

INSPECTION REPORT

LYTCHETT MATRAVERS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lytchett Matravers, Dorset

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113670

Headteacher: Mr M Randall

Reporting inspector: Mr D Hayward
21234

Dates of inspection: 25th – 26th September 2001

Inspection number: 197324

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wareham Road Lytchett Matravers Dorset
Postcode:	BH16 6DY
Telephone number:	01202 622378
Fax number:	01202 622378
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Percival
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
21234	Doug Hayward	Registered inspector
12387	Diane Willson	Lay inspector
21534	Kate Rawson	Team inspector
29946	Janina Hayward	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd.
5 Lakeside
Werrington
Peterborough
PE4 6QZ

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lytchett Matravers is a very large primary school situated to the north west of Poole, in Dorset. In the last 10 years the village of Lytchett Matravers has expanded rapidly and the number of pupils attending the school has increased by about 25 per cent. The pupils come from a mixture of private and council-owned housing in the local vicinity and, as the school has become increasingly popular, from communities further afield. The school has been awarded the Schools Curriculum award in recognition of the role it plays in the community and the way in which it uses the community to enrich its curriculum.

Currently there are 425 pupils on roll, almost all of whom are white and speak English as a first language. About 11 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. Twenty-five per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is above the national average. Approximately 2 per cent of those pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is in line with the situation in other primary schools.

In line with Dorset's policy for admission all children start school in the September of the academic year in which they are five. Initially they start on a part-time basis for mornings only. Gradually they start to attend on a full time basis at three different dates, depending on their date of birth, at the start of the Spring term, after the Spring half term or at the start of the Summer term. At the time of the inspection children in the reception classes attended for mornings only. Tests given to children within a few weeks of starting school show that their attainment is below that expected in other primary schools in Dorset and in schools nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with many strengths. It helps pupils to make very good progress and achieve high standards. It has a very strong ethos of care and support and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- It helps pupils to achieve high standards in national tests at 7 and 11 years of age. The school uses lots of different information very well to plan work for pupils of all ages and abilities so that they make very good progress.
- It provides very good standards of teaching. Teachers are hardworking, work very well as a team and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils say that, *'Teachers take time to explain things to us and make our lessons interesting'*.
- It has an excellent ethos and emphasises the importance of good behaviour and caring for each other. Pupils enjoy school. They say, *'It makes you feel welcome and there is a loving and caring feel around the school'*.
- It provides a wide range of interesting subjects for pupils to learn about. There are lots of colourful displays around the school which show the range of activities that pupils enjoy.
- The school has very good links with parents. They think that it is a very happy, successful place and feel confident to approach the school with suggestions or concerns.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Pupils say that, *'We like him. He is understanding, humorous and keeps our secrets'*. He and the deputy headteacher form a very effective partnership and provide clear educational direction for the school. Governors support him very well.

What could be improved

- The range of activities and resources for children in the reception classes.
- The pupils' handwriting, spelling and the presentation of their written work.
- Pupils' understanding of religions and cultures other than their own.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997, when it was judged to provide good value for money. It has accomplished the difficult task of maintaining its high standards in tests for 7 and 11-year-olds over the last four years. It has successfully addressed all the key issues in that report, with the exception of improving the way in which it teaches pupils about other races, cultures and religions. It has also tackled areas of the report that were not key issues but which, it felt, could be improved. Strengths identified in that report, such as links with parents, leadership and pupils' attitudes and behaviour, are still strengths. Subjects that were identified as requiring improvement, such as design and technology and music, have improved considerably. The proportion of very good teaching during this inspection is much higher than in 1997. The school has worked very hard to improve its assessment policy and it now ensures that all statutory requirements are met. The value for money the school provides has improved and it is very well placed to maintain its high standards.

STANDARDS

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

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

Over the last four years Lytchett Matravers has successfully managed to maintain its very good results in English, mathematics and science for 7 and 11 year old pupils. In the most recent 2001 tests, results dipped slightly at the end of Key Stage 2. This was because that group of pupils contained a high proportion with special educational needs who often found learning difficult. In the most recent tests for 7-year-olds, the school improved results in mathematics quite dramatically, by increasing support for particular groups of pupils and the quality of books and equipment it used in mathematics teaching. The inspection took place in the fourth full week of the autumn term, when pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 had been in their new classes for only a short time. Consequently, the inspectors looked at the work that these pupils have done so far and also at the work in books of pupils in last year's Year 6 and Year 2 classes. Pupils in both key stages make good progress and the targets that the school sets for their results are challenging and are predicted to remain so.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and are very positive about how good it is. They work hard in lessons and say that, <i>'The school gives us chances to work together'</i> .
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. For example, pupils sit very still and listen very carefully when they are all together in the hall for assembly. They are confident that there is no bullying. They are very courteous and polite to each other and to visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, to develop in maturity and to look after each other. Pupils say, <i>'We get on well with each other and enjoy the duties and responsibilities we are given'</i> .
Attendance	Good. In line with that in most other schools. Pupils arrive at school punctually and lessons start promptly.

