

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **COTTESBROOKE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Acocks Green, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103280

Headteacher: Mr E Clewer

Reporting inspector: Mr G T Storer  
19830

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 195372

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cedars Avenue Acocks Green Birmingham West Midlands
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Telephone number:	0121 706 3178
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Mason
Date of previous inspection:	25 <sup>th</sup> April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</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>14</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>17</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Cottesbrooke Junior School is situated in a socially and culturally diverse residential area in the suburbs of Birmingham. The school serves the local community living in nearby local authority, housing association and private accommodation. With 299 pupils on the school roll, this school is bigger than other primary schools nationally. The school has a number of social and educational problems to overcome. Unemployment in the area is quite high and many families experience hardship. Over a quarter of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is above the national average. Pupils' attainments on entry to Year 3, or at other times during the junior phase, are below average and a considerable number face difficulty in their learning. There are 77 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and six have statements of special educational need. The number on the register is above the national average, but the number of statements is about average for a school of this size. Almost a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language. This is high in comparison to most schools nationally. The school also deals with a high turnover of pupils; during the last school year, 17 per cent entered or left the school at times other than the beginning of Year 3 and end of Year 6.

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

This is an effective school. Pupils make good progress to the age of eleven. Their attainments in mathematics and science are above those in similar schools and, though lower, standards in English are improving. Teaching is consistently good and there are frequent examples of very good teaching. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He receives good support from the deputy headteacher and from the governing body. They have a clear view of the way ahead and together they have improved aspects of leadership and management, such as the ways in which they plan for school improvement. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in mathematics and science are higher than those in similar schools.
- Teaching is consistently good, with one in three lessons observed being very good or excellent.
- Pupils have very good attitudes. They enjoy school, behave very well, work hard and rise to the challenge to do their best.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very successfully; pupils have very good social skills; relationships at all levels are very good, levels of harmony and integration are high and pupils contribute responsibly to school life.
- The headteacher, with the support of senior staff and governors, provides very good leadership that ensures high standards in many aspects of the school's work.

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

- Standards in writing are well below average.
- Attendance is well below the national average; procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are not rigorous enough.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

There have been many significant improvements since the last inspection four years ago. Standards in mathematics and science have improved at a faster rate than in schools nationally. The quality of teaching is higher; there are more frequent examples of good, very good and excellent teaching throughout the school. The headteacher places greater emphasis on checking the quality of teaching and learning. He observes teaching more regularly and involves staff and governors in the monitoring process. As a result, levels of teamwork and commitment are higher than they were. Staff and governors work more closely together to identify areas for school improvement and the training that will be needed. The governing body invests more resources in staff development and this results in improvements in the confidence, competence and morale of teaching and non-teaching staff. Planning is better than it was; teachers use national guidelines to ensure that pupils gain knowledge, understanding and skills more progressively and use assessment information more effectively to identify what pupils of different abilities need to learn next. The school has better resources for information and communication technology that are helping to raise standards in this subject rapidly. As a result of training, staff now ensure that computers are used effectively to improve pupils' learning. The school's buildings have been extended to provide additional classrooms

and other rooms have been re-equipped and refurbished. This, along with an effective internal re-organisation of the use of the accommodation, provides pupils and staff with a better environment for work and with improved facilities, such as the computer suite, library and music room. The school provides more frequent opportunities for parents to be informed about and involved in their children's education, through, for example, the annual 'Inspire Workshops' for all classes. There is, however, work still to be done on some aspects of communications with parents.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	D	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	C	C	A	
Science	C	C	B	A	

