

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHENIES SCHOOL**

Chenies, Rickmansworth

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110216

Headteacher: Miss M. Green

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Huard  
27290

Dates of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> January 2002

Inspection number: 197517

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chenies, Nr Rickmansworth, Herts.
Postcode:	WD3 6ER
Telephone number:	01923 282546
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B. Markham
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Chenies School is situated in the attractive rural village of Chenies, near Rickmansworth. It is a small school attended by 98 girls and boys. Since the last inspection it has been subject to re-organisation and now caters for pupils aged between 4 and 11. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and there are no pupils for whom English is not their first language. This is below the national average. There are 16 pupils on the school's register of special educational need. At 16.2% per cent this is, again, below the national average. A very few pupils receive specialist help for educational and behavioural problems, speech, communication and specific learning difficulties. No pupil has a statement of special educational need and no pupils are eligible for free school meals. When children enter the reception class in the term of their fifth birthday, their attainment is above average and most are well within the final stepping stone on their way to meeting the early learning goals in all areas.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school with many strengths. It provides a very good education for its pupils which enables them to leave at the end of Year 6 having achieved standards that are well above those attained nationally. Pupils achieve well whatever their prior attainment, because of the careful thought that goes into formulating a curriculum which takes account of the needs of them all. Pupils with special educational needs as well as those who are gifted and talented are well provided for. Teaching is good overall and very good for the pupils in Years 3 to 6. The management and leadership of the school are very good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future, which is shared by staff, governors and parents alike. The school provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are very high.
- The teaching is good overall and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and reach high standards of personal development.
- The school offers a broad curriculum which is enhanced by a wide range of visits and visitors.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The curriculum for the children under five, whilst satisfactory, is too teacher directed and does not allow children to learn through investigating and discovering for themselves.
- Homework is set erratically and the policy is not consistently adhered to.
- Many subject policy documents do not reflect what is being currently taught.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in September 1997. Since then it has improved significantly and has a good capacity for further improvement. The school has not only maintained the good standards it was achieving at that time in national tests, but has further improved them over the last four years by identifying relative weaknesses and taking prompt and effective action to address them. Standards in design and technology, which were judged to be below those expected, now meet requirements and there are some good features, particularly in the planning for, and evaluation of, the projects undertaken by the pupils. The issues identified concerning the provision of both the curriculum and resources for the children in the Foundation Stage have been successfully addressed, although there are further areas, concerned with the organisation and teaching, which require attention. The provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural education is much improved with opportunities for both being provided for within subjects taught, such as history and geography, and collective worship.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	A*	A	A*	A	Well above average A above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	A	C	A*	A	
Science	A*	A*	A*	A*	

Pupils' achievements are good overall, because of the consistently good and often very good teaching that they receive. The table shows that pupils in Year 6 attained results in English, mathematics and science which were very high and in the top five per cent of results attained nationally. The school's results have improved year on year since the last inspection except for a dip in mathematics in 2000. The school carefully analysed its performance and took appropriate action to successfully remedy the weaknesses identified. The overall improvement made has been broadly in line with the national trend although at a significantly higher level, which is more difficult to maintain. In 2001, results improved significantly in mathematics and science. Targets set for 2002 are appropriately based on pupils' achievement to date and the results of nationally recognised and standardised tests. The targets are suitably challenging but realistic, and pupils should be able to achieve them.

The majority of children in the reception class make sound progress and exceed the Early Learning Goals for their age in all six areas. However, teaching sessions are too long and tasks are often too structured and over teacher directed. This means the children have too few opportunities to investigate and discover for themselves which affects the progress they make. At seven years of age, standards in reading are very high and well above average in writing and mathematics. Pupils achieve standards which are good in relation to their attainment when they first enter the school.

Inspection evidence shows attainment in the current Year 6 to be well above average in English, science and mathematics. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are very good. These are used and developed effectively through work provided in other subjects, such as history and science. In ICT, pupils' achievements are good considering the outdated machines on which they have to work, and good use is made of a range of appropriate software programmes. Good efforts are being made to fully integrate ICT into all subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are good. The pupils enjoy being in school. Most children are keen and enthusiastic to learn. They try hard, settle well to the tasks set and take pride in the presentation of their work. However the attitudes of a small minority of older pupils in assembly do not always provide the best example to the younger pupils.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good around the school and in lessons. The school and class rules are simple, realistic and understood by all pupils. There is an expectation of very good behaviour. Very good support is provided for the very few pupils with behavioural problems, which enables them to learn effectively. The very good behaviour supports the learning of all.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils in all classes are encouraged to take responsibility for a number of tasks in the classroom and around the school. They fulfil these efficiently and maturely. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. Pupils work and play very well together.