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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very good

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

During the inspection 22 lessons were observed. Teaching was good or better in 18 lessons (82 per cent), very good or better in 14 lessons (64 per cent) and excellent in three lessons (14 per cent). This is very high quality teaching and is found throughout the school. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only one lesson, which was not well organised. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is of a consistently high quality and has a significant impact on the way pupils make progress in these subjects. The setting of pupils by ability in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 is very effective. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and set them work that is challenging, yet at just the right level for their ability. Teachers throughout the school have good relationships with their pupils. They listen carefully to what teachers say and there are often jokes shared between them. Teachers are positive in what they say and do. They use praise very well to boost pupils' confidence and make them want to do even better. Their lessons are well planned and they use a range of books and resources well to make them interesting so that pupils are keen to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The school teaches a wide range of interesting subjects at Key Stages 1 and 2 taught in exciting ways. The school provides a very good range of subjects outside lessons. In the Foundation Stage, very limited space makes it difficult for children to enjoy all the practical activities that they should do on a regular basis.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils' work is well planned and the school keeps careful track of the progress they make. Teaching assistants provide very good support in classes and groups.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school helps to develop very high levels of care and understanding. There is a strong feeling of respect between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves. Pupils are clearly taught the difference between right and wrong. However, there are not enough opportunities to learn about the wider world or to develop pupils' understanding of different cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Parents know that this is a strength of the school's work. Pupils say, <i>'We can trust the teachers. They listen to us and give their own time to help us if we have problems'</i> . It has very good systems for monitoring pupils' academic achievements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Parents and pupils have a very high opinion of him. He and the deputy head form a very supportive and effective partnership. Subject co-ordinators work hard to ensure that high standards are maintained in their subjects
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are enthusiastic, hard working and well informed. They are keen to support the school in introducing new ideas that will help to maintain a high quality of education.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has worked hard to maintain its strengths and to improve wherever it can since the last inspection.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its budget very well overall to provide a stimulating education.

The school has spacious grounds which it uses well. The school hall is extremely small and limits the range of activities that can be undertaken. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is also very small and restricts the way in which teachers can plan practical activities for children in the reception classes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Two hundred parents (47%) returned their questionnaires and 33 attended a meeting before the inspection started.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The say their children enjoy school and make good progress. • They say that pupils' behaviour is very good and that the school helps them to become responsible. • They say that teaching is good. • They are confident about approaching the school with concerns and feel that the school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few feel that the school does not work closely with parents and that they are not well informed about their children's progress. • A few say that they are not happy with the amount of homework set by the school.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments. No parents indicated how they felt the school could work more closely with them. The inspection team feels that the quality of information the school provides is very good, and includes newsletters, curriculum information, annual progress reports and three parent-teacher consultations each year. In the opinion of the inspection team, the school does everything it can to make parents welcome and involved in their children's education. The homework that the school sets supports the work that pupils do in school and sometimes involves parents. Some parents wanted more homework. Others felt that too much was set and was not always regularly marked to acknowledge the effort that pupils had put into completing it.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

It helps pupils to achieve high standards in national tests at 7 and 11 years of age. The school uses lots of different information very well to plan work for pupils of all ages and abilities so that they make very good progress

