

INSPECTION REPORT

**ROBSACK WOOD COMMUNITY PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

St Leonards on Sea

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114483

Headteacher: Mr John Benwell

Reporting inspector: Ms Ruth Frith
2490

Dates of inspection: 19th – 20th March 2001

Inspection number: 192533

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Whatlington Way
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M Sadler

Date of previous inspection: 27th January – 10th February 1997

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
 PART B: COMMENTARY	
 WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	 10
 WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	 18
 WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	 19
 PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	 20

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Robsack Wood Community Primary School is a community school for boys and girls of all abilities aged 3 to 11 years. There are 286 pupils on roll, including 48 who attend part-time either in the nursery or reception class. Fifty-one children are aged under five. The school is situated in the north west of St Leonards on Sea and serves a community which has high levels of unemployment, poverty and single parent households. It is involved in activities supported by the local Education Action Zone. The majority of children live close to the school in social housing and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. A significant number of pupils with disrupted educational backgrounds join the school part way through the key stages. On entry to the nursery, children have well below average standards, particularly in language, personal, social and emotional development. Approximately eight per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well above the national average and includes three pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Most of the pupils with special educational needs who require regular additional support have specific learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is finding it increasingly difficult to appoint new teachers due to the general shortage of appropriately trained teachers in the local area.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Robsack Wood Community Primary School is a very good school with many significant strengths. It achieves high standards and serves the community well. The quality of teaching is very good overall and the pupils are encouraged to work hard. Strategies to promote equality of opportunity are very effective and reflect the school's commitment to inclusive education. The leadership and management of the school are excellent and manifest themselves in a strong commitment to raising standards while also offering a broad and interesting curriculum. The school provides very good value for money. In recognition of its success, the school has recently been notified of its Beacon status and received an Achievement Award.

What the school does well

- When compared with similar schools, results in national tests for pupils at the end of their last year in school are very high in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Key Stage 1. It is very good for pupils in Key Stage 2. Teaching is significantly enhanced by the good quality support provided by the Learning Support Assistants. Teaching for pupils with a wide variety of needs is good, and this reflects the school's strong commitment to its aim of inclusive education.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are keen to take part in school activities, and talk about their work enthusiastically.
- The very good provision for pupils' moral and social development contributes to their good behaviour and excellent relationships and personal development. Teachers are particularly effective in managing pupils' behaviour.
- All those who work in the school demonstrate a very high level of commitment to creating a learning culture where pupils are encouraged to succeed. Procedures for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils are excellent.
- The headteacher and assistant headteachers provide excellent management and leadership, and other key staff and the governing body ably support them. The headteacher, staff and governors are strongly committed to the maintenance of high standards.

What could be improved

- Standards of writing at Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January and February 1997 when the quality of education provided, the school's climate for learning, and management and efficiency were very good but standards achieved by pupils were requiring some improvement. The school has successfully addressed the key issues identified in the inspection report and improved on previous very good practice. The quality of teaching has significantly improved and standards in English, mathematics and science are now above those reported in the last inspection at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has been less successful in raising standards at Key Stage 1 but there have been recent signs of improvement in reading and writing, and standards in mathematics have been maintained since the last inspection. Staff have devised new policies and schemes of work, and developed a more consistent approach to assessing pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement.

Consequently, teachers' planning has improved and this has led to the provision of tasks and activities which are better matched to the pupils' levels of attainment. The school seeks help from the local education authority to provide specialist support, including speech therapy. The site has been developed and security improved. The school now meets the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good and the school has the capacity to improve even further. The management structure has developed and senior managers are very effective in all aspects of their roles.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	D	B	A*	very high A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
mathematics	B	A	A	A*	
science	D	C	E	C	

These results show that when compared to all schools, pupils achieved standards above the national average in English, well above average in mathematics and well below average in science. When compared with schools with pupils of a similar background, pupils achieved very high standards in English and mathematics and place the school within the top five per cent of similar schools. Standards in science were average. Over the last five years the school's rate of improvement overall in English, mathematics and science has been above the national trend and reflects the school's focus on improving standards. In 2000, the school set appropriately challenging targets and achieved 11 per cent above its target for English and 5 per cent above its target for mathematics. Evidence from this inspection confirms that pupils in Year 6 are making very good progress and should maintain these high standards. They are expected to reach the targets set in English and mathematics and improve on previous levels in science. Children make good progress with their learning in the Foundation Stage and by the time they are ready to start Year 1, the large majority of children reach the nationally expected standards in all areas of learning. Results of the 2000 standard assessment tests and teacher assessments for seven-year-olds indicate that in comparison to all schools pupils' attainment was well below average in reading and writing, average in mathematics and below average in science. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 are currently reaching average levels of attainment in reading, mathematics and science, and below average levels of attainment in writing. Overall, pupils achieve well and their results indicate an improving trend.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are interested in what they do. They are proud of their achievements and keen to talk about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Staff outline clear boundaries for what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and the vast majority of pupils respond well to this. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils develop in confidence as they progress through the school and become increasingly more responsible and independent. The excellent relationships within the school help to create a safe and stimulating learning environment.
Attendance	Poor. Despite rigorous and imaginative attempts by the school to improve attendance, the rate of attendance last year was well below the national average. Lessons start promptly and no time is wasted.

