

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE VALE FIRST AND MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Worthing

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125865

Headteacher: Mr Anthony R Lovatt

Reporting inspector: Sheila Browning  
1510

Dates of inspection: 30 April – 1 May 2001

Inspection number: 192518

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First and Middle

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 12

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Vale Avenue  
Worthing  
West Sussex

Postcode: BN14 ODB

Telephone number: 01903 872322

Fax number: 01903 873681

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Rayner Wilson

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
1510	Sheila Browning	Registered inspector
11414	Ann Bennett	Lay inspector
22113	Aileen King	Team inspector
17522	Nigel Stiles	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Open Book Inspections  
6 East Point  
High Street  
Seal  
TN15 0EG

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Vale First and Middle school, with 622 boys and girls aged 4+ to 12, is much larger than other primary schools nationally. It is heavily over subscribed and has over 100 more pupils than at the time of the last inspection. Almost all children have experience of pre-school education before coming to The Vale. Attainment for the majority of pupils on entry is above average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, at 7.6 per cent, is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need, 0.2 per cent, is below the national average. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, at 4.8 per cent, is below the national average. There are few pupils of ethnic minority origin and few with English as an additional language. The majority of pupils come from the local area of Findon Valley, High Salvington and Offington and are from favoured backgrounds.

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

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good. Pupils achieve standards that are above or well above national averages. In national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, pupils reached very high standards in English, well above average standards in mathematics and above average standards in science. The school benefits from strong and effective leadership with a staff who are fully committed to raising standards and school improvement. Teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning are major strengths of the school. A successful teaching and learning partnership is in place and the school provides a positive learning climate. The standards of behaviour and relationships are very good. Inspection findings show improvement during the current year in standards achieved in reading by pupils aged seven and in science by pupils aged eleven. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The quality and range of learning opportunities throughout the school are good. Extra-curricular provision is very good. The provision for more able pupils is very good. The good achievements of the pupils, and effective deployment of resources enable the school to provide very good value for money. Its many strengths far outweigh its few weaknesses.

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

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are strengths.
- Leadership and management is strong and effective, all staff work well as a team.
- Target setting for pupils and the use of performance data are very good and support improving standards.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities, including the provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, and social development, are good. Extra-curricular provision is very good.

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

This is an effective school; there are no significant weaknesses. Nevertheless, the following areas could be improved.

- The rate of unauthorised absence.
- Provision for pupils' welfare, by addressing some health and safety issues.

*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 responded well to the issues raised in the last inspection and good progress has been made. The key issues identified are successfully addressed. The overview of the curriculum is established and its delivery is more closely monitored and evaluated with a planned balance between subjects. Key priorities which link targets to cost implications and success criteria are clearly identified within the school development plan. The senior management team support the headteacher in his leadership role well. The Vale is a self-evaluating school with focused priorities. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Formal financial procedures are efficient. The quality and commitment to improvement are excellent and the capacity to succeed further is very good.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	B	A*	A
Mathematics	C	A	A	A
Science	C	C	B	D

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The attainment of children who are under five is above average for this age in all the areas of learning. The majority are likely to exceed the early learning goals by age six, at the end of Foundation Stage. From entry, children make good progress in their Reception year.

In 2000, the average points scored in National Curriculum tests show that pupils aged seven attained above average standards in reading and writing and well above average standards in mathematics in comparison with the national averages. In comparison to similar schools, results in mathematics were well above average, for writing they were average but for reading they were below average. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher Levels (Level 3 and above) was well above the national average in mathematics and was above the average for reading, writing and science.

In 2000, the average points scored in National Curriculum tests show that pupils aged eleven attained standards that were very high in English, well above average in mathematics and above average for science. When compared with similar schools results in English and mathematics were well above average but results in science were below average. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher Levels (Level 5 and above) was very high in English, well above average in mathematics and close to the national average in science. Following the relatively disappointing results in science, the school undertook a rigorous examination of the reasons and has taken very effective steps to ensure that science standards in future are as good as those in English and mathematics. Standards seen during the inspection are above expectations in other subjects. No lessons were observed in religious education although standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in meeting the targets set for them. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from well-planned activities and achieve well.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are interested and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very well behaved, courteous and friendly.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Personal development is good and relationships are very positive between pupils and with their teachers.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is too high.

