

# INSPECTION REPORT

## WESSEX JUNIOR SCHOOL

Maidenhead

LEA area: Windsor and Maidenhead

Unique reference number: 109821

Headteacher: Mrs V Preece

Reporting inspector: Rosalind Johns  
22745

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2002

Inspection number: 195300

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Adrians Close Cox Green Maidenhead Berkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Wessex Junior School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Powell
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> June 1997

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>19</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Wessex Junior School educates boys and girls aged between 7 and 11. The school has 248 pupils and it is about the same size as other schools of its type. There are 122 boys and 126 girls on roll with 12 more girls than boys in Year 4. The school's catchment area includes a mixture of privately owned and formerly local authority housing. There are 88 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Pupils with dyslexia are the largest group. Ten pupils have statements of special educational need which is above average. The school also has a Hearing Impaired Unit which currently has four pupils. Seven pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below average. Almost all pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. Ten pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above average, but none is at an early stage of learning English. During the last school year, five pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and four left it at times other than those of the normal leaving or transfer. This is a low rate of mobility. Pupils generally enter the school at average levels of attainment.

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

This is a very good school. The very good leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, key staff and governors ensure that the school is constantly seeking further improvement in all aspects of its work. In Year 6, pupils attain above average standards in English and well above average standards in mathematics and science. Overall, they achieve very well. This is because of the consistently very good quality of teaching throughout the school which enables pupils to reach new heights in their learning. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2001. These qualities, combined with the very good systems to monitor its performance, mean that the school gives very good value for money.

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

- In Year 6, pupils attain above average standards in English and well above average standards in mathematics and science because teachers encourage them to have high expectations of their own performance.
- The very strong leadership of the headteacher, the close teamwork of all staff and the very effective partnership with the governing body ensure that the school has the vision and the systems in place for continued improvement.
- The consistently very good quality of teaching means that pupils, whatever their level of ability, thrive on learning and make significant headway in a short time.
- Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour, personal development and relationships are all very good and are founded upon the high quality of the school's provision for their moral and social development.
- The school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' academic and personal welfare which give them the security and stability to become confident and highly motivated learners.

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

- The use of information and communication technology is not fully supporting teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development which, although satisfactory overall, does not adequately develop their awareness of Britain as a multicultural society.

*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 June 1997. Since then, it has made a very good improvement and has a similar capacity to improve in the future. Key issues for action have been addressed rigorously as standards in information and communication technology are now average and above average and links with parents have been strengthened. There are very good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science and marking is generally constructive and gives pupils clear indications about how they can improve their work. The school's results have improved and, overall, standards are higher in Year 6 than they were at the time of the last inspection because of teachers' increased knowledge and expertise. The very successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies has also contributed to rising standards. Leadership and management are also

much sharper and more effective in analysing and accounting for the school's performance and planning for improvement.

## 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	B	B	A	B
Mathematics	C	C	A	B
Science	C	C	A	B

Key	
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 above average. Since 1998, the school's results have shown an improving trend in line with the national rate of improvement. The school met 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, overall, pupils in Year 6 attain above average standards in English although some attain well above average levels. In mathematics and science, they reach well above average standards. Pupils with hearing impairment, those with special educational needs and the few with English as an additional language make very good progress and achieve very good standards compared with their earlier attainment. More able pupils and those who are gifted and talented attain very high standards although not all are reading a sufficiently wide or challenging range of books.

Overall, pupils achieve very well as they move through the school because they accept teachers' high expectations and enjoy the challenge of sharp, well informed and focused teaching.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes and this is evident in the high levels of enjoyment, confidence and care with which they approach their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in lessons, assemblies, around the school and at play. Their behaviour contributes greatly to a calm, purposeful atmosphere for working. It enables pupils to use their time fully in school and to make great strides in their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils and all staff get on very well together and this creates a happy partnership in learning. Pupils are friendly and considerate to each other and open and welcoming to visitors. They approach new challenges with enthusiasm and show pride in outcomes and a willingness to improve. They enjoy taking responsibility for tasks around the school and carry these out with calm efficiency.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils' attendance is well above the national average. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Pupils arrive punctually and lessons begin on time. There have been no exclusions.

Pupils are encouraged to be active and reflective learners. They contribute willingly to oral sessions, approach tasks with confidence and enjoy succeeding in their work.