The pupils' very good attitudes, good behaviour and excellent relationships and personal development provide a good basis for their learning and make a positive contribution to the levels of attainment that they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	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.

Across the school, the quality of teaching is very good in 64 per cent of lessons and good in 36 per cent. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection and reflects the high value which senior management place on attracting good teachers whom they then support well through a good programme of professional development. The quality of teaching is particularly pleasing, as four out of the five teachers teaching children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 were recent appointments and had not been in the school for more than two terms. The school meets the needs of all pupils well. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is particularly effective in developing their personal and social skills and their attitudes to learning. These strengths are built upon successfully in the rest of the school where teachers focus on developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy within a broad curriculum. Teachers have adopted the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well. The teaching of English is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2 and the teaching of mathematics is very good at both key stages. Staff have recognised the need for improvement in Key Stage 1 in relation to pupils' writing. Overall, pupils' learning is good. The school targets valuable additional support for pupils with special educational needs and this results in their making good progress towards the targets set. Higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged. Teachers manage pupils very well and have high expectations of work and behaviour. Consequently, no time is wasted and pupils try hard to do their best.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The quality and range of learning opportunities presented to pupils stimulate their interests and maintain their concentration.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and progress well towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Staff are particularly effective in meeting the needs of those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development through the promotion of spiritual and cultural awareness and knowledge of social and moral responsibilities is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff have very good knowledge and understanding of their pupils and make excellent provision for their welfare, health and safety. The care given to pupils is well reflected in the way pupils, in turn, respect and care for others.

The headteacher is keen to ensure that pupils experience a rich and varied curriculum and that they leave school confident in what they can do, having experienced success. Staff provide a wide range of activities which develop pupils' academic and personal skills very well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and central to this is the aim to raise standards. He is very effective in appointing good quality staff and motivating a team with a shared sense of values and priorities. The two assistant headteachers share his passion for education and fully support him.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are fully involved in the school development planning process. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school effectively analyses its strengths and weaknesses in order to decide what needs to be done next.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school manages and uses its resources very well and priorities for development are appropriately financed. Correct tendering procedures are followed and staff and governors seek to obtain the best value for their spending.

The success of the school stems from the inspiring leadership and management of the headteacher and the effective work of key staff and governors. All share a clear vision for the development of the school with a specific focus on teaching and learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are happy to go to school and make good progress. The school promotes pupils' social skills well and they are helped to become mature and responsible. The quality of teaching is good and teachers expect the children to work hard. The school is well led and managed. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school and any issues are quickly and effectively dealt with. Teachers are helpful and understanding. There is good communication between home and school, and reports are clear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although most parents thought behaviour was good, a minority indicated that a small group of pupils had poor behaviour. The provision and marking of homework. More information about their child's progress. More activities outside formal school hours. A few parents expressed concern about mixed age classes and that their child had been taught by supply teachers.

Inspectors endorse the positive views held by most parents and the regard they have for the school. Parents' comments at the meeting and the views expressed in the parents' questionnaires provide mixed messages about behaviour in the school. The majority of parents believe that pupils' behaviour is good and this is confirmed by the inspectors' findings. There were some differences of opinion amongst parents about the school's new behaviour programme. Most thought that this had brought improvements in behaviour which is confirmed by the dramatic reduction in exclusions in the school, whilst a small minority did not agree with 'rewarding the baddies' as they saw it. A small number of parents stated that the setting and marking of homework was inconsistent. From the evidence gathered during the inspection, inspectors judge the provision and marking of homework to be satisfactory. Inspectors understand the views of a minority of parents who would like more information about how their children are getting on but believe that the school offers appropriate opportunities for parents to talk to staff as well as providing good quality written information. Inspectors judge the school to be providing a good range of activities outside formal school hours. The headteacher works as hard as he can to ensure that good quality, permanent teachers are appointed and teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

When compared with similar schools, results in national tests for pupils at the end of their last year in school are very high in English and mathematics.

