

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LATCHMERE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Kingston upon Thames

Local Education Authority area: Kingston upon Thames

Unique reference number: 102571

Headteacher: Mr P W Jarman

Reporting inspector: Mrs R L Johns  
22745

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Inspection number: 193781

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Latchmere Road Kingston upon Thames Surrey
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Latchmere Junior School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Thomas
Date of previous inspection:	28 <sup>th</sup> April 1997

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Latchmere Junior School educates boys and girls aged between 7 and 11. It is larger than most schools of its type as there are 397 pupils altogether. There are 209 boys and 188 girls on roll with 16 more boys than girls in Year 6. There are 62 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs which is broadly average. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties are the largest group. Two pupils have statements of special educational need which is below average. About six per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language which is above average but only ten are at an early stage of learning English. Around eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is below average. During the last school year, 33 pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and 30 left it at times other than those of the normal leaving or transfer. This is a high rate of mobility. Pupils enter at broadly average levels of attainment.

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

This is a very good school with areas of excellence in the major aspects of its work. The very good leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, key staff and governors result in a clear focus on how to move the school forward. In Year 6, pupils attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science and achieve very well overall because the quality of teaching and learning is very good and the work they are given is demanding. These qualities, combined with the excellent systems to monitor its performance, mean that the school gives very good value for money.

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

- Pupils in Year 6 attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science because of the very high expectations which the school has of them.
- The very good leadership and management ensure that the school has the vision and the systems in place for continued improvement.
- The consistently very good teaching and learning throughout the school enable pupils, whatever their level of ability, to realise their talents fully.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes to work, their very good behaviour and personal development and the quality of the relationships in the school promote a happy environment where learning flourishes.
- The school offers a rich, interesting and challenging curriculum which makes it a vibrant and exciting place to learn.
- The school's excellent assessment procedures contribute significantly to the high standards that pupils achieve and to its effectiveness in planning for school development.

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

- Informal links with parents are not developed enough and are leading to problems of communication in some areas of school life.

*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 April 1997 and, since then, it has made a very good improvement. The key issue for action arising from that inspection has been fully addressed. The school's results have improved steadily and standards in English, mathematics and science, which were above average at the last inspection, are now well above average in Year 6. This was reflected in the pupils' work seen during this inspection and results from an improvement in the quality of teaching from good to very good and more rigorous analysis of assessment information which is then used to set specific targets for pupils. The school's strategies for literacy and numeracy have also been implemented very well and this has contributed to rising standards. Leadership and management have further improved and are now very good. Improvements in other areas include pupils' attitudes, the curriculum and assessment. The school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	A*	A
Mathematics	B	A	A	A
Science	A	A	A	A

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

The table shows that in 2001, standards were well above average nationally in English, mathematics and science and that, compared with similar schools based on the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, they were also well above average. In English, pupils' results were in the top five per cent in the country. Since 1998, the school's results have shown an improving trend in line with the national rate of improvement. The school achieved its targets in 2001 for the number of pupils expected to reach Level 4 in English and mathematics and the proportion of pupils who reached Level 5 was well above average. The school has set suitably challenging targets for the 2002 tests. The findings of the inspection are that pupils attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science with some pupils attaining very high standards in English. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress and achieve good standards compared with their previous attainment. Overall, pupils achieve very well because of the consistently very good teaching and learning as they move through the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and the challenge of new learning. They take a pride in all they do and delight in their successes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is very good and contributes greatly to the school's friendly, caring ethos. Pupils show respect for one another and for adults and welcome visitors very courteously.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils and staff get on very well together and this creates a harmonious learning environment. Pupils act responsibly and have a very good understanding of how their actions affect others. They show plenty of initiative in lessons and when carrying out tasks around the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. However, some parents take their children on holiday during term time and this has a detrimental effect on their learning.