1. The results of the 2000 tests for seven-year-old pupils were above average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics. This was the first time for four years that results in reading and writing had been any lower than '*well above average*'. In mathematics, results were also lower than they had been since 1997. Compared with those in similar schools results were above average in reading, average in writing and well below average in science. The reason for this significant fall in test results was because that particular year group contained a large number of pupils with special educational needs. Although the results were a disappointment to the school they did not come as a surprise. The school had identified early in their school career that lots of pupils needed additional support because they sometimes found learning difficult.
2. The reason given for last year's '*blip*' in results is confirmed when one considers the results of the most recent 2001 tests. Although there is no national data with which to compare, pupils' results in all three subjects improved quite dramatically again in 2001 and took them to the levels that the school had experienced for three years prior to 2000. The most significant improvement at the end of Key Stage 1 was in pupils' mathematics results. The school was aware that since 1997 results had been consistently weaker in mathematics than in reading and writing and also weaker than those in similar schools.
3. The school decided to use a range of approaches in a determined effort to improve results in mathematics. For example, a subject co-ordinator for Key Stage 1 was appointed to ensure that the National Numeracy Strategy was effectively taught and new resources were bought. But a much more significant approach was to target particular pupils and groups of pupils to improve their results. Short mathematics sessions for targeted lower-attaining pupils were organised during the school day. More teacher assistant time was provided at Key Stage 1 and targeted to support groups of pupils in mathematics lessons. Individual school targets were set for pupils in each year group and specific lessons were provided for groups of lower-attaining pupils to prepare them for the types of questions they might expect in national tests.
4. These strategies had a positive impact. As a result, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2¹ in mathematics increased from 94 per cent in 2000 to 98 per cent this year and, perhaps more significantly, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 rose from 14 per cent last year to 34 per cent in the most recent tests.
5. In the 2000 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 results were well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science compared with those in all schools nationally. The school's results in English for 11-year-old pupils had never been lower than '*well above average*' since 1997. The same was true in mathematics, with the exception of 1999 when they were '*above average*'. In science, results had always been '*above average*' with the exception of one year. In comparison with those in similar schools in 2000, results were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The results of the 2001 end of Key Stage 2 tests were lower than in the previous year in all three subjects. The percentage of pupils who attained Level 4 fell from 87 per cent to 82 per cent in English, from 89 per cent to 80 per cent in

¹ Levels – by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Those who achieve Level 3 are, therefore, attaining above nationally expected levels.

mathematics, and from 95 per cent to 89 per cent in science. In numerical terms this is a matter of only two pupils attaining lower levels than in 2000. The school's own analysis of pupils' results in non-statutory tests indicated that they would be lower this year, despite additional support within school, because the group included many pupils who had special educational needs. Perhaps this is most clearly indicated by the much lower percentages of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 this year in English, mathematics and science.

6. Ninety-six per cent of parents in their questionnaires indicated that they felt that children make good progress at school and 98 per cent said that they feel the school expects their children to work hard and achieve as well as they can. The school has developed very effective means of showing the 'value' that it adds to pupils' progress as they move through the school. There is a clear trend of improvement in pupils' results in all three subjects at Key Stage 2 since 1997. Early assessments in the reception classes show that children's attainment is below the level expected in many other schools in Dorset in areas such as personal and social development, language and mathematics. Interestingly, the data also shows that the 'gap' between the attainment of children starting at Lytchett Matravers and those in other Dorset schools is widening. This is the beginning of the school's collection of information on each pupil that helps to track progress as they move through the school. These very early assessments also help the school to predict pupils' levels of attainment in tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and to provide additional support if necessary, as it has done very successfully in mathematics in the last year.
7. A range of other assessments are carried out to monitor pupils' progress as they get older and to predict their attainment at 11, identifying when results will not be as high as in previous years. For example, assessments of pupils' writing, mathematics and science are carried out on a monthly basis. Their results are assessed against National Curriculum 'levels' and each level is broken down into three sub-sections, to enable the school to be even more precise about pupils' attainment and where support needs to be targeted. These results are loaded onto a computer spreadsheet and individual targets are set so that the school can aim for a specific measure of improvement from year to year.
8. The wealth of data showing the progress that pupils make over a period of time encourages the school to raise teacher expectations of identified pupils and focus planning for them to achieve higher levels. It has, over the last two or three years, used assessment information increasingly effectively to show what difference the school makes. Many schools now refer to this eventual progress in relation to what the children could do when they started school as 'value added'. It indicates how influential the school has been in furthering the pupils' progress. There is very good evidence that work at Lytchett Matravers builds logically and progressively from year to year on what pupils know and can do. It is now planning to use individual targeting increasingly to ensure that progress is maintained.
9. For example, teachers' marking of pupils' written work is invariably supportive and often humorous, revealing a genuine interest in it. The best marking not only identifies what the pupil has done that deserves praise, but also sets targets for how work can be improved. An example of this was seen in Year 6 when a teacher wrote, 'A very good story, containing all the elements of science fiction writing. Now aim to edit your dialogue more carefully'. The content of pupils' writing develops well as they get older. For instance, in Year 1 pupils write in sentences, 'I am special because my mummy loves me,' and, 'I am special because I can write properly'. The increasing depth of thought and their ability to use a variety of written forms are apparent as they move from class to

class until, eventually they can write in rhyming verse, in response to paintings of poppies by Georgia O'Keefe and Monet,
*'Red is powerful, meaningful, bright,
 Red is fire lighting up the night.
 Red is a heart on a Valentine's card,
 Red is strong, red is hard.
 Red is warning, red is stop,
 Red are the lights for a disco bop.'*

Other pupils in Year 6 show their good range of vocabulary in an almost abstract style when writing about 'a cloud'.

