

INSPECTION REPORT

Lowes Wong Junior School

Southwell

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122769

Headteacher: Mrs. S. Street

Reporting inspector: Kate Ford
1470

Dates of inspection: 11 – 12 March 2002

Inspection number: 197401

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Queen Street Southwell Nottinghamshire NG25 0AA
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Julie Payne
Date of previous inspection:	15 th September 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lowes Wong is a larger than average junior school with 216 boys and 197 girls in classes from Year 3 to Year 6. It caters for pupils who come from several different infant schools in Southwell and the surrounding area. Lowes Wong is joint denominational in character, and is affiliated to both the Anglican and Methodist churches. Many pupils come from advantaged homes, and have good language, literacy and number skills when they begin in Year 3. Almost all the pupils are of white ethnic origin. Only seven pupils have English as an additional language, and of these, only two are at an early stage of English acquisition. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, and so is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. There are 67 pupils on the schools special educational needs register, with the majority, 58 pupils, on the early stages of the register, identified as requiring some extra support. Of the remaining nine pupils who receive further additional support, two have Statements of Special Educational Need. Since the previous inspection, the governors have appointed a new head teacher who took up post in September 2001.

The ethos of the school is based on Christian principles, and it is the school's aim that this Christian foundation translates into reciprocal respect and mutual support between members of the school community as well as extending to the wider community.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school striving to be better under the clear-sighted, highly effective leadership of a new head teacher. Pupils are achieving high standards in their work. The head teacher is providing excellent leadership to a vibrant school community, which is committed to continued improvement. The teaching is very good and, as a result, pupils are achieving very high standards, particularly in English and science. The overall picture is very positive, and the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good teaching results in pupils achieving very high standards in English and in science.
- Pupils achieve very high standards in art and design.
- Pupils' attitudes to work, to adults, and to each other are excellent and this contributes significantly to their very good achievements.
- The school's provision for spiritual and social development is excellent, and this adds to pupils' confidence about themselves and their work.
- Excellent leadership and management are setting a very clear direction for the school and focusing accurately on areas for further improvement.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics are not as high as they should be in comparison to pupils' achievements in other subjects.

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 and has made good progress in improving since that time. Some improvements have taken place over the longer period since the inspection, but the new head teacher has provided an added impetus, by undertaking a very thorough review of all aspects of the school's work. She has set out, in consultation with staff and governors, a very clear plan of action for the future.

The school has improved its provision for religious education and the subject is now taught in line with requirements. Provision for design and technology has improved. The school devotes the right amount of time to the subject, teaching has improved, and design and technology is well managed throughout the school. The role of all subject co-ordinators has been reviewed. Teachers have a very clear understanding of what is expected of the role, and how their responsibilities fit into the school's overall funding arrangements and improvement plan.

The head teacher has undertaken a very thorough analysis of the school's arrangements for checking pupils' progress and on the use of performance data from National Curriculum tests. There is a newly formed assessment team and a coherent approach to improving both the use of information from national tests and the use of teachers' assessments to improve pupils' learning and achievements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A*	A	B
mathematics	A	A	B	C
science	A	A	A*	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The school's results show that pupils perform well in national tests at the end of Year 6, particularly in science where the school's performance in 2001 was in the top five per cent nationally. The test results reflect the inspection findings, that by the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving standards that are well above what is expected for their age. In mathematics they achieve standards that are above what is expected but lack the extra dimension to achievement that is evident in the other two core subjects. In 2001 the school surpassed its English targets, with a significant number of pupils achieving the higher levels. The school did not achieve its mathematics target, partly because fewer pupils achieved the higher Level 5 than in English and science, affecting the overall outcome. The school is increasingly very analytical in setting its targets for pupils' performance, based on careful periodic assessments. Improvements are in line with national trends, but this should be interpreted cautiously, the strong trends in English and science tending to mask a rather weaker picture in mathematics. Throughout the school all pupils are making good progress in their learning. Teachers provide very good help to pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Consequently they achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are invariably extremely positive and enthusiastic about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very polite to adults and to each other. They behave very well in lessons and assemblies, as well as at lunch and break times.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils have very positive relationships with adults and each other. They care for, and are interested in those with whom they work, and are very mature for their age. Pupils are keen to take on extra responsibility and they undertake tasks enthusiastically.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. All the teaching seen was at least satisfactory, and most was good or better. Half of all the teaching seen was very good and excellent, most notably in English and science. Teaching in mathematics was also good but lacked the excellent features of some English and science lessons, particularly in the extent to which higher attaining pupils were extended in their thinking. Very good teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills provides a very good basis for pupils' further learning.