Pupils are proud of their school; they respond very positively to the school's high expectations of them and this has a significant impact on their achievement.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	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.*

Overall, the quality of teaching and of pupils' learning is very good. During the inspection, 46 per cent of the lessons seen were very good or excellent and, of the rest, all but three were good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. There are no weak links in teaching in this school and the standards attained by pupils in the national tests in Year 6 reflect the consistently high quality of teaching as they move through the school. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is also very good and this is why standards are so high. The most outstanding quality of teaching in the school is the challenging expectations of pupils' work and behaviour which result in pupils acquiring new knowledge and skills quickly. It also motivates them to provide considerable effort to their work and to strive for even higher standards. Other strengths are the way in which pupils are managed, the high quality of planning, skilful questioning techniques and insistence on pupils being very precise in their answers and providing evidence to support their views. There are few weaknesses but they include not using teaching assistants efficiently at the beginning of lessons and occasionally not providing enough 'hands on' experience for pupils. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is good and enables them to make good progress in their learning. Excellent assessment of pupils' attainment and progress enables teachers to plan challenging work so that the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and the gifted and talented, can be met.

The strong features of pupils' learning are their knowledge of their own learning, their initiative in problem solving, their willingness to take a risk when challenged and their keenness to learn from mistakes. As a result, they make significant headway in a short time. Weaknesses in learning include occasional lack of concentration by a few pupils and younger pupils being carried away by their enthusiasm and not listening carefully enough to the teacher.

## ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. The school offers a rich variety of learning experiences which capture pupils' enthusiasm. Not only does it have very effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy but it also provides high quality opportunities in art, music, languages and physical education both in lessons and in its outstanding provision of extra-curricular activities. Personal, social and health education gives pupils very good ideas on how to live healthily, express their feelings and value the opinions of others.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall, very good provision. The management of provision is excellent. Pupils' individual education plans are regularly reviewed and revised although parents' contributions are variable. Teaching and learning are good. The in-depth understanding of issues surrounding pupils with special educational needs and the knowledge of their achievements mean that pupils move off the register as soon as their needs have been met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for pupils with English as an additional language. Most of these pupils speak English fluently but a keen awareness of their needs in the classroom and appropriate specialist teaching where required ensure that these pupils make good progress.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall and contributes significantly to the school's caring, friendly and inclusive ethos. Spiritual development is encouraged by times of prayer and reflection and opportunities to appreciate the beauty of art, music and nature. The very good provision for social and moral development, including life skills, is reflected in the sense of community and respect for others in the school. There is an impressive range of opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest and to take part in the creative arts. Provision for cultural development also enables pupils to appreciate the cultural diversity of British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school has very good procedures for child protection, first aid and health and safety. Teachers know the pupils very well and take great care to ensure their welfare. This gives pupils confidence and security that greatly assist their learning. Assessment and procedures for tracking pupils' progress and personal development are excellent and are used very carefully in guiding teachers in their planning. Monitoring of pupils' attendance is a weaker area.

The broad curriculum gives pupils a wealth of opportunities to display their ingenuity, imagination and independent learning. All statutory requirements are met.

### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, key staff and governors provide the school with very good leadership and very clear direction for its continuing development. Staff with subject responsibilities perform their roles very well and play an active part in deciding priorities for future improvement. All staff work as a team and share a vision for leading the school to excellence.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are committed and well informed and are effective in fulfilling their responsibilities and in helping to shape the direction of the school. Their individual skills are used well and committees operate efficiently to make a valuable contribution to the management of the school. They regularly review the progress of the school improvement plan. Governors do not make enough visits to the classroom with an agreed focus to give them a clear overview of the school's provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The analysis of assessment data is very detailed and the information gained is used very successfully to raise standards. There is very rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and of the standards attained by pupils in all areas of the curriculum. Appropriate priorities for improvement are identified and acted upon. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very good overview of the curriculum and its implementation. This is a very self-critical school where all involved are constantly striving to offer the highest quality of education to its pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very efficient use of all its resources to promote pupils' progress and maintains a very good balance between cost and effectiveness. Financial planning is linked very well to priorities determined by the school improvement plan and careful planning has enabled the school to carry out a number of major improvements to buildings which has enhanced the learning environment for all pupils. It has excellent procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of its spending decisions.



The very good leadership and management promote a happy school in which there is a shared commitment to high standards and very good relationships between all adults and pupils. Informal links with parents are not developed enough. The school has excellent systems in place to ensure that it obtains best value when purchasing goods and services.