### 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, 24 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Of these, two were excellent, seven were very good and 14 were good. There are no weak links in teaching in this school and the standards achieved by pupils in the national tests in Year 6 reflect the consistently high quality of teaching across the school. The quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is very good and this is why standards continue to rise. Key features of successful teaching in the school are the challenging and very focused expectations of pupils' commitment and pace of work. This means that pupils want to work to the limits of their ability and all can succeed at their own level. Teachers' in-depth subject knowledge ensures that topics are taught rigorously and that new learning is introduced in a clear and systematic way. Their searching questions lead pupils on to explain their learning and to think beyond the superficial. Teachers' very positive and sensitive management of pupils also makes them feel relaxed and confident to try out new ideas. This approach, which is tempered with good humour and a sense of enjoyment, encourages learning and builds up pupils' self-confidence very effectively. Very good assessment of pupils' attainment and progress and careful planning ensure that the level of challenge is right for all pupils including those whose hearing is impaired, pupils with special educational needs and the few with English as an additional language. They also receive well-targeted support from teaching assistants in class and group work. Teaching is also very good for more able pupils and the gifted and talented because it extends their thinking and enables them to delve deeply into a subject. The few weaknesses in teaching include over direction of pupils in class so that they are not given the chance to develop their own learning and insufficient attention to the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

Strong features of pupils' learning are their independence and their willingness to take risks without fear of failure and to experiment with ideas. Another strength is their knowledge and awareness of what they have learned when they discuss whether the aims of each lesson have been met. An occasional weakness is when a few older pupils chatter unnecessarily, in spite of the high quality of the teaching, and the teacher has to waste time re-establishing acceptable behaviour.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers pupils a broad and interesting range of experiences to develop their learning while ensuring that literacy and numeracy skills are developed very effectively. The well-planned curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs, visits to places of interest and residential trips. The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all its pupils and the relative needs of different groups are met very well. A policy for racial equality is in place.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs including pupils with hearing impairment. Class teachers, the specialist teachers of the deaf, the coordinator for special educational needs and teaching assistants provide high levels of experience, expertise and support for these pupils in class, groups and individually. They liaise very closely to meet pupils' specific needs.
Provision for pupils with	Most of these pupils speak English fluently and are able to take a full part in

English as an additional language	the life of the school without additional support. Where it is necessary, class teachers and assistants have a keen awareness of the language needs of these pupils and support them very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Pupils' spiritual awareness is developed satisfactorily in assemblies and through the curriculum where they are given time to reflect on issues and find wonder in the world around them. The school's high expectations of pupils help them to develop a strong moral code and they are taught to accept and value differences. Very good social development is promoted through everyday activities and opportunities to show concern for the wider community. Cultural aspects are developed satisfactorily through art, music and literature but there are too few opportunities to learn about the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The caring, inclusive ethos of the school provides a secure environment where effective learning can take place. There are very good procedures for first aid, health and safety and child protection. Teachers know the pupils very well and take great care to ensure their welfare. Pupils' progress and personal development are monitored very carefully to provide very good academic and social support. Assessment information is used very precisely to provide challenging work for all pupils.

The well-organised and varied curriculum enables teachers to develop pupils' problem solving abilities, creativity and social and personal development as well as their knowledge and skills. All statutory requirements are met. The school has a very positive ethos which very effectively combines intellectual rigour with high levels of care and nurture.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff share a vision for pupils to achieve the highest possible standards in all aspects of school life. There is a constant drive to maintain high standards in the classroom and teachers are always seeking ways to improve their practice. All staff are involved in planning for improvement and reviewing the progress made at regular intervals.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and needs of the school and fulfil their responsibilities well. They bring a wide range of professional expertise to the school and are constructively critical while valuing and supporting the efforts of the headteacher. They have taken a keen interest in analysing performance data and evaluating the impact of changes. However, they do not make enough visits to the classroom with an agreed focus to give them a clearer overview of the school's provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The very detailed analysis of assessment and the careful monitoring of teaching and learning pinpoint weaknesses in performance so that appropriate priorities for improvement are identified and acted upon. The school's commitment to self evaluation and to the systematic analysis of every aspect of its provision means that there is no degree of complacency and the school is continually moving forward.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The funds allocated to the school are used very well to provide a high standard of education for the pupils. Financial planning is based appropriately on identified priorities in the school development plan. There are very good procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of spending decisions and ensuring that the school gets good value for money when buying goods