Particular strengths in the quality of teaching are the relationships that teachers have with their pupils. This establishes a very good foundation for learning. A consistent feature of the teaching is the respect that teachers give to the views and ideas expressed by pupils. Pupils know that they, and their ideas, are valued and this adds to their self-confidence and to their ability to be tentative and exploratory in their learning. Teachers are clear about what they expect by way of behaviour, concentration and effort, and pupils respond very positively to the challenge. Teachers, through their planning and organisation, ensure that all their pupils have an equal chance to succeed, and make strenuous efforts to ensure that all pupils enjoy access to the school's curriculum. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are helped to make good progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. All aspects of the statutory curriculum are taken seriously and planned very carefully. Together with an extensive range of visits, events and after school activities, this adds up to a very rich curriculum for pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The quality of teaching and the help given ensures that many of these pupils achieve the standards that are expected, by the age of eleven.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. These pupils are well supported and the school 'goes the extra mile' in ensuring that teaching and resources are used effectively to ensure their progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Personal development is strongly and very effectively promoted in the school at every opportunity. The provision for spiritual and social development is particularly noteworthy and adds significant value to the quality of education provided by the school
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are looked after very well. All the necessary procedures are in place to ensure their safety. Beyond this, there are many examples of the staff understanding, and being sensitive to the needs of individuals, so that pupils are secure in the knowledge that they are cared for. Teachers increasingly track pupils' progress well, using the results to adapt their teaching methods.

The quality of the curriculum is a real strength in the school. The school's very methodical and disciplined approach to timetabling ensures that all subjects are given sufficient time each week or over the term. Despite the emphasis rightly given to continued improvement in literacy and numeracy, the arts are valued, and this is evident in the quality of artwork displayed in the school. Teaching is enriched by a number of visits, visitors and

the creative approach employed by teachers when planning their work. The number of activities outside lessons adds significant value to the experiences of pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Excellent. The head teacher has made a very significant impact on the school. Building judiciously on the work of her predecessor, the head teacher has been sensitive, insightful and analytical about the way forward. She has worked most effectively with a committed and professional senior management team to reach a consensus about what needs to be done to ensure continued improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is insightful and knowledgeable about the school, is involved in setting priorities, and knows what is needed to continue to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The head teacher and senior team have introduced a very systematic approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and to targeting improvements. As a result, the strengths and weaknesses of the school are very well understood, and targeted.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school uses its resources very well to help all pupils achieve high standards. The principle of 'best value is well-understood and taken into account by the governing body in its work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most.	What parents would like to see improved
<p>The vast majority of parents feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. • Teachers expect pupils to work hard. • Teaching and behaviour are good. • The school is very approachable when parents have questions or concerns. 	<p>A small number of parents feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level and type of homework are not always suitable. • There could be better information provided about their children's progress. • The school could work more closely with parents. • There could be improvements to the range of activities outside lessons.