### **PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The high standards achieved by pupils.</li> <li>• Behaviour is very good to excellent.</li> <li>• The high expectations of their children.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much/too little homework.</li> <li>• The provision for pupils with special educational needs especially pupils with dyslexia.</li> <li>• The way the school works in partnership with them.</li> <li>• The way the school keeps them informed about their child's progress.</li> </ul>

The findings of the inspection confirm the positive views of parents. The team considers that the school provides appropriate amounts of homework for pupils as long as they keep within the time guidelines set by the school. Provision for special educational needs is very good and pupils with dyslexia receive well-targeted support within the financial constraints placed upon the school. There are clearly some shortcomings in the school's partnership with parents and concerning information about pupils' progress as a number of parents are dissatisfied with these aspects. Informal links between parents and senior staff and class teachers are not effective enough although parents receive very good information through formal channels of communication.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Pupils in Year 6 attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science because of the very high expectations which the school has of them.**

1. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment. In Year 6, their attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science. Overall, this represents very good achievement. In the 1997 inspection, standards in the three subjects were above average. The judgements of this inspection are consistent with the school's results in the national tests in 2001 as there was also evidence of very high attainment in English. In the 2001 tests, 64 per cent of pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English, 55 per cent in mathematics and 58 per cent in science. This means that in 2001, pupils attained standards at Level 5 that were among the top five per cent nationally in English and mathematics and were well above the average for similar schools.

2. Pupils' overall performance has risen significantly over the past three years. This is because the teachers' expectations of all pupils, whatever their level of ability, are challenging and very focused. More rigorous assessment procedures and thorough analysis of pupils' performance in national and internal tests have enabled the school to identify weaknesses and address them through carefully planned programmes of work. The successful implementation of the strategies for literacy and numeracy, setting, dynamic and imaginative subject leadership, and the commitment of teachers to seek ways of improving their practice have had a significant impact on the standards attained by all pupils.

3. In Year 6, most pupils are competent and creative users of language. They are also careful and reflective listeners who explore and develop new ideas eagerly. Most have an extensive vocabulary that they use in a considered and balanced way. This was shown in a Year 6 class when pupils were discussing fact and opinion and how an author can manipulate words to influence the reader. Throughout the school, pupils' obvious enthusiasm for books is a strength of their learning. 'I love reading, it's my inspiration!' exclaimed one pupil. In Year 6, many pupils are well aware of how the voice can be used to create suspense and tension. They respond imaginatively to plot, characters and ideas and refer to the text to illustrate their views and predict how the story may develop. However, some pupils read a comfortable rather than a challenging range of books. Pupils of all abilities are adept at locating and using information from books and other sources. An outstanding feature of pupils' work in English is the quality of their writing. Teachers give pupils opportunities to experiment with language and content and to use bold and innovative vocabulary in their written work. As a result, some pupils write with great depth of feeling and originality. One Year 6 pupil wrote 'fog flutters by, gentle as a butterfly, but on hippo's feet'. In a writers' group, Year 6 pupils showed great insight and maturity in their critical analysis of the poem 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' and other work such as 'Welcome to Mouse World!' is invested with a sense of adventure and energy.

4. In mathematics, a strong emphasis on developing mental strategies helps pupils to achieve very good standards in numeracy. Pupils in Year 6 use their mathematical knowledge and understanding very well in a variety of contexts to solve problems. In this way, they develop a range of strategies which they can apply to other challenges. In all sets, lessons are demanding and packed full of learning. In one group, pupils were actively involved when they looked at a wall display representing Cartesian coordinates. Pupils in another group coped well with a quick mathematical cricket game before working through multi step calculations using calculator skills. Other pupils revised multiples and factors before moving on to measurement work with a focus on the conversion of units. In all

lessons, pupils of all abilities showed very good levels of independence and initiative and rose to the different levels of challenge set by the teachers.

5. In science, Year 6 pupils' very good skills, knowledge and understanding result from the rigorous development of investigative science and the way that they are provided with relevant practical work for applying and learning new knowledge. This was illustrated in a very good lesson on reversible and irreversible changes. A range of teaching styles including whole class teaching, use of video, small group discussion and practical investigation was used as pupils learned about the process of combustion and the resulting chemical change. In another Year 6 class, pupils gave a skilful and very articulate presentation which showed very good knowledge of scientific facts about Einstein. Importantly, pupils are beginning to think like scientists: they see a challenge, work out how to test a hypothesis, predict the result and then put their theories to the test. They also record their work very efficiently and this enables them to evaluate their experiments and come to an informed and correct conclusion.