Pupils' show keen enthusiasm for their work and activities. Very good behaviour makes a major contribution to learning. The personal development of pupils and relationships are very good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. It is good or better in 87 per cent of lessons of which 75 per cent are very good or excellent. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all other lessons. Overall, teaching in English, mathematics and science is very good and enables pupils to make very good progress. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and this is having a positive impact on standards. The school meets the needs of all pupils well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. A strong feature of teaching is the clear way that pupils are told what they will learn, and this is reinforced throughout lessons. Teachers plan a good range of tasks. Throughout the school, teachers make lessons interesting and pupils understand that they are expected to work hard. Expectations of what pupils can do are high. Effective teaching methods reinforce the good quality learning. Pupils are interested and are well motivated.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. The inclusive nature of the school for all pupils is a particular strength. Extra-curricular provision is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision and effective use of resources support pupils with special educational needs well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Few of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. Provision is satisfactory overall.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, supporting pupils' academic performance and personal development, and educational support and guidance are good.

The school provides a good personal, social and health education programme. The range of extra-curricular provision is good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The school works in close partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is effective. Good systems and structures are in place to take the school forward. The school has a positive and highly committed team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities. Governors make a valued and supportive commitment to the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Priorities for development, particularly the focus on raising attainment are good. The Vale is self-evaluating and the action taken to meet school targets is very good.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Teachers and non-teaching staff are deployed well. The non-teaching staff are highly valued by the school. Learning resources are used well.

The number, qualifications and experience of staff are good. Accommodation is adequate but the size of the hall presents some constraints. Leadership is well focused and initiates educational improvement. The school effectively seeks ways to ensure that it gets the best value for money spent.

## 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 school expects children to work hard and achieve the best standard of which they are capable.</li> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• Children make progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Behaviour in school is good.</li> <li>• The school helps children to be mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about how children are getting on.</li> <li>• Working more closely with parents.</li> <li>• Activities outside school.</li> <li>• Homework.</li> <li>• Responses to questions or a problem.</li> </ul>

Parents are very supportive. The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. However, the school provides good information about the progress children make. Timing of consultation sessions would be more useful to parents earlier in the school year. The school tries to work closely with parents. Outside of lessons, a good range of interesting activities are provided. Homework is set regularly and it is appropriate. Thirty-two written comments were received most of which were positive. A few indicated some concerns about inadequate toilets, changing facilities for physical education, a lack of drinking facilities and a lack of covered provision for pupils and parents when waiting for children in inclement weather at the end of the school day. These represent some of the constraints of the building that the school acknowledges.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science**

1. The attainment for the majority of pupils when they enter the school is above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average. By the age of six, the majority of children are likely to have reached or exceeded the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. Children make good progress.
2. The average point scores recorded in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at ages seven and eleven show that pupils reached standards better than the national averages. Standards were higher than national averages at the time of the last inspection and generally they have continued to improve, keeping pace with the national upward trend. The school's targets for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were exceeded for English, mathematics and science, when its best ever results were achieved. Results for pupils aged seven peaked in 1999 and in 2000 showed a very slight decline. Nevertheless, the school's analysis shows that the large majority of this particular group of pupils achieved well in relation to their previous attainment. Teacher assessments were accurate and closely matched the test results.
3. Within this good picture, test results in 2000 were relatively weakest in reading at age seven and science at age eleven. The school has addressed these issues and during the inspection the standards seen had improved significantly. There is now a greater focus on reading for pupils aged six and seven.
4. Following the relative disappointment of science results in the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests the school undertook a rigorous examination of the reasons. It has now taken very effective steps to ensure that science standards in future are as good as those in English and mathematics. Teachers have reviewed the science curriculum and are developing schemes of work from the Curriculum 2000 guidelines throughout the school. Several teachers are also specialists in science and pupils are benefiting directly from their expertise. The co-ordinators for science liaise closely to monitor for continuity in progression throughout the school. These are all positive contributory factors that are impacting on the good standards now achieved in science.
5. Results of boys and girls were not significantly different at either key stage. In lessons there is no significant difference in achievement between girls and boys.
6. Overall standards of attainment in lessons are above national averages and expectations throughout the school. A significant amount of very good quality and excellent work is evident throughout the school in work books, class displays and displays about the school. The standards achieved are directly related to the quality of teaching and the challenging activities presented to pupils. The school promotes a positive climate in which a successful teaching and learning partnership is established and sustained.
7. Standards of literacy are above average for pupils aged seven and are well above average for pupils aged eleven. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been effective and has reinforced pre-existing strong practices in teaching and