	and services.
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The very good leadership of the headteacher combines a concern for the well being of pupils, a respect for the professionalism of the staff and a drive to achieve standards that are as high as possible. The school development plan is at the heart of the school's work and promotes improvement well but the criteria to judge its success are not always defined clearly enough. The governors keep a close eye on how effective financial decisions have been in raising standards.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' 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 attained by pupils.</li><li>• High expectations of their children.</li><li>• The quality of teaching.</li><li>• Behaviour is good.</li><li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Too much/too little homework.</li><li>• The quality of pupils' reports.</li></ul>

The inspection team confirms the positive views of parents. They consider that the school provides appropriate amounts of homework as long as pupils keep to the guidelines set by the school. Pupils' reports are good: they are clear, informative and evaluative and contain targets for improvement.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**In Year 6, pupils attain above average standards in English and well above average standards in mathematics and science because teachers encourage them to have high expectations of their own performance.**

1. Pupils generally enter the school with average attainment. In Year 6, their attainment is above average in English and well above average in 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 in mathematics and science but are lower in English. This is because pupils' speaking and listening skills, which are above average, are also taken into account in this inspection and the current group of Year 6 pupils have a higher degree of special educational needs. Standards in reading are well above average and in writing are above average although there are several pupils with well above average attainment. In the 2001 national tests, 46 per cent of pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics and 52 per cent in science. This means that, in that year, pupils attained standards at Level 5 that were well above average nationally and, compared with similar schools, were well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science.

2. Pupils' overall performance has improved significantly since 1998. This is because teachers' high expectations of commitment and pace of work are clearly communicated to pupils of all levels of ability who, in turn, understand and accept them. Teachers are also very analytical about their work and are constantly reviewing and modifying teaching methods to find interesting and imaginative ways of improving pupils' learning. More rigorous assessment procedures and careful scrutiny of pupils' work and their performance in national and internal tests enable the school to pinpoint specific weaknesses which are addressed and revisited. There has been a whole school focus on narrowing the gap between reading and writing with training for teachers on how to help pupils to develop structure, style, fluency and imagination in their written work. The successful implementation of the strategies for literacy and numeracy, setting and coordinators who have the vision and expertise to provide teachers with a rich fund of ideas have all had a significant impact on driving standards upwards.

3. In Year 6, most pupils are confident and competent users of language. They are also accurate and responsive listeners who express their ideas clearly and build on others' ideas carefully. In a lesson on Sikhism, older pupils studied the mool mantar and discussed thoughtfully how its message was shared by other world faiths. Pupils enjoy reading and know how to bring the text alive by using their voices expressively to match the mood and character of the story. Some discuss style and technique and refer to the text to explain their views and predict possible outcomes. However, more able pupils read a comfortable rather than challenging range of books. In writing, teachers give pupils freedom to experiment with content and language so that many develop their ideas in bold and imaginative ways. Year 6 pupils filled their writing with vivid images and showed a growing sense of style when they used evocative pictures as a creative stimulus. A pupil wrote of an Arctic scene: 'A paradise that no longer exists, buried in the Arctic snow. One survivor watches the sun sink in memory of others.' A polar bear was described as 'a powerful engine driven by its bulging muscles and fuelled by a diet of forgotten fish and slippery seals'. Other work such as 'A Schoolboy's view of the World Cup' is a rich blend of irony and wit.

4. In mathematics, a strong emphasis on developing a variety of mental strategies enables pupils to achieve very good standards. In a Year 6 set, right from the outset, pupils were fired with enthusiasm and the mental starter enabled them to show a good understanding of the rotation, reflection and translation of two-dimensional shapes and the properties of triangles and circles. In another set, pupils investigated the relationship between the radius, diameter and circumference of a circle. The healthy competitive edge enabled pupils to sharpen their skills and work out the rule for themselves. They use their mathematical knowledge and understanding very well in a range of contexts such as solving word problems involving number, mass and length from which they draw simple conclusions and reasons for them. Pupils also understand how important it is to present calculations, like cancelling fractions to their simplest form and solving problems involving ratio and proportions, in a structured, logical way. Pupils are very confident and are keen to explain their methods. They are not afraid to learn from their own mistakes and to explore with others the different ways of approaching a problem. Pupils use and understand probability, such as the likelihood of becoming Prime Minister, and find and justify probabilities with experimental methods based on equally likely outcomes such as tossing a coin. In both sets, learning objectives are demanding and lessons are packed full of learning.

