in most other schools, currently 20 per cent, but a high number with statements of special need, four per cent. Whilst the majority of the pupils come from white English speaking families, 10 per cent have English as an additional language. This is high compared with most other schools. Attainment on entry is broadly average but varies considerably from year to year. There are three new teachers since the last inspection. A new head teacher was appointed in September 2000, and a new deputy in January 2001. The reception teacher only returned from maternity leave in March and so has had limited training and experience in teaching the new Foundation Stage curriculum to reception-aged children.

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

This is an effective school because by the time they leave at the age of seven, most of the pupils do better than could reasonably be expected given their attainment on entry. They do well in comparison with similar schools. The leadership and management of the new head teacher are very good. Teaching is effective overall, but particularly so in Year 2 and, because of this, pupils make rapid progress in this year group. However, the youngest children do not do well enough during their first year in school because of weaknesses in teaching in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>. Although the expenditure per pupil is very high, reflecting the small size of the school and the high percentage of pupils with statements of special need, the school spends what it is given effectively and gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils throughout the school usually do well in mathematics and achieve above average standards.
- Achievement is good in Year 2, where pupils learn well because of very effective teaching.
- Throughout the school, pupils with special needs and English as an additional language make good progress because of effective support.
- Good subject guidance, new equipment, and better teaching in information and communications technology (ICT) result in rapid learning taking place.
- Good teaching in Key Stage 1 enables pupils to get on with their work, enjoy effective relationships with others, and behave well.
- There are exemplary procedures, put in place by the new head teacher, for finding out what is happening in school and bringing about improvement.

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

- Children in the Foundation Stage do not make the progress they should in speaking and listening, reading and writing because of weaknesses in teaching.
- The guided reading sessions are not effective in getting pupils to think and talk about what they are reading.
- The school governors do not have a clear idea about what is happening in teaching, learning and standards in order to judge the effectiveness of the school, or influence its direction.
- Attendance rates are below average and pupils arriving late disrupt the start of lessons.

*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 made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in 1997. Although results are not as high as they were due to changes in attainment on entry, progress is as good as it was. All of the key issues have been dealt with, but some of the weaknesses in teaching remain and the governing body still does not evaluate the effectiveness of its spending on standards. Nevertheless, there has been good progress since the appointment of the new head teacher. The systems for evaluating teaching and learning have very effectively identified strengths and weaknesses but are too recent to have had full effect in some areas, particularly the

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<sup>1</sup> Foundation Stage – the stage of learning for children aged from three years up until they join Year 1 and begin the National Curriculum.

weak teaching. Nevertheless, because of them, and the exceptional leadership qualities of the head teacher, the school has good capacity to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	D	B	B
Writing	A	C	B	B
Mathematics	A	A	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils achieve well and the greatest majority attain better standards than those expected given their attainment on entry. The above table shows that, in comparison with all other schools nationally, the school usually does well overall in reading and writing and exceptionally well in mathematics. This is because a greater percentage of pupils than in most other schools usually reach the higher level in all three subjects. This year, however, Year 2 was a below average year group on entry. Although as many pupils as in previous years attained the expected level in all three subjects, representing good achievement overall, not as many reached the higher level and the test results and the work seen during the inspection show that standards are broadly as expected. This is because, although pupils generally read fluently and accurately, their understanding of what they are reading and their ability to talk confidently about the main points in story and information books and express preferences are not as good as they should be. In writing, they do not always use full stops and capital letters correctly. Speaking and listening skills are good. Most of the Year 2 pupils talk knowledgeably and confidently about what they are doing and express themselves well. Pupils' progress in ICT is now good and standards are broadly as expected by the end of Key Stage 1; they use the new computers and other communication equipment well to support work in other subjects. The children in the Foundation Stage this year entered school with attainment better than that typically found in most other schools. They have achieved satisfactorily in mathematics and have exceeded the early learning goals for this area of learning. However, they have not done as well as they should have in speaking and listening, reading and writing and have only just reached the early learning goals for children of this age in communication, language and literacy.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils take an interest in their work and usually concentrate well, particularly in Year 2 where they work hard because they know what they are doing and why. Children in the Foundation Stage often find it difficult to concentrate because of the high noise level and their attention is easily diverted because of children flitting, unnecessarily, around the room.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good in Key Stage 1. Pupils behave well in and out of lessons because teachers make it clear to them that they expect them to behave and work hard. Satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, but there are times when children do not behave appropriately because they cannot gauge when it is alright to behave boisterously and be noisy and when there is a need to get on quietly and let others work.
Personal development and relationships	Good in Key Stage 1. Pupils get on well together and are very welcoming to visitors. They help around the school, tidying classrooms and acting as register monitors. Sound in the Foundation Stage. Children play and work together satisfactorily overall, but their social

	skills are under-developed, particularly in role-play.
Attendance	This is below that found in most infant schools nationally. Some pupils arrive late; they disrupt the start of the day and prolong registration.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Unsatisfactory	Good	Not Applicable