1. When compared to schools with pupils of a similar background, pupils from Robsack Wood Community Primary School achieved very high standards in English and mathematics in the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 and this placed the school within the top five per cent of similar schools. Standards in science were average. Over the last five years the school's rate of improvement overall in English, mathematics and science has been above the national trend and reflects the focus that staff and governors place on improving standards. In 2000, the school achieved 11 per cent above its target for English and 5 per cent above its target for mathematics. Compared with all schools, pupils attained well above average standards in mathematics, above average standards in English and well below average standards in science. Evidence gained from observing lessons, talking to pupils and looking at their work shows that pupils in the current Year 6 are making very good progress and are in line to maintain these high standards in English and mathematics and improve on the standards in science. However, there has been a recent increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs joining this year group who, although progressing well, may not reach the standards appropriate for their age.
2. When starting in the nursery, many of the children have well below average standards, particularly in language, personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress with their learning both here and in the reception classes and by the time they are ready to start Year 1, the large majority of children reach the nationally expected standards in all areas of learning. Results of the 2000 standard assessment tests for seven-year-olds indicate that in comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment was average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. When compared with all schools, pupils attained well below average standards in reading and writing, average standards in mathematics and below average standards in science. Pupils in Year 2 are currently reaching average levels of attainment in reading, mathematics and science, and below average levels of attainment in writing. Overall, pupils achieve well and their results indicate an improving trend. This is particularly pleasing as this improvement is happening against a background of high teacher turnover. Managers of the school, in line with others in the area, are finding it particularly difficult to appoint good quality permanent staff but have continued to put policies and procedures in place which provide a firm structure to cushion the negative impact of frequent changes of staff.
3. The school has successfully implemented the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Currently, pupils are making good progress in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2. Staff have recognised that pupils need more opportunities to practise their writing across the different subject areas and also produce extended pieces of work. New staff are developing their practice well and the benefits of this are already visible in the quality of work produced by pupils this term. The pupils are encouraged to listen to the views of others and respond in a positive manner throughout the school. Some teachers are particularly effective in improving pupils' speaking skills by extending their range of vocabulary and valuing what they say, as in Year 3/4 literacy sessions. Here, pupils were seen speaking confidently and sensitively about the text studied and their work at the end of the lesson, when they were encouraged to stand up and put forward their views to others in the class. The teachers' confidence in managing these sessions was a key feature in the development of pupils' skills. Above average standards in speaking and listening are seen towards the end of the key stage as pupils gain in confidence, for example, when speaking about fables. Pupils' reading skills are developed well, as shown in a Year 3/4 lesson, where the teacher indicated how reading an unfamiliar text could be improved by pupils using their previously gained knowledge and understanding of the structure of words and the sounds which letters make when placed together. In Year 6, most pupils read texts with fluency and

accuracy, and effective questioning by the teacher helps pupils to appreciate how language is used to create interest in a story. In the best lessons, the high expectations of teachers ensure that pupils are encouraged to work hard to develop, and use, a wide range of vocabulary in their writing. The work on display and in their books indicates how pupils have carefully chosen appropriate vocabulary for the effect it has on the reader. By the time they leave school, pupils have had practice in writing for a variety of purposes and this helps to support the high standards that they achieve.

4. Most pupils make very good progress in mathematics in both key stages. The introduction of the numeracy lessons is stimulating pupils' interest, particularly in mental calculations, and they are gaining in confidence and competence. Pupils in a Year 3/4 numeracy lesson are quickly involved by the teacher's reference to the work done on the previous day on products and equations, and their interest is maintained through playing a 'Bingo' game. The effective questioning of the teacher was a key factor in pupils developing their mathematical thinking. In a Year 6 lesson, the high degree of pupil participation and brisk pace of learning resulted in them making very good progress and reaching levels of attainment which are well above average for their age. Most teachers have high expectations and plan lessons with activities that build well on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. This, together with the very good use of mathematical language and use of practical examples to confirm and clarify learning points, results in pupils making good gains in their learning and attaining above average standards.
5. The school targets valuable additional support for pupils with special educational needs and this results in their making good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged and they reach levels of attainment which match their abilities. Most pupils make good, and often very good progress, as a result of the high expectations of staff, the provision of a broad curriculum, and the pupils' good behaviour and very good attitudes to learning.
6. Although lesson observations were not possible in each area of the curriculum, it was clear from talking with pupils and looking at their work that the good standards achieved in literacy and numeracy help them with their learning in other areas of the curriculum. A review of the pupils' science work indicates that by the end of both key stages they are working at levels appropriate for their age.