At age eleven, the year 2000 national test results were well below the national average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science. Taken together, the 2000 results were in line with the national average and above the average for similar schools. When pupils enter the school, either at the beginning of Year 3 or in many cases later, many are attaining standards that are below average for their age. During their time in the junior school, they make good progress. By the end of Year 6, most attain the standards normally expected of eleven year olds and some exceed national expectations, particularly in mathematics and science. In the current Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are similar to those of the preceding year, although fewer pupils are on course to exceed the nationally expected standard. This does not indicate a lowering of standards. More pupils in the current Year 6 have special educational needs and others started from a lower baseline on entry to the school. Improvements to the teaching and learning of English mean that more pupils are on course to attain the nationally expected standard in speaking and listening and in reading than in the previous year. However, standards in writing remain well below average. This is largely because almost half of the pupils experience difficulties with aspects of their learning or speak English as an additional language and the difficulties that they face affect overall standards in the year group and in particular, standards in English. Nevertheless, pupils of all levels of attainment continue to make good progress. Whilst a considerable number of pupils may not achieve the nationally expected standard in English, arrangements to support the learning of more able pupils mean that some pupils are on course to attain standards that are above national expectations, particularly in mathematics and science.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school; most work hard and make a real effort to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: pupils behave well in lessons and there is no evidence of bullying or of any other unpleasant behaviour in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils treat each other with respect and this contributes to the very pleasant and harmonious atmosphere in and around school.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is improving steadily but remains well below the national average.





## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
24 lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, inspectors observed all teachers and teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons. Two thirds of the teaching was good, very good or excellent. There was good teaching throughout the school and very good and excellent teaching in upper junior classes. The teaching of the basic skills in literacy is satisfactory, though there are weaknesses in the teaching of writing. The teaching of numeracy skills is good. Teachers plan very carefully and use assessment information effectively so that the tasks they set match the needs of pupils of differing age or ability in the class. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and of their capacity to cope with challenging work. As a result, pupils are attentive, join in well and persevere with their work. Teachers get on very well with their pupils. They value and respect the views of all pupils, regardless of their ability, gender or ethnic origins and make sure that all have equal opportunities to join in class activities. This builds pupils' confidence and self-esteem. A consistent strength of teaching is teachers' effective management of their pupils. They ensure that pupils are interested, concentrate well and become increasingly independent. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and of those who speak English as an additional language is effective. There is a good level of teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants. This improves the quality of learning of many pupils in the school. These pupils make good progress and many achieve nationally expected standards in their work in mathematics and science despite the difficulties that they face. Work for higher attaining pupils is set at a sufficiently challenging level to allow them to attain above average standards by the time that they leave the school.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and extends them with a suitable range of educational visits, extra activities and sports.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils with special educational needs receive good support and many go on to overcome their difficulties and to achieve nationally expected standards by the time that they leave the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid gains in confidence and competence and achieve satisfactory standards in all subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good: teachers' planning for lessons and assemblies successfully helps pupils with their personal development. This is particularly evident in the quality of relationships and the high degree of harmony that pervades the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school in which pupils' well-being is a priority. However, the school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: the headteacher and senior staff provide very effective leadership that results in a strong sense of purpose and a good level of teamwork amongst all staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: governors are increasingly effective in overseeing the school's curriculum, financial planning and staffing and in monitoring specific aspects, such as the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound: regular monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that the school's improvement plan is effective in its evaluation of performance and in identifying areas for further development.
The strategic use of resources	Good: the governing body uses the school's budget and other grants effectively, according to principles of best value and in the interests of the pupils. As a result, staffing, accommodation and learning resources are maintained at good levels.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and to achieve their best.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's partnership with parents.</li> <li>• The school's approach to questions and problems.</li> <li>• The information for parents about how children are getting on.</li> <li>• The amount of work children do at home.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

