

INSPECTION REPORT

SHENINGTON CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shenington

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123273

Headteacher: Mrs Coral Milburn-Curtis

Reporting inspector: Peter Kerr
Rgl's OIN: 23583

Dates of inspection: 4 – 5 March 2002

Inspection number: 197328

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Shenington

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Telephone number: 01295 670273

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Roger Gates

Date of previous inspection: 9 September 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a Church of England Voluntary Aided primary school situated in the North Oxfordshire village of Shenington. It has 91 children on roll, aged four to 11. Seven of these are from non-UK ethnic backgrounds and speak a language other than English as their first language, but all are fluent in English. Eight of the pupils (about nine per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is a lower proportion than in most schools. None of the pupils has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The pupils' socio-economic circumstances are well above average. There is a spread of attainment on entry from below average to very high, with many more children well above average than below average. Three per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is a smaller proportion than in most schools. The site and building are cramped but this pressure is due to be relieved with the building of a new school, due to open in 2003. Other changes since the last inspection include a reversion to Voluntary Aided status from Grant Maintained, the gaining of 'Beacon School' status and the cessation of provision of cooked meals at lunchtime.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Pupils achieve very good standards, have very positive attitudes and relationships and behave very well. Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good practice. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction and is very strongly supported by the staff, parents and governors. Provision for pupils' welfare and personal development is very good and the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils reach well above average standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together to form an effective teaching team. *
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are very involved in self-evaluation.
- The school makes very good provision for the pupils' welfare and personal development.
- The headteacher provides very clear educational direction and is fully supported by the staff, parents and governors.

* The inspection evaluated specifically the contribution of teaching assistants to the teaching of literacy and numeracy and how well they are managed in the school. This aspect of the school is reported on separately in paragraphs 29 – 32 of the main report.

What could be improved

- The monitoring, evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning.

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 September 1997. Good improvements have been made in the areas identified as key issues. Planning has improved in all subjects and assessment is used much more effectively to guide the planning of pupils' work. An effective curriculum for personal, social and health education has been introduced. In addition, standards have risen in ICT because of the provision of many more computers and improved teaching better use of ICT skills in other subjects. The issues related to the restricted accommodation have been addressed by the plans in hand to build a new school. The need for children to cross the road regularly for PE lessons in the village hall is still a safety issue that the school monitors closely.

STANDARDS

Standards are very high in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Fewer than ten pupils from the school took the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001. For this reason, the results are not published here.¹

¹If the 'cohort' (year-group) of pupils is lower than ten in any school, the results are not published because the effect of an individual pupil on the results can render the overall statistical comparisons so misleading as to

The following are the inspection judgements on standards:

- By the end of Year 6:
 - Standards are very good in English and mathematics and well above average in science.
 - The pupils are very articulate. They read well and use spoken and written English fluently. Their writing, including poetry, is of very good quality. In mathematics, pupils have very good number skills and use them well to solve problems.
 - The pupils' knowledge and understanding in all areas of science are very good. Standards in ICT are well above average because the pupils have ready access to a wide range of computers and software to support their learning across the curriculum. Pupils have combined their science and technology skill very effectively in design projects.
 - Standards in history are above average. The quality of dance seen in Year 6 was also above average. Standards in the work seen in art and design, geography and music were in line with expectations. Pupils who take instrumental lessons make good progress.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are very good in reading and above average in writing, mathematics and science. The school's results in the national tests for seven-year-olds reflect these findings, although the numbers taking the tests are small, so the comparisons with other schools have to be treated with caution.
- Standards in the Foundation Stage are above average. Many children exceed the expected 'Early Learning Goals' well before the end of their time in the reception class.
- Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress along with their peers and reach good standards relative to their prior attainment.
- There are no significant differences in standards and achievement between girls and boys.

The main weaknesses in the work seen were in the quality of the presentation of much of the work in the pupils' books and in the quality of the pupils' explanations of their work in mathematics and science.

Progress in physical development in the Foundation Stage and composing and performing of music throughout the school continue to be held back by the lack of space in the school building.