Parents responding to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents are right in their assessment of the school's positive features. The head teacher leads the school very ably, and staff are very approachable. Teaching is very good. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils, who also find staff approachable. Behaviour in the school is very good. Concerns that there are not enough activities outside lessons are unfounded. There is a very good range of activities available. Teachers give generously of their time to organise these activities, which contribute significantly to the rich curriculum enjoyed by pupils. Homework provision is satisfactory. There is a clear policy and pupils receive homework regularly. The school is increasingly looking at ways to ensure that this is better used to improve pupils' learning in lessons. There is room for improvement in the level of detail provided for parents, both in the prospectus and in pupils' annual reports.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Very good teaching results in pupils achieving very high standards in English and science

1. The quality of teaching in the school is very good and it is sometimes excellent in some Year 5 and Year 6 classes. Unsurprisingly, this has a significant impact and is the single most important factor in Year 6 pupils achieving such high standards, well above the national average for their age group in English and in science.
2. Pupils produce some stunning work in English because teachers have a very good grasp of the subject; they expect very high standards, never accepting the 'easy' answer. Teachers value pupils' ideas, and extend their thinking and understanding by very focused and purposeful questioning and open discussion of ideas. In a lesson with Year 5 on the use of 'personification' in writing, the teacher's own knowledge came through strongly in the examples offered to the pupils. Because she clearly valued pupils' suggestions, this triggered a wave of enthusiastic responses, and many thoughtful and insightful suggestions followed. The eventual spin-off into pupils' writing was marked, with excellent examples, demonstrating a mature understanding of the idea, such as 'traffic lights stare, blink, wink', 'London cabs crawl, slither around...' 'Parked cars snooze, chatter...'. Pupils' books contain very mature and varied writing, including tabloid style, humorous and dramatic pieces, all showing a very good imaginative vocabulary and a very good understanding of the conventions of writing.
3. Teachers plan their work in English very well, and always share the aims of lessons, so that all pupils are clear about what they are doing and what is expected. Teachers positively encourage the contribution of pupils, and as a result pupils are mature in conversation, and have no inhibitions about expressing their views and ideas, albeit politely. In a school council discussion, older pupils displayed very good skills in considering the outcomes of a questionnaire on pupils' views of the school, and were well able to take account of opposing points of view and the less mature views of younger pupils. In another class, Year 6 pupils were impressive in their ability to discuss each others' work and to offer constructive critical comment, while being sensitive to the feelings of others. The teacher used the work of one child to discuss the features of writing a parody, and to demonstrate how to improve the writing. Pupils responded very positively, in relation both to the issue under discussion and the feelings of the child concerned. These strengths are not isolated, but, to varying degrees, are features in teachers' work across the school. They are rather more noticeable in Years 5 and 6, where pupils' increasing maturity adds another significant and positive dimension to teaching and learning.
4. Pupils who have particular learning needs are always helped very well to make good progress and achieve good standards of work. The school is sensitive to the needs of individuals and aware of how small issues can loom large for children, and have a negative impact on their learning. For example the school was careful to provide a familiar adult to support a pupil, requiring stability in relationships and whose own adult helper was absent. The majority of pupils for whom English is an additional language speak fluently, do not require extra support, and make good progress in their learning. However for one child who continues to need specific help, the school has made strenuous efforts to assist the development of English.
5. Pupils do very well in science and produce work of high quality because the teaching is very good. Teachers plan science work carefully. As in English, they have very good subject

knowledge, which they use very effectively to ensure that pupils use appropriate scientific vocabulary. This helps pupils' learning, and was evident when Year 6 pupils talked confidently, and at length, about scientific topics and investigations, emphasising the importance of fair testing and careful recording of results. Their understanding of scientific ideas was enhanced by their ability to be precise in their explanations. The school places a proper emphasis on knowledge and understanding and investigative work. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills most effectively in note taking, listing items, labelling, factual writing, the creation of a brochure for a country park, and the presentation of data in graphs and tables.