*'It floats across the sky
 Spectacular, stunning, all admirable
 Like a travelling land
 Like a soaring sky
 Makes me feel young and unknowing
 Like a baby born into the new world
 The cloud
 Like life everlasting'*

10. The school uses test and data analysis well to identify pupils with special educational needs and those who are particularly able. The ways in which it plans work to include pupils of all abilities is very positive. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and receive good support in classes from teachers and teaching support assistants and in additional 'booster' groups. In lessons, work is carefully adapted to meet the particular needs and abilities of these pupils. The school organises very effective ability groups throughout Key Stage 2 and additional after-school clubs for particularly able pupils in mathematics. In the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2000, five pupils achieved the very high Level 6 in mathematics.

It provides very good standards of teaching. Teachers are hardworking, work very well as a team and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils say that, 'Teachers take time to explain things to us and make our lessons interesting'

11. In their pre-inspection questionnaires 96 per cent of parents indicated that they felt that teaching is good at Lytchett Matravers. During the inspection, parents commented on the teachers' positive contribution to the school. Teachers are hardworking and committed to the success of the school. Despite the large numbers of staff changes that the school experiences there is a very strong feeling that teachers work as a team. Teachers new to the school all said that they feel well supported and have settled in quickly.
12. Teaching was satisfactory in all but one lesson, which was not well organised and pupils were not clear about the work they had to do. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all the other lessons. The quality of teaching in this inspection is far higher than it was in 1997, although fewer lessons were observed. In 1997 it was noted that, '*Only 5 per cent of lessons had very good features where pupils made rapid progress*'. In this inspection, despite the relatively small number of lessons observed, there were almost twice as many very good and excellent lessons as the other categories combined. Four lessons were judged to be good, 11 lessons were very good and three lessons were excellent. This is very high quality teaching and its impact upon the progress and attainment of the pupils is clear. The improvement in the quality of teaching is due to changes in personnel and an increase in the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and staff.
13. Despite the fact that the inspection took place very early in the new school year, lesson content was planned very well to match the ability of pupils in the group or class. It is

clear that teachers have already made accurate assessments of their pupils' levels of understanding. Many of the strengths identified in the previous report are still apparent; for example, the teaching of literacy and numeracy, class management, the use of resources, teachers' questioning and the way in which teaching support assistants make a contribution.

14. One of the most notable features of lessons is the teachers' positive and enthusiastic approach that really makes the pupils sit up and listen. The lessons have a clear start and there is a clear expectation from teachers and pupils that learning will take place. What the teacher expects the pupils to learn is usually written up on a board and shared with them at the start of the lesson. This '*learning objective*' or '*intended learning outcome*' is frequently referred to during the course of the lesson to ensure that pupils stay on task. It ensures that there is a brisk, lively, focused start and that pupils know what to expect. For example, in one lesson the teacher said, '*Let's get those literacy brains working!*' In several very good mathematics lessons the teachers' emphasis on quick, challenging mental arithmetic activities immediately got the pupils thinking hard. In some lessons the element of competition between pupils to see who could answer or finish first added an edge that really sharpened the pupils' mental skills.
15. During the course of good and very good lessons teachers showed how good they are at asking questions to find out whether pupils understand what they have been taught. This form of '*on-going assessment*' has many benefits. For example, if the pupils' answers indicate that they understand the lesson, the teacher can move on quickly to more difficult work. If their answers show some confusion or lack of understanding the teacher knows that revision is needed. One teacher quickly and perceptively responded to pupils' hesitancy in answering by asking, '*How many of you are confused?*' and then quickly changed the course of the lesson so that she could go back over the work that had been covered to help pupils understand. In the middle of a very good mathematics lesson one teacher cleverly used the pupils themselves to test each other's knowledge by saying, '*I'm pretty confident from going around that you know what you're doing, but I'm going to pick two of you to show us. Everyone look to make sure they're doing it properly.*'
16. Teachers' questions during the lesson, such as those generally to the whole class, '*How could that have happened?*' or specifically to one pupil, '*Emma, tell me what you think the answer is*', keep pupils '*on their toes*'. They have to make sure they listen carefully because they are never quite sure when they will be asked a question. In the best lessons the teachers respond to pupils' answers with another question; for example, in a very good geography lesson the teacher asked, '*Where can we find the mouth of a river?*' She immediately responded to a pupil's correct answer by asking, '*And what is the mouth of a river? And what about a meander?*' This tension and urgency during good and very good lessons ensures pupils' involvement, but they are not overbearing. Teachers are very good in their questioning at giving pupils opportunities to ask for help, guidance or further explanation. At the end of some lessons the teachers ask, '*What have you learned today?*' or '*What have you found difficult?*'
17. Teachers' '*quick-fire*' questioning helps to maintain a brisk lesson pace which, in turn, helps to keep pupils' interest. They also use other very good strategies to keep their lessons to the point and running on time. For example, during the course of the lesson they will give the pupils a specific amount of time to complete a task and then remind them with comments such as, '*You've got three minutes for this. Go*', or at the end of the lesson reminding pupils that, '*You've got five minutes left to finish*'. One teacher's use of a '*rain stick*' to make a noise that all pupils recognised marked a clear and distinct end to one part of a lesson before moving into the final few minutes where the teacher could check pupils' understanding of the lesson.