learning. Most pupils have very good speaking and listening skills and are adept at using dictionaries. They are clear about how to tackle written tasks, and show a good understanding of texts they are studying. For instance, in a Year 2 literacy lesson pupils were aware of very specific language such as 'gulp', 'unfold' and 'krill' when reading text about whales: they explained and used these descriptive terms during class discussion and when note taking. Pupils are making good progress in the development of their English skills. Attention to spelling, especially of subject specific vocabulary, is constantly reinforced in lessons other than English: for example, in mathematics and science pupils are secure using correct mathematical and scientific terms. Key words are effectively displayed on walls for different subjects. Work is well presented and is often of high quality in several areas of the curriculum and particularly in topic books. There are good opportunities for pupils to read, both silently and aloud. Pupils make good use of the library facilities and, particularly, information and communication technology (ICT) for researching and presenting information. In a Year 4 ICT lesson, for example, pupils were given information about a selection of musical instruments in varying conditions and they had to create a tree diagram. They confidently worked out relevant questions to create a database and produced suitable diagrams.

8. In mathematics, standards are well above average. This is a direct result of the combination of high quality teaching and adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy, which is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. Pupils are confident in number and computational skills throughout the school. Higher-attaining pupils multiply and divide simple and mixed fractions and calculate percentages. A small group of gifted pupils in Year 4 quickly increased their knowledge about rotations using an ICT program. They learnt how to rotate shapes in two directions using an interactive white board. Pupils explained and used terms such as 'quadrant', 'axis' and 'origin', and by the end of the lesson could explain their findings on centres of rotation to other adults observing. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, confidently add, subtract and multiply whole numbers, some up to three and four digits. Knowledge of division is secure for many, and pupils explore different strategies to achieve their outcomes. Pupils enjoy translating practical problems into correct mathematical forms. Understanding of geometrical form and spatial ideas is good. The development of number and algebraic skills is clearly evident across the school. Pupils have little difficulty in communicating and interpreting their findings.
9. In science, standards are above average and inspection findings indicate that a greater number of pupils are well on course to exceed the expected Level 4 (at age eleven) in National Curriculum tests this year. Pupils aged six and seven know about common life processes and learn about the human body and how it works. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils could describe the thorax and abdomen and what function they have. The oldest pupils, in Year 7, have a secure understanding of the effects of heat on different materials and chemical changes. Pupils record and share their observations and describe the nature of their investigations well. The range of experimental science is very good across the school.
10. Overall, pupils make very good progress in all subjects seen. They learn well in lessons and consequently make very good progress. Standards in art and in other subjects are above those expected nationally for pupils of this age. Standards in religious education match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
11. The percentage of pupils in the school with special educational needs, at just over seven per cent, is well below the national average. The rate of progress made by these pupils is good overall due to the good support they receive. The very good working

partnership between teachers and learning support staff provides a high level of appropriate and targeted help and this effectively enhances the progress pupils make.

12. Teachers' planning usually includes reference to more demanding work for high-attaining pupils, who are suitably challenged. In English, for example, higher-attaining eleven-year-olds demonstrated good listening skills, responding quickly and intelligently to the teacher's questions when critically analysing leaflets made by the previous Year 6 pupils. They discussed and identified good features, such as the persuasive writing, layout and the use of language to make exciting sub-headings. A Year 7 class completed and read a draft letter from the character of 'Buddy'. Some wrote quite forceful letters and got straight to the point: they discussed the content and comprehension well and presented their work to the class confidently. By the age of eleven, higher-attaining pupils can derive meaning from textual clues when reading.