There were 87 questionnaires (29 per cent) returned and 14 parents attended the meeting for parents. Their responses strongly supported the school and the quality of education provided for their children. Nevertheless, a small number of parents expressed concerns. The inspection strongly endorses parents' positive views but, in some instances, finds evidence to support their concerns. There is, however, no indication that these constitute serious weaknesses in the work of the school. The school has improved aspects of its partnership with parents by providing more opportunities for parents to find out at first hand about what the school has to offer its pupils. However, there is scope for other aspects of communication with parents to be improved. The information in pupils' annual progress reports is satisfactory, but could be improved by giving more specific details of what pupils know, understand and can do by setting clearer targets for improvement. The headteacher and governing body take parents' concerns and complaints seriously. Whilst some parents do not like the school's formal approach to dealing with questions and problems, the school's policy has been properly agreed by the governing body and notified to parents. There is some inconsistency in teachers' use of homework. However, most homework relates well to pupils' ongoing work and so adds to the quality of their learning. The range and quality of activities that take place outside of lessons are satisfactory. Staff and voluntary helpers offer a suitable range of sporting, cultural and social activities for pupils that effectively complements aspects of pupils' academic and personal development. This is similar to the provision in other schools of this size.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Standards in mathematics and science are higher than those in similar schools.**

1. The year 2000 national test results for pupils aged eleven were in line with the national average in mathematics and above average in science. In both subjects, the 2000 results were well above the average for similar schools. In the current Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are similar to those of the preceding year, although fewer pupils are on course to exceed the nationally expected standard. This does not indicate a lowering of standards. More pupils in the current Year 6 have special educational needs and others started from a lower baseline on entry to the school.
2. The school has been successful in its introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. It was part of a national pilot project and so benefited from additional time, resources and training opportunities in its drive to raise standards in mathematics. The subject co-ordinator has made very good use of these additional opportunities, with the result that there are now many strong features in the planning, teaching and assessment of work in mathematics (also see Teaching below).
  - Teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of mathematics and of the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy gives added clarity and authority to teaching.
  - Effective teaching methods, such as the regular use of mental agility work, improve pupils' understanding and use of mathematical concepts.
  - Effective teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants results in good use of time and resources, and in lessons with pace and variety that help all pupils succeed and make progress.
  - Teachers' high expectations of pupils' capacity to cope with tasks set at a suitably challenging level improve progress for pupils of all abilities.
  - Teachers use regular and thorough assessment effectively to identify and address strengths and weaknesses in the mathematics curriculum, to track pupils' progress over time, to refine ability groups and to match work to the needs of pupils of differing abilities.
3. Importantly, these features are evident in classes throughout the school and this degree of consistency makes a powerful contribution to the achievement of improved standards.
4. The school's success in science also stems from an effective approach to teaching and learning. Much of its work is based on the systematic teaching of the skills of scientific investigation. Pupils frequently plan and carry out their own simple experiments and investigations. In doing so, they start with simple hypotheses, make observations, record results and explain their findings in the light of their scientific understanding. This way of working gives pupils a secure understanding of scientific concepts and principles. This approach to teaching places considerable intellectual demands on the pupils but is also very enjoyable for them. Consequently, they are enthusiastic about their work in science, yet work with care and attention. This was seen to very good effect in a Year 6 science lesson. Pupils in an average attaining set used their understanding of electrical circuits to construct 'burglar alarms' incorporating a variety of switches and pressure pads. When they encountered difficulties, pupils were very conscientious and methodical about using their understanding to check each step in their work to find out where the breakdown had taken place. This systematic approach improves the quality of their learning and adds to the progress that they make.

