

INSPECTION REPORT

CULMSTOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Culmstock, Cullompton

LEA area: DEVON

Unique reference number: 113071

Headteacher: Mrs H. Radmore

Reporting inspector: Mrs M. Hulme
OFSTED Inspector Number: 3609

Dates of inspection: 30th April – 1st May 2001

Inspection number: 192759

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant & Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Culmstock
Cullompton
DEVON

Postcode: EX15 3JP

Telephone number: 01884 840598

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr K. Finan

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This small rural school takes pupils from the immediate village, other villages nearby, several hamlets and isolated farms. Most parents are supportive of their children and contribute to the life of the school. However, many children have a narrow experience of the wider world and have lacked opportunities to extend their language and develop their curiosity. Before entry most children have attended the local playgroup. There is some variation in attainment on entry, which matches parental expectation and children's experience. Overall, attainment on entry is broadly average but some children lack communication skills because they do not listen carefully or have the vocabulary to respond.

There are now 91 pupils on roll who are taught in four classes by five teachers of whom one is the headteacher and one is part-time. Most pupils are white with a very few children who speak English as an additional language. Eight per cent are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. There are 14 pupils (15 per cent) identified as having special educational needs, which is below the national average. Of these, three pupils have statements of special educational need (3 per cent), which is above the national average. The school has experienced some changes of staff and during the inspection, apart from the headteacher, there was only one other permanent full-time teacher. This was because the teacher of the Year 5 and 6 pupils was on long-term sick leave and a supply teacher was in that class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school that is making good headway in becoming more effective. Following the previous inspection there were serious problems, which affected teaching and learning and standards but despite the difficulties the school has faced the appointment of the new headteacher has been instrumental in returning the school to a secure, caring place for children to learn. The headteacher is providing strong and purposeful leadership resulting in very good improvement since the last inspection and has a determination to improve standards. Teaching is good. Effective teamwork has been established and together the staff are providing an ethos where most children have very good attitudes, are eager to learn and make good efforts. Although pupils are generally attaining satisfactory standards in most subjects too few children reach the higher levels. However, improvement is now happening and the teacher's good efforts indicate that test results are expected to be better this year. The school is now offering very satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Overall, the quality of teaching is good and is having a positive effect on children's learning;
- The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership resulting in good direction for the work of the school;
- Caring, sensitive and thoughtful management is well supported by a hard working staff and governing body;
- The school fosters good behaviour and most children have very good attitudes to their work;
- Parents have very good views of the school and are satisfied with the quality of education it provides

What could be improved

- More work is needed to improve standards, particularly in National Curriculum tests.
- The responsibilities of staff. They are not equitable and some members are overburdened.

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 1997. The issues raised in the last inspection report had not been addressed until the new headteacher took up her post in September 1999 – over two years after publication of the report. The headteacher puts the rebuilding of trust and confidence of the school community as the most significant improvement. All the key issues for development have been tackled and include: improvements to attainment in music, training for appraisal, with all teachers having been appraised. More opportunities are now provided for spiritual and multicultural development. Assembly themes have been agreed and all pupils are

now involved in worship. A marking policy has been written and recently implemented but more work is needed on consistency of approach. All statutory requirements are now met. Other improvements have been tackled to bring about a whole-school approach to development, including the raising of standards, improved pupil behaviour, new guidance for staff, better assessment and record keeping and greater involvement of parents. Staff have worked hard. The school has effected very good improvement in just under two years.

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	C	C	D	D
mathematics	E	D	C	C
science	E	C	E	E

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Children enter the school with a broad range of abilities but this year they have made a good start and in communication, language and literacy and the mathematical area of learning children in the Foundation Stage are achieving the early learning goals, with the more able pupils already working at the early stages of the National Curriculum. By Year 2, children are continuing to make good efforts, particularly in reading and science. In the National Curriculum reading tests for 2000 all except two pupils reached levels appropriate for their age with 29 per cent gaining a higher level. There are no tests for science at this stage but teachers' assessments show that, as in reading, 29 per cent of pupils reached the higher level, which was above the national average. This was particularly good given that the class had a high percentage of children with special educational needs. However, test results for writing and mathematics were low but that was almost a year ago and currently evidence from lessons and the scrutiny of written work shows that children generally are achieving satisfactory standards and progress from Year 1 to Year 2 has been good.