*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 quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Eight of the nine lessons seen were satisfactory or better, three were good and one was very good. One lesson was unsatisfactory. Teaching in Year 2 is particularly effective because the teacher has a very secure knowledge of what individual pupils already know and need to learn and uses this information well to set work. Throughout the school, the teaching of pupils with special needs and English as an additional language is very effective, mainly because teaching assistants support these pupils well by explaining the work carefully, and making sure they understand what to do and how to do it. Teachers' good use of the new guidance for teaching ICT leads to good learning and rapid progress in this subject. The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers are secure teaching basic numeracy skills through the National Numeracy Strategy and pupils do well in this subject because of this. English teaching is sound overall, but the guided reading sessions are not effective in getting pupils to think about what they are reading. Consequently, pupils do not have a good enough understanding of the styles of different authors to use to influence their own writing. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen. It was in the Foundation Stage, where there were also unsatisfactory aspects to other lessons and parts of lessons and in the work seen in children's books. Here, too often the intended learning does not come about because the questions and activities planned do not always happen. Teaching does not move children's learning on because of this, and the intervention in children's work becomes ineffective. In contrast, sufficiently high demands are made in mathematics and children achieve well as a result.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1. It is relevant, particularly in Year 2, to the age and aptitude of the pupils because teaching has good regard to pupils' individual needs and the pupils understand what they are doing and why. Although appropriate learning opportunities are planned in the Foundation Stage, the quality of the curriculum for these children is marred by plans not coming to fruition.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teaching has regard to pupils' individual learning needs and, most importantly, the teaching assistants support these pupils very effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils do as well as their schoolmates because of the teachers' awareness of their needs and how to meet them through effective language programmes put together by the head teacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. Pupils in Year 2 go on a residential visit, which develops their social skills well. Pupils in Key Stage 1 in particular are expected to work together. There are good opportunities for pupils to explore different cultures and to marvel at their natural and man-made world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know the pupils well and take good care of them. The school works well with parents and keeps them fully informed about what and how well their children are doing.





## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher is an extremely effective leader and manager. The procedures she has put in place for finding out what is happening in school and, more importantly, what needs doing to bring about improvements, are exemplary. She is supported well by a very able deputy, who is a shining example in classroom practice for others to follow.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Whilst governors are very supportive, they do not know enough about what is going on in school and therefore have limited influence in bringing about change. They do not measure the effectiveness of their spending on standards and cannot be sure that they are spending their money in the most effective way.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent procedures are in place to find out, for example, how well pupils with English as an additional language and special needs do. Classroom observations find out what is working in teaching and what needs improving, and the evaluation of pupils' work identifies gaps in their learning. The weaknesses in teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage have been clearly and accurately identified by the senior managers and are being dealt with.
The strategic use of resources	This is satisfactory overall. Funds for pupils with special needs are used well, but the governors do not apply the principles of best value well enough and cannot be sure that they are spending their money in the most effective way.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The good progress their children make and how they are kept informed about what and how well they are doing.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching in the school and the approachability of the school staff.</li> <li>• The way the school helps their children to become mature and responsible, behave well, work hard, and do their best.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the head teacher.</li> </ul>	There were no general issues.