**Teaching is consistently good, with one in three lessons observed being very good or excellent.**

5. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all of the lessons inspected. In 66 per cent it was good, very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection. There was good teaching throughout the school and frequent examples of high quality teaching in upper junior classes.
6. Ongoing initiatives relating to the content and organisation of the curriculum and also to the ways in which teachers plan and assess pupils' work are having a very beneficial effect. The teachers have sufficient knowledge to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum well. Whole-school developments in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology have led to greater consistency and a general improvement in the teaching of basic skills. However, teachers do not currently give enough emphasis to the basic skills of writing and this contributes to low standards in this aspect of the English curriculum.
7. All teachers manage pupils very effectively. This is a consistent strength of teaching throughout the school and results in a majority of lessons being well organised. Teachers make very good use of time and resources so that teaching and learning proceed at a brisk pace. This motivates pupils and sustains their interest and so improves their attainment and progress. Teachers have high expectations related to pupils' behaviour and response. They treat all pupils equally, apply the school's discipline policies consistently and, as a result, pupils behave well in class and apply themselves conscientiously to their work. Teachers have similarly high expectations of pupils' capacity to cope with challenging work. They set tasks at an appropriately demanding level and this makes a strong contribution to pupils' attainments throughout the school but is particularly apparent in the upper juniors. Teachers get on really well with their pupils and this, along with the pupils' predominantly constructive attitudes and response, helps to create a very positive atmosphere in which effective learning takes place.
8. Teachers' planning is thorough. They regularly assess and record pupils' attainment and progress. They use these assessments to good effect as the basis for ability groups (sets) and for matching work to the different attainments of pupils in the class. As a result, teachers know exactly what they expect their pupils to learn and how this is to be achieved and there is good provision for pupils of different ability within the group. For example, in a numeracy hour in a Year 6 set, the teacher had carefully planned questions to challenge pupils of differing ability and to extend their understanding of percentages, fractions and degrees of a circle. This allowed the mental agility session to proceed at a good pace and prepared all pupils thoroughly for tasks in the main part of the lesson. There is planning of this quality throughout the school. Teaching effectively meets the needs of all pupils. The school uses additional teachers and classroom assistants very effectively. This ensures that pupils in large or mixed age classes receive the support and individual attention that they need in order to thrive. It also allows class teachers and classroom assistants to focus on, for example, higher attaining pupils, pupils speaking English as an additional language or pupils with special educational needs, and so ensures that all participate fully.
9. The school makes good arrangements for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. The good support that they receive from class teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator and the support assistants ensures their good progress in most aspects of their work. Teachers ensure that these pupils are fully included in all activities and that their efforts and achievements are valued. This improves their self-esteem and adds to the progress that they make. Individual education plans are prepared carefully, after appropriate consultation between teachers, parents and local education authority support staff. Teachers collaborate well with the special educational needs co-ordinator to match targets in individual education plans to the needs of each pupil. They reflect these targets carefully in planning for lessons, especially in literacy and numeracy, and this promotes steady improvement. The co-ordinator monitors the

progress of pupils with special educational needs very effectively. This information is used well as a basis for future planning and for the review meetings that are held in accordance with the special educational needs Code of Practice<sup>1</sup>.

10. Teachers value, respect and include all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or ethnic origin. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 6 that focused on sacred texts, the teacher asked Muslim pupils to point out any errors or references that could be offensive to Muslims when the class discussed the Qur'an. There are similar numbers of boys and girls in higher attaining sets and the work of lower attaining pupils appears in displays. This builds pupils' confidence and self-esteem and ensures that all pupils enjoy equality of opportunity to succeed and make progress.

**Pupils have very good attitudes. They enjoy school, behave very well, work hard and rise to the challenge to do their best.**

11. Pupils respond very well to what the school offers to them because teachers work hard to ensure that pupils' learning is challenging, stimulating and enjoyable. Teachers pitch tasks at a level that makes intellectual demands on all pupils and plan to make pupils think and to move them forward in their learning. There is a good emphasis on practical and investigative methods of learning. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, lower attaining pupils choose the resources that they will need and work independently with a partner, using their scientific understanding to investigate electrical circuits. Pupils really enjoy finding things out for themselves and, in doing so, come to a deeper understanding of underlying ideas and principles.
12. Pupils' positive response results in part from the very good relationships that exist between all members of the school's community and from the high expectations of the staff. Pupils feel secure and this gives them the confidence to take on demanding activities and to rise to the challenge to do their best. A pattern of careful thought and hard work is developed from entry to the school and maintained throughout. Most pupils show an enthusiasm for learning and high self-esteem. For example, pupils in Year 4 showed considerable pride in what they had achieved when they explained elements of their collages that were based on aerial photographs. Pupils are keen to share their ideas with teachers, other adults and each other. They think for themselves, work diligently and persevere to solve problems.
13. The range and quality of learning opportunities that the school offers also contribute to pupils' very positive attitudes and to their enjoyment of learning. Pupils' learning is brought to life by the good range of educational visits, visitors and special events. Opportunities to experience a residential visit to France, fieldwork trips, and educational visits to museums, galleries, places of worship within the community and to a Tudor hall, all bring an additional richness and quality to the school's curriculum, inspire and motivate pupils and help them to enjoy learning. This term, activities outside lessons include computer club, choir, gymnastics, orchestra and cricket. These are just some of the reasons why 95 per cent of parents replying to the questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed that their children like school.