6. In an excellent lesson with Year 5 pupils on the relationship between the sun, moon and earth, the teacher brought together elements of science, geography and spiritual and cultural awareness. The use of well-chosen video material allowed pupils to gain real insights into the meaning and importance of daylight and darkness in peoples' lives in a lesson, which made excellent links with other subjects but never lost sight of its scientific objectives. In summarising the lesson, the teacher made excellent use of 'pyramid' graphs to encourage pupils to make hypotheses about the hours of daylight in various parts of the world. Not only was this an excellent way of recording scientific data, but the activity acted as a very good assessment of what had been learned by individuals.
7. A key feature in teaching, which contributes significantly to the high standards that pupils achieve in science, is that teachers clearly value pupils' views, encouraging them to be tentative in their thinking and to talk about even half formed ideas. Phrases such as "Well it's only my opinion but..." or "I'm not sure but I think..." were commonplace in science lessons, and signified the good self esteem and confidence needed for pupils to learn successfully.

Pupils achieve very high standards in art and design.

8. A very successful feature of the school's curriculum is the standards that pupils achieve in their artwork. Given the many other priorities in the curriculum, it is to the school's credit that it maintains, and is developing, the art curriculum, and this reflects the wider picture of an enriched curriculum, to which the school is committed.
9. There are several reasons for the high standards in art. The subject is valued. It is well planned and proper time is given to it. The timetable is simultaneously both structured and flexible enough to ensure that sufficient time is available for pupils to make good progress. On the one hand, the school's thoughtful approach has ensured that art is timetabled in all classes regularly. On the other hand, because the subject is valued, the timetable can on occasion be altered to allow for longer blocks of time for certain aspects of the subject to be developed. This provides pupils with the space and time needed to produce work of high quality.
10. Another reason for high standards is the very detailed policy and guidance, which helps teachers to plan carefully and sequentially the skills to be taught. The dowdy colours of the evacuees' clothes, matching the atmosphere in the large collaborative pictures in Year 6 show that pupils make good progress in acquiring their skills in colour mixing. These skills are evident in other work on display such as the Tudor portraits, which also show fine attention to facial features and decorative detail. Throughout the school pupils show very good use of colour, and parrots painted by Year 3 pupils have been carefully done. This attention to detail and the need for care was reflected in the work of pupils in a Year 4 class, who made masks and worked very precisely, with fine brushes, painstakingly and patiently'. The results were very individual and lively. This is reflected at a more advanced level by the work in Year 6

inspired by Monet, in which pupils are developing their brush skills still further, with very mature results.

11. The school emphasises the development of skills, and on occasion this leads to some loss of individuality and 'sameness' in the end result. However this is by no means always the case. Excellent work inspired by artists such as Pablo Picasso and David Hockney, reflected a vibrant, imaginative and very personal interpretation by older pupils. The pupils' sketchbooks, which they take through the school, show how they develop their skills in line drawing over time. The books also indicate the range of work done in art including artistic appreciation and the drafting of ideas.
12. The development of art in the school owes much to the good management of the subject by a specialist art teacher, who has involved local artists in working alongside the pupils on two and three dimensional art projects. Pupils make visits to art galleries and the school has organised an art festival, all of which add considerable value to pupils' curricular experiences. The subject contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.

Pupils' attitudes to work, to adults, and to each other are excellent and this contributes significantly to their very good achievements

13. The excellent attitudes of pupils towards their work, their teachers and each other, together with the quality of teaching, combine to make a major contribution to the high standards of work achieved. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. They are interested in all aspects of school life and participate enthusiastically in both lessons and other activities that the school provides. They behave maturely, and enjoy very positive and fruitful relationships with their teachers and with other pupils.
14. Pupils respond very positively to the very good teaching. Teachers ensure that interesting resources and motivating activities are provided at the right levels. They take the time to seek out interesting texts to use in literacy, such as amusing stories and poems, and this pays dividends in pupils' enthusiastic responses. In English lessons, for example, pupils were invariably keen to carry out their personal writing tasks following whole class discussion of ideas, and were often impatient to begin work. In science lessons pupils quickly become absorbed in their investigations and concentrate for long periods, persevering with their tasks. In reading sessions, pupils in all classes quickly become engrossed in their reading or discussion of books with the teacher or other pupils.
15. Because they know their views are valued, pupils are keen to share their ideas and opinions, often bubbling with ideas. They are confident about expressing their needs and this has a very beneficial impact on their learning. In a lesson with Year 6 pupils, which involved noting the elements of a story as it was read, a pupil had no hesitation in requesting 'could you wait a minute because I want to write down all the headings and use them while I listen...?'
16. Pupils take on responsibility willingly, helping to prepare collective worship, organising reading support for younger pupils and taking responsibility around the school. Their self-discipline and responses to their lessons and to these opportunities to take responsibility are marks of considerable maturity for their age. This maturity and preparedness to take responsibility has a very positive impact in lessons, where pupils clearly see themselves as responsible for their learning and show a very clear desire to learn. This contributes significantly to the high standards that they achieve.

