

INSPECTION REPORT

[NAME OF PRIMARY] SCHOOL

[location including main post town]

LEA area: [name of LEA]

Unique reference number: [school's URN]

Headteacher: [name]

Reporting inspector: [name]
[RgI's OIN]

Dates of inspection: [start - end date]

Inspection number: [inspection number]

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

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INSPECTION REPORT

MILTON ABBOT SCHOOL

Milton Abbot, Tavistock

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113258

Headteacher: Mr P Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims
28899

Dates of inspection: 6th – 7th February 2001

Inspection number: 197406

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Milton Abbot School
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Milton Abbot
TAVISTOCK
Devon

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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr N Hurn

Date of previous inspection: 16th September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of Milton Abbot, midway between the towns of Launceston and Tavistock. At present, there are 91 boys and girls on roll between the ages of four and eleven. It is much smaller than most primary schools. The school draws its pupils from the villages of Milton Abbot and Chillaton and from the surrounding rural areas. Although quite varied, the socio-economic background of the pupils is generally above average. No pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds or from homes where English is not the main spoken language. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. One fifth of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is similar to the national average. Four pupils have

statements of special educational need, which is above average. The range of attainment when children join the Reception class is wide but, overall, it is above average. Since the last inspection, the school has acquired additional land which has provided car parking facilities, a sports pitch and an environmental study area. An additional classroom has been built and the number of pupils on roll has risen by about 20 per cent. The school is growing in popularity.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Milton Abbot Primary School is a good school with many very good features and few weaknesses. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve standards which are well above average by the age of eleven. The overall quality of the teaching is good, and there is a significant amount of very good teaching. The headteacher provides capable leadership and receives good support from a dedicated and hard-working staff. There is a very strong sense of community within the school. Although expenditure per pupil is well above average, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- 2 ___ Good quality teaching enables pupils to achieve high academic standards.
- 2 ___ The school responds well to new initiatives and developments which improve pupils' opportunities for learning.
- 2 ___ The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development, resulting in mature and responsible attitudes and an enthusiasm for learning.
- 2 ___ High standards of behaviour and very good inter-personal relationships help to create a closely-knit community in which every individual is valued.

What could be improved

- 2 ___ The teaching and use of information and communication technology.
- 2 ___ The way subjects other than English contribute to the development of pupils' writing skills.
- 2 ___ The overall balance of the curriculum.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a good degree of improvement since the last inspection, which took place in September 1997. The school has tackled all of the key issues from the last inspection successfully. Schemes of work were implemented for art, physical education and the youngest pupils, and there is now greater consistency in planning the curriculum throughout the school. Further modifications have been made in order to accommodate the new National Curriculum. The teaching of religious education and standards achieved by pupils in this subject have improved. The school now caters well for the pupils' spiritual development through the daily act of collective worship and through incidental opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the wonders of the world in which they live. The school now pays better attention to the professional development of its staff.

Academic standards have improved throughout the school, but particularly in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1, and English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. The rate of improvement is better than the national trend. There have also been improvements in the quality of

teaching. During this inspection, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed and there was a greater percentage of good and very good teaching.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			similar schools	Key	
	all schools				2000	
	1998	1999	2000	2000		
English	C	A	A	B	Very high	A*
Mathematics	C	C	A	A	Well above average	A
Science	C	B	A	C	Above average	B
					Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

The school's results have improved over the last five years. In 2000, results at Key Stage 1 were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to schools in similar contexts, the results were above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. Results at Key Stage 2 were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science; these pupils made very good progress in Key Stage 2, improving considerably on their Key Stage 1 results. The school's overall results compare favourably with other schools in similar contexts and with all schools in Devon. Given the school's achievements over the last few years, the targets it has set itself for the future are somewhat low.