In the year 2000, Year 6 pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests showed an improvement in mathematics but a decline in standards for English and science since the previous year. These results were the same when compared with other schools in similar contexts. There are several reasons that have contributed to lower standards. When the headteacher took up her post she found poor behaviour, a lack of guidance for staff, no schemes of work, low expectations among teachers and lack of leadership. The results for 2000 reflect the limited time she had since September 1999 to remedy the problems. The findings of this inspection show that, despite changes of staff and the number of pupils with special educational needs, the current Year 6 is making steady progress and standards in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving as well as they can and progress is good. The very few who speak English as an additional language progress at the same rate as others in the class because their understanding of English is good. The school accepts that there is still further work to do in improving standards and staff show the determination to achieve it.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Overall, very good. This is very good improvement since the last inspection. Most pupils have positive attitudes to school and make good efforts to do well
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	A great improvement. Pupils' behaviour is mainly good. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with effectively.
Personal development and relationships	The very good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils motivate most children to work hard and do their best.
Attendance	Good. Most pupils are punctual and come willingly to school.

The very good relationships have resulted in the very good attitudes that most pupils have to school and this has formed the foundation for good learning. The good behaviour is a key factor in the sustained work and good efforts.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In the lessons observed, it was good in 70 per cent, very good in one lesson and in the rest was satisfactory. Although teachers received their training late, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and children are taught in a structured and rigorous way. Particular strengths in teaching include improvements to teachers' subject knowledge and lesson planning which has clear objectives that are often shared with children so they know what to do and what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Teachers manage their classes better and have higher expectations of what all children can achieve. The establishment of very good relationships between teachers and pupils has been a motivating force for improving learning. Plenary sessions are used particularly well to reinforce learning, make assessments of how well pupils have achieved or to introduce new work ready for the lesson next day. A few weaknesses were identified in the satisfactory lessons observed but when these were realised, shared with pupils and remedied immediately they did not present problems. There were some minor weaknesses related to inconsistencies in marking and these were the result of the school lacking permanent staff.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curricular opportunities are good. Effective teamwork has resulted in the school's being well prepared for the new Curriculum 2000 and Foundation Stage curriculum
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Well-trained staff provide good support. The work is co-ordinated well and monitored regularly
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Children understand and speak English well enough to progress at the same rate as others.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This has improved and is now good overall. Collective worship promotes spiritual development satisfactorily. Children know the difference between right and wrong and have a growing understanding of the need for social responsibility. Several subjects are used well to make pupils aware of their own culture as well as that of others.
How well the school cares for	The care and welfare of children are now good. The school knows its children

its pupils	well and ensures that the right support and guidance are provided.
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The school values the contributions of parents to their children's learning and is keen that they work in partnership with the school. The range of curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator now identifies children early and provides appropriate support as soon as it is needed. Other support is provided for those children that need it such as, booster classes and additional literacy support. All subjects of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. A child protection policy is now in place and the headteacher has effective procedures for dealing with any problems.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a caring, sensitive and thoughtful leader and she provides very effective leadership for the direction of the school. In this she is well supported by the staff and governing body
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities and use a number of ways to keep themselves informed. They are well organised
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is now a good understanding of the school's performance. The improved use of analysis has helped the staff to understand what works well and why. Governors take a keen interest in standards of attainment.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific grants are used well.

The headteacher is inspiring staff to recognise their strengths and make the best use of them while at the same time feeling secure enough to admit where there are weaknesses and find remedies to overcome them. They know that there is still much to do to realise the whole-school vision of the school they feel it should be, but they are now more aware of what works well and why. However, the responsibilities of staff are not equitable and terms of employment have made it difficult to resolve. The headteacher is overburdened, which is making her leadership and management role harder than it needs to be. In achieving best value governors are aware that the decisions they make need to be seen in the light of improving standards. This is working satisfactorily.

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 like school and make good progress • Behaviour is good and children are helped to become mature and responsible. • Teaching is good • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • Children are expected to work hard and do their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school works closely with parents • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on and consider that they have the right amount of work to do at home. 	No issues were raised at the parent's meeting or in questionnaires that the majority would like to see improved

Inspectors agree with parents' views. They have very good views of the school and are well satisfied with the quality of education it provides.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Overall, the quality of teaching is good and is having a positive effect on children's learning.