The school's provision for spiritual and social development is excellent, and this adds to pupils' confidence about themselves and their work.

17. The school's provision for personal development, especially spiritual and social development, is a real strength. The school provides many opportunities for reflection and thoughtfulness. Teachers use to good advantage the many opportunities for spiritual development, which exist in the curriculum, as well as those times when the school comes together for collective worship. Pupils are helped to understand the views and feelings of others through the school council, where they must be able to take into account the feelings and values of other pupils. They share their responses to works of art, and stories in religious education. Most importantly in lessons they are consistently taught to respect the values and views of others, and this is evident in their attitudes towards other pupils.
18. Pupils are encouraged to express themselves through writing, art and poetry and the school shows in its displays of pupils' work that this valued. A beautifully written book of commendations is kept in the entrance hall so that teachers, parents and children can see what the school values in its pupils. In a Year 6 lesson in physical education, pupils were given an opportunity to work in the dark to very evocative music, which encouraged them to respond thoughtfully. In a Year 5 classroom, a vase of spring flowers and a simple display added to the children's environment and opportunity to appreciate the beauty of nature. The spiritual dimension to a Year 5 science lesson on the earth, moon and sun added considerable value to the lesson and to pupils' learning.
19. Collective worship makes a strong and positive contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual awareness. In one assembly pupils listened to their teacher talking about music that is important to her, and the head teacher, on another occasion encouraged pupils to reflect on 'doing small things really well' throughout the day. There are many small examples such as this, which provide a continuous thread in the life of the school community, and which contribute towards excellent provision overall.
20. The school is extremely good at ensuring pupils' social development and this is evident in their co-operative skills, willingness to work together and their excellent attitudes, described in this report. Pupils are encouraged to raise funds for charities and on occasion they have instigated these activities themselves. Not only do teachers give pupils many opportunities in lessons and in other activities to co-operate and take responsibility, but also they model this behaviour themselves. Staff are highly professional, committed and very supportive of each other, and this sets the tone and expectations for pupils.

Excellent leadership and management are setting a very clear direction for the school and focusing accurately on the areas for further improvement.

21. The head teacher provides excellent leadership to the school community and, working with others, has set a very clear educational direction for the school. She has carried out a very thorough and insightful audit of the needs of the school, and has an exceptionally clear picture of what needs to be done to improve. It is a measure of her success to date, that several major initiatives have been introduced, especially in the fields of mathematics and assessment, whilst retaining the full support of governors a very committed senior management team, and a lively, thoughtful staff.
22. The head teacher has strengthened the roles and responsibilities of curriculum coordinators. They are now more effective in carrying out their roles, especially in relation to monitoring and

reviewing the quality of the curriculum and in using information from national tests where appropriate. Curriculum planning has been sharpened for all subjects, and this is having a very positive impact on teaching and on the standards achieved. Members of the senior management team are keenly aware of their individual and collective responsibilities. They work together very well and, between them, have responsibility for the key areas of the school's work, notably English, mathematics, science and assessment matters. There is a palpable sense of pride in carrying out these responsibilities effectively.