**The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very successfully; pupils have very good social skills; relationships at all levels are very good, levels of harmony and integration are high and pupils contribute responsibly to school life.**

14. Personal, social and health education forms an important part of the curriculum for all pupils. The school does not have a written policy or scheme of work to guide this important area of

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act

pupils learning. Nevertheless, there is a consistent, whole-school approach to pupils' learning underpinned by the school's core aims and values and, as a result, the school is very successful in achieving its aims for the personal development of the pupils. There were several examples during the inspection of teachers making good use of opportunities presented in lessons or at other times to further aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, during a class assembly, there was a heightened sense of spirituality when the teacher acknowledged that pupils offered prayers to different deities and encouraged all to respect this fact. Similarly, a religious education lesson focusing on sacred texts took on a spiritual dimension because of the involvement of Muslim pupils. Pupils' cultural development is promoted successfully by the range and quality of books available to them, many representing non-western cultures and by art projects inspired by the works of artists such as Picasso.

15. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and apply sound moral principles in their dealings with others. Their behaviour is very good. This has a positive effect on the quality of life in school, standards of achievement and the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy each other's company and show high levels of mutual understanding and respect. They work and play together happily in groups that are mixed in terms of age, race and gender. Consequently, levels of harmony and integration are high. In day-to-day interaction with each other and with adults, pupils are courteous, thoughtful and polite. This prepares pupils very effectively for life in a diverse and multi-cultural society.
16. The quality of relationships is very good at all levels throughout the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are friendly and very constructive. Pupils listen well to their teachers and other adults and respond in a positive and confident manner. Teachers respect the individuality and achievements of pupils. As a result, pupils respond very well to positive feedback and discussion activities, as, for example, in religious education lessons and assemblies that are designed to enhance moral and social development.
17. The pupils' personal development is very good. They develop a strong a sense of self-esteem and self-worth, as well as an understanding and respect for other people's feelings. They demonstrate good self-discipline and show respect for the property of others. They gain confidence and social skills from participating in a range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities. They share resources without any fuss. When required, pupils take on responsibility for resources in class and in the daily assemblies, and helping in the dining hall, in the playground and around the school. Members of the School Council and monitors, willingly take on a number of additional responsibilities and carry them out efficiently. Pupils also gain insights into citizenship and contribute well to the life of the community through fund raising, contributing to charities and effective links with the community.

**The headteacher, with the support of senior staff and governors, provides very good leadership that ensures high standards in many aspects of the school's work.**

18. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has a clear view of the way ahead. Roles and responsibilities have been redefined since the last inspection. The head and deputy headteacher are an effective management team. The deputy headteacher is fully involved in the day-to-day management of the school as well as taking the leading role in management tasks such as staff development. The processes of monitoring and evaluating the school's work are becoming more rigorous. They involve the governing body and all staff, and form a very good basis for performance management, staff development and school improvement planning. This collaborative approach to planning for school improvement is an area of significant improvement since the previous inspection that results in improved levels of teamwork and commitment on the part of all of the staff. The governing body has invested more resources in staff training and development; this has increased the confidence, competence and morale of teaching and non-teaching staff and contributed to improvements in teaching and learning.