5. In Year 6, pupils think scientifically, make predictions and communicate ideas using appropriate scientific observations and diagrams. They have a very good understanding of the functions of major organs, are aware of materials that conduct and insulate electricity and of how materials muffle sound and have undertaken work on forces, air resistance, magnetism and electricity. They also acquire very good knowledge and skills because teachers achieve an appropriate balance between giving pupils factual information and providing them with opportunities to apply their knowledge in scientific investigations. Year 6 pupils had a clear understanding of fair testing, variables, control and measurement of results when they conducted an experiment to test how light affected photosynthesis. The teacher enabled them to see these challenges in a scientific way as they discussed the purpose of the experiment, the basis of a fair test, the reasons behind the experiments they were devising and how to measure the results and draw informed conclusions.

6. Pupils with special educational needs including those with hearing impairment, those with English as an additional language, more able pupils and the gifted and talented all achieve very well because the school provides very good support for them and monitors their progress very thoroughly. This is reflected in the high proportion of pupils in these groups attaining Levels 4 and 5. In 2001, a profoundly deaf pupil achieved Level 4 and 5. Some pupils are currently aiming for Level 6 in mathematics.

**The very strong leadership of the headteacher, the close teamwork of all staff and the very effective partnership with the governing body ensure that the school has the vision and the systems in place for continued improvement.**

7. Very good leadership and management are the key features behind this successful school. At the heart of the headteacher's vision for the school is the overriding principle of continuous development in all aspects of its work. This helps to fulfil one of its aims that children will be educated well and will thus be able to move forward to the next stage of their education and take their places ultimately as adults in society. This philosophy is shared by staff and governors and is communicated effectively to pupils and parents. The headteacher's determined but thoughtful leadership ensures a very clear direction for the work and development of the school. Together with the deputy headteacher, she has devoted a good deal of time to minimising the impact of the difficulties of recruiting staff during the past few years. They have created a strong team spirit among staff, offering personal and professional support to colleagues in order to enhance the consistency and continuity of pupils' learning. This energy, vision and teamwork have resulted in an inclusive, happy,

well-ordered school which combines very effective pastoral care with a determination to maintain high standards.

8. Fundamental to the school's drive for improvement is the self-critical analysis of its performance. The unity of purpose and commitment of the staff mean that they show considerable initiative in bringing new ideas to their work and reflect carefully on what they can do to develop better ways of teaching. Coordinators play a pivotal role in monitoring and evaluating their subjects and have a clear view of trends and priorities for development. Good appreciation of the Performance Management process has brought cohesion to the successful management of well-paced change. The headteacher and senior management team have adopted a careful but 'light touch' approach to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching as they recognise and value the expertise of all members of staff and give them the freedom to exercise their talents to the full.

9. Thorough assessment procedures and methodical analysis of data from national and internal tests are also used to build up an objective picture of the school. Rigorous discussion and consideration of this information lead to clear programmes for action and are also used to make informed decisions about adjusting groups and setting individual and group targets. There is also careful scrutiny of these tests to adjust planning precisely when weaknesses are highlighted. This has led to the gap in performance between reading and writing being narrowed and has identified that the teaching of fractions, decimals and percentages is an area where staff would benefit from further training. Teaching and learning of tables are another focus for development. Teachers also regularly assess samples of pupils' work at agreed National Curriculum levels and use this to establish the next steps in pupils' learning. Information is regularly updated and senior staff draw these strands together very well to formulate a coherent plan of action to move the school forward.

10. Governors work closely with the headteacher and senior management team and make a good contribution to shaping the direction of the school. They bring a good range of professional expertise to their role and committees have appropriate terms of reference and carry out their responsibilities well. They have a good knowledge of educational matters through attending appropriate courses and compare pupils' performance nationally, locally and with similar schools. This enables them to have a good awareness of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses and to make an effective contribution to its strategic management. They are fully involved in debating issues around the school development plan and monitoring its progress but are not always as closely involved in the earlier stages of development planning. Governors are willing to challenge the headteacher and staff while supporting and valuing their efforts. Some governors are active within the school, for example, taking assemblies and the special educational needs governor has helped to develop the new policy for special educational needs in line with the new Code of Practice. However, there is no structured programme of visits to enable them to gain a clearer overview of the school's provision.