Attendance	Very good. Levels of attendance are high, few term time holidays are taken. Pupils arrive punctually to school and lessons start promptly.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. In many lessons, particularly in Years 3 to 6, it is very good. Teachers are confident, have good subject knowledge and present this in a way that stimulates and excites the pupils. Their own enthusiasm is frequently reflected in the pupils' responses. This was particularly obvious in a Year 3/4 literacy lesson where the pupils were infected by the teacher's own enthusiasm for the text being used and responded maturely and enthusiastically when discussing the moods created. Teachers challenge their pupils by providing interesting and original tasks at an appropriate level to match the abilities of all the pupils. They encourage their pupils to research independently in order to increase their knowledge. All teachers show respect for their pupils' opinions and ideas, listening carefully to what they have to say and encouraging their peers to do the same. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson pupils took part in a Passover ceremony. They listened intelligently, took an active part in the proceedings and remained interested and focused throughout. Pupils learn effectively because they are interested, are trusted to work sensibly, collaborate efficiently and listen to each other. They take a pride in what they are doing at whatever level they are working and their teachers celebrate their achievements with them. Pupils are valued for themselves, which raises self-esteem and provides on-going encouragement.

English and mathematics are generally taught well and the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are consolidated effectively across the whole curriculum. Teaching is well matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities and lessons are planned which are exciting and challenging to all. However, sessions in the Foundation Stage are often very long and children are expected to remain focused for over an hour. The tasks set often require much recording on worksheets and too few activities are provided which enable pupils to discover and investigate independently. The homework policy is not consistently adhered to and homework is set erratically in some classes.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good. A broad and well balanced curriculum is enhanced through the teaching of French and a range of visits and visitors to support specific topics or areas of learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified carefully, targets are set and work is well matched to pupils' needs. Good support from teaching assistants and other adults benefits many pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' personal development is very well supported by the strong ethos of the school, the good role models provided by the staff, and very good relationships between pupils and adults. The school develops pupils' moral and social awareness highly effectively and particular improvements have been made in pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is effective in promoting the health, safety and well being of its pupils. The positive friendly atmosphere makes a strong contribution to providing a caring learning community. This is underpinned by a range of effective policies and procedures.

The school provides an appropriate range of activities outside of school. Parents think highly of the school, are supportive in many ways and appreciative of the care the school accords its pupils.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership and is supported well by an able deputy. There is a strong spirit of teamwork and commitment among staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are knowledgeable and work efficiently. They manage the school well. They are actively involved in the school and support its development. They question sensibly what it does and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school analyses its results, teaching and curriculum very thoroughly and takes effective action to improve. It consults widely on its further development. The written development plan is particularly clear, outlines current priorities very well and effectively communicates the long-term vision.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Funds are directed to priority areas and their use is controlled and monitored well.

The management of the school is effective in seeking to ensure best value in its spending decisions by questioning what it does and ensuring that funds are spent wisely.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like coming to school.</li> <li>• The school is very approachable. Staff listen to, and act on, any concerns raised.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and the children make good progress.</li> <li>• The behaviour is very good.</li> <li>• The school has very high expectation of the children in terms of behaviour and work.</li> <li>• The children are encouraged to be responsible and become more mature.</li> <li>• The school is very well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many parents felt that there was not enough homework and that it was not set consistently.</li> </ul>

The inspection team concurs with the parents' positive opinions. It also endorses the parents' concern about homework. Although homework was set during the inspection, the team discovered that homework is not always set in line with the school's homework policy, and is erratic in some classes.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Standards in English, mathematics and science are very high.**