The inspectors agree with the positive comments. The greatest majority of parents are very happy with the work of the school. Although some things were not universally approved, such as homework and the range of activities outside lessons, there were very few negative responses to the questionnaires or comments made during meetings with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Pupils throughout the school usually do well in mathematics and achieve above average standards.**

1. The school's analysis of how well the pupils did this year in mathematics shows that 77 per cent of Year 1 pupils did better than expected given on their attainment on entry and the same percentage of Year 2 pupils did better than expected given their attainment at the end of Year 1. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 reached at least their expected level based on their previous achievement and, for the last three years, a higher percentage than in most other schools attained the higher level. Although fewer pupils attained above the expected level this year, almost 30 per cent did and this, given their below average attainment on entry, signifies good progress.
2. This is because teaching is good overall. Teachers use the national teaching guidelines well to structure lessons and organise pupils' learning. There is a good balance of explanation and demonstration, pupil activity, and discussion at the end of lessons, which focuses appropriately on what has been learnt and needs doing next. The mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of lessons focus well on developing pupils' computational skills, for example, to solve problems. The pace of these opening sessions is generally swift and holds the interest of the pupils well. For example, in a Year 1 lesson seen, pupils counting in twos and fives were expected to keep pace with the teacher, who kept changing the tone of voice to keep the pupils' attention.
3. Pupils are challenged well because teacher expectation is sufficiently high and demands are made on pupils to succeed in lessons and over time. For example, in the Foundation Stage, this high attaining group are appropriately expected to add numbers up to 10 and they do as well as could be reasonably expected. The brighter children add to 20, which is generally Year 1 work; this gives them a good start in Key Stage 1, where their learning is built on successfully. By the time they leave the school, the brighter pupils, currently nearly a third of the class, work confidently with numbers to two decimal places and double and half two-digit numbers accurately. They add and subtract up to one thousand, divide whole numbers correctly, and multiply accurately by two, three and ten.

**Achievement is good in Year 2, where pupils learn well because of very effective teaching.**

4. Based on their entrance assessments, only 68 per cent of the current Year 2 pupils were predicted to achieve the expected level in writing and 46 per cent in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. However, 89 per cent of these pupils achieved it in writing and the same percentage attained it in mathematics, indicating good achievement over time.
5. The most rapid progress is in Year 2, where the quality of teaching seen was good and often very good. This year's national tests and teacher assessments, completed in May, show that very few reached the higher level in writing. However, since then, pupils have continued to improve their writing skills through very effective teaching in Year 2 and the standard of their work is starting to show much higher standards than the tests results indicate. This is because the teacher makes it very clear to pupils what they are doing and why and constantly urges them to do better. For example, in the writing lesson seen, she reminded pupils that when planning their stories, they should think very carefully about the characters, plot and setting in order to structure their writing successfully. She explained clearly what makes some stories more interesting than others, such as the language used. As a result, the pupils thought of exciting words to use, like 'mysteriously', 'essentially, and 'collapsed'. Pupils were encouraged to picture the scene in their minds to find more accurate words to describe what was happening. For example, "The tiger climbed out of the water onto the log", rather than "He

jumped out". This brought the image more alive to the reader. As a result, these stories were good; they were well planned and effective language conveyed meaning accurately and concisely. The quality was made better by the pupils' choice of unusual phrases, such as "terribly hungry", prompted by the teacher saying "How hungry?" as she moved around the room reading the stories. Eye-catching sentence structure such as "The giraffe himself was ...", made the writing even more interesting.

6. Teaching in this year group concentrates exceptionally well on what individual pupils have already learnt and need to learn next. This is particularly effective in mathematics because the teacher makes sure that the work is based on pupils' previous learning and is suitably adapted for different pupils in order to meet their learning needs. Mental calculation skills are taught very effectively. The teacher's questions are rapid, and demand a quick response from pupils. Less able pupils are given additional support from teaching assistants during these times or have learning resources to help them, such as multiplication charts. Challenging questions make pupils think, such as "I have eight pairs of contact lenses, how many are there?" followed by "Can you make up a number story involving multiplying by two?" Consequently most pupils have attained the expected level in mathematics and almost 30 per cent of them have reached the higher level.
7. Relationships in this class are excellent. Pupils work enthusiastically to make sure that they are successful in meeting their learning targets to please their teacher. They are clear about what they are expected to do in the time allowed and the teacher's constant reminders about how much time is left urges them to get on and work even harder. The adults working in the classroom model looking up words in a dictionary to check on spellings and meaning, and the teacher encourages pupils to check their work to make sure it is accurate, asking, for example, "What letter haven't you got in that word to make it say 'through'?" Her comments in pupils' workbooks perceptively point out what pupils have and have not done well such as "You have not described the monkey or the setting" and "I like the way you are telling it as Percy Parrot".

