

INSPECTION REPORT

WESCOTT INFANT SCHOOL

Wokingham

Local Education Authority area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 109837

Headteacher: Mrs J Bruce

Reporting inspector: Mrs R L Johns
22745

Dates of inspection: 15th to 16th April 2002

Inspection number: 196697

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wescott Road Wokingham Berkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Wescott Infant School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Wyatt
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wescott Infant School educates boys and girls aged between four and seven years. It is smaller than most schools of its type as there are 140 pupils altogether. There are 75 boys and 65 girls. Of these, 29 children attend full time and 21 attend part time in both Reception classes. The school serves mainly white professional families with a small transient community of various nationalities. There are 13 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs which is well below average and four pupils with statements of special educational need which is broadly in line with the national average. Around 2.3 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is below average. About five per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language which is higher than in most schools but only one is at an early stage of learning English. During the last school year, six pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and ten left it at times other than those of the normal leaving or transfer. This is an average rate of mobility. Pupils generally enter the school at above 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 there is a sharp and constant focus on improving the quality of education provided for the pupils. In Year 2, pupils attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average nationally because the quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils are given suitably demanding work. These qualities, combined with the very good systems to monitor its performance, means that the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils in Year 2 attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science because they respond very positively to the school's high expectations of them.
- The very good leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, key staff and governors mean that the school is outward looking and is always seeking further improvement.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and ensures that pupils learn quickly and apply their new skills effectively.
- The school's excellent overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development greatly enriches their learning and helps them to develop personal responsibility and respect and tolerance towards others.
- The very effective partnership with parents who, in turn, value the school highly and support their children's learning very well.

What could be improved

- The quality of the outside learning environment for children in the Reception classes.

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 and since then, it has made a very good improvement and is very well placed to improve further. Key issues for action from the last inspection have been addressed rigorously as standards in design and technology are now at least satisfactory and pupils are given many opportunities to show initiative in problem solving and enquiry skills. Subject coordinators have far clearer roles in bringing about improvement and raising standards and governors have much more effective ways of supporting and challenging the school. The school's results have improved and standards in English and mathematics, which were above average at the previous inspection, are now well above average and in science have risen from average to well above average. This is because of the consistently good quality of the teaching, more rigorous analysis of assessment information to track pupils' progress and ensure precision in planning, and the effectiveness of the single age groups in classes. The school's strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented well and this has contributed to rising standards. Leadership and management have also been

successful in driving the school forward and in making very good progress since the last inspection in areas such as attendance and provision for pupils' all round development.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	C	C	A	A
writing	B	C	A	A
mathematics	B	B	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 reading, writing and mathematics and that compared with similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, they were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The assessments made by teachers in science at the end of Year 2 in 2001 showed that standards were above average. The findings of the inspection show that the high standards achieved in the most recent national tests are reflected in pupils' work through the year. In Year 2, standards in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, and science are well above average. Standards in reading and writing declined in 1999 and 2000 and rose steeply in 2001 whereas results in mathematics have risen steadily. Improved standards in English followed an intensive focus on the teaching of writing.

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily in physical development and well in other areas and are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Some children are already working comfortably within the National Curriculum Level 1 especially in reading, writing and number. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language enables them to make good progress and attain good standards compared with their earlier attainment. Overall, pupils, including the more able and the gifted and talented, achieve well because they know that they are in school to learn and respond positively to structured, energetic and focused teaching.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are secure and confident learners. They understand the school's high expectations of them and tackle fresh ideas and challenges with enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. In class, around the school and at play, pupils' behaviour is very good and contributes greatly to the purposeful atmosphere for learning. However, there is an underlying restlessness in assemblies which detracts from the high quality of pupils' behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The strong bond of trust and support between pupils and all adults creates a friendly, family ethos where achievement flourishes. Pupils enjoy carrying out tasks around the school and do so quietly and efficiently. They work in happy cooperation with their teachers and delight in finding answers when given independence in learning.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the national average. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. Pupils generally arrive punctually and lessons begin promptly. There have been no exclusions.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and this is shown in the way they persevere and practise to improve their skills and enjoy the stimulus of new learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. During the inspection, 17 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. Two were very good, 12 were good and two were satisfactory. Staff are critical and reflective about their teaching and are constantly seeking improved ways of working to get the best deal for their pupils. They have high expectations of pupils' response and commitment and provide them with a varied and interesting range of learning experiences so that pupils are fired with enthusiasm and want to work to the limits of their ability. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and are developed very effectively through pupils' work in other subjects. Planning is thorough and, in most lessons, teachers achieve a successful balance between imparting information, skilful questioning, lively discussion and purposeful practical activities. They regularly challenge pupils' thinking and give them a good degree of independence through research and investigation. In Reception, teachers organise the restricted space available to children well. Teaching assistants support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, very effectively. The few weaknesses in teaching include not making the most effective use of teaching assistants' time at the beginning of lessons and not giving a high enough profile to the use of information and communication technology in the classroom.