### **Teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are strengths**

13. Teaching is very good overall, with 25 per cent of teaching being excellent and 50 per cent being very good: 12 per cent is good and the remainder at least satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to enabling pupils to achieve their best. Lessons are well planned. The school has adopted the accelerated learning programme (ALPS) to improve teaching and learning even further, and all lessons reflect different learning activities. These activities are reinforced in various ways, often with diffusion tactics to stimulate further learning. This approach ensures that pupils are fully engaged and all of them are provided with work at a suitable level of challenge. The strong teaching enables pupils to achieve well and they often reach standards above those expected for their age. Some excellent teaching was seen in mathematics in Year 6 in the accelerated learning group. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils working towards National Curriculum Level 6 were encouraged to consider a triangle and its properties and then to write down all the equations of straight lines. The teacher timed each task and put key vocabulary and terms on the board and utilised computer software and the interactive white board effectively for exposition. The teacher demonstrated excellent knowledge, pace and use of time and constantly reinforced the learning objectives and increased the level of challenge, enabling the more able pupils to attain higher standards.
14. Good and very good teaching is often characterised by very positive relationships. The school has established a successful teaching and learning partnership in which parents are also encouraged to be involved. Lessons are well structured and much of the teaching encourages pupils to work co-operatively and acquire and share knowledge and skills. In a Year 6 drama lesson, the class worked well discussing Greek theatre. Through drama improvisation, they developed ideas and engaged in imaginary roles and situations using the story of Medusa and the Gorgons. This resulted in some high quality work using techniques such as mime, still image and tableaux, and pupils critically appraised each other's work successfully. Pupils work purposefully in groups or pairs. In a Year 4 physical education lesson, throwing and catching balls, pupils developed good skills working supportively together. Another group tried Australian cricket: they responded enthusiastically, increasing their sense of competition. In a Year 7 science lesson, pupils conducted experiments and then presented their findings to the class coherently. They gave some excellent presentations, were articulate and explained their practical applications well using overhead projectors, sharing facts and diagrams and using drama to demonstrate the differences between solids, liquids and gases and between reversible and irreversible reactions. Teachers utilise open-ended questioning techniques and provide opportunities for all pupils to show their capabilities. Established teaching routines ensure that a minimum amount of time is spent in getting

out equipment and resources. Pupils are not required to undertake time-wasting tasks and are encouraged to take notes and use other higher-order skills. These methods add to the good pace of learning. The good liaison between learning support assistants and teachers ensures that adult support contributes significantly to learning and the standards achieved.

15. The positive introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has provided a better structure and has reinforced existing good practices. Very good teaching strategies are used that ensure that pupils are provided with continuous challenge and interest. Very good questioning and recapitulation, and teaching aids like the interactive board, projectors and computers, are used frequently to good effect. Technical terms are reinforced and pupils' understanding of vocabulary is checked. Teachers make sensible choices of resources and working groups to match activities well to meet individual pupils' learning needs, including pupils with special educational needs. A good example was seen in a Year 5 science lesson, when pupils explored the different sounds made when objects or materials vibrate. The teacher had provided various resources to experiment with, rice grains on a drum, a tuning fork in water and on the table, a record player using a cone or cup, and pupils found this great fun. As a result, they came to understand how vibrations, from sound sources travel through different materials. Plenary sessions are regular features of all lessons and they provide effective reinforcement of the knowledge and understanding acquired.
16. Teachers' have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and of how pupils learn. Teachers often teach their specialist subject: this and the teacher's detailed knowledge of pupils' prior attainment secure very good learning. Teaching expertise is often combined with enthusiastic presentation. In a Year 6 ICT lesson, pupils were encouraged to use software to organise and communicate information. This built on their previous knowledge and experience and they were confident using the resources. They accessed information about Greek gods and produced some high quality multi-media presentations. They considered sequential layouts and selected colour schemes to show to other pupils in different year groups. Through his own interest, the teacher generated the pupils' enthusiasm. In another Year 7 ICT lesson, pupils accessed information about an exchange school in France using the website. The teacher enabled the pupils to exchange information. They had previously taken photographs of each other using a digital camera and each prepared an email with an attachment to send to their pen friends in France. Difficulties arose with the server but, together, the teacher and the technician were quickly able to locate the problem and resolve it.
17. A feature of all good lessons is the positive impact of pupils' enthusiasm for learning. There is no significant difference in the good progress made by boys and girls, or those from different groups or backgrounds.
18. Some 96 per cent of parents commented in the questionnaire that teaching at the school was good. The inspection fully confirms this overwhelming majority view.
19. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good in lessons. This is a major strength of the school that makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. They are well motivated and want to learn and are involved in all aspects of learning. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They show high levels of concentration, remain on task and are interested. Pupils are eager to answer questions and help and encourage one another when working together, readily sharing and listening to different ideas. For example, in a Year 6 art lesson, pupils researched Greek tragedy masks: they drew them in their sketch books showing