1. Overall the quality of teaching is good and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. This is an improvement on the previous inspection and particularly good given the staffing situation, in which temporary and supply teachers have not had very long to work together.
2. The use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has helped teachers to bring more structure and rigour to their lessons. Teachers make good efforts to have displays that remind children of what they have learned and there is a range of children's work that shows they are acquiring the essential skills they need to become literate and numerate. Occasionally a minor weakness was observed when displays were too high on the wall making it difficult for children to read them. In the class of younger children more care is needed in the standard of print presented to children since they are still at the stage where they are learning to write.
3. The teaching of reading is good because teachers have the technical skills to do it well. Apart from reading together from a large class book, some children were reading silently and showed a good understanding of the story when questioned. In the class of younger pupils there is a great love of reading and teachers provide time for them to select books from the school library and take them home. Enthusiasm for reading was evident, particularly when children talked about how they select a book and how they read at home – for example, in bed, in a tent, with granny or 'when I should be walking the dog'.
4. Teachers try to make their lessons interesting and find tasks that will help children to sustain learning, particularly in writing. Writing for a specific purpose has included such activities as instructions for *how to wash your dog*. Teachers make opportunities for writing in other subjects such as design and technology when writing instructions on how to make food items or objects and in history when writing about family life in Victorian times.
5. The particular strengths seen in lessons are key factors in the improvements to teaching. Better subject knowledge is evident in the way that subjects are presented and explained. In a numeracy session for younger children the teacher was keen to show them that mental calculations can be done more efficiently when they have the skill to do addition in any order. Effective use was made of a counting stick and children worked in pairs or threes demonstrating their skill, for example, explaining that $5+5+5+5+2$ adds up to 22. Teachers often share the learning objectives with the children as in a literacy session with Year 3 and 4 pupils that involved them in diary writing. They knew what was to be achieved by the end of the lesson and organised resources quickly, even remembering to read teacher comments from previous work to see what they had done well and where they might need to work harder. Pupils responded well to the teacher's comment of "we've no time to waste" and because they knew the order of the tasks and what was to be achieved made good efforts, particularly with joined writing and presentation. Teachers are managing their classes better, which was particularly evident in the class of Year 5 and 6 pupils. The challenging behaviour of some pupils was not allowed to disrupt others because the teamwork of the teacher and learning support assistant ensured that quick intervention from an adult prevented it escalating and order was quietly restored.

6. The very good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils have been used well to motivate learning. Teachers listen carefully to children, show appreciation of their efforts and provide support to those needing help. This has resulted in a rise in pupils' self-esteem and they are eager to make the good efforts that result in good achievement. They want to please their teachers. In most lessons the use of plenary sessions at the end of lessons were effective. Children took pride in their work and were keen to show what they had achieved. Their interest in the lesson meant that they wanted to know what they were going to do next. There were some minor weaknesses resulting in teachers showing inconsistency of approach to such aspects as marking. This is the result of the recent implementation of some policies and although the headteacher's monitoring has identified what needs remedying there has been insufficient time to achieve it.

The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership resulting in good direction for the work of the school.

7. The headteacher has a clear vision of what the school is about. She wants it to be one of the most successful but not just for academic results. Both she and the governing body are intent on preparing children to be good citizens of the future. They need to be individuals who are capable of relating well to others, whatever their background, showing tolerance and understanding, whatever their values and beliefs, and showing concern for those less fortunate than themselves. With these qualities she feels that they will be able to contribute to their own community and perhaps beyond it.
8. She has a positive view of the governors, who are active, questioning and supportive. She and the governing body recognise the importance of consultation with parents who are sought as partners with the staff and governors in the education of their children. The headteacher's monitoring is probing how effectively subjects are taught and when weakness is identified she sets targets for improvement. As a part-time class teacher she knows that her work needs monitoring too but the tight budget leaves her little leeway to involve the other teachers considerably in this role.
9. The headteacher's concern to improve standards has involved her in providing booster classes for the Year 6 pupils. Last year she had 100 per cent attendance even though they started an hour before school began. This year she has given up valuable administration time as there was no other way to fit it all in. In the past there was a reluctance to identify children for the special educational needs register but the headteacher has had to take on that role and now children are identified early and the appropriate support provided. This early intervention has resulted in some children being removed from the register. Her understanding of children's needs has won the praise of parents. One parent told inspectors that her child showed very challenging behaviour but the staff and other pupils treated her with sympathy and understanding. She recognised that in another school her child might have been excluded.
10. The headteacher's role as a class teacher puts her in a good position to monitor the work of individual children and note progress. The broader picture is not ignored and national trends are noted and compared. In the past the curriculum has not been regularly reviewed but it has been completely reviewed since the head was appointed and there is now an intention to do it regularly. The school's procedures for taking pupils' views into account are informal but very much part of the school ethos.