The warm, supportive relationships in the school enable teachers to encourage pupils to think for themselves and not to worry about failure when trying out new experiences and ideas. This means that a strength of pupils' learning is their willingness to profit from their mistakes. Another strong feature is their knowledge and awareness of what they have learned when they discuss whether the aims of each lesson have been met.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers pupils in Years 1 and 2 a rich variety of learning experiences whilst ensuring that literacy and numeracy skills are well developed. This is achieved through a thematic programme of work with a strong focus on the creative arts. However, provision for the Foundation Stage is only satisfactory as there is no designated play area with direct access from the Reception classrooms to enable children to achieve higher standards in physical control, mobility and awareness of space. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of other activities such as clubs, concerts, workshops and visits to places of interest.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. The management of provision is very good and teaching and learning are good. Pupils are identified early and teachers provide work that is well matched to their needs. Individual education plans are very well organised and regularly reviewed. They contain targets that are precise and achievable so that pupils can experience success. The needs of the pupils with statements of special educational needs are well met. Annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Most of these pupils speak English fluently and are able to take a full part in the life of the school without additional support. Class teachers and assistants have a keen awareness of the specific language needs of some pupils and support them well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral,	Excellent overall. This clearly reflects the school's aims and values. Pupils are given a wealth of experiences to develop their spiritual and personal responses

social and cultural development	through times of stillness, prayer and reflection. Across the curriculum, they gain a profound sense of the awe, wonder and mystery of the natural world. Provision for moral and social development is based on a clear code of conduct, mutual respect and opportunities to contribute to the life of the school community. The school enables pupils to appreciate their own heritage and to value cultural diversity through the high profile given to the creative arts.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school places a high priority on providing a safe and happy environment where staff know and care for pupils well. There are good procedures for first aid, child protection and health and safety. Pupils' progress, behaviour and personal development are monitored carefully and this enables teachers to provide good support for pupils' academic and social development. Good assessment procedures are used consistently by teachers and the information gained is used well to guide them in their planning.

The carefully structured curriculum is enriched by the high status given to the performing arts and to the music, art and literature of a wide range of cultures. The lack of an appropriate outdoor learning environment for children in the Reception classes limits aspects of their physical and social development. Its caring, inclusive ethos results in a happy school where pupils are expected to support one another and learn together.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The excellent leadership of the headteacher inspires staff and pupils to strive for the highest standards in their work. Her vision is shared by staff and governors which ensures that there is a constant drive towards even further improvement. All work together as a highly effective and committed team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are very well informed and play an important role in shaping the future direction of the school. They bring a very good range of professional expertise to their work and continue to seek more effective ways of supporting and challenging the school. They are very active in the school and have appropriate procedures for their visits. Their role in monitoring the progress of the school development plan is a weaker element but is being addressed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The very detailed analysis of assessment data and the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning identify priorities for improvement, lead to successful strategies being put in place and contribute significantly to rising standards. The school's commitment to self-evaluation and the systematic analysis of every aspect of its provision means that there is no complacency about its performance and it is constantly moving forward.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very efficient use of all its resources to promote pupils' learning and there are close links between the budget and the priorities identified in the school development plan. Governors consider a number of options before making financial commitments and monitor how effective financial decisions have been in raising standards. The carry forward in the budget is well below recommended levels but a close eye is being kept on this.