The quality of teaching is good for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Key Stage 1. It is very good for pupils in Key Stage 2. Teaching is significantly enhanced by the good quality support provided by the Learning Support Assistants. Teaching for pupils with a wide variety of needs is good, and this reflects the school's strong commitment to its aim of inclusive education.

7. Across the school, the quality of teaching is very good in 64 per cent of lessons and good in 36 per cent. This quality of teaching represents an improvement since the last inspection and is particularly pleasing as several staff are new to the school, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Teachers' performance reflects the high expectations of the headteacher and the value that senior management and governors place on attracting good quality new staff. Also, a good programme of professional development is in place to support staff, and the regular monitoring of teaching and learning identifies teachers' strengths and areas for development. All these features, together with the very strong team spirit present in the school and the strong commitment of staff, result in good practice.
8. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is at least good and sometimes very good. New staff, particularly in the nursery, have worked hard to develop their practice and present a positive, consistent approach to teaching and learning. This is an important factor in the way children develop very good personal, emotional and social skills, attitudes to learning and behaviour. Appropriate attention has been placed on settling children into school and a good range of activities is provided which maintains the children's interest and supports their learning. A good balance is made between direct adult teaching and activities which

encourage the children's ability to make choices and work independently or with each other. Children are encouraged to develop their literacy skills through the provision of activities presented around a set text, for example, 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. The children's speaking and listening skills are developed well by the teacher, who reads the story and encourages them to talk about the sequence of events. By the end of the session children join in speaking some of the repetitive phrases and use words such as 'caterpillar', 'cocoon' and 'butterfly' correctly, and with confidence. The teacher shows very good subject knowledge and understanding of how young children learn by planning activities such as puzzles, painting, drawing and collage which support the objectives of the lesson and maintain the children's interests throughout. The learning support assistant works well with the teacher and gives valuable support to children. The children's skills are further developed in the reception classes where here, too, teachers and support staff work well to meet the children's needs and provide a safe and stimulating learning environment. In a very good lesson which focussed on developing the children's use of the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting, the teacher was particularly effective in using a range of teaching methods and activities which enabled all to achieve well. The children showed interest and enjoyment in their learning, behaved very well and maintained good levels on concentration. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes have worked hard to change their practice, in line with the new national recommendations, and planning is generally good.

9. Children's strengths are built upon successfully in Key Stage 1, where the school focuses on developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy within a broad and relevant curriculum. The quality of teaching in English is good, with some very good teaching in Year 2 and the quality of teaching in mathematics is very good. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils make very good progress in their writing as a result of the teacher's careful planning and very good teaching which builds systematically on previous work. This results in the pupils becoming clear about how they can make their writing more interesting for the reader by using words such as 'sobbed', 'exclaimed' and 'demanded' instead of 'said'. The teacher has high expectations and provides a very positive learning environment which encourages pupils to do their best and work hard. A scrutiny of the pupils' work indicates how her teaching has brought about improvements in the pupils' work since her appointment at the beginning of the year. She gives good feedback to pupils and indicates how they might improve their work.
10. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils can do. The needs of pupils in mixed age classes are well met through careful planning which teachers undertake across the year groups. This means that regardless of which class pupils are in, they receive a similar curricular experience to others of the same age. Staff have focused on developing the pupils' basic skills in a coherent way and have successfully used the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to meet the needs of pupils. The Literacy Strategy helps to engender an interest in stories and writing for a variety of purposes, and the Numeracy Strategy ensures that pupils get regular practice in using their mental mathematics skills. Additional booster classes have also been provided, which have supported the pupils' learning. Support teachers and assistants work effectively alongside class teachers and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in these areas.
11. In a Year 3/4 literacy session the teacher was very effective in getting pupils to respond to a text. Pupils are very used to empathising with the language presented and look for 'spine tingling moments' when they are encouraged to talk about the effect that a piece of writing has on them. They talk about this confidently and are aware that writing does not have the same effect on all readers but are still interested in hearing the views of others. In a Year 5 numeracy lesson, the teacher was very effective in getting pupils to think and react quickly. The pace of learning was good and all pupils were effectively challenged. Four different activities were provided to match the needs of pupils with differing abilities, so all felt able to succeed at their own level. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour were excellent, as all were fully involved and interested in their work. Consequently, no time was wasted and the quality of learning was very good. Teaching in Year 6 is very good and particularly effective in getting pupils to achieve as high as they can and preparing them for moving to another

school. The teacher instils in the pupils a strong sense of belief that they can do well and equips them with a range of strategies to improve their work and consolidate their learning. Her expectations are high and pupils respond well to this.