**Throughout the school, pupils with special needs and English as an additional language make good progress because of effective support.**

8. Pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language learn well because they are supported very effectively in lessons. All of the Year 2 pupils this year with special educational needs did as well or better than could reasonably be expected in reading, writing and mathematics given their attainment on entry and their difficulties with learning. Although there are still 27 per cent of the pupils in Year 2 on the special needs register, many now need less support than at the beginning of the year and some on it last September are no longer included because of their good achievement. The learning of these pupils is well focused because their difficulties are identified very precisely in their individual learning programmes and their learning targets are small, achievable and very precise, such as "To hold the pen and paper correctly". Their learning programmes contain strategies to use in class as well as ideas for support assistants such as "Work on colouring in and staying in lines".
9. Teaching assistants are very knowledgeable about the learning needs of these pupils and help them by giving more simple explanations if and when necessary, and making sure the pupils understand what to do. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils who the teacher knew had struggled previously with multiplication sat beside the teaching assistant. She constantly helped them to work out the answers by explaining the methods they should use, or simplifying the questions. In the same lesson, the teacher checked that those pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition understood fully what they were doing by going to them first and checking that they knew what was expected of them and were able to do the work. Similarly in Year 1, all pupils, including the less able, could double whole numbers and complete sums by putting in the 'add' or 'subtract' sign because of effective support from either the teacher or the teaching assistant.

10. Pupils with statements of special needs are supported particularly effectively. Their learning support assistants have an extremely good understanding of their individual difficulties because they keep detailed records of what these pupils achieve during lessons. They, and the teachers, use the information well to assess the pupils' needs as they change over time, and make sure that their work is always suitably adapted. They are fully involved in curriculum and lesson planning and so know what these pupils are to do and learn during each lesson and this, in turn, means that they can support them effectively in their learning.
11. Similarly, this year, those pupils with English as an additional language did as well as could be expected and all of them met their targets in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This is because well-focused language programmes ensure that their English language acquisition is promoted effectively and that they understand what is going on and make sufficient progress over time. The programmes contain a clear evaluation of pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and useful ideas for teachers and support assistants about how to develop English language. For example, teachers are encouraged to use puppets to promote pupils' understanding and to ask pupils to point to words when reading and select and browse through books to develop their reading skills.
12. The management of special needs and English as an additional language is very good. The head teacher gives clear guidance about how individual learning programmes should be structured and monitors the work of the statemented pupils carefully by looking at their work and reading the comments the teaching assistants make about pupils' achievements. She knows the pupils well because she tracks their progress rigorously to ensure that they do as well as they should. She writes useful notes in the support assistants planning files, giving them new ideas and helping them with suggestions.

**Good subject guidance, new equipment, and better teaching in information and communications technology result in rapid learning taking place.**

13. Very good subject leadership and management, from both the ICT co-ordinator and governor, are bringing about many new and exciting developments to teaching and learning in ICT. The co-ordinator, in post for less than a year, is enthusiastic about the subject and has very clear ideas for its future. She has written very good teaching guidelines for colleagues, which means that teachers are now very clear about what to teach and when to teach it. These are shared with parents, who encourage their children to use their home computers to help meet their learning targets. 'Drop-in' weekly staff training sessions mean that teachers can check with the co-ordinator how to use a particular piece of equipment or get guidance about how to teach pupils new ideas and skills. New learning resources bought since September 2000, such as computers and printers, are already improving teaching and learning and raising standards. Extensive in-service training has increased teachers' subject knowledge and expertise and this means that classroom computers are now used a lot more to support pupils' learning than they have been in the past.
14. Only one ICT lesson was seen during the inspection due to time restriction. It was in Year 1, where the quality of teaching and learning was good. In this lesson, teaching guided pupils accurately in entering information onto the computer database and showing it in different ways, such as on bar charts and in pictograms. The teacher's explanations were clear and very precise and pupils' understanding was consequently good. Pupils listened intently and thoroughly enjoyed the prospect of using the computer that day and throughout the week. Pupils learnt how to enter information, and print, store, and retrieve it in different formats. Effective questions made pupils think about what information can be gained from reading graphs and pictograms and how it can be organised differently.
15. Teachers throughout the school use computers and other ICT equipment well to support learning in other subjects. For example, children in the Foundation Stage confidently operate the tape recorder and use the headphones to listen to taped stories. They have good 'mouse' control skills and 'drag and drop' objects around the computer screen to, for example, dress

teddy. In Year 1, pupils make decisions about, for example, what Baby Bear is taking to the moon and explain why they chose particular items, such as books to relieve boredom and a hat to keep him warm. In a literacy lesson in Year 2, the teacher made good use of the computer to type out a story the class composed together. This encouraged pupils to use the computer to write and edit their own stories, which they did with ease and confidence, and developed their awareness of the usefulness of computers for speed and accuracy. For example, they know that they can make a mistake and correct it “without making a mess” and how spelling mistakes are highlighted on the computer screen and can be easily corrected.