The school's very good leadership and management mean that it has the vision, commitment and systems in place for the successful management of well-paced change. The school development plan only covers one year and does not have an overview of the long-term development of the school. Very efficient financial control and administration ensure that the school gets good value when making spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The high standards that pupils achieve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about their child's progress.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils' behaviour.• The good quality of teaching.• High expectations of pupils set by the school.• The leadership and management of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside lessons.
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The inspection team endorses the positive views of parents. It considers that the school provides very good information about pupils' progress including three consultation evenings, twice yearly reports, curriculum newsletters, workshops and an open door policy. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils in Year 2 attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science because they respond very positively to the school's high expectations of them.

1. Pupils generally enter the school with above average attainment. In Year 2, their attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science. Overall, this represents good achievement. In the 1997 inspection, standards in English and mathematics were above average and were average in science. The judgements of this inspection are consistent with the school's results in the national tests and teachers' assessments in 2001 which were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in science. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. In these tests, 51 per cent of pupils reached the higher Level 3 in reading, 19 per cent in writing and 40 per cent in mathematics and science which was also well above average nationally. Baseline assessment procedures showed that this group of pupils entered the school at levels which were below the average for local schools and were above it when they left.

2. Pupils' overall performance has risen significantly since the previous inspection. This is because they show interest and pride in their work, approach new challenges with enthusiasm and uphold teachers' high expectations of work, response and behaviour. As a result, they make great strides in their learning. In addition, thorough analysis of pupils' performance in national and internal tests and more rigorous assessment practices have enabled the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance and to take appropriate action through carefully planned programmes of work. The successful implementation of the strategies for literacy and numeracy, which have been modified to meet the needs of the school, the introduction of single aged classes, the more active and better defined role of subject coordinators have also all played an important part in raising the standards attained by pupils.

3. In Year 2, most pupils are developing a sense of fun and delight in language and enjoy experimenting with words and ideas. They are also careful and responsive listeners who readily put forward opinions and information. Many are confident, clear communicators and their contributions to discussions are lively and expressive. In a Year 1 literacy lesson to develop awareness of character, pupils asked sensible, well-framed questions of their teacher in her role of the Wolf in *The Three Little Pigs* and listened eagerly and appreciatively to her replies which were a good stimulus for their creative writing. Pupils love reading and many read expressively with few hesitations. 'I love reading 100 times over!' exclaimed one Year 2 pupil happily. Most use their knowledge of sounds and word building techniques very competently to work out unfamiliar words. They make simple observations about characters in their stories and talk excitedly about their likes and dislikes. The school has had an intensive focus on improving the quality of pupils' writing. This has paid dividends and many pupils are developing a lively confidence in their use of language and are beginning to fill their stories with vivid images. Encouraged by their teachers, pupils are keen to organise their ideas in exciting and imaginative ways. In their 'Fireworks' poems, Year 2 pupils wrote of 'vicious volcanoes spitting' and 'fantastic flowerpots flashing' and in their 'I like' poems of 'the smell of marzipan nudging my nose' and 'the sight of sparklers swishing side to side'. They generally show a very good understanding of sentence structure and awareness of punctuation. Handwriting is well-formed and simple spelling is accurate or recognisable as a good attempt using phonic knowledge.

4. In mathematics, pupils develop and use a variety of mental strategies to work out problems and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding in different situations. They add and subtract numbers mentally, understand the value of place numbers to 1000 and answer questions using

their times tables. Pupils measure length, weight and time in standard and non standard units, calculate half of a given quantity and recognise reflective symmetry. In response to an issue from the last inspection, strategic thinking is encouraged in ludo, mathematics and computer clubs for the most able pupils. In mathematics lessons, pupils' thinking is regularly challenged and there are many opportunities for them to demonstrate their understanding of mathematical concepts through the wide range of investigations and problems set for them. Pupils in Year 2 enjoyed the various degrees of challenge offered to them when using a number of coins to make different amounts of money. They tried several approaches and were confident in using mathematical vocabulary when explaining their strategies to the rest of the class.