### **The very good leadership and management ensure that the school has the vision and the systems in place for continued improvement.**

6. At the heart of the school's vision is the belief that Latchmere Junior is a 'learning institution' for both staff and pupils by continuous offering of personal development for staff and constant self-evaluation and analysis of pupils' needs. As a result, there is a shared commitment by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, key staff and governors to excellence and the successful management of well-paced change. The staff are full of ideas and confidence. All work as a high performing team whose positive response to change has made a significant contribution to the school's development. In the 1997 inspection, leadership was reported to be strong and effective and providing a clear sense of direction and purpose for the school. It was judged to be a strength of the school. Since that time, there has been no complacency; the school is outward looking and has embraced considerable change. It has also fully addressed the key issue for action from the previous inspection and has an excellent capacity to improve in the future.

7. The headteacher provides very clear direction for the daily work of the school and ensures that appropriate priorities are identified and addressed through effective action. The school's open management structure has resulted in a committed team whose skills complement each other and where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The main strengths in the management of the school are the careful monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards and the rigorous analysis of pupils' performance. The school has had its Investors in People award revalidated and is involved in the Excellence Model, a school self assessment project. There is also very effective delegation of responsibilities to subject leaders who play a key role in bringing about improvement and raising standards through weekly Inset meetings and input into the school improvement plan. The headteacher recognises and builds up the strengths of all teaching and support staff through opportunities such as 'Bubble Time' and gives them the freedom to exercise their talents to the full.

8. This vision is shared by the governors who make a good contribution to shaping the direction of the school through their well organised and efficient committee structure. They attend appropriate training, receive regular reports from the headteacher and subject leaders and monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan at termly review meetings. Through questioning and debate at governors' meetings, and careful scrutiny of national tests results, they fulfil their role as critical friends well. However, they do not visit the school regularly to observe lessons with a clear focus agreed in advance. As a result, although they have a good understanding of what the school does well and of the achievements of pupils, they are less sure about what it needs to do to improve.

9. Budget planning is closely linked to the very good school improvement plan so that educational priorities are supported by careful financial management. Control and management of expenditure are very rigorous and care is taken to ensure that value for money is obtained when purchases are made or building projects undertaken. The headteacher reports to the Latchmere Schools Parents' Association where the money raised has been spent. There are very good procedures for judging how well money has been spent in terms of the effect on standards reached by the pupils to ensure that resources are used very well to promote pupils' learning.

**The consistently very good teaching and learning throughout the school enable pupils, whatever their level of ability, to realise their talents fully.**

10. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good and explains why pupils do so well. During this inspection, 28 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. Teaching was excellent in three lessons, very good in ten, good in twelve and satisfactory in three. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is also very good. These figures show an improvement from the last full inspection when teaching was good overall with 14 per cent of teaching very good or better and three per cent less than satisfactory. There are no weak links in teaching in this school and the very good standards attained by pupils in the national tests in Year 6 reflect teachers' interest and commitment across the school. All share a common purpose and are reflective about what they can do to improve teaching and learning and ensure the best possible deal for the pupils. This year, there is an intensive focus on accelerated learning, thinking skills and emotional intelligence to raise staff's awareness of different styles of learning and to enable all pupils to succeed at their own level.

11. The key to the successful teaching is in the teachers' planning which shows clearly what the lesson will teach specific groups of pupils and how their progress will be measured. In the previous inspection, expectations were not always clear in planning. The learning objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons so that they know at the outset what is expected of them and helps them to develop very good knowledge of their own learning. During the inspection, challenging lessons were observed in all year groups which indicates consistently high expectations of pupils throughout the school. In a Year 6 information and communication technology lesson, when pupils were designing a home page for a multi media document, there was excellent creativity and very good intellectual challenge. Teachers place considerable emphasis on pupils being very specific in their answers, explaining their reasoning and supporting their ideas with reference from the text. In a lesson where they were distinguishing between fact and opinion in biography, this meant that Year 6 pupils had to apply greater effort and think for themselves. Teachers' own very good command of the subject enables them to teach it at the required depth and inspires pupils to perform well. In a numeracy lesson, some Year 6 pupils discussed the use of double brackets with a calculator very maturely with the teacher. Thought-provoking questions are also used very skilfully to draw out pupils' personal responses. 'What does "spectacularly useless" tell us?' a Year 3 teacher asked her class when they were examining how an author uses language to create an effect.