The inspection findings show that many children enter the school with above average levels of attainment. They make good progress in the Reception year and most children achieve higher standards than those expected by the time they start Year 1. Progress slows towards the end of Key Stage 1, although pupils still achieve above average standards. They make good progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 3 and 4. By the time they leave school, pupils achieve high standards in reading, mathematics and science. They listen and express themselves well, asking relevant questions, giving clear explanations and participating in debate in a mature manner. At their best, they are capable of produce interesting, imaginative and carefully worded writing, but the written work they produce for subjects other than English does not always show the same careful choice of words or degree of accuracy. Teachers do not always pay enough attention to marking the accuracy of pupils' written work or showing them how to improve their writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the additional help they are given by teachers and assistants. Boys and girls do equally well. There are no subjects in which pupils' attainment is weak, although standards in information and communication technology are below expectations in some aspects of the subject.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, have very positive attitudes to their work and are keen to learn. They participate well in lessons, often with great enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond well to their teachers and have a very good awareness of the standards expected. They behave very well, both within lessons and around the school. They are polite, friendly and respectful, and fully aware of how their behaviour affects others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils relate very well to each other and to adults. Older pupils care for younger children, and pupils in all classes are

	good at listening to what others have to say. Pupils undertake responsibilities willingly and carry them out effectively.
Attendance	Good. The level of attendance is above the national average and there are very few unauthorised absences. Pupils arrive punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	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 teaching was satisfactory or better in all of the lessons seen during the inspection. It was very good in 33 per cent of lessons and was good in a further 50 per cent.

The overall quality of the teaching is good. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are well taught throughout the school. Teachers develop pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills well. Good attention is given to the development of writing skills in English lessons, but this work is not always consolidated effectively when pupils produce written work in other subjects. Implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has helped to improve pupils' abilities in mental mathematics. Mathematical skills are also developed effectively in other subjects, such as science. Much of the teaching in Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 3 and 4, is very good. Fast pace, challenging questions and very good participation from the pupils characterise these lessons. In some lessons at the end of Key Stage 1, work is not sufficiently challenging for many of the pupils. The teaching of religious education has improved since the last inspection. Not enough account is taken of the skills pupils already possess in information and communication technology, and teachers do not develop the full range of skills in this subject.

The school works hard to meet the needs of all pupils. Good use of assistant staff ensures that the youngest children and pupils with special educational needs receive additional attention, which is instrumental in helping them to make progress. The teachers have good subject knowledge, prepare their lessons thoroughly and structure their lessons well. They insist on, and receive, very good standards of behaviour which, together with the very positive attitudes shown by the pupils and their willingness to try hard, helps to ensure that the overall quality of learning is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Individually, most subjects are well planned, but too much time is devoted to English and not enough to some other subjects. There are weaknesses in the planning of information and communication technology and some topics in history are repeated too frequently. However, the curriculum is enriched through a good variety of visits to places of interest, visitors to the school, links with the community, the use of the local environment and a good range of after-school activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Staff are well aware of the needs of individual pupils and provide them with appropriate work. They are given suitable targets for improvement and their progress is monitored regularly. Support assistants are very effective in helping pupils with special educational needs. Provision for these pupils is coordinated well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now good, as is provision for their cultural development. Staff provide good role models and cater very well for the pupils' moral and social development. The scheme in which some of the oldest pupils are taught how to act as mediators in disputes with other pupils is a very good initiative.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school manages child protection issues and all matters to do with pupils' health, welfare and safety well. The school has all the hallmarks of a caring school, in which staff know their pupils very well and give good attention to their individual needs. Staff are much better informed about pupils' academic progress than they were.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has been responsible for instigating many improvements since the last inspection, which have resulted in better quality education and higher standards of attainment. He receives good support from his senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body exercises its role effectively, ensuring that statutory responsibilities are met, and providing good support for the headteacher. Governors are well informed and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has monitored the teaching of English and mathematics effectively and has established priorities for future monitoring. The development plan identifies appropriate priorities for future development. Involvement in the Effective Early Learning Research Project has helped the school to analyse its provision for the youngest pupils. Staff are starting to track pupils' progress through the school more closely.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. The school makes effective use of its resources, apart from computers, which could be used more frequently. Assistant staff are deployed effectively. The governing body has used funds raised by the very supportive Parents Teachers and Friends Association to acquire additional land which now provides extra facilities for sport and environmental study. The school applies the principles of best value in the purchase of resources and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Their children enjoy coming to school and are making good progress. ● The school is well led and managed, and the quality of the teaching is good. ● The staff are very supportive and helpful and the school provides a caring environment in which the children feel happy and confident. ● Standards of behaviour and relationships are good. Older and younger pupils mix well together. ● They value the fact that the school is a small community and very open. ● Introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours has helped children to make much better progress. ● Teachers motivate the children to learn, to do research on their own and to become responsible learners and members of society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Because of the mixed-age classes, pupils sometimes repeat work they have already covered. This is particularly prevalent in history. ● The school's homework policy is not always implemented appropriately or consistently. ● Some parents would like more information on what is happening and how their children are doing, and more frequent opportunities to consult staff. ● Some parents would like more opportunities for physical education, sport and extra-curricular activities.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are pleased with improvements to the school's facilities. | |
|--|--|