11. The priorities for improvement that are identified through self-evaluation are supported very efficiently through prudent financial management and administration. Expenditure is carefully linked to priorities in the school development plan which is well related to the aims of the school and gives strategic direction for several years. However, the criteria for gauging the success of various initiatives are not always sharply defined. Governors ensure that they obtain good value for money when making spending decisions and consider a number of options before making financial commitments. Costs are compared with neighbouring and similar schools. Parents' views are canvassed through questionnaires. The curriculum committee also has good procedures for examining the impact of spending on the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by pupils.

**The consistently very good quality of teaching means that pupils, whatever their level of ability, thrive on learning and make significant headway in a short time.**

12. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good and accounts for the very good progress of all pupils. During the inspection, 24 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Of these, teaching was excellent in two, very good in seven and good in 14. These figures show an improvement from the last inspection when teaching was good overall with 20 per cent very good or better and 11 per cent less than satisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is also very good and this is why standards continue to rise. The headteacher has been successful in inspiring and motivating staff and has created a high performing team full of ideas and enthusiasm. The very good standards attained by pupils in Year 6 are firmly rooted in the high quality of teaching in each year group. Even so, there is no complacency; staff are committed to improving their teaching and this was evident in the open yet reflective way in which they received feedback during the inspection.

13. Teaching is successful because it is founded on very specific planning which ensures that there are clear objectives for learning and that the activities for different groups are appropriate and challenging. This means that more able pupils and the gifted and talented flourish because they are able to forge ahead and use their initiative. Less able pupils also do very well because they are enabled to grasp more basic skills and concepts.

14. Many factors contribute to the very good teaching but perhaps the most significant is teachers' challenging and focused expectations which promote pupils' individual potential very well. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson, pupils were working out a rule about the relationship between the radius and diameter of a circle – 'Prove it!' demanded the teacher. In a literacy lesson, a Year 6 teacher encouraged the pupils to think creatively and imaginatively - 'Is this a normal way to describe the sun?' – as they studied and wrote kennings. In a science lesson on photosynthesis, pupils were treated as young scientists: they were given a challenge, worked out how to test a hypothesis, predicted the result and put their theory to the test. Teachers' own very good command of the subject enables them to teach topics rigorously and this breeds confidence in pupils. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, the teacher showed a high degree of flair as she modelled writing a poem and explored literary devices and powerful adjectives so that pupils were adventurous and original in their approach to their own work. In a numeracy lesson, a Year 4 teacher's fluent and well-structured explanations about methods of multiplication gave pupils the confidence to ask questions to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. Teachers also insist on pupils being very precise in their answers, explaining their reasoning and supporting their ideas. When the Year 3 teacher asked her pupils whether they preferred to live in Cox Green now or ten years ago, she stressed 'I want your reasons'. In a Year 5 literacy lesson, the strong focus on the persuasive power of words in advertisements made pupils apply greater effort and think for themselves. Teachers are also very careful to introduce and reinforce specific vocabulary so that pupils use it naturally and quickly learn to master technical language across the curriculum.

15. Underpinning all these very good features are teachers' skilful behaviour management strategies which help pupils to feel relaxed and confident to try out new ideas. Pupils are active and responsive learners and this stems from the value that teachers place on their individual contributions and the interesting and stimulating way in which lessons are presented. There is a sense of urgency in lessons and teachers and pupils move from whole class sessions to the main activity smoothly and without wasting time. In a Year 4 literacy lesson about evaluating advertisements, the teacher's lively, dynamic approach accelerated pupils' learning and made it meaningful and enjoyable as they examined exaggerated claims to attract customers' attention. When pupils in Year 3 were studying word puzzles, the teacher quickly realised that puns were too difficult for them and swiftly moved the lesson on. She injected a note of humour with 'knock knock' jokes so that pupils caught the air of excitement. As a result, pupils remained eager and alert and the lesson retained its pace and vitality.

16. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment, and the few pupils with English as an additional language is also very good and they receive skilled support from teaching assistants in lessons. During the inspection, the coordinator for special educational needs provided good, focused teaching in Year 4 which met pupils' needs well and helped them to compare the roles of religious leaders in different faiths. Similarly, the specialist teacher for pupils with hearing impairment supported her pupils calmly and unobtrusively in a Year 4 lesson about changes that have taken place in the school and in Cox Green. Her intervention was positive and sensitive and reinforced the class teacher's approach very effectively so that both pupils were fully included in the lesson and thoroughly enjoyed their learning.

17. There are not many weaknesses in teaching. Occasionally, pupils are directed too much and lose the opportunity to think for themselves and develop their own independence and initiative. In addition, information and communication technology does not have a high enough profile in class teaching.

**Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour, personal development and relationships are all very good and are founded upon the high quality of the school's provision for their moral and social development.**

18. At the pre inspection meeting, parents were impressed with the way that staff know pupils academically and personally and focus on pupils' individual learning needs as well as helping them to develop into well-rounded personalities. In the pre inspection questionnaire, 98 per cent of parents considered that the school was helping their children to become mature and responsible. In the 1997 inspection, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development were reported to be good so that these aspects have improved. The school's goal is to motivate pupils to 'work hard and play hard' so that, as they move through the school, they develop maturity and a readiness to help others within a strong ethos for learning. High staff morale and a shared vision for the school provide pupils with a message and very good role models of positive attitudes to which they can aspire.

19. One of the school's aims is to help each child develop a sense of self-discipline and self-reliance. This is shown in the high level of enthusiasm and commitment with which pupils approach their work and generally become absorbed in the tasks set for them. They look for, and enjoy, a challenge and rise to the intellectual and creative demands placed upon them by lively, structured and stylish teaching. This was particularly evident when pupils relished the challenge of the mental starter at the beginning of numeracy lessons. Pupils accept failure as a step in the learning process and have the confidence to take risks. When Year 3 pupils were discussing homophones in a literacy session, they were not afraid to make mistakes and were directed sensitively by the teacher to the importance of 'Phoneme Fred'. Their pride in outcomes and willingness to improve are shown in their ability to evaluate and improve their work and persist and practise to refine their skills. In a Year 4 information and communication technology lesson using a floor turtle, pupils evaluated the success of the turns well and explained the commands given equally successfully. They understand the routines and procedures expected of them, settle quickly to group activities and produce good amounts of high quality work. Targets are also a springboard to improved standards and enable pupils to focus on the quality of their learning. They are keenly aware of this responsibility and the attractive way in which targets are presented – 'Our target tree – have we blossomed?' – provides good motivation for pupils.

20. Pupils' very good behaviour is based upon the strong moral framework within the school and staff provide clear and consistent guidelines for pupils' awareness of right and wrong. The positive management of pupils' behaviour provides a very good basis for moral understanding and creates a supportive environment which effectively promotes skills and confidence in the classroom. There is a well-structured reward system which emphasises the values of the school including Good News and

Sharing assemblies, Golden Time, house points, stickers and certificates. Sanctions like 'time out' and loss of privileges are used to give pupils time to think about their situation. Pupils are frequently reminded of the codes of conduct – 'The 3 Rs' and 'Stop, Think, Go!' In an assembly, the headteacher warned pupils that 'to be your best self' needed care and attention as it was like brass and soon became tarnished with neglect.

21. Therefore, pupils behave in a mature and responsible way because that is what is expected of them. During the inspection, behaviour was very good in classrooms, around the school, at playtimes and at lunch. They show consideration and concern for adults and each other and 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. They raised money and designed the adventure playground and took measurements for the gazebo. The school was commended in the Mars Environmental competition.