1. The pupils' achievements in National Curriculum tests have improved steadily year on year. In the end of Year 6 tests last summer, results were very high in English, mathematics and science when compared with the results achieved by pupils nationally. They were well above average in English and mathematics and very high in science when compared with the results of pupils in schools of a similar kind<sup>1</sup>. Pupils at the end of Year 2 achieved standards that were very high in reading and well above the national average in writing and mathematics. There are relatively few pupils in each group taking the tests each year and so some variation is inevitable, as small numbers mean that each pupil can be worth up to 7 points. However, despite this, over time the school has seen its trend of improvement rise broadly in line with that shown nationally, but at a much higher level, which is far harder to maintain.
2. Although standards are high, the school cannot be said to be complacent in any way. The headteacher and staff undertake a rigorous analysis of test results each year. As a result of a drop in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in writing at the end of Year 2 in 2001, the school identified writing as a particular area of focus. It has adapted the literacy strategy and is using the framework in a way that meets the needs of all the pupils. Through careful planning, the school now has a programme for English that is varied and exciting. It challenges and inspires the pupils, enabling them to learn highly effectively.
3. In Year 6, pupils have focused individual targets in the front of their books. These are relevant and often usefully referred to in marking by the teacher. They also have the checklist of the requirements for National Curriculum writing at levels 4 and 5 at the front of their creative writing books, and it is clear that they have frequent opportunities to write at length, in a range of styles and for a variety of purposes. The school's strategies for writing are proving to be successful because the pupils have opportunities to practice writing appropriate openings and endings for their writing, but they also have the chance to put all the elements together by planning for and completing a whole story or project. They experiment with grammatical conventions and the use of imagery such as alliteration, devising their own nonsense alphabet after the style of Edward Lear. They clearly enjoy the effect of such phrases as 'the devious dangerous daring dog' or 'the creeping clever curious cat'. They have completed an excellent project based on 'The Journey of 1000 Miles' by Ian Strachan. The work completed is of high quality by pupils at all attainment levels. Within it the pupils have completed a range of language tasks including comprehension exercises, exploring vocabulary and undertaking advanced dictionary and research work, as well as writing in a range of styles such as reports, instructions and play scripts. Pupils have also successfully experimented with writing Japanese Haiku poetry and show a good understanding of its conventions.
4. In Year 2, pupils also have individual targets which are frequently referred to in marking. The pupils follow a good quality varied curriculum which gives them many opportunities to write at length as well as learning handwriting in a structured and progressive way which is clearly successful from the good progress shown over time. Pupils are taught effectively how to spell, use basic punctuation and improve their grammar in the writing they carry out. Their work shows that they undertake a good range of exercises to re-inforce learning in spelling, punctuation and grammar, carry out comprehension exercises and write at length for a variety of purposes. For example, they wrote a review of the pantomime 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. These included details of the characters and explained sensibly the reasons why they liked or disliked the performance. Pupils are beginning to write stories with a more complex structure, and nearly all have moved beyond the stage of starting sentences with 'and then..'. Written work

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<sup>1</sup> Similar schools - those schools with a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

is usually neat and well spelled. There is an appropriate mix of worksheets and independent writing. The literacy strategy is used effectively to promote pupils' reading and writing and when reading together pupils use very good expression and appropriate intonation. They enjoy experimenting with words and sentences, describing 'Six Dinner Sid' as 'a fat greedy black cat,' with great relish.