The inspection findings support all of the positive views expressed by parents and some, but not all, of their concerns. Some aspects of curricular planning could be improved, in particular the balance of time allocated to each subject and the distribution of topics in history. However, for its size, the school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities and all staff are involved in offering additional opportunities for pupils out of school hours. The school has made good steps towards improving its provision for sport and physical education, although internal accommodation will continue to limit opportunities for indoor physical education.

The school is open and welcoming to parents, who have every opportunity to consult their children's teachers or the headteacher on an informal basis throughout the year. Appropriate opportunities are provided twice a year for more formal consultations. The school has, however, noted the desire of some parents for more frequent information about how their children are doing.

During the inspection, good examples were observed of homework and research at home being used effectively during lessons. However, there was not enough time or opportunity to evaluate how consistently the school implements its homework policy.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

GOOD QUALITY TEACHING ENABLES PUPILS TO ACHIEVE HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS

1. Since the last inspection, pupils' academic standards have risen throughout the school. In 1997, results at Key Stage 1 were close to the national average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. In 2000, results were well above the national average in all three areas. The improvement has been quite substantial in mathematics. At Key Stage 2, there has been a similarly dramatic improvement in mathematics, and further improvement in English and science. Almost half of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and, at Key Stage 2, the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science.

2. In the work observed during the inspection, pupils in the eldest class showed themselves capable of achieving high standards. In English, pieces of imaginative writing on display were well structured, carefully presented and showed very good use of vocabulary. In a mathematics lesson, pupils showed a good grasp of rotational symmetry and the ability to carry out mental calculations quickly. In science, they displayed a good understanding of the principles of condensation and evaporation, identifying many objects around the home in which the principles of evaporation can be observed. Younger pupils also demonstrated good standards. In Year 2, pupils listened well and contributed thoughtful answers during a discussion on the use of flow charts. In Year 1, pupils identified a wide range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and talked confidently about the properties of each shape.

3. Various factors account for the improvement in standards and the good quality of work observed. The quality of teaching is now better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Although only 18 lessons were observed, nine of these were good and six were very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, as there was during the last inspection.

4. The school uses teachers' own areas of expertise well. Pupils at Key Stage 2, for example, receive specialist teaching in science from a science graduate. The two science lessons

observed were very good indeed. Not only were the lessons well prepared, but the teacher responded very well indeed to pupils' questions, gave informed answers and used her expertise to get the pupils to think more deeply about what they were saying and to draw scientific principles from their observations. The teacher's own enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject also communicated themselves well to the pupils, who responded with equal enthusiasm.