5. Year 2 pupils also like being young scientists and show a very good understanding of how to undertake an experiment and carry out investigations. In one lesson, pupils made decisions within their groups about how they could devise a fair test to see which shape could bear the greatest amount of stress and were introduced to the idea of one variable. They identify ways in which animals are suited to their environment, investigate the different stages of the life cycle of a butterfly and egg laying creatures and have incubated Bantam eggs. Pupils predict and compare how rubber bands of different degrees of thickness will stretch with a similar weight attached, test whether the oldest pupils are the tallest, explore how sounds are made in a Sounds workshop and investigate push/pull techniques in playing instruments. Teachers encourage them to make careful predictions, observe closely and record findings accurately using a range of methods.

The very good leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, key staff and governors mean that the school is outward looking and is always seeking further improvement.

6. At the heart of the headteacher's vision for the school is 'lifelong learning' for all staff and pupils. The staff and governors all share this philosophy so that this common purpose and commitment to constant evaluation and self-driven improvement have resulted in a happy school where pupils thrive and learning flourishes. It is this absence of complacency that has enabled the school to raise standards further. The strong leadership of the headteacher and the school's commitment to raising standards of achievement were also reported at the last inspection. The school has addressed the key issues for action from that inspection very well and has a very good capacity to improve in the future.

7. Central to the success of the school is the excellent leadership of the headteacher. She is quietly determined and combines a concern for the well-being of all pupils and their families, a respect for the professionalism of the staff and a drive to achieve standards that are as high as possible. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher. All staff work together as a highly committed and efficient team with an openness and willingness to learn from each other. At the time of the last inspection, subject coordinators were not sufficiently involved in monitoring standards and planning. They now play a much more active role in shaping the direction of their subject and in overseeing the implementation of the curriculum and pupils' work.

8. There is a very clear link between the school's increased analysis of its performance, the action taken as a result and the subsequent improvement in the quality of education and the standards that pupils attain. Performance Management is an integral part of the school's work. The careful monitoring of teaching and learning and of standards, rigorous assessment procedures and detailed analysis of performance in national and internal tests have all highlighted areas of improvement. Strategies have been quickly put in place to address them, for example, standards in English have improved following an intensive focus on writing. Half termly mathematics assessments and data from national tests are used to spot high frequency errors so that informed decisions can be made about what aspects should be discussed and where planning should be adjusted.

9. Governors also have an important role in steering the school and are continually seeking more efficient ways of supporting and challenging its work. They compare pupils' performance nationally, locally and with similar schools. They are active in the school, bring a good range of professional expertise to their role and attend appropriate training. Governors have a very good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and make an effective contribution to its strategic management through their strong network of committees. Following the key issue for action from the previous inspection, governors are much better informed and have very good procedures for their visits and an agreed protocol for writing their findings and reporting to others. All staff and governors are positive about the purpose and benefits of monitoring and, as a result, all respond quickly and constructively to issues and work together to find ways of improving the school's performance.

10. The priorities for improvement that are identified in the school's self critical analysis of its performance are supported very well by the school's financial management and administration. The school development plan clearly identifies actions to be taken and has rigorous success criteria but it does not cover a long enough period. There is no overview for the next two years so finances are not linked and the strategic direction is not clear to everyone. Monitoring of the school development plan is a weaker element in the work of governors although it is being addressed. Resources are used very efficiently and governors ensure that value for money is obtained when purchases are made or building projects undertaken. They also examine the impact of expenditure on the quality of education provided, for example, the standards achieved by pupils following the decision to give priority to staffing to allow single aged classes to run for a second year.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and ensures that pupils learn quickly and apply their new skills effectively.

11. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and this means that pupils reach standards that promote their individual potential well. During the inspection, 17 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. Teaching was very good in three, good in 12 and satisfactory in two. The profile of teaching broadly reflects that of the previous inspection when it was reported to be good with some very good and excellent features. However, in this inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching and 88 per cent of teaching was good or better compared with 60 per cent last time. Staff work together effectively as a team and are continually examining their own practice, reviewing initiatives and carefully assessing the impact of their work on how pupils learn. The open, yet reflective, way in which they received feedback during the inspection showed their ongoing commitment to developing their teaching.