19. The headteacher has very clear educational aims, values and principles. These lie at the heart of all of the school's work and give rise to a very positive atmosphere and an effective climate for learning, within which pupils feel secure and gain significantly in confidence. The school effectively meets its aim to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils. It provides good support for pupils with special educational needs, for those who speak English as an additional language and for those who are more able. The atmosphere within the school fully reflects its 'Mission Statement', which is a commitment to working together for quality and success in education.
20. Through the work of the full governing body and its committees and the regular involvement of individuals, members of the governing body are conscientious in overseeing the work of the school. Governors are fully involved in all aspects of policy, planning and the monitoring of standards and quality. They bring a wide range of community, business, commercial and professional expertise to the governing body and use their experience very effectively to support the school. For example, their discussions of options for increases in staffing, whilst seeking to reduce a budget deficit, have been searching and protracted. They ensured that competing priorities were considered, that decisions were well founded in principles of best value and that this significant investment of funds was in the best interests of the pupils and the community.
21. Financial systems work well. The finance officer monitors the school budget regularly and provides the headteacher and governors with accurate and up-to-date management information. As a result, specific grants are spent for their designated purpose and the school is firmly on course to eliminate its budget deficit. Budget setting takes full account of the long-term plans of the school and different priorities are carefully matched against the funds available. As a result, the school is very successful in meeting its targets in the school improvement plan. The school provides good value for money.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Standards in writing are well below average.**

22. At age eleven, the year 2000 national test results were well below the national average in English. Improvements to the teaching and learning of English mean that, in the current Year 6, more pupils are on course to attain the nationally expected standard in speaking and listening and in reading than in the previous year. However, standards in writing remain well below average. To some extent, this reflects the national picture, where standards in writing lag some way behind standards in speaking, listening and reading. However, in this school, the trend is more pronounced. This is largely because almost half of the pupils in Year 6 experience difficulties with aspects of their learning or speak English as an additional language and the difficulties that they face affect overall standards in the year group and in particular, standards in writing.
23. Throughout the school, standards in writing are well below average. In the lower junior classes, many pupils are still not comfortable when writing for an extended period of time. The way they hold their pencil, position their hand, arm and body and the way they position their books is not conducive to the development of a fluent style of writing. Lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 still struggle with letter formation, simple spelling and the most basic punctuation. Many have not yet adopted a cursive, joined style of writing. This is well below the standard normally expected of pupils of this age. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' understanding of writing improves. Many pupils can talk about different styles of writing, such as persuasive writing, descriptive writing or reporting, but the majority struggle to reflect this apparent awareness of the purpose of writing or its intended audience in their own writing. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 identify complex sentences and pick out main and subordinate clauses, but their own writing, though more accurate, is usually very basic in style, form and

punctuation. Pupils' skills of drafting, redrafting and improving their work are limited. They can do this to some extent as an exercise, but do not often do so as part of their own independent writing.

24. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy is improving and this reflects in rising standards in pupils' speaking, listening and reading. However, teachers have not had time to develop their understanding and competence in the full range of teaching methods suggested by the National Literacy Strategy. This is because, as a pilot school for the National Numeracy Strategy, teachers came later to their training for improving their teaching of writing and other literary skills and are to some extent behind other schools in this area of development.
25. The school's monitoring of assessments in English has already highlighted the weaknesses in pupils' writing. However, the initial action plan aimed at bringing about improvements did not focus sufficiently on improving the teaching of the basic skills of writing. It did not ensure that all pupils develop and improve these skills systematically from the beginning of their time in the school. Extra curriculum time, intended to address this area of weakness, has at times, been used as an extension of the literacy hour. Pupils have used the time in studying, for example, genres, rather than in focusing on basic skills. As a result, pupils are not making enough progress in learning the small steps that lead to fluent, accurate and independent writing.