5. Throughout the school, the numeracy strategy has been embraced with enthusiasm. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 respond enthusiastically to the challenge of mental arithmetic quick fire questions to start a lesson and show a good ability to recall tables and make simple calculations when counting in fives and tens. Teachers have high expectations and the pupils respond extremely well. Positive relationships and interesting tasks enable pupils to sustain their concentration and ensure their active participation in lessons. The school has identified a need to increase and improve the opportunities to carry out problem solving activities. The effectiveness of the strategies employed was obvious during the inspection. Pupils answer questions confidently from an early age, and share ideas and strategies for solving mathematical problems, which build on previous work and methods. The work that the class carries out with money is more effective because pupils use real coins and work is appropriately challenging and very well matched to the abilities of all pupils. The monetary calculations are well supported by an appropriate computer program which pupils take it in turns to complete with much enjoyment. This re-inforces their learning effectively in a challenging and amusing way.
6. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study similar topics at an appropriate level which ensures that they are all challenged and can achieve high standards for their own ability level. For example, all pupils were investigating factors. Higher ability pupils were listing all factors of a number up to 100, and investigating various numbers with different qualities; for example, those with an odd number of factors. Others were working on identifying all the factors of a range of smaller numbers. High standards are achieved because pupils are constantly on-task; they listen attentively and respond promptly to questions. All work builds on what has gone before. Higher-attaining pupils, for example, were confident in tackling a range of challenging extension exercises such as finding all the perfect numbers less than 40. Lower attaining pupils were provided with additional resources and support to reinforce the work they were carrying out to establish their understanding and ability to find factors. They help and support each other aided by the teachers. Self-esteem is raised by teachers encouraging pupils to share their work and by the methods employed in solving problems with the rest of the class. Appropriate homework was set which effectively re-inforced their learning and extended a challenge to all.
7. Pupils of all ages achieve very well in science. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards which are very high. The school has sustained this level of performance in the national tests and teacher assessments for several years. Pupils in Year 2 achieved results which were well above average in 2001. Pupils show a good level of factual knowledge and a well-developed understanding of practical skills. A major factor in the school's success is the good provision for the experimental and investigative aspects of science, which promotes high standards and ensures that pupils understand their work. This forms the basis for the entire science curriculum and pupils' knowledge from Year 1 to Year 6 is enhanced through practical investigation and experimentation which encourages and supports the development of their questioning attitudes.
8. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding develop systematically as they move through the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are encouraged to predict what will happen in their experiments and to use the appropriate technical vocabulary for their work. They start to define what makes a test fair and to consider challenging questions such as 'Which of the cars do you think will travel furthest?' As they move through the school pupils are encouraged to write up investigations in more depth and draw on the wide range of experiences they have had in the past. They broaden the range of recording methods they use. For example, older pupils collect and analyse data drawing a graph of their results. Complex challenges are issued to extend their thinking skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 were set a challenge to design a circuit using 3 bulbs, 2 switches, a motor, two batteries and a buzzer so that 2 bulbs lit and the motor

worked, or 3 bulbs lit and the buzzer worked. Many achieved this showing a very good understanding of the correct positioning of the switches.

### **The teaching is good overall and very good in Years 3 to 6.**

9. The quality of teaching is good overall and is a strength of the school. In Years 3 to 6 it was often very good. In all the lessons observed, the teaching was sound or better. The teaching and the opportunities it provides for pupils to improve their learning skills is the major factor contributing to the high standards the school is constantly striving for and achieving.
10. Teachers' planning is thorough and detailed. Lessons are carefully sequenced to ensure full coverage of a topic or programme of study. Plans outline clear learning objectives for each lesson, and teachers tell the pupils exactly what they are going to learn. Grouping is considered carefully and teachers ensure that activities are planned which match the attainment level of all pupils. A brief recap at the start of each lesson prompts pupils' memories and allows some useful assessment to take place. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, most pupils could remember the definition of a factor. Skilful and focused questioning and clear explanations soon enabled those whose understanding was not so secure to grasp the idea. The pace set is lively throughout and lessons are well structured and relevant to sustain pupils' interest. Written tasks are fully explained to pupils before they carry them out and pupils record work in a variety of appropriate ways.
11. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been well adapted and implemented, and all pupils are fully occupied with suitably challenging tasks during the times when the class teacher is concentrating on one group of pupils. Pupils are able to work unaided because the work is carefully matched to the pupils in each group. Teachers give clear instructions as to the work to be tackled and ensure that the pupils understand what they are to do before they start. The quality of marking is particularly high. It effectively contributes praise and constructive criticism. It is evident that teachers are very aware of their pupils' capabilities and comment accordingly.
12. The expertise and enjoyment that teachers bring to their lessons is evident. In a literacy lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher had prepared a lesson on how the opening of a book can effectively set the scene for the story. His sense of the dramatic when reading the opening to 'The Wolves of Willoughby Chase' was apt and original, appealed to the pupils and helped develop their understanding in an instantly unforgettable way. He had high expectations of the pupils' abilities to understand the main features of the passage, but devised an instantly effective method of assessment by having the pupils make a quick sketch on their whiteboards of the opening scene. From this he could gauge their level of understanding of the scene in general, but also of some of the complex vocabulary used. For example, a few drew the Hall with crenellated towers - but not many. He set short tasks, such as underlining phrases and words which were difficult to understand and took care to ensure that all pupils could grasp the meaning of such phrases as 'pleated hills'. The highly effective session at the end of the lesson drew all the learning together and confirmed that the learning objectives had been successfully achieved.
13. Whole class teaching is used effectively to promote the learning of pupils with special needs and is very good overall. Careful questioning by the teachers ensures that these pupils can take a full part in all lessons. Praise and encouragement are used effectively. When pupils are involved in small group work, work is carefully matched to their abilities. For example, in the Years 5 - 6 mathematics lesson, lower attaining pupils were able to find factors of numbers using the divisibility rules. They were working with a support assistant who had the rules written on a whiteboard for them to refer to, and she gave them additional help by asking appropriate questions and providing clear explanations. Individual education plans are readily available and the targets are realistic and highly individual to each pupil and designed to build on learning step