12. Teaching is successful because it is founded on thorough planning. This profits from the fact that teachers plan and review lessons as a team which ensures that, even where planning is adjusted for different groups, it remains within the common context. Planning also takes good account of pupils' specific needs so that the more able groups are given opportunities to apply their more advanced skills while teaching ensures that less able pupils are able to grasp more basic concepts. This was seen in a Year 1 numeracy lesson on symmetry when some pupils were given responsibility and independence to organise their own resources while others examined symmetrical patterns. All were challenged well at their own level and were given suitably demanding work. Learning intentions are also shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons and are regularly reviewed and reinforced which helps pupils to develop responsibility for their own learning. The basic skills of reading, writing and manipulating number are well taught so that pupils acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, the teacher injected a sense of fun into phonic work when she introduced the puppet 'Croaker' who had difficulty saying 'ee' words. Similarly, in a Year 2

numeracy lesson, an interesting variety of approaches captured pupils' interest as they played number games based on times tables.

13. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach is generally good and there was no sign of weaknesses in design and technology and science identified at the last inspection. Teachers' confidence is shown in lively presentations, interesting explanations and well-structured questioning which lead pupils on to new learning at a brisk pace. In a Year 2 science investigation on forces, the teacher's effective balance between imparting knowledge and giving pupils the opportunity to investigate and experiment led to high attainment in their understanding of a fair test. Underpinning all these features are the warm, supportive relationships in the classroom so that pupils are not afraid to ask questions, seek help or express their feelings because teachers consistently value their contributions. In a Year 1 religious education lesson when pupils talked about special places - 'my soft bed', 'Spain because its nice and hot' – they spoke confidently about the feelings they evoked, such as calmness, happiness and comfort, as a result of the teacher's sensitive guidance.

14. An energetic pace and a high degree of challenge were the hallmarks of a Year 2 literacy lesson based on pupils' work on 'London's Burning' which illustrated strong features of teaching and learning across the school. The teacher skilfully built up tension in her reading of 'The Great Fire of London' and pupils relished the sound and rhythm of expressive language. As a result of her perceptive questioning, they were able to identify how the author had enlivened the writing by means of similes, and the use of powerful and descriptive words. There was a real buzz of excitement in the room but the teacher astutely introduced a few moments of quiet reflection for pupils to imagine the dramatic scene. As a result, many pupils created vivid images: 'I see magical, smoky, colourful flames spreading around the great city of London' and 'A blazing fire curling around the tops of wooden houses'. During the lesson, pupils made very good gains in their creative use of language because of exciting, well-informed and dynamic teaching.

15. Teaching and learning are also good in the Foundation Stage. Children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through play, talk and investigation. Teachers plan and organise work well and liaise closely with assistants to ensure that all children make good progress in their learning. They achieve a successful balance between activities that are directed by an adult and those initiated by the children and there is a good emphasis on structured play activities. This was seen in both classes based on *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* but was not the case in the previous inspection. All adults place good emphasis on talking with the children, encouraging them to communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas and helping to extend their language. In the younger Reception class, the teaching assistant interacted well with children in the 'Three Bears Cottage'. Both teachers have created a calm, secure environment in which children are valued and treated with warmth and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to develop an awareness of others. Phonic work and basic number recognition are also taught well and children are encouraged to see mathematics all around them. In one Reception class, the teacher created a sense of fun and expectancy when pupils were counting on using a number square and in a literacy lesson, pupils were caught up in the air of excitement built up by the teacher and spontaneously joined in with the story.

16. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs mirrors that seen in the rest of the school. Individual education plans provide very good detail with clear and sustainable targets and teachers ensure that they, and the few pupils with English as an additional language, are well supported. More able pupils, and those who are gifted and talented, achieve well because of the school's early identification of their needs and provision of challenging experiences. Occasionally, extension activities are not sharply focused enough to allow them to delve sufficiently into the subject to make the best of their abilities.

17. There are not many weaknesses in teaching. At the beginning of lessons, teaching assistants often sit and listen rather than observe and support pupils and record their responses. There is sometimes over direction, especially in practical activities, so that pupils are not allowed to develop their own independence and initiative. Information and communication technology does not have a high enough profile in class teaching.