12. As well as recognising the need to provide pupils with a good grounding in literacy and numeracy, the school is keen to ensure that pupils experience a broad and rich curriculum which stimulates their interests and encourages a desire for learning. Very good teaching in a Year 3 and 4 science lesson resulted in pupils developing a sound understanding of scientific enquiry and investigation, and knowledge and understanding of a plant's needs for growth. The teacher's very good subject knowledge was used well to plan a lesson that built on the pupils' previous understanding and challenged their scientific thinking. Consequently, all achieved well. Very good teaching in a Year 3 and 4 physical education lesson was also observed, when the teachers' calm and confident manner, together with his good management and control of the pupils, resulted in a session where all made very good progress in developing a sequence of movements. Most reached levels of attainment above those expected for pupils of that age.
13. One of the most significant factors in improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection has been the identification of clear learning objectives, through careful planning, and the sharing of these with the pupils. In the best lessons, this helps pupils to understand the relevance of what they are doing and encourages them to work towards set targets. Consequently, pupils are aware of how they can improve their work and they are able to review their achievements at the end of the lesson. Teachers generally mark the pupils' work well and use the information gained from this to correct any misunderstandings and indicate to pupils how they can improve their work. This has enabled teachers to focus their attention on areas that are likely to make a difference to pupils' levels of attainment. Teachers are encouraging and this results in pupils becoming confident, keen to answer questions and put forward their own points of view. The comments made to pupils help to raise their self-esteem and give them a clear idea about how they can improve.
14. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good in English, mathematics and science, and the results of these assessment are used well to guide lesson planning. There is useful data collected from statutory and optional testing of pupils' attainment, and results are carefully analysed to produce a picture of an individual's strengths and areas for development. This is used as a basis of predicting and target setting and for identifying pupils who, for a variety of reasons, may not be making the expected progress. They are then given appropriate support. Pupils are aware of their own targets, and they are involved in self-reviews of their attainment and progress along with their parents.
15. Additional support for pupils with special educational needs is very good and well managed. The smaller group size afforded by this additional support and the clear identification of learning needs result in these pupils making good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Specialist teaching by the special educational needs co-ordinator to a small group of pupils in Years 3 and 4 was particularly effective in meeting the needs of the pupils. Activities were related to the targets set and the learning environment was such that the pupils felt safe in their learning and willing to 'have a go'. Effective support was given by a voluntary helper who, together with the teacher, made suggestions when pupils felt 'stuck' with their learning, and encouraged them to think. Consequently, pupils were sufficiently challenged whilst also receiving appropriate support. Teachers plan well to meet the needs of all pupils within the lessons, including the higher attaining pupils and pupils from traveller families.
16. Learning support assistants are seen as valued members of the teaching team and make a significant contribution to the work of the school and pupils' progress. They are well trained and supported and this results in a staff that is keen to do its best for pupils. Those members of staff who work with pupils involved in the Access to Learning Project, which is aimed at developing pupils' good attitudes to learning and behaviour, play a significant part in supporting these pupils in their learning. The Integration Assistant plays a key role in

monitoring pupils' performance and behaviour in class and in developing pupils' self-control. Teachers and support staff take pride in the pupils' achievements through the display of their work. It is of a good standard and contributes positively to the raising of pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Communication within the school is good and adults act as good role models to pupils, who emulate their behaviour and attitudes. It is noticeable that the staff like the children who they teach and they often indicate this. They also, when necessary, identify the behaviour that they don't like. Pupils understand this and consequently feel supported, even if they have misbehaved and their behaviour is not approved of. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent.

Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are keen to take part in school activities, and talk about their work enthusiastically.

17. Responses from the parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils indicate that the vast majority of pupils like school. Children settle quickly into the routines of the nursery and reception classes and develop very good attitudes to their learning. Pupils throughout the school are well motivated and respond positively to the teachers and the activities provided. They attend activities out of formal school hours where possible and this helps to develop their skills, as in the netball club, and also enhances their self-esteem and social development. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 spoke enthusiastically about their trip to the theatre and a class display indicates how this activity supported the curriculum well. One Year 2 pupil when asked to talk about what he liked doing best at school could not choose a specific activity as he 'loved all school'. When asked why, he stated that all he wanted to do 'was learn'. Several pupils in Year 6 volunteered their very positive experiences about the school saying they like their teachers and enjoy lessons. They value the opportunities that they are given to learn and also the additional help they receive, for example, when preparing for the National Curriculum tests and assessments.
18. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and a reflection of the expectations of staff and the provision of a broad and interesting curriculum. Most pupils are eager to improve their work and have pride in their achievements. They were keen to identify their own work on display and talked about it positively. The quality of display in the school is very effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and also enhancing the environment. Pupils listen well to each other and to the teachers, and generally settle quickly to tasks when asked to do so. Pupils become increasingly independent as they get older. By the time they leave school, they are clear about what they should learn, work well on their own and have the confidence to ask for help when they need it. They show respect for the school, the people within it, and resources. Pupils indicate that they have a clear understanding of the importance of their own learning and most know how they can improve their work. This is supported by the way teachers explain the next steps to be taken in learning, through the marking of pupils' work and through the setting of targets. The pupils' very good attitudes to school and to their learning are key features in ensuring that they work as hard as they can and make good progress.