18. Six teachers are new to the school this term and about 50 per cent of teachers are new to the school since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the very good relationships between teachers and pupils evident in the last inspection are still apparent and, in fact, they are strengths of the teaching. Pupils have no doubts that they like and respect the teachers and that feeling is reciprocated. It was obvious during observations that teachers take notice of what pupils say. They speak to them politely and listen carefully to their ideas and answers. Class control is usually very good and is maintained through a calm approach, often with more than a touch of humour! Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which enables them to give accurate information and deal with increasingly difficult work confidently. They use precise subject vocabulary and encourage pupils to do the same. They use resources such as whiteboard and overhead projectors very effectively to help them teach in a way that has the most impact on pupils' learning.
19. Teachers use praise very well to boost pupils' self esteem and confidence, and the quality and frequency of their comments have benefits on pupils of all ages. For instance, in the reception class the teacher commented to one child, *'Brilliant! You are listening very carefully to me. Well done!'* In a very good mathematics lesson, the teacher commented on one pupil's efforts, *'You really are very good at choosing the right strategy to use!'* Words, such as, *'Fantastic!'* and *'Excellent!'* are just two of the terms of praise that teachers use regularly and which pupils recognise as meaning that their work and attitudes are valued. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their *'caring'* teachers and how they give freely of their own time to help them

The school has an excellent ethos and emphasises the importance of caring for each other and good behaviour. Pupils enjoy school. They say, *'It makes you feel welcome and there is a loving and caring feel around the school'*

20. Ninety-five per cent of parents in their questionnaires indicated that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. At the pre-inspection meeting they strongly supported the view that Lytchett Matravers promotes positive and worthwhile values; for example, caring for others in and around school and raising money for good causes. The pupils' excellent attitudes and relationships with others were also identified as strengths in the previous inspection. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their school and their work. They are proud of their school and are very keen to tell visitors the reasons why they think it is so good.
21. Pupils feel that the school cares very much for their well-being. They spoke about *'feeling safe'* in school and knew that security measures, such as restricted access to the school, were for their benefit. They spoke about how teachers remind them of being aware of dangers outside school, and about initiatives such as road safety training and alerting them to the need to take care when meeting strangers. They say that teachers, *'look after us and put us with our friends whenever they can'*. They referred to the good relationships between boys and girls, how, *'Most of us get on well with each other'*, and how the school, *'tries to encourage us to work together'*.
22. This aspect of good relationships plays a very positive part in the pupils' day to day work. Pupils frequently work in mixed gender groups and the level of co-operation between them, whatever the task, is very good. They bring positive and conscientious attitudes to their work and carry out their tasks sensibly and thoughtfully. Not once was any pupil heard to say that they did not want to work with another. Pupils' willingness to listen carefully to what they have to do, to start work quickly and to concentrate and work hard means that very little time is wasted in lessons.
23. The school assembly themes do much to foster the idea of caring for others in school and in a wider sense. The school has been awarded the Schools Curriculum award in

recognition of the role it plays in the community, and the way in which it uses the community to enrich its curriculum reinforces this judgement. Parents agree that the school is a positive place that stresses the importance of thinking about others. Older pupils talk proudly of their responsibilities in and around the school during the day; for example, as door monitors, as prefects and when manning the school office at lunchtimes. Older pupils spoke enthusiastically about volunteering to take part in the new 'play pals' initiative in school. They told how their duties involved, *'going round the playgrounds at playtimes and lunchtimes looking for children who look lonely or upset'* and then talking to them to cheer them up or helping them to join in with activities.