22. The warm and inclusive ethos of the school enables pupils to develop confidence, experience a sense of achievement and share happily in the successes of others. Staff have an open and friendly manner which encourages the development of pupils' social skills very effectively. Pupils are generally thoughtful, responsible and ready to help others. Year 6 pupils act as monitors and carry out their duties, which assist in the smooth running of the school, with calm efficiency. Their personal development is supported well by a programme of personal, social and health education focusing on relationships, citizenship and lifestyle and the House system. 'Circle time' enables pupils to share experiences and concerns and to relate positively to one another. The school was the first in Berkshire to obtain the Healthy Schools Award at Gold level. Pupils work very well independently and in a group, sharing resources and valuing others' achievement. Year 6 pupils enjoyed acting out the role of waiter and customer as they ordered a meal in French and Year 3 pupils listened appreciatively as groups played simple pieces they had composed on a glockenspiel. Many pupils have developed self-discipline and independence in learning but, occasionally, the work is so directed by the teacher that it does not allow pupils to develop their own initiative. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as choir, drama and sports clubs. Residential trips to the Isle of Wight and Calshot enable pupils to live, work and learn together in unfamiliar surroundings. Pupils are aware of their responsibility for the poor and disadvantaged when they raise money for charities such as Hearing dogs, Denim for Diabetes and Mad Hair Day for Mozambique. The School Council provides a good forum for discussing ideas and, when they were studying aerial photographs, Year 3 pupils reported sensible ideas for change within the school to their representatives.

23. Across the school, relationships between pupils and the adults who support them are very good. This bond of trust and respect means that pupils feel happy, secure and valued. They are keen to ask questions, put forward their own ideas and express their feelings. They respect and value differences and listen to the opinions of others carefully. Pupils in a Year 5 class talked maturely about the impact of World War II on ordinary people and how they coped with rationing. In another Year 5 class, they spoke thoughtfully about symbols of authority based on their knowledge of the chauri in Sikhism. Pupils display good humour, respect and tolerance towards one another and are kind and sensible when difficulties arise. 'Friends are never too shy to say they're sorry' and 'each cares and shows respect' wrote Year 4 pupils. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors and speak to them confidently and courteously.

24. Such attitudes and values ensure that the school is calm and orderly and enables pupils to have a sense of self-worth and personal responsibility.

**The school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' academic and personal welfare which give them the security and stability to become confident and highly motivated learners.**

25. The inclusive and caring ethos of the school creates a sense of identity as a community for which everyone is responsible and where everyone is supported. All members of staff show very high levels of concern for the well being of pupils. The quality of information kept on each pupil is detailed and comprehensive. Members of staff know pupils and their medical and personal needs very well and the school is well supported by health professionals and other agencies.

26. The school identifies and deals very well with any hazards found on site and health and safety checks, risk assessments and inspections are regularly undertaken. The school's health and safety policy is detailed and members of staff take their responsibilities seriously. There are appropriate routines for safety checks, including a range of risk assessments. Members of staff are trained to administer first aid and the school's procedures for the care and treatment of pupils are very good. Very thorough precautions are in place for dealing with emergencies arising from pupils' medical conditions or ailments and for dealing with accidents and injuries. The school's arrangements for child protection are very good, and the policy and procedures follow the guidelines of the local committee for the protection of children. The deputy head teacher is the designated person responsible for child-protection. The school monitors pupils very well, especially if there is any concern about their welfare.

27. The school's ethos, the high quality of teaching and the consistent use of positive behaviour strategies support the very good behaviour seen throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour is monitored consistently well by the school and this results in the absence of oppressive behaviour. The school has very good procedures in place for encouraging good behaviour and is based on 'catch them being good'. The school is very good at monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour and parents and pupils confirm that the pupils feel safe in the school. Although parents expressed concern about incidents of bullying, the school takes such incidents seriously and deals with any issues speedily and sensitively. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is also very good, as the school's attendance statistics show and these robust procedures are very positively influencing learning and progress.

28. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment are very good. The inclusive ethos of the school with its respect for individuals ensure that these pupils take a full part in all school activities and that other pupils are very sensitive to their needs. Pupils with hearing impairment cope very well with working in a hearing community. Other pupils are told 'How to be a good friend to a hearing impaired child'. Through the school's very good provision and carefully organised individual education plans, very effective arrangements are made for the careful review of the progress of pupils with special educational needs. However, the targets in some individual education plans are imprecise and do not focus enough on short term targets with practical examples. Pupils' records are well maintained and organised and provide a clear picture of their progress. Teaching assistants are well prepared and appropriately trained and draw upon a good range of skills and strategies to enhance pupils' learning. The headteacher, the specialist teacher for the deaf and the coordinator for special educational needs meet formally every fortnight to discuss issues. The Hearing Impaired Unit is now incorporated into the main school building and some classrooms are acoustically treated. There is also in service training for staff on audiological and support issues relating to pupils with hearing impairment. The school also has good links with outside agencies.