**Good teaching in Key Stage 1 enables pupils to get on with their work, enjoy effective relationships with others, and behave well.**

16. Pupils enjoy school and take an interest in their work. They are enthused by the teaching, which often inspires them to achieve and do well. For example, in an ICT lesson in Year 1, because of the teacher’s own enthusiasm for the subject and her clear explanations, pupils were eager to enter and organise information on the computer screen. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, good questioning by the teacher prompted the pupils to confidently express opinions about the words and phrases authors had used in the books they were reading, and to explore the meaning of unknown words using the context within which they were written. In both year groups, teachers prompt all pupils to answer their questions or offer opinions without fear of embarrassment or failure, and because of this pupils of all abilities are not afraid to have a go.
17. A good range and variety of activities keep pupils interested. These involve designing and making things with winding mechanisms and finding different places they have visited with their parents on a world map. Pupils make up songs about tadpoles after watching them turn into frogs, and look at sculptures and artefacts made from sandstone, paper and leaves. They visit places of worship, such as the local church and synagogue. The three-day residential trip for pupils in Year 2 is particularly effective in developing pupils’ social skills.
18. Pupils’ attitudes to learning are good. This is because pupils are usually expected to work hard and concentrate well and appropriate demands are made on them to complete their work to at least a satisfactory standard. Constant reminders about spelling and using alternative words when writing stories in Year 2, for example, ensure pupils work productively and achieve high standards in their writing. Teachers’ comments in pupils’ workbooks identify what pupils are doing well and not so well, and suggest things they could do to improve their work next time. Pupils respond well to these.
19. Pupils get on well with each other and the adults around them; they are welcoming to visitors. They talk proudly about their past and present work in, for example, English, mathematics, and ICT. The older pupils in particular are starting to use their initiative. They organise themselves and get on quickly with their work without fuss. Pupils of all ages switch on computers, retrieve their work and save it again to work on another day. Personal and social skills are promoted particularly well in the personal, social and health education lessons. In a particularly good lesson in Year 1, pupils were encouraged to work together in groups of four to complete a set of jigsaw puzzles. Each pupil was given an envelope with four jigsaw pieces in it, all from a different puzzle; they had to negotiate with one another to obtain the correct pieces and then work together to complete the puzzles. This showed them how to work together to achieve a group goal by sharing, helping and taking turns, which they did well.

**There are exemplary procedures, put in place by the new head teacher, for finding out what is happening in school and bringing about improvement.**

20. The head teacher has a very good grasp of what is happening in school through excellent monitoring and evaluation procedures. Extensive evaluation of how well pupils with special needs and those from different ethnic backgrounds do in comparison with their classmates and how the performance of boys and girls differs has identified areas for further exploration next

year. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage has been analysed and their end of key stage levels of attainment predicted for 2003. The progress individual pupils make is being tracked to make sure that each one reaches at least their expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school. Assessments at the end of the Foundation Stage, Year 1, and Year 2 have been used this year to identify in which year pupils have made the most and least progress so that gaps in teaching and learning can be identified and dealt with.

21. Lesson observations focus on what works and does not work well in lessons and full and frank discussions with individual teachers identify relevant and specific development targets, which have already led to improvements being made. The work of support staff is also monitored and evaluated, and training given in the areas identified for development. Teaching and learning files are looked at regularly and curriculum plans are examined. Sensitivity is shown in the comments written on these and suggestions for improvement are made, for example, about what teachers and support assistants can do to improve the learning of individual pupils, such as put inattentive pupils at the front to help to ensure that they concentrate, and carry out 'small steps' assessments on individual pupils to identify their specific learning needs.
22. The head teacher reads the subject co-ordinators' monitoring files and makes suggestions such as "Can you arrange to see ... teach music?" Written evaluations point out what the co-ordinators do well and in which aspects of their work they are less effective. Useful comments about planning and pupils' work helps improvements to come about. For example, "Multi-cultural elements are not highlighted in planning" and "Not always clear from marking whether objectives were achieved" gives teachers ideas about they can do to improve their effectiveness.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Children in the Foundation Stage do not make the progress they should in speaking and listening, reading and writing because of weaknesses in teaching.**