5. The school is conscious of the need to provide pupils with an appropriate challenge. Teachers use the necessity of teaching mixed-age classes to group talented younger pupils with older ones in order to provide them with a greater challenge. Those who are experiencing difficulties with their work receive additional assistance from capable classroom assistants. The youngest children are given an appropriate variety of opportunities for learning and benefit from having many of these activities supervised by a classroom assistant. As a result, pupils in Year 1 are able to receive much closer attention from their class teacher.

6. The governing body has made it a priority to maintain as favourable a staffing ratio as possible and has used additional grants to reduce class sizes. Pupils in Year 2, for example, are taught as a group of 14. At various times of the year, and as funds permit, classes are occasionally split, allowing a better ratio of teachers to pupils. In an English lesson, for example, the eldest class was split. The headteacher taught pupils from Year 6, whilst the class teacher taught those from Years 4 and 5. Both lessons were very productive and, because of the smaller number of pupils, teachers were able to give them much more individual attention than would have been possible in the larger class.

7. Overall, the quality of the teaching is good. Much thought has been given to the way the curriculum in each subject is planned. Teachers now have a better basis from which to plan sequences of lessons, but also spend much time in preparing individual lessons carefully. There is good communication between teachers and assistants, so that everybody has a clear idea of what is to be taught. They use resources well to engage pupils' attention and to clarify what is being taught. The teachers' knowledge of almost all subjects is good, which enables them to ask pertinent questions and extend the pupils' own knowledge and understanding.

THE SCHOOL RESPONDS WELL TO NEW INITIATIVES AND DEVELOPMENTS WHICH IMPROVE PUPILS' OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

8. The school has responded well to new national initiatives. Parents commented that their children's attitudes to English and mathematics have improved since the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Staff acknowledge that the training involved and the attention given to new teaching methodology have improved the quality of

their teaching. All of the mathematics and English lessons observed were well structured, building carefully on work which had been done before, and providing pupils with good opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding.

9-Offers from parents to help develop pupils' understanding of the local natural environment have resulted in a high-quality and interesting project to chart how the environment changes during the year. This has involved different aspects of cross-curricular study and made very good use of the school's spacious and attractive grounds. Pupils, in all parts of the school, have produced good observational drawings of plants, flowers and trees. Their understanding of life-cycles and natural changes according to the seasons has improved. Above all, however, the project has given them a good appreciation of the richness and wonder of nature and their local environment.

10-The principles involved in providing pupils with special educational needs with individual education plans have been extended to all pupils. Teachers consider each pupil's strengths and weaknesses and devise individual targets for development. Each pupil has their own target card on which the teacher writes down aims for the term, and pupils write their own objectives. Pupils who were questioned about these cards were very aware of their own personal aims and objectives. These are reviewed regularly and, once targets have been achieved, new ones are set. This initiative is helping to make pupils more aware of their own learning.

11-The school has been one of only a few within the area to participate in the Effective Early Learning Research Project. This has helped staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching provided for the youngest children in the school. Through tracking individual children and observing how involved they are in different activities, the class teacher has been able to determine which activities offer children the best learning opportunities. This has led to reflection on the way some sessions during the day are structured and to modifications which have helped the youngest children to become more involved, more physically active and to make better progress.

12-The science coordinator has been involved in national initiatives in science. These have ranged from assisting with the redrafting of the National Curriculum for science, to working on optional assessment tests for pupils in Year 4 and the national assessment tasks for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has benefited from this involvement, which has ensured that the teaching of science is well informed and completely fulfils the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Additionally, the teacher's own enthusiasm for the subject ensures that pupils receive interesting, vibrant and challenging science lessons which go beyond the normal curriculum and deepen the pupils' interest in and understanding of science and scientific principles.

13-Visits from local artists and musicians have helped to broaden pupils' experience of the arts. Working with a local artist, pupils contributed to a project which aroused local interest and was displayed outside the town hall in Tavistock. A visit from an African musician helped pupils not only to appreciate music from a different culture, but to become aware of different customs and the way people from another culture look at life.