The school's targets for success in the national tests for eleven-year-olds are very high. It is expected that all pupils will achieve at least Level 4 and aim for Level 5. As many pupils as possible aim to reach Level 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very happy in school and very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave very well around the school. Behaviour in lessons is usually good and sometimes very good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with each other and with the staff. They are mature and responsible, and show good initiative.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above average overall, despite a number of pupils being taken on holiday in term time.

The pupils' very positive attitudes and good behaviour enable lessons to proceed smoothly and therefore greatly assist their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

be meaningless. For cohorts of less than 20, significant swings from one year to the next can be caused by the inclusion on just one or two very high or very low scores. Comparisons based on such small cohorts should therefore be treated with caution.

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	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 seen during the inspection was good overall, and ranged from satisfactory to very good. Strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics, beginning with very systematic teaching of reading, writing and number skills in the reception and infant classes. Lessons cater well for pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.

Teaching and learning are effective, particularly in Years 3 to 6, because:

- Teachers set high expectations, particularly for basic skills, and give the children a lot of individual attention and support to meet them. The children respond with positive attitudes and a high work-rate.
- Teachers involve the pupils fully in their learning through sharing the learning objectives with them and helping them to set their own targets.
- Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers and are an integral part of the teaching team.
- Flexible teaching arrangements enable all the children to benefit directly from teachers' subject expertise. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop good skills of historical enquiry because all their lessons are taught by the history specialist on the staff.
- Teachers know the pupils well and manage them effectively so that they spend a high proportion of their time learning.
- Lesson planning is very thorough. It is related closely to the National Curriculum in each subject and based on detailed assessments of pupils' progress.
- Lessons cater for the full ability range, with extra challenge for the more able and support for those with lower levels of attainment.

The main areas for improvement in those lessons that were judged satisfactory rather than good or better are:

- The use of a wider variety of methods and resources so that pupils are involved more in practical learning, for example through investigation, discussion, research and presentation.
- More focused use of marking to engage the pupils in a dialogue about the quality of the work they have done as well as about their targets.
- An even stronger emphasis on learning through purposeful play for the youngest children in the Foundation Stage.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A good curriculum is provided with plenty of activities outside of lessons, mostly in Years 3 to 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils receive good support in lessons. Their individual educational programmes are of satisfactory but improving quality.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	All of these pupils are fluent in English and do not require extra support to be fully included in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is good. The curriculum for personal, social and health education makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' personal development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for child protection and monitoring pupils' progress are very good. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken. The school successfully promotes good attendance and good behaviour.
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The school's very good provision for pupils' care and guidance and the encouragement it offers for their personal development promote very positive attitudes among pupils and a sense of responsibility for their own learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very clear educational direction, especially in raising expectations, but also in caring for all the pupils. The contribution to management by other staff is satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a good working knowledge of the school. They fulfil their duty to hold the school to account, give good support to the headteacher and ensure that all legal requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school keeps a very close track of its performance relative to other schools and strives to excel.
The strategic use of resources	The principles of best value are used well to guide development planning, which is very closely tied to the school's educational priorities.

All the staff fully support the headteacher in the school's promotion of high standards. Their management roles are now to be put on a more formal footing, which is an improvement as it will enable the headteacher to delegate more effectively and improve the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations are high and teaching is good. • The children like school, behave well, make good progress and become mature and responsible. • The school is approachable and is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like to be better informed about their children's progress. • One or two parents do not think the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views expressed by the parents. It did not find any evidence to support the reservations expressed about information on children's progress and the range of activities provided outside lessons, both of which were judged to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils reach well above average standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).

1. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have been very high overall since 1998. A great deal of caution has to be exercised in interpreting these results, as the cohorts are usually small. However, in this case, they are a good reflection of the pupils' levels of attainment. The inspection confirms that standards in English, mathematics and science are considerably higher than is found in most schools. This is because all of the pupils have at least the expected levels of knowledge, understanding and skills (Level 4), whereas in most schools, a proportion of pupils would be attaining at a lower level. In addition, more pupils have higher than average attainment (Level 5 or 6) in this school than would usually be the case. The pupils also have very good computer skills and use these very confidently and competently across a wide range of subjects. Together, these accomplishments equip the pupils very well for their transition to the secondary phase of education.
2. In English, the pupils have a wide vocabulary, which they use with confidence, both in speaking and in writing. Their poetry, for example, includes sensitive word and phrase selection, with a good awareness of the overall impact the piece is intended to have. The pupils have the ability to write in different styles for different purposes, such as book reviews, newspaper articles, posters, notes to friends and persuasive writing. The written work by Year 3 and Year 4 pupils contains many of the elements expected for Level 4². It is mature in style and correct in grammar, punctuation and spelling. The writing in the Year 5 and 6 sample of work contains many elements of Level 5 and some of Level 6. It engages and sustains the reader's interest, for example with wit and humour, and uses a range of sentence constructions and of punctuation, with accurate spelling. The pieces the pupils produced to say why their school was 'the best' showed a very good sense of purpose and audience - and were very persuasive! The pupils talk very confidently to each other and adults in informal situations. The speaking that was observed in formal situations, such as assemblies, was good in content but lacked assurance in delivery, suggesting that the pupils could benefit from more opportunities for speaking to different audiences. The standard of reading is very good throughout the school. The pupils read widely and with enjoyment and have good research skills.
3. Most pupils make rapid progress throughout the school in mathematics, especially in number work, to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6. The process begins in reception, where the children learn to count very quickly and to use a wide range of mathematical vocabulary. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils learn basic number facts effectively, such as which pairs of number add together to make ten, through brisk, purposeful teaching. They quickly progress to working with tens and units and using multiplication and division as well as addition and subtraction. By the end of Year 2 many are working at the above average Level 3 in their number work. For example, they are confident with place value past 1000 and recognise when simple fractions are equivalent. The pupils build rapidly on this knowledge in Years 3 to 6 so that, by the end of Year 6, the most able are working towards Level 6, for example in the way they use decimals, percentages and ratios and proportions. Most of the others are working towards Level 5. This rapid progress through attainment target 2 (number and algebra) is further accelerated in Years 5 and 6 by targeted teaching in small groups. Overall, the pupils have above average skills in using and applying their mathematical knowledge and skills. They recognise what mathematics is needed to solve a particular problem and look for different ways of arriving at a solution. In some lessons, however, they do not develop and refine these skills as much as they could because of the urgency with which they are moving towards the next learning target. Lower

² Level 4 is the level that pupils are expected to achieve by the end of Year 6. Level 5 and Level 6 are the next two levels up. Between a quarter and a third of pupils attain Level 5 in the national tests in English, mathematics and science end of Year 6, but very few achieve Level 6.

attaining pupils in Year 4 still use their fingers to aid counting on. They do not know their tables securely or make connections between different number facts, such as being able to use four nines instead of nine fours in solving a problem. They do not always have the time and practical support they need to consolidate and apply their skills.

4. In science, the pupils' work reflects good knowledge about living things, materials and forces. Their explanations of what they observe are couched in scientific terms that show an above average understanding. For example, they explain in detail how sound is produced and the mechanisms by which the ear transfers the sound vibrations into signals to the brain. They show a similarly good understanding of how light produces images in the eye, using clear diagrams to illustrate the pathways taken by the light. Their experimental and investigative skills are also above average, including relating their work in the classroom to discoveries made by scientists. For example, after learning about Fleming's discovery of penicillin, they carried out an experiment on how mould grows on bread. They drew the general conclusion from their results that mould is less likely to grow on food if air is circulating around it. Their work contains a range of graphs, including line graphs, and some clear interpretations and explanations - although this is not a consistent feature of the work in their books. There is little evidence, also, of their repeating observations and measurements to confirm their hypotheses, and explaining any differences that may occur, or how they could improve their methods. This is an area for further development in their investigative and experimental skills.
5. The pupils' work in most aspects of ICT is above that expected for their age throughout Years 3 to 6 because of the ready access they have to computers, the range of software available for them to use and the good teaching they receive. Innovative use of new technology by the school contributes to this good progress. For example, an interactive link through computers enabled the pupils to be taught directly how to assemble electronic circuits by the design and technology specialist at the feeder comprehensive school. The quality of the circuits the pupils subsequently incorporated into their burglar alarm models was well above average as a consequence. Some of the pupils also received good support from home with this project, enabling them to produce very sophisticated designs and models for their age. High-attaining pupils demonstrate exceptional skills using computer programs that simulate electronic circuits. The pupils are also very confident at word-processing and basic desk-top publishing techniques, using these skills to support their learning in many subjects, especially in Years 3 to 6. They produce posters and leaflets, varying the layout and illustrations, and colour, size and format of the font for the text to suit their purposes. Good examples were seen of posters relating to the Second World War that included slogans such as 'Make Spitfires, Make Peace' and of 'Wanted Rabbi' posters in which the pupils outlined the qualities needed for the post. This illustrates how ICT is being used well to support and enrich good teaching in history and religious education. Computers have also been used as a monitoring tool. For example, the pupils have recorded the lowest and highest levels of light in the school. This has led to good scientific thinking into the causes of temperature and light variation. For instance, a low daytime reading for light was traced back to a particularly heavy storm that had occurred. Pupils also use spreadsheets to process data and display the results in graph form to support their mathematics. The variety and quality of the pupils' work in ICT across the curriculum are a very strong feature of the school's provision.

Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together to form an effective teaching team.

6. The close co-operation between the teachers and teaching assistants throughout the school enhances the quality and range of activities that are offered in lessons, improves the ethos for learning and enhances the pupils' progress and personal development.
7. The headteacher is very supportive of the teaching assistants in terms of facilitating their professional development. All are undertaking induction training via the local education authority, while some are also attending additional courses on specific aspects of provision such as personal, social and health education. The teachers make the most of the resulting expertise by involving the teaching assistants fully in the planning, preparation and delivery of lessons, allowing

them to take on as much responsibility as they feel able and confident to do. This extends to the direct teaching of lessons, which are very successful on occasions. For example, a very good physical education lesson was seen which a teaching assistant taught under the class teacher's supervision. The teaching assistant's knowledge and enthusiasm, combined with the active and skilful support of the class teacher generated a very positive response from the pupils, very good progress and a good level of performance. However, other lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 in which the teachers or teaching assistants were teaching subjects because the 'specialist' was absent, and in which the quality of learning was not so good. This highlights the importance of monitoring the effectiveness of these arrangements to ensure consistency of provision throughout the school.

8. The reception children benefit from the teamwork that has been established between the teacher responsible and the classroom assistants. When they are at play, the children have access to a number of adults who understand their evolving needs. This enables them to learn through talking about what they are doing in accordance with the Foundation Stage curriculum guidelines. The teacher and teaching assistants know the children well and can therefore adapt activities to match their developing skills. Very occasionally, the youngest children are incorporated into activities that are too formal and demanding for them. Both the teacher and teaching assistant are quick to spot this happening, however, and move the children into more play-based learning. They are skilled at taking every opportunity to encourage the children to learn the basic skills that underlie reading, writing and counting, so that they make rapid progress in these areas in preparation for beginning the National Curriculum in Year 1.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are very closely involved in self-evaluation.

9. The school is a hard-working community. All the pupils are very aware of the high expectations that the teachers and their parents have of them, and respond very positively. They work hard and are proud of their achievements.
10. The pupils have very good relationships with one another and with the many adults who work in the school. They are very confident indeed compared to pupils of a similar age in other schools. The older pupils initiate conversations with adults in a very self-assured way and respond intelligently and thoughtfully to questions. Their written work reflects their maturity and also indicates a willingness and ability to look at things from other people's perspectives. For example, when studying the Victorian period, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils considered what the reactions of people in different parts of society might be to the coming of the railway. Their writing indicates that good attempts were made to imagine and empathise with what the individuals concerned might have thought and felt.
11. The subject of many of the conversations initiated by the pupils during the inspection was the quality of their work and their school. They were very anxious to present a positive picture, indicating a high degree of commitment and loyalty. This is rooted in a genuine affectionate regard for their school, as was demonstrated in the pieces they wrote to say why they think the school is so good. The older pupils' writing showed a real awareness of how lucky they perceived themselves to be, for example in having a village green to play on in safety. They also expressed an appreciation of the challenge and variety they experience in the curriculum that the school provides.
12. The pupils' responses in the lessons seen reflected the attitudes that were apparent in the writing. In a very good English lesson in the Year 3 and 4 class, for example, the pupils responded with enthusiasm and creative energy to the teacher's challenge to imagine and describe an 'explorer's attic'. They worked hard to incorporate features such as adjectives and alliteration into their poems in response to the teachers excellent explanations of how these devices enlivened poetry. In a very good dance lesson in Year 5/6, the pupils achieved an above average performance in a sequence based on a fairground because of the very positive way they responded to the teacher's own enthusiastic and challenging input. They showed very good levels of maturity in adapting