23. The children in the Foundation Stage this year entered school with attainment better than that found in most other schools. They have exceeded the early learning goals for children of their age in mathematics but have only just attained them in all of the other areas of learning. They have made insufficient progress in particular in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is because there are some fundamental teaching weaknesses that need dealing with. Classroom management is weak and teaching makes insufficient demands on pupils to work hard and do their best.
24. Although some good learning opportunities are planned, they do not always happen. This means that teaching often lacks direction and children do not always work purposefully. For example, in one lesson, a group of children were going on a make-believe bear hunt, stimulated by a book they had read together. It was planned that these children would work with the teacher; they would sit down together and plan their journey, deciding on what to take with them and the route they would follow. However, once the children had put on the dressing-up clothes, the teacher left the group. The planning discussion did not take place and teaching did nothing to bring about any kind of order to the activity or intervene in the children's learning. Consequently, very little learning took place. Similarly, in a literacy lesson where the teacher and children read the book 'The bear hunt' together, the teacher read the story well, with good voice intonation and facial expression, which held the interest of the children. However, teaching did not, as intended, focus on who the author or illustrator was, or the language and structure of the book, and learning was limited because of this.
25. The often-high noise level makes it difficult for children to concentrate and work hard. It is not always dealt with effectively and too often children's learning is adversely affected because of it. There is insufficient awareness of what is going on around the room. For example, in one

lesson three children were asked by an inspector what they were doing as they had not started work some three or four minutes into the session. They replied, "Playing". This went unnoticed by the teacher, who was busy with another group and unaware of what was happening elsewhere in the room.

26. There are too many missed opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. For example, when characters in a story being read to the pupils had to walk through mud, the children were asked, "What will happen?" Although the pictures showed the characters removing their shoes, the inappropriate answer "Their shoes will get muddy" was accepted. Similarly at the end of the same lesson, some children were asked to stand up and explain to their classmates what they had done that lesson. Only one child did this before the teacher took over and explained the children's work for them. There was no reference to how well the work had been done, or what the children could have done better in order to improve the standards of work next time. In their written work, children are rarely required to produce more than one sentence and malformed letters go uncorrected. The book area does not promote browsing or looking at books for pleasure because it is not attractive enough to encourage children to spend time in it, and in word work, too much emphasis is put on completing worksheets, which often involve a lot of colouring in rather than writing practice.

**The guided reading sessions are not effective in getting pupils to think and talk about what they are reading.**

27. The school has not, until recently, implemented the National Literacy Strategy teaching guidance in its entirety. Up until the beginning of this year, focused guided reading and writing sessions did not take place and nothing else was done instead of them. Some teachers still do not feel completely confident about leading guided reading and writing sessions and although training has taken, and is still taking, place and teaching has improved because of it, there is still much work to be done, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Year 1.
28. In these year groups, there is insufficient planned focus still on understanding the text and a tendency to use the guided reading sessions to teach word attack skills rather than build pupils' understanding of what they are reading. Pupils are not asked, for example, to think or offer opinions about the characters, story structure, words, or phrases different authors use and because of this, do not take notice of the different styles they come across to influence their own writing. Although no guided writing sessions were seen during the inspection, convincing evidence shows that progress in reading and writing is not as rapid as it should be and the school has not kept up, over time, with the improving trend in standards found in most other schools.
29. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, after the pupils had read the story together and then individually, they were asked to search for words ending in 'ing' and 'ed'. There was no exploration of the book, or opinions sought about who the pupils liked and why, and what parts of the book were more interesting than others. This takes away the joy of reading for pleasure and does little to encourage a love of books and develop pupils' understanding of book structure, plot, and how a story line is extended. This in turn means that their story writing skills do not improve as rapidly as they could. In a Foundation Stage lesson, children read the book together with the teacher but there was no discussion about who the characters were and what was happening and why. Teaching was unclear about precisely what the children were to learn during the session and because of this, it lacked focus and the children and teacher lost interest. The lesson ended prematurely and children were asked to draw a picture in the time left
30. Although the teaching is better in Year 2, these skills are newly taught. Discussion with the older pupils in school shows that, by the end of Key Stage 1, they are reluctant to talk about their favourite books or to explain what is happening in the books they are reading. They name famous authors, such as Roald Dahl and Dick King Smith but although they list the books these people have written, they do not talk eagerly about which one they like best or why. When



asked why they chose a particular book to read, for example, they replied simply, "Because it looked interesting".