The very good provision for pupils' moral and social development contributes to their good behaviour and excellent relationships and personal development. Teachers are particularly effective in managing pupils' behaviour.

19. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and helps to support the working atmosphere evident throughout the school day. Communication between staff and pupils is positive, friendly and supportive. This results in pupils who feel valued and, in turn, value others and their property. Relationships are excellent and staff act as good role models in the way they interact with each other and the pupils. They acknowledge that a significant number of pupils experience disrupted lives outside school and support them when they are able. Staff indicate to pupils that they are aware of their difficulties and strive to encourage them to develop strategies which will support them both inside and outside school. A key feature of successful practice is the way that staff set high standards of personal and social development alongside those for academic excellence. There is a strong commitment to the belief that these elements are not mutually exclusive and that pupils can achieve well.

20. On entering school, pupils quickly become familiar with the school's policies and procedures and respond well to the expectations placed upon them. In the nursery, work is planned to maintain the children's interest and to develop their independence. Consequently, children quickly become involved and display good levels of concentration and application from an early age. Activities such as the 'Café' develop their imaginative and social skills well, for example, when they act out the roles of waitress and customer. Pupils' social and academic skills are further developed throughout the rest of the school when pupils are encouraged to play together and take part in activities such as paired reading in Year 5. In this lesson, pupils choose a partner with whom they read a book of agreed interest and support each other by tackling difficult, unfamiliar words together. The pupils observed showed very positive attitudes to this activity and supported each other well.
21. Moral and social development is also addressed through formal lessons where pupils are asked to respond to issues through, for example, the reading of stories, and through the daily interactions between staff and pupils. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were observed during a lesson when they were encouraged to discuss the effects of teasing and saying unkind things about other children. By the end of the session, they were able to suggest comments which would be positive and help other children, and were able to relate another person's feelings and behaviour to their own. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were observed responding sensitively to issues of poverty when discussing the plight of the main character in a text they were studying. Although initially a minority found this difficult, the careful questioning of the teacher and the responses of the learning support assistant who acted in-role, provided pupils with opportunities to reflect on their own experiences and the experiences of others less fortunate. The good range of extra-curricular activities and visits to places of interest further enhance pupils' social development by encouraging them to interact in a setting other than a formal lesson.
22. The school's expectations regarding good behaviour towards others are clearly outlined by staff and demonstrated by their daily interactions with pupils. Assemblies are used effectively to confirm the school's expectations and to guide pupils in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are also used well to praise pupils either for their academic or personal achievements through the awarding of certificates and recognition of their efforts in front of the staff, pupils and parents. Pupils are proud to wear stickers which have been awarded for their work and effort and talk confidently about how well they have done. This reflects the staff commitment to 'catching pupils when they are good' and recognising their achievements. These formal systems of reward encourage pupils to give of their best.
23. In classrooms, around the school and in the playground, the behaviour of pupils is good. A key feature of the success of the school is the consistent approach adopted by all who work there. Staff are clear about the school's behaviour policy and implement it well. Pupils do not distinguish between teaching and non-teaching staff, who are all seen as having equal status within the school community and relate to them very well. The school had always had a minority of pupils who behaved badly and did not respond to the existing systems that were in place to moderate and improve their behaviour. In the Autumn Term of 1999, over 50 short time exclusions were recorded. Senior managers were particularly anxious to develop a system which would support these pupils successfully, keep them in school and maintain good levels of work and behaviour. With support from the local education authority, they developed the Access to Learning Project, which is a reflection of their desire to put into practice their commitment to inclusive education. They, together with governors, believe that alternatives should be found to excluding pupils from school whilst at the same time maintaining high standards of pupils' work and behaviour. This project is still in its early stages of development but already is bringing about significant improvements. In the Autumn Term 2000, for example, no pupils were excluded from school. The project is focussed on setting clear and achievable targets for identified pupils and working with them and their parents to achieve them, and following this with the pupils' chosen reward. Pupils have the opportunity to meet regularly in 'The Haven' which is a room created to provide a quiet and calming environment focussed on a multi-sensory approach. Pupils feel safe in this room and

respond well to the opportunities to discuss their own issues and reflect on their own actions. The expertise of the staff involved, who display a firm but supportive approach to the pupils, is key to the success of the project. The project is effective because:

- it provides clear support and guidance for those pupils identified with particular problems;
- it supports teachers by giving a clear framework for what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and procedures for action;
- it positively impacts on the learning of all pupils as no time is wasted in lessons dealing with disruptive behaviour.