29. Pupils with English as an additional language are also very well integrated into the school and show confidence in oral and written work. Where this is necessary, teachers have a keen awareness of their language needs. More able pupils and gifted and talented pupils are also given plenty of opportunities to deepen their knowledge through research and independent work. They enjoy using their initiative in problem solving skills in the mathematics extension club and, in the English extension group, pupils are given demanding work that extends their thinking.

30. Very good assessment procedures also provide a clear view of pupils' academic progress and enable the school to make the necessary adjustments to help pupils improve their performance. Data



from internal and national tests are analysed methodically to give the school much useful information. They are used to set clear and appropriate targets for pupils, predict levels to be achieved, find those needing extra support and agree focus groups. Careful analysis of tests is also used to identify specific areas of weakness and to determine a course of action. Individual targets also give pupils tangible goals to achieve and keep motivation high. Data are also used very effectively to evaluate how well the school is doing nationally, locally and compared with similar schools and to monitor the progress of boys and girls. Teachers then use this all this information very well to adjust and develop the next stage of their planning to ensure that the level of challenge is just right for individual pupils.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

#### **The use of information and communication technology is not fully supporting teaching and learning across the curriculum.**

31. The school has made a good response to the key issue for action from the last inspection to raise standards of attainment in information and communication technology. At that time, overall attainment was below national expectations but it is now at least average. In the 1997 inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about teaching but teaching and learning observed during this inspection were good.

32. The school now has a well-equipped computer suite and staff are part way through information and communication technology training. A pilot scheme for monitoring attainment in information and communication technology has been set up throughout the school. A computer club has been started for low achieving boys in Year 5 and a 'Computer for the Shy' club for parents. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology in daily lessons to enable pupils to develop their skills fully. Lesson planning does not take account of how to incorporate this technology into lessons even where the activity lends itself well to using these resources.

#### **Provision for pupils' cultural development which, although satisfactory overall, does not adequately develop their awareness of Britain as a multicultural society.**

33. Overall, the school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural heritage and the traditions of their community. Pupils have enjoyed taking part in the Golden Jubilee celebrations at Bisham Abbey, Shakespeare projects at Norden Farm Arts Centre, and the Ocean World Performance at the Royal Albert Hall. They have also entertained visitors like the Lanternfish Theatre Group, Bitesize Shakespeare and musicians. They learned about the legacy of ancient civilisations when history was brought to life on Greek and Roman days. There is a sound variety of ethnic instruments and pupils have composed Zulu love poems, made African masks and studied Indian, Aboriginal and Egyptian art. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to study religions such as Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism and know about the significance of Pesach and Divali through celebrations. However, there is insufficient emphasis on raising pupils' awareness of Britain as a multicultural society through the curriculum and everyday routines of the school. This includes ensuring that the images presented to pupils through books, posters and displays around the school, role models, choice of music, links with schools and other resources are truly representative of the ethnic and cultural diversity of Britain in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to experience through art, music and literature, the rich variety of cultural influences in society to prepare them for life in an increasingly multicultural environment in Britain.

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

34. In order to continue to improve the quality of education provided by the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) **\*Develop the use of information and communication technology in all areas of the curriculum.** (Paragraphs 31 and 32)
  
- (2) **Raise pupils' awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.** (Paragraph 33)

\* Already identified as an area for improvement in the school's development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	14	1	0	0	0
Percentage	8	29	58	4	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 four percentage points.*

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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	Y3 – Year 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		248
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	Y3 – Year 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		88

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

<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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.0

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0

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	2001	27	27	54

<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	23	22	26
	Girls	27	20	27
	Total	50	42	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93(83)	78(74)	98(85)
	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	20	23	25
	Girls	25	23	27
	Total	45	46	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83(78)	85(76)	96(83)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	236
Any other minority ethnic group	4

*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: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.1
Average class size	31

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y 6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	175

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-01
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	£
Total income	566329
Total expenditure	565454
Expenditure per pupil	2290
Balance brought forward from previous year	35653
Balance carried forward to next year	36528

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	248
Number of questionnaires returned	77

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	48	5	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	45	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	56	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	48	16	1	0
The teaching is good.	52	48	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	44	5	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	32	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	38	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	48	6	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	43	50	3	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	54	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	55	8	3	4