24. Pupils are proud to be representatives of the school as members of the school council. They listened intently to the clerk of the parish council who came in to school to talk about developments in the village, such as better sports facilities and environmental concerns. These were issues that the pupils themselves had discussed, putting forward ideas and suggestions to the parish council through their own school council. This involvement in the wider world makes an excellent contribution to pupils' understanding of citizenship.
25. Ninety-six per cent of parents in their questionnaires agreed that behaviour is good and this was commented on positively at the pre-inspection meeting. They talked about the positive comments that adults had made about the behaviour of pupils when they were on trips to places of interest. Pupils are very aware of how they are expected to behave in school and are very polite to visitors. Some parents expressed concern about the school's system for managing behaviour with *'merit and demerit marks'*, but the pupils think it is a fair system that they understand and support. Pupils' behaviour in assemblies, in lessons and at lunchtimes and playtimes was very good. They listen intently to what others say and very rarely have to be reminded about how to respond appropriately to adults and to other pupils. Pupils of all ages say that bullying is not an issue at Lytchett Matravers because the school has very good ways of facing up to it and dealing with it. For example, a piece of writing by a pupil in Year 6 contained the comment, *'If you are ever bullied you can tell an adult or a friend. You should treat yourself and try to forget about being bullied even though it seems hard. Ask the bully why they are bullying you. Is it something you have said or done? If the bully goes on bullying you then you must call the anti-bullying campaign'*.

The school provides a wide range of interesting subjects for pupils to learn about. There are lots of colourful displays around the school which show the range of activities that pupils enjoy

26. Several of the key issues from the previous report centred on the school's curriculum provision. For example, the report identified weaknesses in design and technology, music and religious education, and inconsistencies in art and information and communication technology (ICT). There was insufficient attention given to the development of pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures other than its own. With the exception of multicultural provision, all these issues have been addressed with a considerable degree of success. First impressions are of a bright and attractive place in which to work. Despite the considerable limitations on space that the school offers in some areas, particularly in the hall and the Foundation Stage area, all available walls in classrooms and shared areas are used well to display a wide range of pupils' work to good effect.
27. The school has made great strides in improving pupils' skills in composing and performing in music. During the inspection a very proficient school orchestra, containing over 30 pupils playing a range of tuned and untuned percussion, string, woodwind, and brass instruments, performed extremely well during assembly. In their lunchtime club they practised performance skills with considerable understanding of terms such as *'forte'*

and *'articulation, with the teacher giving fulsome praise to one pupil for, 'an excellent decision on dynamics'*. Their design and technology work includes a good range of shared projects, which encourage pupils to apply their design skills to real problems; for example, to design a way of making an egg clear a bar at least 20 centimetres high and not break on landing. The range of pupils' art work has improved considerably. It includes studies of Western artists, weaving, collage and silk painting. Colourful displays of art work help to make the school attractive and often make very good links with work in other subjects, such as history. Links between subjects, which were judged to be sound in the previous inspection, are now good and sometimes very good.

28. In ICT, pupils use a wide range of computer programs to develop their ability to use technology skills and to make an increasing contribution to other subjects. For example, in Year 4, pupils experiment with different fonts in their word-processing work, whilst in Year 2 pupils word process descriptions to accompany their history studies. In Year 1 they use a data-handling program to illustrate in graphical form how they come to school, whilst in Year 6 one pupil used the word processor to write a description of his work in art, linked to history. *'Using 'Dazzle' on the computer I created a wallpaper design in the style of William Morris. Morris was a designer and engineer in Victorian times and many of his fabric and wallpaper designs are still used today'*.
29. During the inspection, an excellent drama presentation by teachers, linked to their study of Egypt, gave pupils an opportunity to watch how Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun and then to devise questions to ask the characters in role. An outstanding archaeology lesson enabled pupils to find *'artefacts'* on the school field linked to their work in history. Both lessons showed how well the school uses its own talents, subject knowledge and resources to make subjects *'come alive'* and involve pupils actively in their learning. They also demonstrate how the school successfully manages to create a sense of *'awe and wonder'* in the curriculum, which it was judged not to provide in the last inspection.
30. There is now good provision for pupils to take part in problem solving activities. The previous report noted that opportunities for investigation and problem solving were limited, but this is no longer the case. In an excellent mathematics lesson the pupils had many good opportunities to use their mathematical skills, working in groups to try to solve real and complicated issues that the school wanted to address; for example, finding out the cost of carpet to cover a work area and the purchase price of badges, certificates and posters for a rounders scheme. Pupils have also been involved in more abstract projects, such as designing an international airport in Lytchett Matravers village, which involved contact with architects and other professionals. Older pupils in Year 6 also have an opportunity to take part in newly initiated *'thinking skills'* classes, which try to teach them to develop logical approaches to problem solving.