the different emotions: then they listened and shared ideas about how they would make them in clay. Boys and girls contributed equally and thoughtfully. A very positive feature is the way that pupils work with each other in pairs and small groups. In a Year 7 science lesson, for instance, pupils worked together, listening and evaluating the contributions of others. They readily shared their ideas and predictions about solids, liquids and gases. They highlighted important features and presented their findings to the whole class: the class applauded each group at the end of each presentation spontaneously.

20. The school has created a strong climate of self-discipline. Pupils learn well in a positive and supportive learning environment. Pupils also enjoy the different opportunities and responsibilities they are given. For example, participation in extra-curricular activities is high. Pupils enjoy being school monitors and becoming involved. They are polite in lessons, around the school and to each other, their teachers and visitors. They are keen to greet visitors and ask questions; and they are articulate in expressing their views.
21. Very good relationships are evident between all members of the school. There is no evidence of any oppressive behaviour, or behaviour of sexist or racist natures. Pupils respect other's values and feelings. The school has an atmosphere of order and discipline.

**Leadership and management is strong and effective, all staff work well as a team**

22. The headteacher provides strong leadership with an excellent understanding of how the school should continue to address its key priorities for future development. He has established effective management structures for promoting this. Both of these features are improvements since the last inspection. The last inspection required the school to identify more clearly the key priorities within the school development plan, linking targets to cost implications and success criteria. This has been successfully achieved the development plan is now more sharply defined and focused. Another issue was to extend the skills of the senior management team in order to better support the headteacher in his strong leadership. Senior managers have clear job descriptions. The appointment of an additional assistant headteacher together with the existing deputy headteacher has enabled the headteacher to delegate many of his responsibilities. The senior management team, middle managers and the well-informed articulate and involved governing body work effectively together. They ably support the headteacher who enables and empowers staff whilst valuing their professional judgement. The headteacher sees his role as a stimulator; a motivator; a facilitator; a leader by example; and a decision maker. He is very successful in this role.
23. Policy statements are reviewed systematically and give useful guidelines to staff. A good example is the use of ICT across the curriculum, which is implemented well. The senior management team and governors work well together in promoting common objectives. Although standards are high, there is no complacency. There is an excellent commitment to improvement and a secure capacity to succeed. All staff regularly reflect upon current practice and seek ways of improving it.
24. Subject co-ordinators and shadow co-ordinators are effective and respond well to the responsibilities delegated to them. From the end of November to the end of January, the school undergoes a formal process of self-evaluation by the co-ordinators and a whole school analysis by the headteacher. Informal monitoring that involves team teaching and an analysis of teaching and curriculum development throughout the school is part of this process. In this way, the school is continuously seeking effective methods to improve standards. Curriculum co-ordinators are increasingly involved with the

monitoring of pupils' academic progress and this is undertaken well. The early identification of pupils with special educational needs, ALPS and fast tracking are helping to raise the standards of individual pupils.

25. The governors make a valued and supportive commitment to the life of the school. Their support has been a major factor in shaping school policies and their effective implementation. Governors have established close links with all areas of the school and they monitor standards and judge the success of the curriculum carefully. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Governors have expertise and a good insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses, for example the constraints the building presents at times, especially the hall. Building development has been limited, with 30 per cent of classrooms being designated temporary. There has been no expansion of the hall, field or playing space, resulting in rigorous and strategic planning for how best to use existing facilities. The hall does not provide enough space for the whole school to meet together at one time. The original buildings have been enhanced by developments throughout the years. For example, in addition to the six temporary classrooms there has been the creation of a science/art/home economics area within an extra building. Other alterations have been made to cater sufficiently for ICT, music and special educational needs. The aims of the school provide a clear focus for its work.
26. Financial planning is very effective. Allocation of funding is very carefully monitored and evaluated and matched against the school development plan's future projections. The school is constantly seeking other sources of funding. Governors formally follow the principles of best value and they are rigorous in ensuring value for money from the spending decisions taken. Considerable money has been spent in updating and increasing the amount of computer equipment throughout the school and there has been training for staff. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The new computer suite is well utilised and staff are more technically competent. Governors took the decision to employ a technical assistant for ICT and this has proved to be a valuable expenditure. As a result of all these factors, pupils develop and maximise their ICT skills well and use computers to support their learning in a wide context.
27. The number of teaching and non-teaching staff has risen considerably to meet the increase in pupil numbers. This has been carefully financed and has made a significant impact to the delivery of lessons. Beacon and Teacher Training statuses mean that staff are frequently demonstrating their teaching skills to other visitors and professionals. Central to the philosophy of the school is the formal structure of teaching and learning. The school has identified team teaching, planning together and the accelerated learning programme (ALPS), which is delivered enthusiastically by all staff, as vital components of good practice. Accessing pupils' preferred learning styles has been beneficial.