by step. The school has identified several pupils who are gifted or talented in one or more areas of the curriculum. It works hard to present these pupils with appropriate challenges within class and, if it is appropriate, will move pupils to another year group to tackle more complex problems within a specific area such as mathematics.

### **Pupils have positive attitudes to school and reach high standards of personal development.**

14. Pupils are keen to come to school. They feel safe and valued by staff and their peers. They show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy being in school, appreciating the efforts of the staff in providing a caring environment in which they feel valued. They carry out duties responsibly and sensibly, for instance when preparing the hall for acts of collective worship or preparing the playground equipment for use at playtime.
15. In lessons, pupils are nearly always ready to start lessons. They prepare their books with the minimum of fuss and sit expectantly so that minimum time is wasted and teachers can get on straight away. Pupils listen very carefully to instructions, work well independently or in co-operation with others and show an enthusiasm to do well. They respond eagerly to questions, whilst listening carefully to others' opinions. Pupils are happy to explain what they are doing and are confident to seek advice from teachers if they are unsure of what to do. They concentrate well on their work, enjoy being challenged and persevere when they find learning difficult. This was particularly evident in the literacy hour, where all pupils settle very quickly and purposefully to the group or independent tasks and worked hard whilst teachers were busy with other pupils. However, in assembly a very small minority of the older pupils, mainly girls, do not provide good role models for the younger pupils. They do not have an active role such as sitting with the younger children and helping them. They slouch apathetically during hymn singing and show little enthusiasm or inclination to join in.
16. Relationships are very good. Most adults who work or help in the school are good role models. Pupils form friendly relationships with one another and with the staff. In classes, there is an atmosphere of willing co-operation and mutual respect and trust between staff and pupils. Pupils are sensitive to each other's feelings; they work and play together happily in mixed gender groups. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into classroom activities and the other pupils appreciate their efforts.

### **The school has established a broad curriculum, which is enhanced by a wide range of visits and visitors.**

17. The school has positively and thoroughly reviewed its planning systems in the light of Curriculum 2000 and made significant improvements in the curriculum offered to the pupils as a result. The school mainly uses nationally approved schemes of work, effectively adapting and modifying these to fit its own requirements. The school provides a wide and interesting range of learning opportunities and the links established between subjects are particularly effective. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. It is evident, from the examination of pupils' work, that although the school reacted positively to the recent national emphasis on literacy and numeracy, it at all times sought to ensure that its pupils continued to be provided with a broad range of activities in all subjects. This has resulted in overall standards across the whole curriculum being at least good.
18. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been effectively adapted and implemented to fit in with the needs of the school. The literacy strategy has been adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils and the school now works well to emphasise particular elements of the literacy hour. Writing has been a priority for further development. This focuses more clearly on the skills required for extended writing and has been effective in raising

standards across the school. The numeracy strategy has resulted in good quality focused mental oral starters being incorporated into each lesson. These are brief, pacy, linked to on-going mathematics topics and time is effectively used before moving on to the taught topic for the day. There has been a recent emphasis on developing a range of more challenging activities for higher attaining pupils. The school has consulted widely and taken advice from the local authority on setting up a useful 'bank' of materials which has enabled it to extend its provision very effectively.