some vigorous movements to the restricted confines of the village hall and very good initiative in asking if they could evaluate each other's work and suggest improvements.

13. On occasions, the pupils' responses are inhibited by the teaching methods used and the organisation of groups. For example, the youngest children in the reception class did not pay attention to the formal input in some of the lessons seen during the inspection because of their natural impulse to chat and play. Also, pupils who have been moved up a class because of their academic prowess show levels of maturity that are commensurate with their own peer group rather than that of the older age-group of the class on occasions and therefore respond inappropriately. As a rule, the quality of the pupils' responses in lessons reflects the quality of the teachers' input and the opportunities they have to demonstrate initiative and show responsibility.
14. Self-evaluation is a strong feature of the school. The pupils are very mature in their awareness of their progress and in the way they participate in setting their own targets. In this, they are responding very favourably to the encouraging ethos they experience at home and at school. The pupils take work home regularly and complete it conscientiously. As they progress through the school, they take an increasingly active role in determining what they should aim for next. They have their targets written down so that they can refer to them in class and show a good awareness of where these are leading to in terms of National Curriculum attainment levels. This high degree of active participation on the part of the pupils in aiming for high levels contributes positively to the school's continuing success in the national tests.

The school makes very good provision for pupils' welfare and personal development.

15. The maturity, responsibility and very good attitudes displayed by the pupils reflect the school's success in promoting high expectations within a relaxed atmosphere in which the pupils feel secure and valued. The pupils know what they need to do to succeed academically, but they also feel valued at a personal level. The school ensures that rewards are given out regularly for non-academic achievements, for example helping others, working hard or achieving success in activities outside of school. This encourages the pupils to value their own interests and strengths and to appreciate what other people achieve. The pupils' reflections on their experience at the school confirm that they really value this aspect of provision.
16. The health, safety and welfare of the children are very well provided for. All members of staff are fully aware of child protection procedures, which are closely monitored by the headteacher and one of the governors. Regular health and safety checks, risk assessments and fire drills are carried out and recorded and first aid facilities are very accessible. The school has to contend with the dangers inherent in the children using the narrow road to enter and leave the premises and to attend physical education lessons in the village hall. The headteacher, staff and parents are very vigilant about this and the pupils very aware and responsible but the risks cannot be eradicated completely until the transfer to the new school.
17. The school has a very effective overall approach to personal, social and health education. A very good formal syllabus is in place so that the pupils have opportunities to engage in discussion and debate on a range of issues. The curriculum is well thought-out to include wider social questions such as the desirability of keeping wild animals in zoos to more personal concerns such as bullying and racism. To complement this educational input, the school has set up the 'message to Ted' system. This is a very effective mechanism to enable individual pupils to deal with some of their own personal concerns and problems by writing a note to 'Ted' the teddy bear. The issue is then discussed by the class if appropriate and a message sent back to the child via Ted. This enables real issues to be aired in a non-confrontational and non-threatening way, and is much appreciated by parents and children alike.
18. The school's anti-bullying and anti-racist policies are clear and effective and help to establish and promote an inclusive ethos. The staff, pupils and parents are aware of the school's expectations

in these matters. The school is also pro-active on occasions in responding to world events that have a bearing on the pupils' attitudes. For example, following the September 11th attack, a display was set up to explain Islam and promote a more positive image of it. The pupils were involved in practical ways, such as making designs based on Islamic geometrical patterns. Plans were in hand at the time of the last inspection to establish links with a multicultural school but these have not yet come to fruition.

The headteacher provides very clear educational direction and is fully supported by the staff, parents and governors.