**The school governors do not have a clear enough idea about what is happening in teaching, learning and standards in order to judge the effectiveness of the school, or influence its direction.**

31. Governors do not know enough about what is going on in school and therefore have limited influence in bringing about change. They do not have a clear picture of what is and is not working well, in general, throughout the school. Although there are subject governors, they have not, with the exception of the ICT governor, yet met with the subject co-ordinators and so are unaware of what is happening in their subjects. They do not observe lessons and their time in school is spent, in the main, watching school concerts and attending social events such as the strawberry fair. They do not check that they are fulfilling their statutory duties effectively because they delegate the management of the school to the head teacher and assume that she is doing it effectively. They listen to her guidance and generally act on what she says needs to be done, trusting her judgement.
32. Whilst the governing body looks at the school's test results, it does not measure the effectiveness of its spending on standards and cannot be sure that it is spending the school's money in the most effective way. The governors assume, rather than check, for example, that it is the high number of trained teachers and support assistants causing good achievement overall. They make no comparison of their own spending with that of other schools and although they operate effective tendering procedures, they do not apply the other principles of best value for money effectively enough. Their strategic financial planning is weak. For example, some of their surplus budget is ear-marked for redecorating, yet they have not obtained a quotation for the work and have little idea about how much they need to keep in reserve for this work.

**Attendance rates are below average and pupils arriving late disrupt the start of lessons.**

33. The attendance rate at the school is well below the national average. There has been a downward trend in attendance figures over the last four years. Even taking into account one or two pupils taking extended periods of time off school this year, attendance is still low compared with that found in most other infant schools nationally. However, improving pupils' attendance has been identified as a priority area for improvement in the school development plan because individual pupils taking one, and sometimes as many as three, holidays a year causes considerable disruption to the education of these pupils and also their classmates. This is because teachers and teaching assistants have to spend time going over missed work with those returning from their holidays, limiting their time with the other pupils in the class.
34. Although the school currently does too little to discourage parents from taking their children on holiday during term time, the head teacher monitors attendance rigorously and informs parents at the end of each term how many days of absence their children have had. Certificates are awarded for full attendance each term, encouraging good attendance, and the school secretary telephones parents to ask about any unexplained absence, thus preventing unauthorised absence.
35. There is a significant amount of lateness, which disrupts the start of the school day and prolongs the registration period. On both days of the inspection, several pupils wandered in late during the first five or ten minutes and this meant that lessons did not start promptly and on time, and cut down on the teaching and learning time. This is partly because the time this school starts its day does not coincide with the start of the neighbouring junior school day and parents who have children at both schools find it difficult to negotiate getting both their infant and junior children to school on time.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. The school staff and governing body should now:

- (1) Improve the teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage by:
  - i) making sure that lesson plans are followed with sufficient rigour;
  - ii) ensuring that classroom management and control strategies are effective enough to encourage children to work hard and behave well;
  - iii) making sure that teaching engages all of the pupils all of the time and intervention in children's learning is effective;
  - iv) engaging children in conversation about books and developing their enthusiasm for reading;
  - v) improving children's writing through developing their handwriting skills effectively and making higher demands on the quality and quantity of their written work.
- (2) Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the guided reading sessions by ensuring teachers take the opportunity during these sessions to question pupils about the books they are reading so that they can use the different styles and choices of vocabulary effectively to influence their own writing.
- (3) Ensure that school governors have a clear understanding about what is happening in school in order to judge its effectiveness and influence its direction.
- (4) Improve attendance rates and pupils' punctual arrival at school by:
  - i) discouraging parents from taking holidays during term time;
  - ii) encouraging parents to get their children to school for the start of the school day.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	9
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	33	44	11	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 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	78
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	16

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
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	12	19	31

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	18	18	17
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (85)	90 (85)	90 (93)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	18	17	17
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (81)	90 (93)	90 (89)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	40
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	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 – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.3
Average class size	26

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	133

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	266287
Total expenditure	258264
Expenditure per pupil	3399
Balance brought forward from previous year	13192
Balance carried forward to next year	21215

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	78
Number of questionnaires returned	35

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	29	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	29	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	37	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	80	20	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	37	9	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	26	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	31	3	0	9
The school is well led and managed.	69	31	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	34	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	34	6	0	0