All those who work in the school demonstrate a very high level of commitment to creating a learning culture where pupils are encouraged to succeed. Procedures for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils are excellent.

24. The school is a very caring community which makes excellent provision overall to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. The personal needs of the pupils are met very well. Pupils in Year 6 spoke very positively to the inspectors about their feelings for the school and the staff and their comments indicate that for many, the school is a special place. They stated that "It is like a big family in the class, no-one laughs at you", "...teachers are there for you - they care". They describe the school as having a good atmosphere, warm and caring. They say that there is always someone to turn to. One child stated that it (the school) was like a second home and they felt safe. Another stated that they felt safer than at home. All staff show a very strong commitment to the pupils in their care. They want to make a difference to the lives of the children by showing them a good range of learning experiences.
25. Teachers and support staff have high expectations and they create a very positive learning culture where pupils are encouraged to do their best. All the staff know the pupils well and consequently are able to appropriately challenge pupils to do better, if they think that they can, and support them when they assess that learning is difficult for them. The needs of pupils are identified early and those with special educational needs are given appropriate support to help them make good progress. The school recognises the need to develop further support for pupils who show particular abilities or talents. These pupils are identified and given appropriately challenging work within school. A small group of higher attaining pupils have been identified to attend additional sessions outside school aimed at challenging them and stimulating their interests.
26. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is carefully tracked with the help of individual targets in which pupils are encouraged to be aware of the impact of their actions, and ways in which they can change. The school supports pupils experiencing difficulties regarding their conduct and tracks their behaviour, offering to work closely with parents to support their children. The school is well aware of the need to ensure that behaviour is monitored and does this well. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions, and know that parents are likely to be involved if behaviour becomes unsatisfactory.
27. At playtime, pupils are well supervised by adults. The midday meal supervisors know the pupils well and are aware of their responsibilities regarding health and safety and child protection. The school has a breakfast club and is aiming to provide more facilities for pupils after school and during some holiday times. This reflects the senior managers' and governors' aim of seeing the school as being central to the local community and providing an extended service to the children and their parents.
28. Staff have worked very hard to provide a building and site which are well maintained and provide a pleasant and safe environment. On entering the school, pupils are encouraged to interact with the displays of pupils' work, books and artefacts. All classrooms are bright, cheerful and stimulating, thus suggesting that learning is fun and something to celebrate. The display of the pupils' work throughout the school indicates that the staff have pride in the pupils' achievements, helps to improve the environment and raises the pupils self-esteem.

The safety of the site has been significantly improved since the last inspection and the buildings and outside play areas are well cared for.

The headteacher and assistant headteachers provide excellent management and leadership, and other key staff and the governing body ably support them. The headteacher, staff and governors are strongly committed to the maintenance of high standards.

29. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and central to this is the provision of high quality teaching to ensure good standards. He has an inspirational style of leadership which is founded in his beliefs and desires that all who work in the school should do the very best that they can for the children. He is particularly effective at team building and motivating staff. An outstanding feature of staffing is the strength of united teamwork that is noticeable on entering the school. It is purposeful and motivated, resulting in improving standards and a determined will to succeed. There is a strong leadership team, and the skills, expertise and experiences of the assistant headteachers complement each other well. They have a clear view of the school's strengths and priorities for development and ably assist the headteacher. Their work is a significant feature in the success of the school. All members of the leadership team are willing to experiment, learn and move on. An example of this approach is the development of the 'Access to Learning Project' mentioned previously. The roles of the management team members and subject co-ordinator are developing well and they share a clear understanding of what should be achieved. The co-ordinators for literacy, numeracy and science are well informed and effective in promoting their subjects and raising standards. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent.
30. The headteacher and assistant headteachers have particular strengths in appointing effective staff and developing and supporting their practice through a structured programme of professional development. They have high expectations and have developed a good teaching and learning policy, which gives appropriate guidance to staff. They set good examples through their own very good teaching, and the feedback they give to teachers after observing their lessons is aimed at identifying and extending good practice. They also have a good understanding of the pupils' needs and how they learn, and this is reflected in the school's practice, which encourages independence and learning through a range of activities. These features are well demonstrated in the school, where an ethos of care and concern together with high expectations are evident. By the time pupils leave school they show a mature attitude and are sensitive to the needs of others. There is a good degree of mutual tolerance and respect.
31. The school's aims of raising standards and improving the quality of education are increasingly reflected in its work. Good systems are used to monitor pupils' progress and to evaluate the quality of teaching. The school's tracking system, which indicates the gains that pupils have made in their learning, highlights that the vast majority of pupils meet the targets set by the school. Overall, the headteacher has developed a culture of continuous improvement in which both staff and pupils try to do their best.
32. The school has successfully addressed the key issues arising from the last inspection and the school has made very good improvement. Governors give full support to the school and they and the headteacher have worked hard to attract new staff, raise standards and involve parents and the community. Governors have very good levels of knowledge and are well informed, which helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments. They undertake their duties diligently and fulfil their roles very well. They have trust in the headteacher and staff. Governors, headteacher and staff continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining the pace of improvement. There is an excellent culture of monitoring and target setting that keeps the school moving forward towards achieving its aims. The school development plan sets a clear agenda for improvement and is the result of a good consultation process. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They have good control over the budget and have spent a considerable amount of time to ensure the best value for their spending. This has resulted in the school providing very good value for money.