19. Not all subjects were seen being taught during the inspection. However, lively and interesting displays of work in all subjects throughout the school and evidence from pupils' work indicate that the school is successful in providing links across several subjects in order to ensure very good learning opportunities. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote play scripts based on the tales of Ancient Greece. This linked in particularly well with their work in history as did their research into words with a Greek origin. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote lively and expressive newspaper reports about the exploits of Boudicca. Overall, the very good planning ensures a rich and dynamic curriculum which, coupled with good teaching, results in all pupils making very good progress. Parents appreciate the broad curriculum and are impressed by the coverage the school accords all subjects.
20. In addition to National Curriculum requirements, the curriculum for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is augmented through the teaching of French. The provision for French is good. The lessons are highly suitable for pupils of these age groups and the curriculum and the way it is taught greatly benefits pupils' learning in other subjects, in particular their skills in speaking clearly and listening attentively. However, a certain amount of recording also takes place and pupils clearly enjoy this addition to the standard curriculum. The school has built successfully on the positive aspects noted in the last inspection report in providing a rich curriculum in French for its pupils. Through French, the school stimulates pupils' awareness of and interest in Europe and in themselves as European citizens.
21. The curriculum is enhanced by an exceptionally wide range of visits, visitors and cultural links. These are carefully thought out and selected as being particularly beneficial to the pupils and as appropriate re-inforcement or extension of school activities. The school is fortunate in its location in an attractive village, which provides many opportunities for curriculum enrichment. The school has established good relationships with the local manor house and is currently helping to develop appropriate curriculum materials for visiting school children. Very good links have been established with local churches, and the expertise of a local minister is valued highly when she visits to conduct occasional religious education lessons. The school performs plays in the church at Christmas to which the whole village community is invited. The school is in the process of making a link with a school in India, which will benefit the pupils' cultural and social awareness as well as their academic development. Residential visits are used to develop pupils' independent skills and social and personal development. Pupils visit Scarborough and the Isle of Wight. Theatre groups are invited into school; for example, the Quantum group visits to re-inforce work carried out in science. To further pupils' cultural development, they attend concerts at The Festival Hall, ballet at Covent Garden and visit various local museums and performances in nearby towns.

### **The leadership and management of the school are very good.**

22. The overall leadership and management of this small school are very good. The headteacher was appointed shortly after the last inspection and provides strong leadership and clear educational direction for the school. The main focus is to maintain and improve the already high standards, but the school actively plans to develop fully the personality of the pupils so they are well prepared to enter society as well rounded individuals. In this the school has been particularly successful with the unstinting help and support of the all the staff and governors. Together they have devised a full, exciting and diverse curriculum, which fulfils and enhances

national requirements, to fully achieve the school's aims

23. The roles of the subject co-ordinators have been improved and developed. Because of the small size of the school, all staff have responsibility for at least one and sometimes two or three areas or aspects of the school's curriculum. Strategies for monitoring achievement are on-going. This is particularly evident in the core subjects where analysis of past work, test papers and results are part of an on-going annual review system in order to ensure that subjects are taught most effectively. For example, a decline in the percentage of pupils attaining higher results in mathematics led to an emphasis on investigation and the development of more challenging activities for the more able pupils. Planning is carefully monitored, and pupils' written work scrutinised on a regular basis. Literacy and numeracy have been effectively monitored through classroom observation. Staff now have a budget to manage. This is a relatively new venture, and because limited funds are available, these have been allocated for the current year in order to fit in with current school priorities, which is appropriate.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed. There is a recently revised comprehensive policy, covering all the statutory requirements and including the requirements of the new government guidelines. There are relatively few pupils on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs and parents are pleased with the effective provision and support. Good quality training is provided for support assistants, often directly related to the specific needs of the pupils being supported. Where appropriate, diagnostic tests are administered and outside agencies are fully involved. The school has moved away from its previous policy of withdrawing pupils for support, and they are now fully integrated into all class activities. The governor for special educational needs is involved and supportive. The co-ordinator assists with the writing of individual education plans and ensures that targets are referred to in planning for class work.
25. The governors are highly knowledgeable, involved and supportive. They have termly meetings for which the headteacher provides detailed reports. They have established committees, each with agreed terms of reference, and each reports to full governing body meetings. The governing body as a whole has established a very good working relationship with the headteacher and undertakes the role of 'critical friend'<sup>2</sup> very successfully. They review test results and are actively involved in target setting with the staff. Governors visit the school on a regular basis, take part in residential visits and the chair and headteacher meet on a weekly basis to keep each other abreast of on-going developments. Governors fulfil their responsibilities successfully and their involvement in the strategic direction of the school is very effective.
26. The school development plan clearly identifies relevant priorities. It is ambitious but achievable and is clearly a working document, which can be updated and amended as the year progresses. It shows developments in areas including the curriculum, organisation and
27. management, finance, the local community and premises. There is a well laid out action plan for each area, with the budget implications clearly identified. The main curriculum priorities currently are raising standards in numeracy and writing. The plan provides a very good focus for continuing development by giving an overview of the likely priorities for a three-year period.
28. The school aims are highly appropriate. They head up all school documentation and are published in the prospectus for parents to share. They address a range of relevant issues including personal, social, moral and spiritual development, the curriculum and home and community links. The underlying values of celebrating achievement and promoting the individual development of every pupil are very clearly evident in the day-to-day life of the school. They are also recognised through events such as the annual prize giving which has been