THE SCHOOL MAKES GOOD PROVISION FOR PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, RESULTING IN MATURE AND RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDES AND AN ENTHUSIASM FOR LEARNING

~~14.~~From the moment children start school, teachers emphasise the importance of participation and foster positive attitudes to learning. The children enter a climate in which they are encouraged to contribute their answers and opinions, and where the contributions of each individual are valued. In the youngest class, children in the Reception year participate in short whole-class sessions with the pupils in Year 1 and quickly learn how to listen attentively. Through carefully directed questions, they are also encouraged to speak in front of others. They quickly gain an enthusiasm for whole-class activities, as well as the more informal sessions in which they work under the guidance and supervision of the classroom assistant.

~~15.~~The involvement of other adults and parent helpers reinforces the importance of learning and helps pupils to relate well to adults. In an art lesson, pupils in Year 1 responded very positively to the wide range of activities which was provided for them by the teacher and well supervised by the classroom assistant and a parent helper. The pupils were keen to experiment and concentrated well on their individual tasks. They also cooperated very well with each other when working with construction toys.

~~16.~~The pupils are encouraged to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. After the teacher had explained group and individual tasks clearly in an English lesson in Year 2, pupils moved to their tables quickly and sensibly, and got on with their work without any fuss. Pupils were responsible for getting their own books and collecting the materials they needed. Some pupils decided that it would be helpful to use a dictionary, and used their initiative to collect them. Two pupils worked on the computer, offering sensible suggestions to each other and taking it in turns to use the keyboard. All of the pupils were well motivated and completed the tasks they were given. One pupil commented afterwards that she enjoyed school because "you don't get bored like you do at home because you have got plenty to do."

~~17.~~The teachers treat the pupils respectfully and in an adult manner. They value their ideas and contributions to discussions. In a science lesson for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, the contribution of every pupil who had researched objects which made use of the principles of evaporation was invited and valued. The ensuing discussion of each object was challenging and stimulating, as the teacher extended pupils' learning by asking pertinent questions, helping them to deepen their scientific understanding. The pupils responded with mature and thoughtful answers, and made good progress as a result of the high quality of the discussion.

~~18.~~The role models provided by the teachers, and their own commitment to each lesson and to other opportunities provided for the pupils, also help the pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning. In a religious education lesson in the eldest class, the teacher had taken great care to ensure that appropriate artefacts were available and that they were handled with proper care and respect. Through this practical demonstration of handling the Qur'an respectfully, pupils were able to learn important lessons about the faith of others. In

another lesson, the pupils responded enthusiastically to an interesting introduction to a lesson on rotational symmetry.

~~19.~~Pupils learn to become responsible members of society as they take on different tasks and responsibilities. In each class, pupils are expected to carry out simple duties, from taking the registers back to the school office, to tidying away at the end of the lesson. Older pupils have a range of monitorial duties which they carry out willingly and effectively.

HIGH STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR AND VERY GOOD INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS HELP TO CREATE A CLOSELY-KNIT COMMUNITY IN WHICH EVERY INDIVIDUAL IS VALUED

~~20.~~Standards of behaviour are very good throughout the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of how they are expected to behave and respond well to teachers and other adults. Behaviour in lessons is very good, and this helps to create a good climate for learning. Pupils' behaviour around the school and at lunchtime is also very good. Breaktimes are somewhat more robust occasions, but pupils have agreed clearly delineated areas for more physically active games and for those who wish to talk or sit quietly. Parents are pleased with the good standards of behaviour. The pupils themselves comment that they feel safe and secure within the school environment and that they are not afraid of bullying or any oppressive behaviour.

~~21.~~The pupils relate very well to each other and to adults. They are courteous and friendly to visitors and socially confident. They engage adults in interesting conversation. Within lessons, pupils cooperate well with one another and with their teachers. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and how their actions and words affect others. Younger pupils feel secure and confident because of the helpful and caring attitude of older pupils. A number of parents mentioned how impressed they have been with the way the older pupils care for the younger ones.