**Target setting for pupils and the use of performance data are very good and support improving standards**

28. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils can achieve their potential. Parents speak highly of the support that their children receive. Teachers monitor pupil's personal development, academic achievements and progression as they move up through the school. This information is transferred internally and externally to the high school. Using a software program, teachers are able to track individual progress, make accurate projections and target pupil's specific needs. Pupils have individual mental/table testing programmes and they can see their scores and the speed



improving. For instance, pupils take a mathematics test in November and again in May: this enables teachers to monitor progress made and, depending on their progress, pupils can move up the groups set by ability and sit higher tests. Pupils complete individual assignment sheets in topic areas and these go home to parents for their comments. The sheets indicate the pupil's opinions; the teacher's summary and the parent's views upon their child's performance.

29. To enable pupils to achieve even better results, there is an analysis of tests and the subsequent targeting of work to remedy the failings. An example of this is that the school targeted boys' reading and then their writing. The results achieved were 99 per cent Level 4 in English, 90 per cent in mathematics and 97 per cent in science, whereas the targets had been 78 per cent, 77 per cent and 80 per cent respectively.
30. At the end of the academic year, parents receive a written report on their child. Annual reports to parents provide appropriate information about pupils' attitudes to learning and personal development, and their academic achievements and progress. On the whole, the reports are subject specific, informing parents in sufficient detail about the pupil's strengths and weaknesses, covering aspects such as knowledge, understanding and skills. Reports also indicate end-of-year targets for all core subjects. The governors produce an annual report for parents.
31. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved fully in the initial and review processes in relation to registration. They are informed regularly about their children's targets and progress made.
32. The school provides a revision programme at the spring half term for pupils and teachers, some of whom are unpaid, work on Saturdays and early mornings from January onwards. Many staff make a positive contribution to the extra-curricular work of the school, including booster classes.

**The quality and range of learning opportunities, including the provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development, are good. Extra-curricular provision is very good**

33. The school has maintained a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. It meets statutory requirements. It builds on previous learning and consolidates this through its improvement planning. The school meets pupils' needs and provides good equality of access. It provides opportunities for pupils to show and develop their inter-personal skills, and their bodily kinaesthetic, spatial and rhythmical and musical talents. The inclusive nature of the school for all pupils is another strength. It continually seeks ways of providing varied and stimulating learning opportunities for pupils, for example the accelerated learning programme for all pupils and fast tracking for identified pupils. Provision for children in the Foundation stage is good. In Key Stages 1 and 2 and in Year 7 pupils follow a common curriculum of English, mathematics, science, and foundation subjects, including religious education and a personal social and health education programme. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 also study French. Homework is set regularly.
34. The school provides good learning opportunities, and sees as fundamentally important the pupils' entitlement to a balanced curriculum and this has been retained despite an increased focus on literacy and numeracy. A revised curriculum map has been put in place which is used to ensure that there is progression across all key stages. The breadth and balance and relevance of the curriculum are good. Sufficient time is allocated to all subjects, including the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Religious education is taught and is based upon the locally agreed syllabus. Since the last inspection, schemes of work have been introduced and teachers are further refining curriculum planning by using Curriculum 2000. The programmes of study are fully covered in design and technology and the time allocation for ICT has been increased. These are all improvements since the last inspection.
35. Provision for pupils with special educational need is good. Good planning and effective use of resources enable pupils to work successfully towards their identified targets. Individual needs and targets are recorded in their individual educational plans (IEPs). The variety of need is carefully identified and IEPs are specific to behaviour or educational needs. Targets are reviewed each term and pupils move up and down through the key stages, and on and off the register.
36. The school has a good programme to support the most able pupils, and this is particularly successful in mathematics. The programme provides accelerated or fast-track learning for identified pupils. For example, Level 6 scientists go to the local high school to work with the Year 9 pupils. Some of the Year 2 pupils are taught with Year 6 pupils. These pupils are provided with particular activities in smaller groups, teaching methods are adapted so that they are challenged. Individual educational plans are devised for the pupil and programmes are provided to give them a better opportunity to achieve Level 6. Target setting is in place for all and there is an effective revision programme. Stimulating teaching is enabling these pupils to broaden and deepen their mathematical understanding. In a couple of the mathematics accelerated lessons observed, excellent knowledge enabled the teacher to challenge pupils' thinking through a balance of probing and open-ended questioning. Tasks were brisk and built on previous knowledge. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the challenge and discussed their work at a high level. They asked questions of each other and the teacher and learned at a