The school's excellent overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development greatly enriches their learning and helps them to develop personal responsibility and respect and tolerance towards others.

18. The school's excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development and very good work for social development clearly reflect its aims and philosophy. Each of these aspects is integral to the life and work of the school. They ensure that the ethos for learning is strong and positive within a well-ordered, happy and caring community. The school encourages pupils to develop mature attitudes to their work for their age, to show care and thoughtfulness to others both in school and beyond and to express their enjoyment of the world around them. This means that the school offers a rich and interesting curriculum through its planned thematic programme where pupils can develop their creativity, social skills, ingenuity and independence.

19. At the pre inspection meeting, parents commented that the school was like a close-knit family where pupils grew in confidence, experienced a sense of achievement and developed a good self-image. In assemblies, there is a good balance between music, speech and silence and times of prayer and reflection are used well to develop pupils' spiritual and personal experiences. Teachers are also keenly aware of the importance of seizing opportunities across the curriculum to channel pupils' natural curiosity and enthusiasm into a spiritual response. Pupils sow seeds and watch them grow, marvel at chicks hatching, tadpoles turning into frogs and caterpillars into butterflies and show wonder at colours on their autumn walk and cobwebs covered in dew. In this way, they develop a keen sense of awe at the order and mystery of the natural world.

20. The school is very effective in providing pupils with a strong moral code as the basis for their behaviour. Teachers lead pupils to make clear distinctions between right and wrong and encourage values such as honesty, fairness and mutual respect. Pupils discuss and decide on class rules and keep to them well. They also respond very positively to the school's expectations of them that that they should consider the effect of their actions on others and act on moral principles rather than through hope of reward or fear of punishment. There is a calm atmosphere in the school and good behaviour and attitudes are acknowledged by staff and through merit assemblies. Moral aspects are taught very well and pupils show a keen awareness of their responsibility towards property and the environment. All parents who replied to the pre inspection questionnaire felt that the school was helping their children to become mature and responsible. Pupils consider wider world issues such as poverty and support a number of charities like the British Legion Poppy Appeal, Comic Relief and Tools with a Mission.

21. The school has established a strong sense of community and the pupils' part in this is clearly valued. This was emphasised in an assembly when the headteacher told the pupils that the school and its children were like the beautifully patterned patchwork quilt on display which was not complete without its individual parts. The school has a warm, welcoming atmosphere where pupils are considerate and supportive to everyone and to adults. Staff have an open and friendly manner which encourages skills and confidence in the classroom. Pupils work together cooperatively and are taking increasing responsibility for their own learning through targets and learning intentions in lessons. Lessons were seen in which pupils worked independently of the teacher and used their initiative if the

teacher was with another group. Pupils are proud to be 'Stars of the Week' and enjoy being given responsibilities suitable to their age group such as showing visitors around the school and helping with class routines. There is no school council to enable pupils to give their opinion on various aspects of school life. 'Circle time' enables them to share their concerns and experiences and to relate positively to others. They take part in clubs like Year 2 percussion or choir, football and school productions including *Pirates* and *The Gigantic Star* when every pupil in the school is given a chance to perform.

22. The school draws on examples from many cultural traditions and helps pupils to understand the ethnic and cultural diversity of British life and to accept and value differences. They are taught to appreciate their own cultural heritage and the traditions of their community through studying artists such as Picasso and Paul Klee. In music, they take part in concerts, Harvest celebrations in the underwater shelter, national schools' choir festivals and a Sounds Workshop and also enjoy listening to storytellers and authors. The curriculum is also planned to provide pupils with a wealth of opportunities to learn about traditions and faiths from other cultures. Through religious education and collective worship, pupils celebrate Christian festivals and those of other faiths such as Divali and Chinese New Year. They enjoyed a workshop by the Kala Arts Group featuring Indian dance and hand movement and, in the spring term, Pedro Espi Sanchis mesmerised the whole school with a demonstration of African instruments and the story of the magic Lekolilo bird. Pupils also took part recently in their own concert on a Caribbean theme and have listened to a talk by a visitor about her life in Southern India. Another highlight was the visit of Bhajan Hunjan, the artist in residence, when pupils created dramatic designs such as mosaics in primary colours. All these proved to be stimulating and enjoyable experiences for pupils which contributed to the school's inclusive ethos and enabled them to recognise and celebrate cultural diversity.