23. The head teacher has put in place a very effective system of monitoring and review which ensures that the progress of pupils is more closely monitored, and that the results are used to target pupils who need extra support. A crucial management decision has been the overhaul of the school's approach to teaching mathematics. A new system of planning in this subject has been introduced, and despite some anxieties, this is already having a positive impact. Teaching is now more closely aligned to the National Numeracy Programme and this is ensuring a better sequence to the teaching of mathematics concepts throughout the school
24. The governing body is doing a very good job. Governors take their responsibilities seriously. They have appropriate committees to help them to carry out their work, and there is good liaison between them to ensure that everyone is kept properly informed. Individual governors take responsibility for specific subjects; they liaise with subject co-ordinators and increasingly visit the school to keep up to date. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have a clear view of priorities, which are kept under review. Governors understand the literacy and numeracy strategies, and know that the school's results in mathematics in National Curriculum tests reveal underachievement compared to pupils' performance in other subjects. They are keeping a watchful eye on this in discussions with the head teacher.
25. The real strength of leadership in the school lies in the strong sense of community and teamwork engendered by the head teacher. There has been a very significant impact on the school in the short time she has been in post. Building judiciously on the work of her predecessor, the head teacher has been sensitive, insightful and analytical about the way forward, and this provides an excellent foundation for future improvements.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards and teaching in mathematics are not as high as they should be in comparison to pupils' achievements in other subjects.

26. The results in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 showed that pupils did very well in English and science when compared to schools across the country and to similar schools. This was not the case in mathematics, where results have been consistently lower than in English and science over recent years, dipping again in 2001. The head teacher and governing body had already identified this by the time of the inspection and it was agreed that this would be a main focus for inspection.
27. There are several reasons why standards have not been as high as they should be. Until this school year, mathematics was not given sufficient regular time each week in order to teach all the parts of the subject successfully. There was a heavy emphasis on using a mathematics scheme, which was not closely aligned to the National Numeracy Strategy.
28. The findings of the inspection reflect the picture of performance in tests with a more mixed picture of teaching, provision and standards, and lessons, which sometimes, but not always,

lacked the sparkle of English, and science lessons. It was noticeable that there was less good and very good teaching in mathematics than in other subjects.

29. Teachers are working with new 'setting' arrangements, whereby pupils are taught in classes with others who are at a similar stage of learning, and with fairly new teaching material to support their planning for mathematics. This is still settling down, but there are several features emerging that the school will need to consider. In some lessons, even within 'sets', work was not sufficiently well matched to the needs of different pupils, with some higher attaining pupils not as actively engaged as they might have been. In a Year 4 lesson on odd and even numbers, some higher attaining pupils 'marked time' in the set tasks. With more careful explanations from the teacher and a better-structured activity, progress could have been faster. In a Year 5 lesson on time, the use of an identical worksheet as the initial task for all pupils did not provide sufficient challenge for some pupils who completed this very quickly. Although a more difficult worksheet was made available, this form of organisation did not challenge pupils well enough from the outset of the lesson. Where this is the accepted format of lessons over time, it leads to a slow rate of progress.
30. There is a danger that, having discarded one commercial scheme; some teachers may replace it slavishly with another. There were instances of teachers limiting the scope of mathematical tasks, despite their own professional judgement and knowledge of their pupils, in order to fit the task into the commercial worksheet designed to support the work. This was very limiting for some pupils, particularly those capable of attempting more complex problems. In a Year 3 lesson on partitioning numbers as a way of adding, one pupil's very good grasp of addition was misunderstood because she had not worked out the answer according to the teacher's formula.
31. Some teachers are more accomplished than others at using the mental starter activities and the plenary sessions. In some lessons the mental 'starters' were not pacy enough so that the pupils' attention was not always maintained. For example the use of the whole class to order numbers from minus 10 to plus 10 in a Year 4 lesson took a long time, and could have been done more quickly. The individual whiteboards used by pupils to display their answers were not always used to best advantage by teachers, for example in asking pupils to explain their answers where these differed from others. On occasion, pupils simply copied the answer from others, and the teacher did not always pick this up. In the best 'starter' activities, the teacher varied the questions to suit the known needs of individuals, and kept the pace fast and lively. This set the tone for a good lesson and, as a result, good progress.
32. The best plenary sessions were given ample time and not 'squeezed' into the last three or four minutes of a lesson. Teachers usually recap on the aims of the lesson very well and this helps pupils, over the course of the week, to be clear about their own learning and what is expected day-by-day. In a very good plenary session with higher attainers in a Year 5 lesson on estimation, the teacher allowed plenty of time, and encouraged pupils explicitly to talk about what they found difficult. This proved a highly effective way of furthering learning for pupils, and of assessment by the teacher.
33. Because of the way in which the mathematics curriculum is currently organised, teachers give far fewer opportunities for investigative tasks than in other subjects such as science. Indeed, a consistent, if implicit, thread in several lessons was 'Can pupils do this?' rather than 'What can pupils do?' and it was clear from talking to pupils that often they were capable of more than was being asked of them. There were however some good examples of homework in