~~22.~~A particularly good initiative, which was introduced a few years ago, is the school's peer mediation scheme. Selected pupils from Years 5 and 6 are trained through the use of role-play and active learning to help other children sort out minor problems. All pupils know that there are pupils who are able and willing to help solve problems or disputes, and those who have used the system talk favourably about the results. More importantly, the scheme highlights for pupils the importance of taking responsibility for their own actions and shows them that disputes and problems can be solved by talking things through.

~~23.~~The very good standards of behaviour and inter-personal relationships help to create one of the aspects which parents value most about the school, namely the sense of a closely-knit community. Teachers know all of the pupils well and pupils know each other well. There is a good sense of camaraderie and belonging which helps to create a climate in which learning is valued.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

THE TEACHING AND USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

24. Since the last inspection, the school has improved some aspects of its provision for information and communication technology. Resources have improved, and each classroom now has two well-specified computers. All staff are undertaking training to improve their own expertise, and most now have access to their own computer. They recognise the importance of the subject, but are not yet entirely confident in teaching the subject or integrating the use of information and communication technology into the teaching of other subjects. The school has recognised its deficiencies in these areas and is making satisfactory progress in implementing a detailed four-year development plan for the subject.

25. As part of the improvement plan, the coordinator has conducted a survey of what pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 can do, the programs they are familiar with and the things they would like to be able to achieve. From the survey, it is clear that many pupils are confident users of computers, but that they have a limited knowledge of different types of software. Many pupils have access to a computer at home, and this has clearly helped them to become conversant with basic computing skills. Some pupils acquire advanced skills, such as the ability to install pieces of software or to defragment a hard disc. Nearly all pupils say that they are confident in using a word processor to produce written work, but also that they would like to be able to type faster. Some pupils, who do not have access to a computer at home, are much less confident in all aspects of the subject.

26. There have been weaknesses in the way the subject has been taught in the past, and the school has not built adequately on the knowledge which many pupils already have or which they have acquired at home. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below those expected in some aspects of the subject. Although pupils use a word processor competently, and know how to search for information on CD-ROMs or the Internet, they have little working knowledge of databases, spreadsheets or control technology. They do not, therefore, have the range of skills necessary to be able to combine different sources of information and to make purposeful use of information and communication technology in a range of different contexts.

27. The school has adopted an exemplar scheme of work to give structure to the overall planning of the subject, but the scheme has not been adapted sufficiently well to dovetail into what pupils already know. The sequence in which each of the units of the scheme is tackled is not always appropriate, particularly in Key Stage 1. During the inspection, some lessons were observed in which appropriate tasks were given to pupils to complete using a computer. In general, however, not enough thought has been given to the way technology can be used to supplement and enrich the teaching of other subjects.

28. Although the school's resources have improved, the school is not yet using its equipment as efficiently or effectively as it could. Many of the computers remain unused for much of the day. This limits even further the number of opportunities pupils have to practise or consolidate skills or to use computers to help with their learning in other subjects. The school has given some thought to providing an area in which a number of computers are

grouped together, but has not yet found a workable solution which would enable them to make more efficient use of the existing equipment and give pupils greater access to computers.

THE WAY SUBJECTS OTHER THAN ENGLISH CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS' WRITING SKILLS

~~29~~ Throughout the school, pupils are capable of producing writing of good quality, and standards in writing are above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Year 2, for example, can produce well-written accounts, demonstrating good understanding of the use of capital letters and punctuation, and a good range of expressive vocabulary. They are starting to vary their sentence structure and make good attempts at spelling unfamiliar words. Their handwriting is clearly formed. At the end of Key Stage 2, there are examples of thoughtful, creative and imaginative writing. Pupils know how to draft, review and then redraft a piece of writing in order to improve the final version. Many pupils try to incorporate interesting and adventurous vocabulary into their writing.