The aims of the school are well met and the drive for high academic standards is effectively combined with other aspects of personal development.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards of writing at Key Stage 1.

33. Since the last inspection, the school has made significant improvements in the curriculum, assessment and teaching which has resulted in higher standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers have carefully identified strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' learning and adapted the Key Stage 2 curriculum in order to make it relevant to the pupils' needs. Overall provision has improved, for example, by the development of booster classes and the planning of work across year groups. This has resulted in teachers being able to more easily target appropriate work. During this time, although improvements have also been made at Key Stage 1, these have not yet been reflected to the same level in writing by pupils aged seven. A significant minority of pupils use a restricted range of vocabulary and do not develop their ideas fully. The school has analysed the pupils' work and progress and has adopted strategies to raise standards. Recent staff changes have made this process more difficult but current staff are already making significant differences to improving the pupils' work and achievements. The quality of teaching is at least good and often very good but staff are aware of the need to further improve the quality of pupils' written work by increasing their opportunities to write at length and across most subject areas. Members of the senior management team are also aware of the need to identify and share examples of good teaching practice in order to raise the overall standards of teaching.

Pupils' attendance.

34. Despite vigorous efforts on the part of staff and governors, the attendance rate was well below average in the last full academic year before the inspection. The school works hard to encourage good attendance and most pupils are keen to attend because they enjoy school. However, there is a general apathy towards attendance and punctuality by a small minority of parents. This instils in pupils the acceptance, for example, that they can have the day off school to buy a pair of shoes, stay at home on their birthday or to care for younger siblings. Good links with the community are evident and the messages coming from the school clearly state their expectations, but more work still needs to be done to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to schooling. Members of the leadership team are already endeavouring to find ways in which the school can support parents in encouraging them to get their children regularly to school on time.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve standards of writing at Key Stage 1 by:
 - * ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise their writing across a range of subject areas;
 - * ensuring that pupils have opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing;
 - * ensuring that best teaching practice is shared.

(Paragraphs 3, 33)

- Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - * continuing to monitor rates of absence and supporting those who find it difficult to regularly attend school;
 - * informing parents of the importance of full attendance in raising pupils' attainment.

(Paragraph 34)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

25

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	64	36	0	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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16	248
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	131

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	109

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	40
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	76

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.4
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	20	19	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	17
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	28	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (42)	77 (50)	85 (77)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	16	16
	Girls	15	17	17
	Total	28	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (48)	85 (69)	85 (73)
	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	20	16	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	17	19
	Girls	13	11	11
	Total	29	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (71)	78 (86)	83 (75)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	30	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (79)	83 (75)	89 (82)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	11
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	198
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	4	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	78	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	242

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	17.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	546,538
Total expenditure	548,374
Expenditure per pupil	1,828
Balance brought forward from previous year	74,907
Balance carried forward to next year	73,071

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	264
Number of questionnaires returned	29

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	34	3	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	62	10	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	34	7	0	7
The teaching is good.	55	41	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	31	14	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	31	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	38	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	48	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	48	41	7	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	45	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	21	28	10	17

Other issues raised by parents

There were some differences of opinion amongst parents about the school's new behaviour programme. Most thought that this had brought improvements in behaviour whilst a small minority did not agree with the idea that those displaying poor behaviour should be awarded.

A few parents expressed concern about mixed-age classes and the fact that their children had been taught by supply teachers.