fast pace. This accelerated programme is particularly effective where the pupils' understanding and thinking are challenged and stimulated.

37. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is given particular priority. The school is focusing on equipping pupils with these basic skills and prepares them for their next stage of education. Both strategies are effectively implemented and they are having a positive impact upon the attainment of the pupils.
38. Pupils are actively encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities both in and out of school. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. They include visits to local places of interest and other events. There is opportunity to play a wide range of musical instruments and 41 per cent of pupils in the middle school have instrumental lessons. Music theory grades 1, 2 and 3 is offered to pupils as an extra-curricular activity. Pupils have opportunities to try pottery, singing, dance, and play almost every sport. There is a wide range of musical activities and a school orchestra. Pupils take part successfully in local competitive events such as writing and poetry competitions and the school is involved in the Worthing Festival. There are good opportunities to become involved in productions, plays, and talent evenings where as many as 120 pupils participate. Nearly all of the Year 7 pupils were involved in the school production of Pendragon and gave an excellent performance. There are cluster schools/family arts evenings. The school is involved in many local community events. Amongst residential trips are visits to Little Canada on the Isle of Wight and to Rouen in France.
39. Equality of access to the curriculum and the educational opportunities for pupils are good. All pupils have access to the full curriculum and are fully integrated into the life of the school.
40. The school emphasises the importance of personal, social and health education and has an appropriate policy in place. It incorporates circle time, and sex and drug misuse education for pupils in Years 6 and 7.
41. The school makes good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is a place where all pupils are recognised as unique individuals and valued positively. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good; cultural development is satisfactory.
42. Pupils' spiritual development is good. All requirements for a daily act of worship, built on a broadly Christian foundation, are fulfilled. The assembly themes that incorporate pupils' involvement, through singing and drama as well as answering the questions, provide a good spiritual awareness. Pupils are given good opportunities to participate and to think about their own feelings and experiences. The quality of two assemblies taken by the headteacher was excellent. Religious education plays an important part in nurturing pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
43. The school's provision for moral development is good. All adults and pupils work hard at achieving the high standard of behaviour seen throughout the school. The school has a caring ethos that is based on mutual respect. Pupils care for the well-being of others and have a clear sense of right and wrong. Effective opportunities are provided in lessons and circle time to discuss issues such as caring for others. Assemblies also focus on a range of moral and social issues. Pupils are taught from an early age the value of honesty, fair play and truth, and to respect the belongings of others.
44. The provision for pupils' social development is good. All adults provide very good role models and pupils are valued. Regular achievement assemblies celebrate individual

and school successes. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. Special assemblies, for instance merit assembly, celebrate the success and achievement of individual pupils. All pupils are given opportunities to take an active part in school life, for example on a rota basis to collect and return registers to the school office. Older pupils care for younger ones and listen to them read, as in the buddy system. They are given good opportunities to relate positively to one another and to teachers and visitors in the school. The school council, which consists of elected representatives and house captains, allows pupils to have a say in the school's organisation and decision-making processes.