19. The headteacher provides very good educational direction for the school, based on high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. As a matter of course, all pupils are expected to work towards Level 5 in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Increasingly, more able pupils are aiming at Level 6, particularly in mathematics. However, the headteacher exhorts the pupils to aim for wider achievements than those that are currently measured by the national tests. Central to this strategy is the drive to equip the pupils with the best possible information and communication technology skills. The school has been designated as a 'Beacon' school for many of its strengths including leadership and management, information and communication technology and mathematics.
20. A second strand of the headteacher's successful leadership is the formation of fruitful partnerships with other schools and with business. For example, sponsorship of new computers has been arranged through a commercial company, enabling the pupils to have much easier access to computers and therefore more time to practise and extend their skills. Links with the feeder comprehensive school have made direct specialist teaching available through an interactive computer-video link. The headteacher has brought similar energy and vision to developing the proposed new school building as a model high-tech school of the future.
21. The headteacher has established a creative approach to the organisation of teaching. This has helped the teachers to consider how best to utilise their skills and make the most of the building and the available support from teaching assistants and parent volunteers. The innovative methods include specialist subject teaching and a lot of small group teaching as well as the extensive use of information and communication technology, especially in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of some subjects by specialists was seen to have a very positive impact in some cases, for example history in Years 3 to 6.
22. Everyone connected with the school is supportive of the headteacher. The parents' questionnaire returns and views expressed at the parents' meeting were exceptionally positive, with hardly any reservations about any aspects of the school's provision. This support is expressed in very practical ways too, from fund-raising to hearing the pupils read in school and helping them to design improvements to the toilets. Many parents were involved in the daily life of the school during the inspection. This contributes to establishing and maintaining a very positive ethos. The headteacher has been instrumental in improving the opportunities that pupils have to share in shaping the direction of the school through the School Council. The pupils put forward their ideas for school improvement in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously.
23. The school staff is united in support of the headteacher's vision for the school. The teachers undertake subject management responsibilities in addition to their class-teaching duties but, up until now, there have been no responsibility posts for management other than the headteacher. This is about to change in recognition of the need for more support for the headteacher in managing the many changes that are already happening as well as ensuring that the new school is everything the pupils need for their future education. Teaching assistants play their part in taking on a wider range of teaching and whole-school responsibilities than is usually the case.
24. The governors are very active in fulfilling their duties. They are proud of the school and determined that it should continue to be successful. Many of them are parents of children at the school. They undertake direct monitoring to see for themselves how well the school is working, and fulfil their obligation to hold the school to account very robustly. The headteacher receives very

valuable professional support from the vice-chair of the governing body, who advises her on management matters.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The monitoring, evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning.

25. Overall, the quality of teaching in the school is good and secures good learning for the pupils, leading to good achievement overall and very good results in the national tests at the end of Year 6. The headteacher is closely involved in teaching, taking responsibility for supporting specific groups and individuals through the tests. For example, this year, she is teaching the highest-attaining groups of Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils so that those who are capable of it can achieve Level 6. Last year, much of her input was to support some lower-attaining pupils so that they could achieve Level 4. This level of teaching commitment has left insufficient time for the headteacher to directly monitor teaching and learning throughout the school, or to release other teachers to do so. Aspects of teaching and learning were identified during the inspection that could have been picked up by such monitoring.
26. Among the areas for further improvement in teaching and learning identified during the inspection were:
- The provision for more practical learning for those pupils who need it. In some of the mathematics lessons seen, younger and lower-attaining pupils needed to engage in more practical activities to improve their understanding and skills. This was overlooked because of the generally high level of understanding in the class as a whole.
 - The monitoring of individual pupils who have been placed in older year groups because of their academic progress. This system works well in some subject areas but the pupils are not necessarily mature enough to cope with all aspects of the work presented to the older pupils. An example was seen in a PSHE lesson in which the very young pupil's suggestions were much less mature than those of the rest of the class.
 - It was not always clear what individuals or groups of pupils should have been doing at particular times. For example, on one occasion, the class teacher was not aware how much of a lesson one pupil had missed because of instrumental tuition. Closer monitoring of individuals' timetables would appear to be necessary.
 - The balance between teacher input and pupil involvement could be better in some lessons, even the good ones. In particular, the pupils would benefit from more opportunities to present their ideas in full and to question each other about them, without the teacher's intervention. In some lessons in Years 1 and 2, in particular, opportunities were missed to provide first-hand experiences to enrich and strengthen the pupils' learning.
 - Although marking is used well to identify targets, it is not used as well as it could be as a means of engaging the pupils in a dialogue about their work. For example, few instances were seen of pupils being praised for a particular achievement – say, the choice of a word in a poem or the way they presented the results of an experiment. Specific suggestions about how to improve individual pieces of work were also not prominent. For example, in the science books, opportunities were missed to get the pupils to explain fully their results and then to lead them into repeating observations or asking the next question for themselves to investigate.
 - In lessons that are taken by teachers other than the class teacher, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are not always as positive as they otherwise are.