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<sup>2</sup> Critical friend - one who monitors constructively the activities and achievements of the school, identifying the areas that are strong and those that are weaker and require improvement.



adapted so that the achievements of every pupil, social as well as academic, are celebrated. The school provides a welcoming, friendly environment. The staff work industriously as a united team and provide very effective role models for the pupils. The ethos is very positive and reflects the school's strong commitment to on-going improvement and good relationships.

29. The school manages its financial resources very well overall. Financial planning is effective and fully supports the improvement of teaching and learning. Expenditure is carefully considered and planned to ensure cost effectiveness. Governors appreciate the need to ensure best value. The school evaluates its own performance and compares it with that of similar schools to ensure that it plans effectively for further improvement. It consults parents on many relevant issues. In addition it takes time to ensure that all funds are spent appropriately. This means that the lowest quote is not always necessarily accepted; for example, in considering quotes for recent building works it was decided to accept a quote which was more expensive, but was considered to use more durable and hardy materials. Many services are bought in from the local authority as a means of ensuring quality and value for money. Staff are very well deployed and very good use is made of support staff. The good deployment of staff expertise promotes the development of the curriculum and the improvement of teaching and learning.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage, whilst satisfactory, is too teacher directed and does not allow the children to learn through investigating and discovering for themselves.**

30. One of the major key issues at the time of the last inspection concerned the provision for children under five - now called the Foundation Stage. This was to ensure that the full and appropriate curriculum was taught, based on what were then the Desirable Learning Outcomes for Children under Five. Another issue concerned the improvement of the outdoor-play equipment for the children. Both of these issues were successfully addressed. The headteacher has recently updated the early years' policy in order to reflect the new Foundation Stage status of children under the age of 5. At the same time, medium term planning documentation has been drafted so that that provision can be made for both the Foundation Stage children and the small number of Year 1 pupils in Class 4. This is to enable the requirements of both the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum to be met. The policy and planning documentation are both of good quality and provide a very good framework for more detailed planning on a short-term basis.
31. The children enter the reception class in the term in which they are five. They enter with generally above average levels of attainment, and many children are well on schedule to achieving the early learning goals before the end of the year. However, despite their abilities, they still have many characteristics of young children such as short concentration spans and the need to make discoveries for themselves.
32. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality was at least sound. The teacher showed she had a generally good awareness of the needs of very young children in the language and literacy lesson by starting in an exciting way, with an action song designed to catch the attention of the children immediately. The text chosen was appropriate, and effective open-ended questions were used which elicited good, well thought out responses from the children. For example, 'What do you think Baby Bear is reading?' elicited the response 'A book about motor bikes because he's a boy'. When the children moved on to group work there was a range of well-differentiated activities, which involved appropriate interaction between children and adults. However, the session was very long - 70 minutes in all. The group activities were very structured and led by adults, and there were no opportunities for children to make choices or to participate in independent work or role-play.

33. In mathematics, the children were enraptured by an account of an 8th birthday party, which led them into different ways of making 8. However, the carpet session was too long and children became restless, fidgety and lost concentration. The group work was highly structured, with the majority of children completing worksheets - one of which had been completed on a previous occasion and was unnecessary repetition. The worksheets themselves were mundane and provided no opportunities for the children to experiment with number and explore and discover for themselves. The most appropriate activity was provided for lower attaining children who played a form of dominoes involving counting and number recognition. Although children had access to appropriate apparatus to assist them with their counting and doubling worksheets, there were no opportunities during the main body of the lesson for investigating numbers independently for themselves.
34. The children were making a collage of Goldilocks in the forest in art. The teacher had provided a very good range of resources in the form of fabrics, ribbons and lace as well as pencils and crayons. There were many good opportunities for speaking and listening and the adults in the room used these well when asking children to describe the feel or texture of the fabrics they were using. However, the children were allowed little independence in deciding what to use for their own contributions. Suggestions were continually made by adults as to what they should use for hair, what shapes they should cut, and even what should be included in the scene, instead of allowing the children to express their own ideas.
35. At the current time, the work being planned and taught in the reception class is more geared to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the children are being taught as if they were in Year 1 not the Foundation Stage. Sessions are too long and pupils are expected to concentrate on one subject for an inappropriate length of time. There is too much recording and teacher directed work and too little emphasis on discovery and allowing children to investigate and generate ideas for themselves. Although the children are entering the school at an above average level of attainment, the organisation and management of their day should still reflect their Foundation Stage status.

**Homework is set erratically and the school's policy is not consistently adhered to.**

36. The school has an excellent homework policy. It clearly states the purposes of homework as the opportunity to further strengthen the partnership between the home and school, to consolidate and re-inforce skills taught in numeracy and literacy, broaden the resources available for learning and encourage pupils to develop confidence and self-discipline in study. The policy appropriately suggests the recommended time that should be spent on homework by pupils in each class group.
37. Useful guidance is given to parents and carers as to how they might constructively help pupils with, for example, the learning of spellings. It also explains what the pupils in each year group are expected to know, by briefly summarising relevant sections of the numeracy strategy. The policy states quite clearly what parents can expect their children to bring home each night. For example, pupils in Year 6 should have French on Monday, mathematics on Tuesday, English and science on Wednesday and so on.
38. One of the concerns expressed by parents at their meeting prior to the inspection was that homework is set erratically and their children did not bring home what they were supposed to. During the inspection appropriate homework was set. It was of good quality and related well to work being carried out in the classes so that relevant skills and learning could be re-inforced. However, on speaking to pupils, inspectors discovered that although homework was set most of the time, the weekly timetable was not always adhered to and homework was sometimes forgotten on certain nights.

39. With such good arrangements for homework having been made through this very good policy, it is a pity if the opportunity to further re-inforce pupils' learning by this means is being missed. The parents are very supportive of the school's policy and appear to welcome this opportunity to share the responsibility for their children's learning. The school's policy should be adhered to and appropriate monitoring is needed to ensure that it is consistently applied across the school.

**Many subject policy documents do not reflect what is currently being taught.**

40. The school has a full range of policy documents dealing with various subjects and aspects of school life. Many of those examined, such as that for personal, social and health education, have been recently reviewed and amended in order to include new requirements - such as citizenship.
41. However, many of the subject policy documents are old and out of date, many dating back as far as 1994. They no longer reflect what is being taught at the school nor the teaching methods, organisation and management used. A few of the policy documents have had rough notes added to them indicating changes that need to be made, but the majority of documents, for example, the English policy, bear no resemblance to what is actually being taught. Whilst the school has taken good care that its teaching reflects all recent innovations, such as the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and Curriculum 2000, the documentation does not and this needs to be reviewed and amended.

**41. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

1. Make teaching and learning for the children in the Foundation Stage more effective by:
  - ◆ Recognising that young children have shorter concentration spans and allowing shorter session times, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
  - ◆ Providing a greater range of activities which allow children to make choices, include more practical discovery tasks, with fewer formal worksheets which are unstimulating and repetitive.  
(see paragraphs 29-34)
2. Ensure that homework is set regularly in accordance with the school's policy.  
(see paragraphs 35-38)
3. Update the school's subject policy documents to ensure they reflect what is being taught and how.  
(see paragraphs 39-40)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	2	5	3	0	0	0
Percentage	17	17	41	25	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 eight percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	98
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	16

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	3.2	School data	0.0

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	6	9	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (90)	100 (90)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (90)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	6	8
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	14	13	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (94)	87 (76)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	6	8
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	14	13	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (94)	87 (76)	100 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	87 (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	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	95
Any other minority ethnic group	3

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	24.5

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	53.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	248658
Total expenditure	238359
Expenditure per pupil	2119
Balance brought forward from previous year	-23
Balance carried forward to next year	10322

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	98
Number of questionnaires returned	60

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	43	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	53	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	68	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	58	20	3	0
The teaching is good.	42	55	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	60	17	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	20	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	33	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	60	3	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	68	32	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	45	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	47	12	2	3

### Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by parents.