11. The issues raised in the last inspection report had not been addressed until the headteacher took up her post in September 1999 – over two years after publication of the report. She puts the rebuilding of trust and confidence of the school community as the most significant improvement. However, since that date all the key issues from the last report have been dealt with and considerable other work has been achieved too. This work has resulted in:
- staff perceiving themselves as valued and improvement to their morale;
 - teaching and learning aims identified and written by staff together;
 - planning formats being devised and used;
 - planning for assessment in mathematics and moderation in writing allowing teachers to see progression and be sharper in identifying National Curriculum levels;
 - recording systems introduced and used;
 - target setting procedures introduced for individuals and groups in English and mathematics;
 - improvements in pupils' behaviour through introduction of rules and sanctions and class codes of conduct;
 - the introduction of a staff handbook, which has reduced stress and frustration;
 - a completely new prospectus;
 - the introduction of a home and school agreement;
 - a homework policy agreed and implemented;
 - more parental involvement in raising standards;
 - Foundation Stage needs being identified and addressed;
 - an overview of the whole curriculum achieved and there are schemes of work devised for all subjects;
 - adaptations being made to the building for physically handicapped children to move about freely.
12. Although some procedures are still developing, there have been many successes and the headteacher knows what needs to be done. The parents and governors are supporting her efforts very well.

Caring, sensitive and thoughtful management is well supported by a hard working staff and governing body.

13. The school has experienced many changes since the last inspection. In 1997 there were problems for staff caused by the previous headteacher. The issues became major concerns, affecting all staff and pupils and within a year of that inspection the morale of the staff, the behaviour and attainment of the pupils and the organisation of the curriculum deteriorated. The present headteacher has had to tackle all these problems since taking up her post 18 months ago.
14. There was a range of problems and staff morale was very low. Staff were fragmented and divided. Teachers were deskilled and had received scant training for such initiatives as the National Literacy Strategy. There was a poor level of resources, particularly for literacy, numeracy and the Foundation Stage. There were no common planning procedures and the only form of assessment was statutory National Curriculum tests. Teachers lacked training, support and a culture of assessing attainment against National Curriculum levels. No teacher knew how to manage curricular responsibilities as co-ordinators and no teacher had been appraised for four years. Instances of disruptive behaviour had to be controlled. The class shared by the present headteacher and part-time teacher would have three teachers in a week if the headteacher

were out of school. To ensure consistency for the pupils, the headteacher stopped attending many meetings and training. The budget was forecast as having a deficit of £7,000 and stringent budgeting followed.

15. The headteacher inherited many problems but was determined to overcome them and put the school back on a secure footing. Everyone was prepared to support her and both teachers and governing body spent considerable time discussing, planning, attending training, writing policies, implementing new practice and generally remedying weaknesses. It says much for the school that they have got so far in such a short time as it is just less than two years since they began. Staff say it has only been achieved because the headteacher is a caring and sensitive leader.
16. A detailed staff handbook has been written and is now providing good guidance for staff. Teachers show appreciation of all that the headteacher is doing to support them and make the school a happier place. Teachers are consulted about all decision making. Morale is clearly improving. There is now a good understanding of the school's performance. The improved use of analyses has helped the staff to understand what works well and why and governors take a keen interest in this too.
17. All governors now have a link to a subject of the curriculum in which they have expertise or interest and, in discussion with them prior to inspection, they showed enthusiasm for the curriculum committee and the work they do in supporting the school. They are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have trust in the headteacher and feel she is doing a good job in returning the school to normality and in helping pupils and staff overcome the stress they experienced under the previous headteacher.
18. Governors know how to support the school because they keep themselves well informed through, reports provided by the headteacher, working in the school on an individual basis as volunteers, formal monitoring visits that are reported to full governing body meetings, and involvement in evaluation procedures. They are also providing support through involvement in formulating such documents as school policies, which some of them write through links with curriculum co-ordinators and through discussion and decision making in respect of the school development plan.
19. Priorities for development are arrived at following a school audit. The audit is shared with staff and governors and priorities arise from discussions. The school's educational priorities are to raise standards across the whole curriculum. This year the priorities identified are: early years education, mathematics improvement, and improved teacher knowledge of National Curriculum subjects, particularly levels of attainment. This has resulted in a fragmented staff now being united. The much awaited training has been provided and is leading to effective team working with shared practice.
20. The school has clearly undergone a traumatic time but the teamwork that has emerged is now a strength and staff and governors are partners with the headteacher in overcoming difficulties and enabling development to take place.