Year 6, which allowed full rein to pupils' interest in numbers, and enabled all pupils to handle a common problem at an appropriate level.

34. Although the picture is 'mixed', nevertheless most of the teaching was good or very good. Most teachers have a good grasp of the subject and they plan their lessons very carefully, sharing the aims of lessons with pupils. The notes on teachers' day-to-day planning show that they take account of what has gone before when planning for the next lesson, and that they evaluate their work thoughtfully. The quality of questioning is often high. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher challenged pupils very well throughout the lesson with very focused questions, and made good use of pupils' homework in the lesson itself, as a way of checking pupils' understanding. In a lesson with Year 6 pupils, the teacher was very precise about the aims of the lesson in relation to using grid references - 'Yesterday was about accuracy, today is about confident use...' The mental starter in this lesson was particularly effective and involved an element of competition to which pupils responded positively. The teacher used very motivating resources and the main activity involved a game of 'battleships', which enthused pupils so that they made excellent progress in their learning. There is some very good practice in mathematics teaching on which to draw in making further improvements.
35. The subject is very well managed. There is a well-considered action plan in place. The coordinator is very clear about what needs to be done in ensuring that the subject is taught systematically in each year group according to the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils' progress is increasingly carefully monitored, and the school is very well placed to achieve the improvements it seeks.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. The governing body, head teacher and staff should:

(1) Improve standards in mathematics by:

- implementing the current action plan for the subject;
- providing further support and guidance for teaching through exchange lessons within the school and visits;
- providing work within the mathematics 'sets' that meets the needs of individuals, especially higher attainers;
- provide ways to present more open - ended work to pupils.

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	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	8	7	4	0	0	0
Percentage	13%	34%	37%	16%	0%	0%	0%

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than four percentage points

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		413
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		67

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	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	58	65	123

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	49	48	57
	Girls	59	48	61
	Total	108	96	118
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88(94)	78(88)	96(97)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	49	49	57
	Girls	60	50	63
	Total	109	99	120
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89(89)	81(88)	98(98)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	403
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	29

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	151

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	na
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	na
Total number of education support staff	na
Total aggregate hours worked per week	na
Number of pupils per FTE adult	na

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	8

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	742215
Total expenditure	716400
Expenditure per pupil	1621
Balance brought forward from previous year	- 8931
Balance carried forward to next year	16884

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

47.9%

Number of questionnaires sent out

413

Number of questionnaires returned

198

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	47	8	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	41	52	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	55	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	54	15	4	1
The teaching is good.	58	38	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	48	18	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	35	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	41	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	31	58	11	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	53	44	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	43	6	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	56	12	0	4

Other issues raised by parents

There were 26 additional responses, mainly very positive, with many commenting on how pleased they are with the direction of the school since the appointment of the new head teacher. Negative comments were mainly with regard to homework. Some parents of children in Years 3 and 4 feel that homework is often boring and does not challenge pupils. Parents of children in Years 5 and 6 comment on the increase in the amount and difficulty of homework, which they feel leaves children with too little time to pursue out of school activities.