The very effective partnership with parents who, in turn, value the school highly and support their children's learning very well.

23. The school regards its strong partnership with parents as crucial to its success. It encourages parents to be actively involved in their child's education and thus builds important bridges with the local community. In turn, parents value the work of the school, support their children's learning at home very well and make a significant contribution to its effectiveness. Staff and governors are also committed to forging good links between school and home. This reflects the findings of the 1997 inspection. Parents are encouraged to play a full and active part in all areas of school life and feel welcome and appreciated. At the pre inspection meeting and in the questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of the parents were fulsome in their praise of the school. Some parents spoke warmly of the family atmosphere where all pupils are valued equally and their individual needs recognised so that pupils felt proud of their school. Every parent agreed that the school is well led and managed and some spoke of the comfortable rapport between the headteacher and their children so that pupils felt happy and secure in their surroundings. Grandparents are also welcomed and attend events such as concerts and tea parties.

24. A significant number of parents felt that they were not well informed about their children's progress. The inspection team considered that this information provided by the school is very good. Twice yearly reports are detailed and informative and encourage parents to make a written response at the end of the year. There are also consultation meetings every term and teachers are available at the end of the school day. Some parents were also dissatisfied with the range of activities provided outside lessons. The judgement of the inspection is that extra-curricular activities are good including clubs, musical concerts, Year 2 percussion or choir, gardening club and visits and visitors. Important links with parents also include curriculum workshops, newsletters, termly parent induction evenings, a website with planned updates of information, programmes of homework activities, home link reading records and topic newsletters showing parents how to support thematic work in school. Parents' views are also canvassed through questionnaires and are taken into consideration as part of the school's self evaluation procedures.

25. A thriving Parent Teacher Association with the junior school provides enthusiastic and effective support. As well as many events that involve the school and community, it raises funds to provide additional facilities and resources to enhance pupils' learning. The committee also runs a coffee morning for new parents. The school's partnership with parents is strong because it is fostered well and is based on mutual respect and trust. This bond gives pupils security and confidence in learning and has a very positive effect on their achievements.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The quality of the outside learning environment for children in the Reception classes.

26. The school is developing the Foundation Stage in line with national guidance and is providing a good quality of education that takes account of the differing needs of children and prepares them well for the National Curriculum. Many children are ready to tackle aspects of the National Curriculum before the end of the Reception year and the teacher prepares them well for this. In their physical development, children are making sound progress in their physical control, mobility and awareness of space. However, there is no designated outside play area with direct access from the Reception classrooms or large wheeled toys and clambering equipment. This means that children are not given an appropriate amount of challenge to gain confidence and extend their skills in climbing, balancing, manoeuvring large wheeled toys and moving energetically. Children are also unable to move spontaneously between the indoor and outdoor environments as recommended in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. This lack of an outdoor area limits children's large-scale movements, means that the classrooms, although well organised by the teachers, are cramped and restricts the attainment of higher standards in physical development, and aspects of social development, in the Reception classes.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Improve the quality of the outside learning environment for children in the Reception classes by:

(Paragraph 26)

- providing a designated outdoor play area with access from the Reception classrooms so that children can move easily from one environment to another ;
- ensure that children have appropriate access to large play equipment to enhance their physical development.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
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	0	3	12	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	18	70	12	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 five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	131
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4

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 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	22	31	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	20	21
	Girls	29	30	30
	Total	47	50	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (87)	94 (89)	96 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	21
	Girls	29	30	30
	Total	48	50	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (89)	94 (91)	96 (87)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	101
Any other minority ethnic group	6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	22.8

Education support staff: YR– Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	114

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-1
	£
Total income	311481
Total expenditure	307788
Expenditure per pupil	2463
Balance brought forward from previous year	25671
Balance carried forward to next year	3693

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	121
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	29	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	39	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	69	29	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	49	10	2	0
The teaching is good.	55	41	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	41	22	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	20	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	43	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	35	57	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	16	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	29	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	42	21	2	15