The school fosters good behaviour and most children have very good attitudes to their work;

21. Although an acting head had worked hard to restore calm to a troubled school and junior pupils were beginning to feel more secure, the behaviour of the children had deteriorated badly by the

time the headteacher took up her post. She describes the school as having no sense of responsibility about equipment, no sense of order or structured discipline. The first staff-training day was devoted entirely to the need for good behaviour and discipline and together the staff worked out what they needed to do to improve this situation and restore pupils' self esteem. The need for rules and procedures that would result in an orderly school community was agreed and assembly times were used to discuss with the children what this was going to mean to them. Children are involved in drawing up the rules for their own class every year and now have a good understanding that keeping them means everyone can work in harmony within the school community. There are sanctions, which are known and understood by parents and children, including a "Thin Ice" book but no one has been entered in it for two terms. Behaviour is monitored regularly and the headteacher receives feedback from parents, pupils, staff and governors about their perceptions of how effectively these procedures are working. Behaviour management by pupils themselves is encouraged, resulting in the improved attitudes and children wanting to come to school.

22. The system of rules and procedures is expected to help children establish social systems for themselves. There are targets to help them improve their social skills, and pupils' progress is regularly monitored. The effectiveness of personal development is judged by how children relate to and support one another. At lunchtimes and playtime they were seen co-operating well in small groups, showing concern for younger children and, particularly showing tolerance and respect for those with particular physical difficulties, enabling them to join in games.
23. The aims of the school provide a happy, stimulating and safe place for children to learn. The whole school team, including governors, is dedicated to the task of promoting attitudes and values that enable the school community to work and play in harmony. Teachers work hard to promote positive attitudes to learning, establish good work routines and encourage children to share with and care for one another. By the time they leave school they are more mature and responsible.
24. In 80 per cent of the lessons observed pupils' attitudes were good or very good and the rest were satisfactory. The very good relationships established between teachers and pupils are a key factor in their attitudes to school and their work. Children appreciated the efforts made by teachers to make the lessons interesting, responding with good intellectual and creative efforts. For example, the pupils of Years 3 and 4 enjoyed a music lesson based on a chant sounding like a machine. The introduction of discussion and addition of actions resulted in animated discussion, good creative efforts and an exhilarating response to the challenge. Pupils who had been somewhat reluctant to take part at the beginning were now reluctant to stop. This made for a very productive working atmosphere.
25. The school aims to help children develop positive relationships through the example of others and this works well in practice. Teachers listen carefully to what children say; they are interested in them and in any problems they may have. This is a strength that provides a good foundation for pupils' learning. All adults in the school are very good role models and demonstrate the courtesy to pupils that they expect them to show to others. Most children reflect this good example in the way that they relate to one another.

Parents have very good views of the school and are satisfied with the quality of education it provides