~~30~~ However, the same high standards are not always evident in the written work which pupils produce for other subjects. Written work in science, for example, contains frequent orthographical errors and careless sentence structure. Pupils' thoughts are not expressed as clearly as they are in their English written work.

~~31~~ Although some of their written work in English is marked in a supportive way, and specific exercises help pupils to develop their range of expression and use of vocabulary, much of the marking of pupils' work in other subjects is cursory and does not help them to improve. There are frequent examples of pupils' spelling subject-specific vocabulary incorrectly without these errors being pointed out or corrected when the work is marked. There are very few examples of comments which show pupils how they can improve their writing. As a result, staff miss many opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills through the work which they produce for other subjects.

THE OVERALL BALANCE OF THE CURRICULUM

~~32~~ The school fulfils its statutory obligations by teaching all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The curriculum is also enriched by visits to places connected with topics pupils are studying, visitors to the school and a range of extra-curricular activities. However, the balance of time allocated to the subjects of the curriculum is unduly weighted in favour of English. Over a third of the available teaching time is spent on English lessons and sessions for reading, handwriting, news and story-time. As a result, subjects like history, geography, design and technology, music and religious education receive only a small allocation of time each week or are not taught for significant parts of the year. This affects the breadth of work pupils are able to undertake in these subjects. Insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' skills in information and communication technology.

33. Pupils' skills in reading, speaking and listening are generally very good and, in many cases, these skills are developed well in lessons other than English. Although pupils produce written work for other subjects, the development of writing skills is confined largely to pupils' English lessons. Each morning is devoted almost exclusively to the teaching of English and mathematics, and some of the sessions are unnecessarily long. By reviewing the time allocated to each subject and the length of some of the morning sessions, there is scope for pupils to increase the breadth of their knowledge and understanding in other subjects and at the same time to improve their writing skills.

34. Some parents and pupils feel that the mixed-age classes lead to unnecessary repetition of work. Particular examples were quoted of pupils having studied the Victorians at least three times. Within the constraints imposed by lack of time, the curriculum is generally well planned and there are appropriate schemes of work for each subject. However, even though the pupils have had interesting and enjoyable experiences which have resulted in some high quality work, the programme of topics in history is unnecessarily repetitive, especially given the fact that the subject receives only a small allocation of time during the year.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

- i. Improve the provision for information and communication technology [paragraphs 24-28] by:**
- ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to acquire new skills across the full range of the curriculum for information and communication technology;
 - taking greater account of pupils' prior knowledge of the subject;
 - making more efficient use of the school's resources;
 - ensuring that information and communication technology is integrated more effectively as a tool for learning in other subjects.
- ii. Develop and consolidate pupils' writing skills [paragraphs 29 – 31] by ensuring that:**
- better use is made of opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills through work which is produced in subjects other than English;
 - pupils' attention is drawn to errors in their written work and that the teachers' marking helps pupils to learn how to improve the quality of their work.
- iii. Review the overall balance of the curriculum [paragraphs 32 – 34], paying particular attention to:**
- the structure and timing of lessons during the morning sessions;
 - the overall amount of time allocated specifically to English;
 - the time allocated to other subjects, such as history, geography, design and technology, music and religious education.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

18

Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils
[In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]

13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	33	50	17	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	87
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.4	School data	0.1
National comparative data	5.2	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Total
	2000	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	14	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (87)	94 (94)	100 (87)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	13	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (87)	100 (94)	100 (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Total
	2000	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	15	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (92)	88 (84)	100 (92)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	15	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (84)	88 (92)	100 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	79
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)	4.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.9
Average class size	21.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	91

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	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	217,588
Total expenditure	211,274
Expenditure per pupil	2,201
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,152
Balance carried forward to next year	17,466

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	91
Number of questionnaires returned	51
Percentage of questionnaires returned	56

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	33	4	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	47	6	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	63	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	67	10	0	2
The teaching is good.	52	48	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	43	35	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	37	14	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	18	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	25	63	12	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	47	47	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	35	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	63	14	6	2