12. A breathless pace and a sense of fun and energy maintained the momentum of an excellent Year 3 lesson about expressing and supporting views in a story and using prefixes. The teacher's dramatic reading of *The Daydreamer* was enlivened by the pupils acting as a chorus, 'Give me a hoot of laughter!' This close involvement fired their imaginations and they made very good predictions about the possible outcomes to the story. Pupils also caught the air of excitement created by the teacher as they played the 'prefix game' and were quickly and accurately able to change their words into antonyms. The pupils were bright eyed and eager throughout the lesson and worked in happy cooperation with the teacher because he had made learning relevant and enjoyable for them.

13. Specialist teaching also enhances the curriculum. A high quality singing and percussion performance in Year 6 was the result of the teacher's expertise and excellent use of ongoing assessment. Pupils in Year 6 are being introduced to weaving in art and in French are developing confidence and learning new structures and vocabulary as a result of confident, knowledgeable and well-prepared teaching.

14. There are few weaknesses in teaching. Teaching assistants are not always used efficiently at the beginning of lessons, some staff do not always have techniques for involving all pupils in discussions so that they become too passive and there is occasionally a lack of 'hands on' experience for some pupils.

15. Underpinning all these features are the very good relationships that exist between teachers, support staff and all pupils based on the school's commitment to assertive discipline. There is a relaxed, happy but purposeful atmosphere in each class where teachers obviously enjoy teaching and pupils delight in learning.

**Pupils' excellent attitudes to work, their very good behaviour and personal development and the quality of relationships in the school promote a happy environment where learning flourishes.**

16. In its social policy, the school recognises that high self-esteem among pupils and staff is necessary for efficient learning to occur and has put strategies in place to achieve it. As a result, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have a very beneficial effect on the quality of learning.

17. Pupils' attitudes to school are a great strength and help to explain why standards are so high. They are eager to gain knowledge and participate enthusiastically in a wide range of activities. Pupils relish a challenge and enjoy lessons where there is a competitive edge as in mental mathematics. In lessons, they are attentive and interested and this helps them to absorb new knowledge. They are confident in asking questions, follow instructions carefully and settle quickly to their tasks showing very good levels of concentration. Pupils work very well independently and in a group, sharing resources and valuing others' work. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils responded very sensitively to the views of others as they discussed experiences of war in *Zlata's Diary*.

18. Pupils meet the high expectations of behaviour and response set by their teachers. During the inspection, their behaviour in class was never less than good and it was excellent in some cases. This confirms parents' views and they say that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively. The school is a well-ordered and caring community and pupils are confident, articulate and proud of their school. In the classroom, around the school and at play, they are considerate and supportive to adults and to each other. Their behaviour in assembly is very good and helps to create an atmosphere appropriate to prayer and reflection. Pupils are well aware of the impact of their actions on others. Resources are handled carefully and pupils show respect for their own and others' property and take care of the school environment.

19. Pupils' personal development is also very good. There is a genuine sense of community where everyone's contribution is valued. Pupils are generally thoughtful and responsible and show a readiness to help others, for example, reading buddies, monitors, mediators and the friendship squad. They are fully involved in the daily routines in the school and show initiative as they carry out various tasks. Pupils participate in the school council, are keen to offer ideas for improvement and report back to their classmates. Their personal development is very well supported by a programme of personal,

social and health education with a focus on Citizenship and Environmental education and by the work of the social skills assistant. Many take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Residential visits, such as the Comenius project, offer very good opportunities for them to live and work together in close quarters and unfamiliar surroundings. Pupils select and support local and national charities, like Barnardos, 'Love in a Box' and the Ockendon Venture. They also have strong links with the community through activities such as musical concerts. As they move through the school, pupils evaluate their work more carefully and develop responsibility for, and independence in, their own learning.

20. Across the school, relationships between pupils themselves and the adults who support them are very good. A strong bond of trust and support has been built up amongst staff and pupils. Teachers create a secure environment, within clear boundaries for work, response and behaviour, in which pupils have the freedom to explore and express their ideas and enjoy their learning. Pupils work and play together in harmony and often very maturely. They show good humour and tolerance and share resources and their own skills willingly and fairly. For example, pupils in a Year 3 numeracy lesson supported others' learning about fractions very well when they played a counter spin game. Such attitudes and relationships ensure that the ethos for learning in the school is strong and positive.