26. The school has very good links with parents, who value their involvement with the school. Many make positive contributions to their children's education in school and at home. This is a strength of the school. Parents are provided with a good range of information about the life of the school and particularly about their children's progress.
27. Parental contributions to children's learning are generally good. They have opportunities to help their children with work at home. Some parents who have the time and live near enough to help in school provide good support. Parents are invited to assemblies, especially those when awards are being presented, giving an opportunity for them to share in their children's achievements. The work of the Parent-Teacher Association is much appreciated by the school and their organisation of social and fund raising events contributes well to the range of learning resources used by the children. The assistance of those parents accompanying the school on visits to places of interest or to the residential activity enable children to take a full part in the range of learning opportunities.
28. At the parents' meeting prior to the inspection parents expressed positive views of the school. There was general agreement that parents were happy about standards and appreciated the ways that teachers work sympathetically with children, negotiating their targets and enabling them to identify and correct their own mistakes. Parents are pleased that their children enjoy coming to school. They say that pupils feel secure within the framework of the school rules. Parents welcomed the new rules introduced by the headteacher. They reported that behaviour is good in the school and that their children are told clearly when they are in the wrong, which they approve of. Parents were fully involved when the homework policy was decided. They feel that the amount of homework is about right. Tasks are set for the week and can be fitted in with family commitments. Parents know when to expect homework to be set. Tasks are varied to suit pupils' different needs. Homework is always marked, with helpful comments, and it is followed up in class. Parents are able to write comments on the work to indicate the level of difficulty experienced by the child, though children are confident enough to be able to approach the teacher to ask for help.
29. Parents are happy with the information they receive from the school in the annual report. Last year the amount and depth of information they received were much increased. The reports indicate how the children are getting on, and comment on weaknesses as well as strengths.
30. Some good responses were received to the questionnaires, with no aspect being identified as a concern or where parents expect to see improvements made. They reflect the good responses of the parents' meeting.
31. Parents have very good views of the school and are well satisfied with the quality of education it provides. The school values the contributions of parents to their children's learning and is keen that they work together in partnership.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

More work is needed to improve standards, particularly in National Curriculum tests.

32. The headteacher and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they are concerned that the school has not been as effective as it might have been in the past. The headteacher has expressed concerns that the school does not achieve as well as other similar schools but understands that recent history has had an effect on pupils' attainment.

The baseline assessment is not yet accurate and only gives an indication at present but there are plans to moderate results with other schools and it may be necessary to break away from the model used in the Culm Valley to a scheme used nationally. Last year attainment at Year 2 in writing and mathematics is not as good as it might be and, currently, attainment in writing is a concern across the school. Attainment in science is also being investigated, particularly in the junior classes. Girls are achieving higher standards than boys and this is particularly marked in writing. More work is needed to improve teachers' assessments to ensure that past practice, when pupils' attainment was assessed as being better than tests revealed, does not occur again.

33. Teachers are now making good use of what they learn from analysing test results. At the time of the year 2000 tests 13 per cent of children were absent. When teachers analysed the results of those Year 6 pupils who actually took the tests some interesting facts emerged. Of the 14 pupils taking the tests in English three-quarters of them reached a level appropriate for their age and half of these gained the higher level. In mathematics all but two pupils reached a level typical for their age but only one pupil reached the higher level. They realised that the percentages which reached Level 4 (76 per cent) was similar to the national average in English (75 per cent) and the percentage reaching Level 4 in mathematics (86 per cent) was better than the average (72 per cent) but the percentage of those at the higher levels were not as good as the national average, particularly in mathematics. Although children at Year 2 are doing well in science, the results for Year 6 pupils have fluctuated over the last few years, showing pupils' performance as being well below average for one year and then average for the next year. This has been the pattern for the last four years. Science is seen as an area for investigation and work is needed that will enable more pupils to achieve the higher level in mathematics.
34. However, the number of pupils undertaking these tests was small in comparison with other schools, with one child at Year 6 representing the equivalent of 6.25 per cent, which has a considerable effect on a school percentage measure and teachers have been careful to bear this in mind when analysing their results.
35. In the past only one teacher was really conversant with the National Curriculum attainment levels and the headteacher has worked extensively with staff to raise their awareness and make them familiar with what constitutes a Level 2 or Level 4.
36. There is now a policy for assessment. In mathematics, assessment is identified in planning and assessment activities are in place for every key objective. Record keeping has improved and is a regular activity. Target setting in mathematics for the whole school, together with key objectives and assessment tasks, has brought consistency to the subject and teachers are now more confident and knowledgeable about the subject.
37. The concern about writing has resulted in a system involving what is known as the 'toolkit', which was only introduced in January. Teachers have been involved in training and defined the purpose and how the system will be used in school. Every child has individual targets for improving writing and these are always in front of them where they sit, acting as constant reminders. As they become more proficient and improve their skills the targets change. There are writing targets for groups of children too, such as above average or slower learners. Every term work is assessed and coded. For example, teachers record where they start, their progress by the end of term and targets for a particular group. There is a 'toolkit' in every class and early indications show that it is helping children to improve their writing. A progress book involves every child in his or her own self-assessment. Previously the only assessments used were the yearly National Curriculum tests. The headteacher has introduced some national interim testing that is recommended but at first pupils found it difficult to cope and did not

perform well. However, the school is persevering, starting at Year 3 and then at Year 4, when it will have an indication of how well that group should perform at Year 6. The school intends this to inform target setting for the whole school.