The school has very good links with parents. They think that it is a very happy, successful place and feel confident to approach the school with suggestions or concerns

31. The school views the parents' contribution as a very positive feature of its work. This was also a strength recognised in the previous report. Eighty-seven per cent of parents indicated in their questionnaires that the school works closely with them, but there was little indication from the remaining 11 per cent of how they felt it could be improved. At the pre-inspection meeting parents agreed that teachers are easily approachable. Ninety-seven per cent of parents said that they would feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. Many commented on the school's very good systems for making links with parents of reception children, including home visits. All agreed that their first contact with the office and administration staff was helpful, cheerful and welcoming.

32. The school maintains very good links with parents through the enthusiastic and hardworking Parent-Teacher Association. Not only does the association raise very large sums of money each year, but it also feels that it has a positive role in promoting the school's profile in the community and helping parents of all the pupils to forge links. It organises termly parties for parents of pupils in particular classes to get to know each other and promotes the school's involvement in village activities, such as the Summer Fete. The school also maintains a register of talents, where parents list those skills that they feel might be useful to the school at any time and where they would be willing to give up time to help. For example, in the pupils' work on designing an *'international airport'* parents who had particular skills in design and communication came into school to talk to pupils. Similarly the school holds details of parents who are able to help in practical work on the building. Eighty-three per cent of parents indicated that they feel the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress. The school sends out detailed and informative end-of-year pupil reports and the quality of its written communication is very good. It includes curriculum information, newsletters and original and interesting annual governors' letters. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting agreed that they could see no way in which the school could improve the quality of information it provides.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Pupils say that, *'We like him. He is understanding, humorous and keeps our secrets'*. He and the deputy headteacher form a very effective partnership and provide clear educational direction for the school. Governors support him very well

33. Ninety-seven per cent of pupils agree that the school is well managed and led. At the pre-inspection meeting parents agreed that the headteacher has a very good rapport with pupils, that he is easily contacted and that he makes frequent contact with parents on an informal basis. Their only reservation was that his success in headship had led to two periods of secondment to help other schools and that he had to leave Lytchett Matravers temporarily to do so! Additionally there were comments from staff, pupils and governors about the effectiveness of the headteacher's leadership. They feel he sets an excellent example in enthusiasm and fights hard for the school. The high quality leadership is apparent in the quality of school documentation. It is apparent in the way in which high standards have been maintained over a number of years and the progress that pupils make. It is apparent in the smooth running of the school by the deputy headteacher when the headteacher was recently seconded for a year. Above all, it is apparent in the fondness with which pupils refer to him. They trust him and say that, *'He is loving and kind, he does a lot for the school and he is strict if he needs to be'*.
34. The school is confident that it is soon to receive the *'Investors in People Award'*, indicating its commitment to staff development, communication and the well-being of the staff. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on the important part played by teaching, support and administrative staff. The role of subject co-ordinators and their responsibilities are clear, although the role of the Foundation Stage co-ordinator is insufficiently developed. There has been significant staff turnover in the last four years. Many teachers have moved on to promotion in other schools and to advisory posts in the local authority. This indicates a commitment to developing the full potential of staff and nurturing *'new'* staff who replace them. The fact that there was a far higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching in this inspection than in 1997 indicates how successful the headteacher has been in monitoring the work of the school.
35. Governors play a positive part in the running of the school. They are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and supportive. They feel fortunate to be associated with such a successful school. They have a very good relationship with the headteacher and share aims for the future development of the school. They have regular and frequent contact with the

school, including the monitoring of teaching. They have an active committee structure in place that helps them to deal efficiently with aspects such as curriculum and personnel. They feel that the quality of the school development plan has improved and that, *'It is a great help to the governing body so that we can see where we are going'*. The governors believe that they have the principles of *'best value'* firmly established. They play a very positive part in reviewing the performance of the school and support educational priorities well through prudent financial planning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The range of activities and resources for children in the reception classes

36. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting spoke very positively about their children's start to school in the reception classes. In fact, they nominated one of the teachers for a nationally recognised, *'Teacher of the Year'* award last year. Teachers have worked hard to develop their own long term plans in line with the requirements of the Foundation Stage² introduced just over a year ago. Assessment shows that many children start in the reception classes with lower than expected attainment in areas such as language and mathematical skills. Nevertheless, they make good progress and many are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals³ by the end of the reception year. However, the design of the building, the very limited space available and the school's current use of its current accommodation make it very difficult for children to experience a full range of creative and practical activities on the regular basis to which they are entitled.
37. The reception *'classrooms'* are extremely small, unusually shaped, very dark and restrict the range of teaching approaches that can be used. They were originally built as a semi open-plan area and partition walls severely limit children's access to hard floor areas where they can use water and sand. Tables and chairs are large, heavy and not totally suitable for young children. There is no direct access to an outdoor activity area which can be supervised adequately and where there is cover in wet weather. The recent addition of a glass-covered walkway adjacent to the classrooms offers possibilities for children to use sand and water equipment, although it requires heating and blinds if it is to be used successfully in cold and sunny weather. An existing outdoor area offers considerable potential for children to use large ride-on equipment and to develop climbing skills, but the school has not fully developed this. Teachers try hard to offer creative, play and physical activities whenever they can. However, there is a need for the school to take stock of its current provision to see how it can be most effectively improved.

The pupils' handwriting, spelling, and the presentation of their written work

38. Results in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 have remained high for a number of years, as have results in English overall at the end of Key Stage 2, partly as a result of the school's good assessment procedures. However, while the range of writing and the quality of vocabulary develop well throughout the school, the quality of pupils' handwriting, the accuracy of their spelling and the neatness of their presentation do not match this improvement and progress. Older pupils agree that this is an aspect of their work that could be improved! The practice of setting individual targets for improvement in pupils' exercise books, especially to target handwriting, spelling and presentation is not established throughout the school.

Pupils' understanding of religions and cultures other than their own

² Foundation Stage – this was introduced in September 2000 and forms a separate stage of education for children from the age of three until they reach the end of the reception year.

³ Early Learning Goals – these are targets for learning by children by the end of the reception year. They refer to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.

39. The previous report noted that the school's provision, *'to develop pupils' awareness of cultural diversity and the cultures and traditions of other cultures in the wider world is underdeveloped'*. This remains the case during the current inspection. The school has made some effort to increase pupils' awareness of other cultures, for example by inviting in a parent to talk about Judaism. However, in discussions they still know very little about significant religious occasions in other religions or the names of gods in other religions. There are too few planned links between religious education and multi-cultural education, where pupils' religious awareness could be developed. Although the school policy for cultural awareness emphasises that cultural awareness, *'is an integral part of the curriculum'*, there is little evidence that this is the case.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In the context of its many strengths and the high quality of education it already provides, the school should now:

- i ensure that it reviews the provision it makes and the level of resources for pupils in the reception classes;**
- ii ensure that it reviews the implementation of its policies for handwriting, spelling and presentation to ensure that these aspects of pupils' written work improve;**
- iii ensure that it fully implements a multi-cultural policy to enable pupils to study the diversity of British culture and religions other than their own.**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	11	4	3	1	0	0
Percentage	14	50	18	14	4	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 percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	425
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	47
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	106
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	32	31	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	30
	Girls	30	30	29
	Total	57	58	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (97)	92 (94)	94 (95)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	30	28
	Girls	30	29	31
	Total	56	59	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (97)	94 (97)	94 (95)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	41	20	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	36	39
	Girls	19	18	19
	Total	53	54	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (85)	89 (77)	95 (82)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	31	39
	Girls	19	17	19
	Total	52	48	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (90)	79 (78)	95 (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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	381
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR –Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	263

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	794,887
Total expenditure	794,370
Expenditure per pupil	1,869
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,830
Balance carried forward to next year	33,347

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	425
Number of questionnaires returned	200

This indicates a return rate of 47%

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	36	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	39	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	43	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	49	9	3	2
The teaching is good.	57	39	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	51	14	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	28	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	47	11	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	71	26	1	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	39	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	39	7	3	12