**The school offers a rich, interesting and challenging curriculum which makes it a vibrant and exciting place to learn.**

21. The school provides a well-planned and varied curriculum that inspires pupils to do their best. A suitable amount of time has been allocated to all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and statutory requirements are met. This enables teachers to develop pupils' knowledge and skills progressively and in depth and to place appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics through the successful implementation of the national strategies. Imaginative and colourful displays, such as the interactive display on the Victorians in Year 6 and book cover illustrations of how the animals got their colours, show the broad range of pupils' learning experiences. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning but there is not enough use of sensors. Teachers also effectively develop pupils' problem solving abilities, creativity and social skills. The school ensures that the curriculum provided matches the aptitudes, interest and needs of pupils through ongoing curricular planning, review, adaptation and development. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and the gifted and talented, thrive in this happy but challenging environment.

22. Parents are full of praise for the wide range of activities provided for their children outside lessons. These clubs include football, gardening, Spanish and Bible Whizz Kids Club. Music making is at the heart of the school: the choir and orchestra take part in concerts at local churches and Surbiton Assembly Rooms and at a music festival at Fairfields Hall Croydon and there are links with the London Symphony Orchestra. Drama has a high profile and the millennium production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* remains in the memory of many associated with the school. There are book weeks, poetry weeks, visits by theatre groups, such as the Globe and Salamander theatre groups, visiting experts, Borough citizenship conferences, Bays investigations at the Science Museum, more able writers' group and reading groups. Some Year 6 pupils visit the local branch of a national bookstore to write book reviews. Every year, the school celebrates Citizenship, Arts, Multicultural and Environment at Latchmere week. Another highlight is Opportunities week where workshops are offered to pupils which do not form part of the National Curriculum and includes Environmental day and Sports day. The school also has many awards such as BT Top Sport School, Activemark – Sport England, National Charter Status from the Football Association. It has its own swimming pool, is a

project school for Surrey gymnastics development group and takes part regularly, and successfully, in local sports tournaments.

23. The school is proud of its provision of modern languages which also includes Spanish and German for more able pupils. This links well with the school's strong focus on Global Education. Latchmere Junior is part of the European Education Comenius Project linking it with schools in Greece, Spain, Italy and Denmark as well as unilateral links with schools in France and Germany. Within the overall title of 'Hermes – Our Town', pupils have focused on 'Being Active Citizens' and have studied air pollution caused by traffic in Richmond Park. Some pupils who travelled to Thessaloniki in May 2001 presented their findings at the third international meeting of pupils and teachers from participating schools.

24. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education including Citizenship. Relevant issues like the maintenance of a healthy diet and life style, independence and decision-making are taught in specific lessons and through 'circle time'. The school has won a gold award for Health Promoting Schools and visitors include the police and fire brigade. A social skills assistant works with pupils on life skills such as conflict management, mediation and the friendship squad and the friendship bench has a prominent place in the playground. Latchmere Junior has been chosen as the focus of one of the books *A Caring School* as part of a government initiative to support the heightening of the importance of Citizenship in schools.

**The school's excellent assessment procedures contribute significantly to the high standards that pupils achieve and to its effectiveness in planning for school development.**

25. The school's success owes a great deal to self-critical analysis of its performance. A major reason why standards are so high, and keep rising, lies in the school's excellent assessment procedures. Assessment is regular, rigorous and manageable and ensures that gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are identified and that work is then matched to the needs of individual pupils. All teachers share the main goals of each lesson with pupils and at the end the whole class usually reviews whether they have been achieved. At the pre inspection meeting, parents who had had several children at the school felt that the most important factors in the school's improvement since the previous inspection were the comprehensive picture which is now being compiled of each pupil's achievement and the sharp focus on his or her individual learning needs.