**Attendance is well below the national average; procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are not rigorous enough.**

26. In the last complete reporting year, attendance at the school was 93 per cent. This was well below the national average. In the same year the rate of unauthorised absence was above the national average. Attendance was well below average at the time of the previous inspection and, whilst figures have improved, they have not caught up with attendance rates nationally. Figures for the current year show a further slight improvement in overall attendance, but attendance is likely to remain well below average. During the inspection, teachers recorded pupils' attendance and punctuality correctly. Few pupils are late in coming to school.
27. The school takes some steps to monitor and improve pupils' attendance. However, current procedures are unsatisfactory; they are not rigorous enough to bring about the required improvements. The school prospectus is weak on the subject of attendance. Attendance and absence statistics are reported. However, the current prospectus does not present national comparative data, nor does it set out the parents' responsibilities, their entitlements in respect of leave for holidays or the school's expectations and procedures for dealing with attendance issues. Whilst the Home/School Agreement contains some of this information, the school has only received about a 75 per cent return, suggesting that a significant number of parents are either unaware of or unwilling to sign up to the partnership agreement with its implications for pupils' regular and punctual attendance.
28. The school monitors attendance and is aware of some patterns of absence. When the attendance of particular pupils becomes a matter of concern, the school contacts parents on the first day of any new absence. However, this active approach only extends to four families and so does little to improve overall attendance. The special educational needs co-ordinator monitors the attendance of pupils on the register of special educational needs and whole-school monitoring indicates that some Asian pupils miss school as a result of extended family visits to India or Pakistan. However, current monitoring is not searching enough to give a full picture of attendance or absence patterns and the reasons that lie behind them. It does not focus on, for example, boys and girls, pupils of different ethnic origin, pupils with English as an additional language or of any other group, neither does it reveal the possible impact on the education of pupils in these groups. It is, therefore, difficult



for the school to target its efforts effectively and to act on the specific causes of pupils' absence rather than the general symptoms of low attendance.

29. The school tries to take a positive stance by rewarding good attendance. There are prizes awarded on the annual Prize Giving Day at the end of the school year to those pupils with the best attendance records. Other measures to promote attendance include a talk about the importance of regular attendance to parents who come to the induction evening and occasional references to attendance as part of school assemblies. However, current measures are not sufficient to make attendance a high profile issue for all pupils and their families or to make all pupils really want to be in school every single day. As a result, some pupils and their parents have a casual approach to attendance that can reduce pupils' attainment and progress.

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

30. In order to extend the school's current good level of achievements, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Improve the standard of pupils' writing by:
  - i) ensuring that all teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding to teach the basic skills of writing effectively;
  - ii) developing a skills based approach to the teaching of writing;
  - iii) ensuring that teachers use time given to the teaching of writing systematically to introduce, reinforce and develop pupils' basic writing skills.
  
2. Improve the overall attendance rate and the measures that the school take to monitor and raise attendance by:
  - i) giving parents clearer information about the importance of regular attendance and about the school's expectations and their rights and responsibilities in this regard;
  - ii) monitoring attendance more rigorously and taking a stronger position on all incidents of regular or unexplained absence;
  - iii) using the outcomes of monitoring to target any specific causes of poor attendance;
  - iv) raising the profile of attendance in the minds of the pupils so that they take pride in coming to school every day.

## 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	11

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	29	33	33	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	299
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	83
<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	77
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	73
<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	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	52	23	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	32	43	51
	Girls	12	15	22
	Total	44	58	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (61)	77 (69)	97 (81)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	40	50
	Girls	13	14	16
	Total	47	54	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (66)	73 (66)	89 (85)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

## Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	16
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	24
Pakistani	37
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	177
Any other minority ethnic group	43

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

## Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	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)	13.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27

### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	153

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

Financial year	2000 / 01
	£
Total income	667403.00
Total expenditure	650408.00
Expenditure per pupil	2176.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	-31066.00
Balance carried forward to next year	-14071.00

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	299
Number of questionnaires returned	87

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	51	2	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	52	3	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	60	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	54	9	7	1
The teaching is good.	47	43	5	2	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	49	13	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	38	11	11	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	38	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	25	49	15	7	4
The school is well led and managed.	31	47	9	3	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	51	5	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	47	9	6	5

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents at the meeting were concerned that the school's policy discourages parents from making informal visits to teachers in classrooms and routes all communications through the school office or headteacher. They felt that this diminished teachers' partnership with the parents of pupils in their class by closing a simple two-way channel of communication between home and school.