45. The quality of provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Most pupils share a common cultural background and are given good opportunities to appreciate their local heritage through an exploration of the area in which they live, including visits to the local church. Further opportunities to provide a knowledge and understanding of other cultures are developing. Geography allows pupils to consider a range of life-styles and cultures. History allows pupils to examine the changing nature of their own culture as well as that of other societies, such as the ancient Greeks. In English, they develop an understanding of their literary heritage by studying a range of poetry and prose and Shakespeare. Younger pupils' experiences include listening to and reading fables and legends. Multi-cultural awareness, although developing, is not extended to include a more identifiable element in the curriculum which would deal with the issues around ethnic minorities.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The rate of unauthorised absence**

46. Good procedures are in place to promote and monitor attendance. However, during the academic year 1999-2000, the rate of attendance was just below the national average in comparison with other primary schools. The rate of unauthorised absence at the school during the same period was above the national average. Records indicate that a majority of such absences are for family holidays. The rate of attendance for the spring term of the current academic year shows a marginal but distinct improvement. Pupils, in general, are punctual in arriving at the school in the morning and in returning to their classrooms after the morning break and lunchtime. The school's expectations and parents' responsibilities concerning their children's regular and uninterrupted attendance and punctuality are very clearly stated in the school prospectus. The school implements the local authority procedures and policy with regard to attendance. At the end of an academic year, a record is provided to parents, giving them information on attendance and lateness.
47. The school's attendance policy sets out the relevant requirements for implementation within the school. The attendance registers are marked manually and as this information is transferred electronically it can be open to error. Teachers adhere to the local authority guidelines and procedures for marking the registers. The school takes appropriate measures, when parents fail to send an explanation of their children's absence. The school maintains a good liaison with education welfare office.

### **Provision for pupils' welfare, by addressing some health and safety issues**

48. During the inspection it was observed that although instructions are clearly sited to lock the science laboratory when unoccupied, it remained unlocked during the school day.
49. Older pupils have no separate changing facilities for physical education. Girls are allowed to use the toilets but this is not very desirable.
50. Although the swimming pool is suitably fenced off, the gate leading to it is unlocked.

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

51. In order to raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and senior managers should address the following minor weaknesses:
  - (1) Decrease the rate of unauthorised absence by:
    - persisting with the recommendations for parents in the school prospectus regarding attendance. (Paragraphs 46, 47)
  - (2) Attend to the health and safety concerns by:
    - ensuring that the science laboratory is locked when unoccupied;
    - considering alternative changing facilities for physical education;
    - locking the gate by the swimming pool. (Paragraphs 48, 49, 50)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
25	50	12	12	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR-Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	na	622
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	na	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR- Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	na	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	na	53

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
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	43	47	90
	[1999]	[42]	[39]	[81]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39 [40]	37 [37]	43 [40]
	Girls	44 [39]	44 [39]	45 [39]
	Total	83 [79]	81 [76]	88 [79]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 [98]	90 [94]	98 [98]
	National	83 [82]	84 [83]	90 [87]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39 [39]	42 [41]	41 [41]
	Girls	43 [39]	44 [38]	44 [39]
	Total	82 [78]	86 [79]	85 [80]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 [96]	96 [98]	94 [99]
	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	30	40	70
	[1999]	[43]	[29]	[72]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29 [34]	27 [38]	29 [38]
	Girls	40 [27]	37 [27]	39 [26]
	Total	69 [61]	64 [65]	68 [64]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	99 [85]	91 [90]	97 [89]
	National	75 [70]	72 [69]	85 [78]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27 [34]	29 [33]	29 [39]
	Girls	39 [27]	38 [24]	39 [28]
	Total	66 [61]	67 [57]	68 [67]
Percentage of pupils	School	94 [85]	96 [79]	97 [93]

at NC level 4 or above	National	70 [68]	72 [69]	79 [75]
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*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	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	545
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*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)	28.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	29.6

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

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	511

### ***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
	£
Total income	1022075
Total expenditure	1023250
Expenditure per pupil	1622
Balance brought forward from previous year	14372
Balance carried forward to next year	-1175

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	622
Number of questionnaires returned	243

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	45	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	46	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	51	2	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	57	10	2	4
The teaching is good.	61	35	2	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	51	23	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	34	10	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	33	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	53	11	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	53	40	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	53	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	54	10	3	3