26. From the time pupils enter the school, teachers use internal and standardised tests, such as reading and spelling tests, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority optional testing and Cognitive Ability tests, to plot their progress. The levels achieved, together with the average points score, are added to the school database and block graphs are produced to enable the teachers to track individual pupils. Data are also used to check trends such as value added, differences between boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language across a year group and throughout the school. This careful analysis also enables the school to make informed decisions about adjusting groups and setting individual or group targets. It also highlights what aspects should be a focus for discussion and development and where support would be best directed. For example, boys' writing became a focus for improvement and was addressed by strategies like hot seating, response buddies, mixed gender grouping and accelerated learning and thinking skills. In 2000, no boys attained the higher Level 5 in the national tests but in 2001, 39 per cent achieved that level. However, there is no degree of complacency and boys' writing still remains a whole school priority.

27. Data from national tests are also used extensively to evaluate how well the school is doing compared with other schools nationally and locally and in terms of gender and ethnicity. Pupils'

attainment in the national tests is analysed very thoroughly to see which questions pupils found difficult and this initiates a search to find the reason and, if necessary, to make adjustments to the way the subject is planned and taught. Curriculum targets are also set for the whole school as a result of this analysis.

28. The use of assessment information to inform teachers' planning is excellent. Assessment is underpinned by weekly year group evaluations of lessons and revision of planning to meet the specific needs of individual and groups of pupils. On a day-to-day basis, teachers make very efficient use of lesson plans by annotating them with the impact of the teaching and whether topics need to be revisited in either the short or longer term. Teachers also regularly assess samples of pupils' work at agreed National Curriculum levels which provides a useful profile of a class or group particularly in identifying pupils who are significantly above or below average for their age.

29. The introduction of target setting in English and mathematics is seen by the school as an important factor in raising standards. The targets give pupils tangible goals to achieve, keep motivation high and help them to become independent and responsible learners. Following discussions between teachers and pupils, and sharing the information with parents, targets are agreed half way through the autumn term and are reviewed twice yearly. In this way, they become an integral part of pupils' learning as their importance is constantly reinforced by teachers. Marking is also a strength of the school. Comments are clear, constructive and often challenging and encourage pupils to think deeply about their work and what they can do to improve it.



## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Informal links with parents are not developed enough and are leading to problems of communication in some areas of school life.**

30. The school sees its close partnership with parents not only as their right but also as a crucial element in maximising pupils' learning. At the previous inspection in 1997, the school had an effective partnership with parents and the headteacher and staff were very approachable. The parents' meeting before this inspection and the parents' questionnaires showed a very high level of support for the school and a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of education it provides and the standards achieved. However, some parents expressed the view that the school was not meeting the needs of some pupils with dyslexia, and there were various concerns about the amount of homework and the time spent on project work. Although they greatly respected the need for security for their children and the importance of a brisk start to the school day, some parents considered that the school was run in an overly formal manner, that parents were kept at arms' length, that all teachers were inaccessible and that it was a waste of time expressing their concerns.

31. The school provides very good information for parents through half termly newsletters, curriculum and consultation meetings, questionnaires and records of achievement for children. Parents can also express their views through class representatives, the Latchmere Schools Parents Association and parent governors. However, evidence from the inspection endorses the views of some parents that there are not enough informal opportunities for parents to meet senior staff and teachers at the school and that these perceived barriers are undermining the effectiveness of the school's links with parents.

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

32. In order to continue to improve, the school should:

**Extend the effectiveness of its links with parents by providing greater informal opportunities for parents to meet all teachers at the school.**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	10	12	3	0	0	0
Percentage	11	35	43	11	0	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3 – Year 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	397
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	Y3 – Year 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		62

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	24

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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 2 (Year 6)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	49	50	99

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	44	42	47
	Girls	47	43	48
	Total	91	85	95
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (88)	86 (82)	96 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	41	43	40
	Girls	47	46	48
	Total	88	89	88
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (83)	90 (85)	89 (89)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	5
Indian	11
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	328
Any other minority ethnic group	30

*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: Year 3 – Year 6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	33.2

#### **Education support staff: YR3– Year 6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124.75

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	857964
Total expenditure	795975
Expenditure per pupil	2026
Balance brought forward from previous year	52399
Balance carried forward to next year	61971

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	397
Number of questionnaires returned	83

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	46	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	48	8	2	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	57	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	52	12	9	1
The teaching is good.	41	48	8	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	40	18	7	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	35	10	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	35	4	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	47	14	5	1
The school is well led and managed.	42	49	4	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	40	7	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	28	4	0	1