38. The test results of last year reflect the difficulties of having a Year 2 class with many children with special educational needs. Of the 14 children undertaking the tests nine pupils (64 per cent) had been identified as having some form of learning difficulty and four of these were on the special educational needs register. The other five were not on the register but working closely with the headteacher, who is the special educational needs co-ordinator. Given their difficulties their results in reading and science were satisfactory but in writing and mathematics results were well below average. The Year 2 children this year are expected to do better and the findings of this inspection show that standards in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory.
39. Last year the Year 6 pupils had several difficulties. In this small year group 30 per cent were on the special educational needs register, for learning and behavioural problems. Their teacher, with whom they had very good relationships, was absent, they expressed unhappiness to the headteacher and this clearly affected their performance. Booster classes, beginning at 8.00am, were held and despite the 100 per cent attendance it was not enough to make a noticeable change. The booster classes have continued this year for slower learners and are held in school time. Inspection findings show that despite changes of staff and the number of pupils with special educational needs, the current Year 6 is making steady progress and standards in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory for the majority.
40. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving as well as they can and progress is good. The very few who speak English as an additional language progress at the same rate as others in the class because their understanding of English is good.
41. The school accepts that there is still further work to do in improving standards and teachers have the determination to achieve it.

The responsibilities of teachers. They are not equitable and some are overburdened.

42. At the time of inspection the teaching staff comprised the headteacher, one full-time teacher and one part-time teacher, who are permanent, one temporary teacher and one supply teacher. The only permanent full-time class teacher has responsibility for one subject of the curriculum and the co-ordination of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The part-time teacher has the task of co-ordinating one subject. All other responsibilities are the task of the headteacher. She co-ordinates six National Curriculum subjects, religious education and personal and social education, and oversees another two while a teacher is absent. In addition she co-ordinates the work of pupils with special educational needs. At the same time she is teaching a class for three days a week and has all the responsibilities of leadership and management.
43. This is a very extensive task when the workload has had to include dealing with the key issues of the previous inspection and turning around a school with some serious issues. To add to this, several staffing issues emerged, when the headteacher came to her post, that have added considerably to her workload. The need to manage redundancy was only finalised in March 2000. At the same time the illness of the administrator left the headteacher with no support for a year, which was a particular hardship since high quality skills were lost and lack of funds prevented an adequate temporary appointment. The redundant teacher had been the special educational needs co-ordinator so this task was added to the headteacher's responsibilities. Just

one year after taking up her post she lost her part-time colleague on maternity leave for several months but she has now returned to the school. At this point another teacher went on long-term sick leave.

44. The extensive responsibilities of headteacher have made it difficult for her to carry out her work as well as she would wish. The fact that she has succeeded well in all her tasks is commendable and says much for her tenacity, stamina and leadership skills. Governors have trust in the headteacher and feel she is doing a good job in returning the school to normality and in helping pupils and staff overcome the stress they experienced in the past. However, the headteacher is clearly overburdened and a review of staff responsibilities to resolve these difficulties is needed at the earliest opportunity.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. In order to improve pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, and staff need to:

- **do more work, using the ways identified, to improve standards;**
refer to paragraphs 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 39
- **reorganise the responsibilities of all staff to make them more equitable so that all can work to the best of their ability.**
Refer to paragraphs 13, 15, 42, 43, 44

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	70	25	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)	0	91
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	14

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	9	5	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	9	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (86)	64 (71)	86 (64)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (79)	86 (79)	93 (79)
	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	9	7	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	12	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (70)	75 (60)	69 (80)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (80)	81 (70)	88 (90)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

N.B. The tables above are incomplete because although the year group total is more than 10, the total for boys and that for girls is 10 or fewer

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	73
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
	£
Total income	189498
Total expenditure	195669
Expenditure per pupil	2250
Balance brought forward from previous year	1791
Balance carried forward to next year	-4380

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	87
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	39	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	39	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	48	3	0	3
The teaching is good.	68	32	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	35	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	32	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	26	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	58	42	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	35	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	29	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	26	10	0	6