These developmental points are typical of what might emerge from a systematic programme of monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning but which can be missed under the day-to-day pressure of teaching.

27. The governors have accepted that the headteacher needs more support in the monitoring aspect of her management role. They have allocated promotional points to members of staff linked to managerial responsibility to take effect from September. This puts the school in an even stronger position to continue improving the all round level of provision and achievement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

28. The governors have already implemented procedures to facilitate improved monitoring and evaluating of the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and staff should:
- Use the management time provided to identify clearly what works best in teaching and learning in each key stage and make improvements where they are needed. (Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 7, 13, 26, 27)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The inspection evaluated specifically the contribution of teaching assistants to the teaching of literacy and numeracy and how well they are managed in the school.

29. The inspection focused on the support provided in literacy and numeracy in the Year 3 and 4 class, as this is the only class that has regular, specific support in the literacy and numeracy lessons. However, the contribution of teaching assistants in other classes to the pupils' progress was also evaluated and reported on above (paragraphs 6-8) as this was identified as a strength of the school.
30. The contribution made by teaching assistants to the teaching of literacy is very good. Good subject knowledge and thorough preparation of lessons in collaboration with the class teacher underpin very effective work with targeted groups. For example, in a very successful poetry lesson, the teaching assistant supported a lower-attaining group by suggesting a first line for them, showing them how to make a list of ideas and helping them with finding new words using a thesaurus. This competent teaching enabled the class teacher to focus on other groups so that the best was brought out of most of the pupils.
31. The quality of support for the teaching of numeracy is good. The subject knowledge is not quite as strong as in English but is good nevertheless. More training is needed in the best ways to enable the pupils to explain and develop their own strategies for solving problems. In the lesson seen, the teaching assistant worked with the younger, lower-attaining pupils. She supported them well with the work they were doing on using the three and four times tables. The area for development in the teaching assistants' contribution was the same as for the lesson as a whole. This was in the use of practical apparatus, such as individual whiteboards, to enable pupils to write down answers and methods for comparison and discussion.
32. The teaching assistants generally make a good contribution to learning in English and mathematics and across the curriculum generally because of the very effective way in which they are managed. They are made to feel equal partners with teachers, which improves their self-esteem and effectiveness. They are invited to staff meetings and work very closely with teachers in planning and reviewing lessons. They have all attended the local authority's induction training and are encouraged to develop their skills further according to individual interests. The headteacher accords them professional status by giving them wider responsibilities. For example, one teaching assistant takes physical education lessons in Years 1 and 2; another takes physical education lessons in Years 3 to 6 and oversees PSHE throughout the school. The main area for improvement in the management of the teaching assistants is in the systematic monitoring of the quality of their work, especially when they are given whole-class responsibilities.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	8	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	13	54	33	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		91
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		0

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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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
		2001	7	8

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	93 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	93 (100)	93 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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
		2001	2	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	72 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

(Where the number of pupils in any groups is less than ten, comparative statistics are not published)

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	81
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.9
Average class size	22.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
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	2001
	£
Total income	204,879
Total expenditure	236,975
Expenditure per pupil	2,822
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,693
Balance carried forward to next year	43,343

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	91
Number of questionnaires returned	57

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	30	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	60	35	4	0	2
The teaching is good.	88	12	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	44	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	23	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	93	7	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	58	37	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	75	25	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	18	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	33	15	4	0

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The parents' views are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised.