

INSPECTION REPORT

CHASE BRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Twickenham

LEA area: Richmond upon Thames

Unique reference number: 102905

Headteacher: Mr B Neville

Reporting inspector: Mrs C M Skinner
23160

Dates of inspection: 28th-29th January 2002

Inspection number: 197870

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kneller Road Twickenham Middlesex
Postcode:	TW2 7DE
Telephone number:	020 8892 1242
Fax number:	020 8744 3888
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Chase Bridge Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Harris
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
23160	Carole Skinner	Registered inspector
9542	Brian Jones	Lay inspector
30695	Geraldine Dinan	Team inspector
16492	Bob Lever	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants
"Thule"
60 Joy Lane
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 4LT
01227 273449

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33 Kingsway
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chase Bridge Primary School educates boys and girls aged between four and 11. It is larger than most schools of its type as there are 449 pupils altogether. There are 218 boys and 231 girls on roll. Fifty-seven children attend full-time in two Reception classes. There are 108 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is broadly average. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with emotional and behavioural problems form the largest groups. Ten pupils have statements of special educational need, which is average. Approximately 16 per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is higher than most schools. About seven per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above average, but only three are at an early stage of learning English. Around four per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. During the last school year, 15 pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and 35 left it at times other than those of the normal leaving or transfer. This is an average rate of mobility. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many very good features. The very good leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, key staff and governors result in a clear focus on improving the quality of education for the pupils. This helps pupils to make good progress and results in well above average standards in Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning is good because pupils are given suitably demanding work. These factors, combined with the very good systems to monitor the school's performance, mean that the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils in Year 6 attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science because the school has high expectations of them and provides suitably demanding work.
- The very good leadership and management provide clear direction for the school and ensure a strong commitment to continued improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour, relationships and personal development are all very good and result from the school's very good provision for their moral and social development.
- The consistently good teaching throughout the school enables pupils, whatever their level of ability, to make good progress.
- The school offers a varied and interesting curriculum, which is greatly enriched by a very good range of extracurricular activities.
- The school receives very good support from parents, who raise considerable funds for additional resources and provide valuable help in lessons and other activities.

What could be improved

- The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and is not always helpful in showing pupils how to improve their work.

The area 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 October 1997 and, since then, it has made a good improvement. The key issues for action arising from that inspection have been fully addressed. The school's results in national tests have improved in line with the national trend, and standards in information and communication technology have risen as a result of better resources and effective training for teachers. Curricular planning has improved with the introduction of new schemes of work, and the school has given greater emphasis to developing pupils' independent learning skills through personal research. The role and effectiveness of the governors, senior management team and subject co-ordinators have developed significantly, and this has resulted in a good improvement in the leadership

and management of the school. These have been greatly enhanced by the school's commitment to self-evaluation using the Business Excellence Model, and its involvement in Investors in People. The school has a very good capacity to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The school has maintained consistently high standards in English and mathematics over the past three years, but results in science, although still above average, have dipped because fewer pupils reached Level 5. In English and mathematics, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 was well above the national average, while in science, it was similar to that seen in most schools. The school has identified the reasons for this and is already implementing modified teaching strategies, which are helping pupils to reach a higher level of attainment. The school exceeded its targets in English and mathematics in 2001 and has set suitably challenging targets for 2002. The findings of the inspection are that pupils in both Year 6 and Year 2 attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Children in the Foundation Stage exceed the standards expected of them by the end of the Reception year in all areas of learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress and achieve good standards compared with their previous attainment. Overall, pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and learning as they move through the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils participate in lessons and other activities with interest and enthusiasm and take a pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils show respect for each other and for adults and are courteous and helpful towards visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, quick to show initiative and work independently when required. They have a very good understanding of how their actions affect others.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is higher than the national average and this has a positive effect on pupils' progress.

Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations of them, and this has a positive impact on their achievement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. During the inspection, all but four of the 25 lessons seen were good, and seven were very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The standards of work seen in pupils' books and the results achieved by pupils in the national tests in Years 2 and 6 reflect the good quality of the teaching as pupils move through the school. The three lessons seen in the Reception classes were of a very high quality and show that pupils are given a very good start to their education. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is consistently good, and sometimes very good, and this is why standards are so high. The best features of the teaching are the high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, which help pupils to make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills, and the teachers' management of the pupils, which is calm but firm, and results in a productive working atmosphere in lessons. Other strengths are the teachers' planning, which clearly identifies what pupils are expected to learn and how this will be achieved, and their skilful questioning techniques, which make pupils think and work things out for themselves. There are few weaknesses, but the most notable is the quality of teachers' marking, which varies considerably between classes. Some is very constructive and helpful, but some does not show clearly what pupils have done well or what they need to do to improve their work.

The strong features of the pupils' learning are their initiative in problem solving and their willingness to learn from their mistakes. Most pupils are well motivated and concentrate on their work very well, which enables them to progress at a good pace. They work well independently.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school offers pupils an interesting variety of experiences whilst ensuring that literacy and numeracy skills are very well developed. The well-planned curriculum is greatly enriched by a very good range of extracurricular activities, including clubs, visits to places of interest and residential trips.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision is well organised and helps pupils to make good progress. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils receive good support in lessons and when they are taught in separate groups. They have clear targets which are reviewed regularly.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Most of these pupils speak English fluently, but teachers are aware of pupils' needs and make good provision for those who need additional help.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Good. Good spiritual development in assemblies and through the curriculum gives pupils the chance to reflect on issues and express wonder at different aspects of the world around them. Very good

development	provision for moral and social development is promoted through discussions, opportunities to work together, and high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The school develops pupils' cultural awareness well through the arts, literature and history, which enables them to appreciate the cultural diversity of British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school has good procedures for child protection, health and safety and first aid. Teachers know the pupils very well and take great care to ensure their welfare. Pupils' progress and personal development are monitored carefully, and this helps teachers provide the best support for pupils' academic and social development.

A strength of the school is the way it includes all pupils in the opportunities it offers and makes provision for their individual needs.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, key staff and governors provide very good leadership and clear direction for the school. Teachers with subject responsibilities contribute effectively to planning for school improvement. There is a very strong team spirit among the staff, who are all committed to continuing development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are very well informed and play an important role in helping to shape the direction of the school. They have a very good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are fully involved in evaluating progress and identifying priorities for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The rigorous analysis of assessment data and monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning identify priorities for improvement and contribute significantly to raising standards. The school's commitment to self-evaluation and the systematic analysis of every aspect of its provision ensure that there is no complacency about its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very efficient use of all its resources to promote pupils' progress. Financial planning is linked very well to the priorities identified in the school development plan. There are very good procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of spending decisions and ensuring that the school obtains best value when purchasing goods 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 like school. • The school has high expectations of their children. • The school is well managed and led. • It helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework their children receive. • The way the school keeps them informed about their children's progress.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| • The teaching is good. | |
|-------------------------|--|

The findings of the inspection confirm the positive views of the parents. The team considers that the school provides appropriate amounts of homework for pupils as long as there is consistency within each year group. The school makes good arrangements to inform parents about their child's progress through termly consultation meetings and the end-of-year report. In addition, teachers are available to discuss issues with parents throughout the year.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils in Year 6 attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science because the school has high expectations of them and provides suitably demanding work.

1. Pupils enter the school with above average attainment. In Year 6, their attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement and shows that high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Standards in English have risen. The judgements of this inspection are consistent with the school's results in the national tests in 2001 in English and mathematics, but show an improvement in science. In the 2001 tests, 46 per cent of the pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English and 41 per cent did so in mathematics. These were well above the national average. However, in science, 35 per cent of the pupils reached Level 5, a lower percentage than in previous years, although in line with the national average. The school is addressing this by providing specialist teaching for more able pupils in Year 6, and is on course to improve its performance at the higher level in 2002.

2. Pupils' overall performance has remained high over the past three years in English and mathematics. This is because teachers have implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy very well, and have constantly reviewed and modified teaching methods to meet the needs of the pupils. Rigorous assessment procedures and thorough analysis of pupils' work, and their performance in national and internal tests, have enabled the school to identify weaknesses and address them by implementing new strategies. For example, teachers identified that less able pupils in Years 1 and 2 were not making enough progress in reading, because the time allocated to hearing pupils read individually had been reduced after the introduction of the literacy hour. This has been addressed by ensuring that these pupils are able to read to an adult more frequently. A whole school focus on improving writing resulted from a detailed analysis of pupils' test results, and further training for teachers has been organised to help them teach pupils how to develop the structure, style and fluency of their written work. The introduction of setting by attainment in mathematics has enabled teachers to focus more closely on the needs of different groups of pupils and to provide work that is suitably challenging for all.

3. In Year 6, pupils listen attentively and take account of what others have to say. Their prompt and enthusiastic responses show a good understanding of what has been said to them. They speak confidently and articulately, adapting their speech to formal and informal situations appropriately. Pupils read aloud fluently and expressively, and enjoy a wide range of literature. In a literacy lesson, pupils scanned a text to find arguments for and against the use of mobile phones in schools. They were able to identify the key features of a discussion text, including the use of the present tense and connectives such as 'moreover', 'on the other hand' and 'furthermore'. Standards in writing, though not as high as in reading, are still higher than those seen in most schools. Pupils' work is well organised and structured, and they use a wide range of vocabulary imaginatively to set the scene and create mood or atmosphere. Where writing is at its best, it is closely linked with reading and pupils study examples of a particular genre before attempting to produce their own writing. A particularly good example was seen in Year 6, where pupils enjoyed and discussed books of the mystery genre, such as *Tom's Midnight Garden* by Philippa Pearce. Subsequent attempts to write in a similar style showed that pupils had learned a great deal about structure and the use of language to build suspense. Pupils learn to use literary devices such as similes and metaphors to enliven their work. One wrote "I sprang up so fast I thought I'd just been electrocuted" and "I ran like a cheetah to the phone".

4. In mathematics, there is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' mental strategies, which helps them to achieve very good standards in numeracy. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge and understanding very well in a variety of contexts to solve problems. They understand how important it is to present their calculations in a structured, logical way and are willing to learn from each other that there are different ways of approaching a problem. In one lesson, pupils were very keen to explain their methods and those who encountered difficulties were confident enough to admit this and learn from the ideas of others. Pupils in another group built up their skills in checking their answers when solving long multiplication and division problems. Some pupils made effective use of calculators when working out long division involving decimals. Pupils' work demonstrates a good understanding of fractions, decimals, ratio and proportion. Pupils achieve very good standards in mathematics and numeracy because the work they are given is well matched to their capabilities and provides a good level of challenge. They are encouraged to think for themselves and use correct mathematical language. For example, in one lesson, pupils were asked to check their answers using the 'inverse operation' when working out long multiplication and division problems.

5. In science, pupils have very good knowledge, skills and understanding because teachers achieve an appropriate balance between imparting factual information and giving pupils opportunities to apply their knowledge in scientific investigations. This was illustrated well in a lesson about air resistance, where pupils investigated the effect of the surface area of an object on the rate at which it falls. Pupils enjoyed the initial discussion and demonstrated a good understanding of gravity, 'upthrust' and the effect of air on moving objects. The ensuing investigation, devised by the pupils, showed a good understanding of what makes a fair test and the ability to predict what might happen before deciding how to proceed. A group of more able pupils were taught separately from the rest of the class in order to provide them with additional challenge. They were encouraged to apply their knowledge and understanding of air resistance as they refined and modified their investigation.

6. Pupils with special educational needs, exceptionally able pupils, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds all achieve well because the school provides good support for them and monitors their progress carefully. This is reflected in the high proportion of pupils from each of these groups who reach Levels 4 and 5 in the national tests.

The very good leadership and management provide clear direction for the school and ensure a strong commitment to continued improvement.

7. The key features that make for very good leadership and management are a clear vision for the school, strong and effective teamwork, and a commitment to self-evaluation and continuing improvement. The school's mission statement, "Excel at learning, express your talents, care for others" is reflected in all aspects of school life. Over the past four years, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior management team, governors and staff have successfully managed changes and improvements, which have maintained high standards in many areas and improved them in others. All have embraced national and local initiatives with enthusiasm and determination to succeed, and there has been no complacency. This can be seen in the school's swift response to a relative decline in standards in science following analysis of the school's test results in 2001. The school has fully addressed the issues arising from its previous inspection in 1997 and continues to look for ways to raise standards still further. It is very well placed to continue to improve in the future.

8. The headteacher provides very clear leadership and direction for the school, based on a very good understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to improve, and ensures that staff feel valued and appreciated. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, who plays a key role in the day-to-day running of the school and had a major input into the school's preparation for the 'Investors in People' assessment. There is an effective management structure, which includes teachers who

manage responsibilities for infant and junior classes, different subjects and special educational needs. Individual roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and the system works well because there are clear links and efficient channels of communication between all involved. There is effective delegation of responsibilities to subject leaders, who make an important contribution to monitoring standards, the quality of teaching and learning and the implementation of the curriculum. The headteacher recognises and values the contributions made by all members of staff and provides many opportunities for teachers to develop and fully utilise their expertise.

9. Governors share the vision of the headteacher and senior management team and work closely with them to shape the direction of the school. They have a very good awareness of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses and make an effective contribution to its strategic management through their committees. Governors take it in turns to visit the school to observe and report on aspects of its provision such as behaviour, standards of achievement and how different subjects are taught. They also attend parents' consultation evenings to find out about any concerns among parents that need to be addressed. Governors support the school very well. They are willing to question the headteacher and senior staff rigorously while recognising and showing appreciation for their hard work and commitment.

10. More recently, it is the school's commitment to rigorous self-evaluation that has increased the effectiveness of its leadership and management. The school's involvement in 'Investors in People' and its implementation of the 'Business Excellence Model' of self-evaluation have led to a number of significant improvements since the previous inspection. For example, teaching assistants have a more clearly defined role and are more productively involved in school development. The views of parents and pupils are taken into account when considering priorities for improvement, as well as those of all staff and governors. There is detailed monitoring of pupils' progress and analysis of their performance in national and internal tests, which has highlighted key areas for improvement. A strong feature is the way senior teachers compare and analyse the attainment of boys and girls, pupils from ethnic minority groups and those who speak English as an additional language. The school's very strong commitment to inclusion can also be seen in its efforts to provide appropriate facilities and accommodation for pupils with physical disabilities.

11. The priorities for improvement that are identified through self-evaluation are supported very well through meticulous financial management and administration. Resources are used very efficiently and governors ensure that they obtain best value for all expenditure by examining its impact on the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by the pupils. They and senior staff compare the school's performance with that of other, similar schools and make very effective use of all available data to inform their discussions. The school generates considerable additional income through lettings and commercial links. This makes a valuable contribution to the quality of education provided for the pupils by enabling the school to maintain a high teacher/pupil ratio. The school employs several additional teachers which allows smaller teaching groups to be arranged to support pupils with special educational needs and the more able pupils. This also enables teachers to ensure that pupils in the middle ability groups are given sufficient challenge. Any funds that are carried forward at the end of the year are designated for particular projects in the coming year or used to offset reductions in income and to maintain staffing levels. The unusually high level of funds carried forward in 2001 was due partly to additional income that was received late in the financial year, but was also intended to meet a budget shortfall in the following year.

Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour, relationships and personal development are all very good and result from the school's very good provision for their moral and social development.

12. Pupils' very good attitudes to their work are a considerable strength of the school and help to explain why standards are high. As with many of the school's best features, good foundations are laid in the Reception classes, where children quickly develop positive attitudes to learning. Teachers throughout the school build upon this enthusiasm for and enjoyment of learning by making lessons interesting and varied. As a result, pupils listen intently to teachers' explanations and instructions and respond eagerly when given the opportunity to offer ideas, make suggestions or answer questions. Pupils work equally well whether independently, in pairs or as a group. They are willing to share ideas and listen to what others have to say, and they value each other's contributions. These qualities were illustrated well in an information and communication technology lesson in Year 4, where pupils were using computers to enter information and create line graphs. The pupils were clearly very well motivated and concentrated very well as the teacher recalled the previous lesson and explained what the pupils were going to learn next. Pupils worked sensibly in pairs, taking turns to enter information and discussing how to progress with the task. This helped them to make very good progress in extending their knowledge of how to enter and interpret data. In the very few lessons where pupils' attention and enthusiasm began to wane, this was because teachers talked for too long before pupils were able to engage in practical 'hands on' activity.

13. The school sets very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they respond to these with maturity and a sense of personal responsibility. Behaviour during the inspection was very good in lessons, around the school, at playtime and in the dining hall. This confirms the views of parents, who are proud of how well the pupils behave, both in school and when out on visits. Pupils show consideration and respect for adults and their peers, and are aware of the impact of their actions on others. They handle property and resources with care and help to look after the school environment. Pupils clearly take a pride in their school and in their own and others' achievements. They are generally thoughtful and responsible and show a readiness to help others. Pupils from different ethnic groups and backgrounds get on very well together.

14. The school's very good provision for pupils' moral and social development contributes significantly to the high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes, and also promotes very good personal development. The school operates a 'Discipline for Learning' approach to managing pupils' behaviour, which stresses the importance of recognising and acknowledging good behaviour. Following a discussion about the existing school rules, pupils discuss and devise rules for their own class, which they feel are essential for day-to-day life in the classroom. A wide-ranging programme of personal, social and health education gives pupils opportunities to explore challenging issues. They develop an understanding of citizenship through voting for their representatives on the Richmond Pupil Parliament and their own school council. Pupils regularly take part in fund raising activities for different charities, which gives them a wider perspective on society. They benefit from residential trips and extracurricular activities, where they learn the importance of teamwork and co-operation.

15. As well as providing a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour and promoting this consistently in all aspects of school life, teachers plan worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop moral awareness through the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 have explored challenging moral concepts such as racial and religious equality, human rights and justice in literacy and history lessons. By studying and discussing *The Diary of Anne Frank*, they learned about the persecution of the Jews during the Second World War, and have recently been discussing racial segregation in the United States of America and the impact of Martin Luther King on the growth of the human rights movement.

16. All of these experiences help to develop pupils' self-esteem and expand their awareness of the world around them. There is equal emphasis on both pupils' personal and academic development, which prepares them well for taking their place in society.

The consistently good teaching throughout the school enables pupils, whatever their level of ability, to make good progress.

17. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and accounts for the good progress that pupils make. Of the 25 lessons seen, all were at least satisfactory and 21 were good or better. Seven lessons were very good. The proportions of good and very good teaching are similar to those seen in the previous inspection, although, at that time, there was a small minority of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is good, and sometimes very good, and this is reflected in the high standards attained by the pupils in English and mathematics. The specialist teaching in science, which was in place at the time of the last inspection, had to be discontinued for financial reasons. Since that time, the school has identified the reasons for a slight dip in standards in the subject, and has addressed these very well through training and curricular re-organisation. Teaching in science is now good and is helping to raise standards, particularly for the more able pupils. The quality of teaching in information and communication technology has improved significantly as a result of developments in equipment, resources, curricular planning and training for both teaching and support staff. Specialist teaching enhances pupils' learning in music, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are learning to speak French. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good because teachers take good account of pupils' individual needs and plan work accordingly. These pupils also receive good support from assistants and additional teachers who sometimes teach them in small groups.

18. Teaching is successful because it is founded on thorough planning, which is an improvement since the last inspection. This means that teachers focus specifically on what pupils are intended to learn in each lesson. They explain this clearly at the beginning of the lesson and return to it at the end to check whether the pupils have acquired new knowledge and skills. This gives pupils a good knowledge of their own learning. In addition, teachers in each year group plan their weekly work together, which ensures consistency between classes. Teachers' planning takes good account of pupils' differing needs. A good example of this was seen in a Year 2 literacy lesson, where more able pupils composed sentences independently using 'oa' and 'ow' words, while those whose knowledge and understanding were at an earlier stage of development practised spelling and saying the sounds and the words to reinforce their ability to distinguish between the different spelling patterns. In mathematics, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in sets that are formed on the basis of their attainment in the subject. This works very well, because the most able groups are given opportunities to apply their more advanced skills, whilst teachers ensure that less able pupils and those with learning difficulties are able to grasp more basic concepts. All are challenged well at their own level and given suitably demanding work. This helps to promote high standards in the subject.

19. The previous inspection found that the homework policy was not fully understood by all parents, and many wanted more homework to be provided. The parents' views in this inspection show that most are satisfied with the amount given, but that a minority would like more. The inspection findings are that the amount of homework given to pupils is appropriate provided that teachers are consistently following school policy and guidelines.

20. Teachers show a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and are able to communicate this effectively to pupils. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented very well and there is effective teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and manipulating numbers. This means that pupils acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. The quality of relationships and teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour help teachers to create a purposeful working atmosphere. They engage and sustain pupils' interest and attention well, encouraging them to concentrate and complete tasks at a brisk pace. Pupils' exercise books show that they complete a

substantial amount of work over time. Additional teachers and teaching assistants are very well deployed to teach sets, small groups and individuals.

21. A strong feature of most lessons is the well-paced learning which enables pupils to work productively within a given time. In these lessons, teachers achieve a successful balance between imparting information, skilful questioning and purposeful practical activity. A good example of this was seen in a Year 1 science lesson about magnetism. In the introduction to the lesson, the teacher used an enlarged text very effectively to introduce pupils to different types of magnet and the language associated with magnetism, which was described as "a special force". Pupils soon had the chance to experience magnetic "pull" or force for themselves as they handled a variety of magnets and tested them on different materials. The enthusiastic "oohs" and "aahs" that accompanied their discoveries reflected the pupils' enjoyment of this 'hands on' activity. The teacher used scientific vocabulary well, and ensured that the pupils understood the meaning of certain words. Pupils were encouraged to predict and then test whether materials would attract a magnet. This prepared them well for using more advanced scientific methods later on.

22. On the few occasions where lessons were satisfactory rather than good, too much time was given to talking to the pupils and imparting information, and too little to practical activity and independent work. As a result, pupils became restless because they had to sit in one place for too long before becoming actively involved in their own learning.

23. Very good teaching was seen in the Reception classes in all three lessons observed. Teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of young children and how they learn, and of the recommended curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. They plan very well to meet the needs of all children, whatever their capabilities, and ensure that all are given suitably challenging experiences. There is very good teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, which lays a solid foundation and enables children to make a smooth transition into the National Curriculum when they are ready. Very careful assessment of what the children know, understand and can do is used effectively to plan future learning for each child. There is a very good emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development, which helps them to form constructive relationships, and to become independent and self-reliant. Teachers and assistants work very well together to plan work, support children's learning and assess their achievements.

The school offers a varied and interesting curriculum, which is greatly enriched by a very good range of extracurricular activities.

24. The school provides a well-planned, varied and interesting curriculum that enables pupils to benefit from a broad range of worthwhile experiences. An appropriate amount of time has been allocated to all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, and statutory requirements are met. Teachers give high priority to developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics and have implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy very effectively. They make useful and constructive links between these and other subjects when planning their work each term, and use information and communication technology well to support and enhance learning. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when there were weaknesses in curricular planning, which meant that skills and knowledge were not always taught in a logical order to build on previous learning. Curricular planning is reviewed and discussed regularly by teachers within each year group with valuable input from subject co-ordinators. This helps to ensure a consistent approach between classes, and teachers benefit from exchanging ideas and refining their own practice. Children are given a very good start to their school life in the Reception classes, where the curriculum is very well planned in line with national recommendations for the Foundation Stage.

25. As well as making very good provision for developing basic skills, knowledge and understanding across all subjects, the curriculum is enriched by a very good range of activities outside lessons. A variety of clubs, which appeal to pupils' different interests, take place during the lunch hour and after school. These include gardening and computer clubs, drama, first aid, orchestra, chess and several sports clubs. Pupils have many opportunities to participate competitively against other schools and to join with other schools in performing or enjoying shared experiences. Visiting theatre groups present ideas and information to pupils in an innovative way, such as a performance about materials, a Shakespeare Workshop and a presentation about bullying. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are enriched by visits to places of historical and cultural importance. Year 6 pupils visited the British Museum to learn about the Ancient Egyptians, whilst Year 4 pupils found out more about Roman Britain in St Albans. The school devotes a week to a particular focus, the most recent of which was 'Book Week'. This incorporated dance workshops, visits from an author and an illustrator, and a puppet show. Drama performances, such as the recent *Bugsy Malone*, and specialist teaching in music, provide valuable opportunities for pupils to explore and use their talents to the full. Residential trips to Wales and the Isle of Wight and visits to France expand pupils' knowledge and understanding of other geographical locations and cultures, as well as enriching their personal and social development.

26. The curriculum is planned to take account of pupils' differing needs and is socially inclusive. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, who receive effective support both in classes and when taught in small groups. Exceptionally able pupils and those with particular talents in music or sport, for example, are well provided for. The school has a clear policy for these pupils and has identified ways to encourage and develop their particular gifts and talents. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also well provided for and are given good support by teachers and assistants. An awareness of the differing needs of boys and girls informs curricular planning and the choice of appropriate resources. The school makes every effort to ensure that pupils with physical disabilities are able to be included in all aspects of school life. It is particularly successful in doing this in the Reception classes, where modifications to the accommodation and liaison with outside agencies have greatly improved provision.

The school receives very good support from parents, who raise considerable funds for additional resources and provide valuable help in lessons and other activities.

27. The majority of parents are very supportive of the school and many play an active role in school life. There is a strong commitment on the part of governors and staff to forging strong links with parents in order to create an effective partnership between school and home. Parents are encouraged to participate actively in all areas of school life. They receive regular newsletters and half-termly information sheets about what their children will be studying. A number of parents come into school to hear children read, help with practical activities and accompany pupils on school trips. Parents' views are canvassed each year, and these are taken into consideration when the school development plan is put together. They form an integral part of the school's self-evaluation procedures. The school consults parents very well about proposed changes and major decisions, and there is a willingness to respond to parents' concerns.

28. A thriving parent/teacher association provides enthusiastic and effective support for the school. As well as arranging many events that involve the school and the local community, it raises considerable funds for the school, which provide additional facilities and resources to enhance pupils' learning. Each year, parents who help in school are invited to a strawberry tea as a mark of the school's appreciation for their support. The school's partnership with parents is strong because it is nurtured well, and this has a very positive influence on pupils' achievements.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and is not always helpful in showing pupils how to improve their work.

29. This aspect of the school's assessment procedures is not as effective as other aspects because individual teachers have different approaches. The school uses a range of standardised tests and assessments at various points throughout the year. This helps teachers to track pupils' progress carefully as they move through the school. However, on a day-to-day basis, teachers' assessments of pupils' work, and the use of this information to set targets for improvement, are inconsistent. The best examples of teachers' marking show pupils clearly what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. At its weakest, marking is cursory and consists simply of ticks or one word comments. There are noticeable differences in approach between teachers within some year groups. For example, comparisons of pupils' work showed that one teacher's use of marking was diagnostic, with clear pointers for improvement, while another in the same year group simply rewarded good work with positive comments.

30. In English, teachers set individual targets for each pupil, which are clearly displayed in their exercise books for reference. Some teachers refer to these targets in their marking and one very good example showed clearly when targets had been met in a piece of work. There are, however, few instances where teachers acknowledge or make use of pupils' targets in their marking, in order to help pupils work towards them. Conversely, it is not apparent that marking informs the setting of pupils' targets by identifying the most important aspects for improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

31. In order to continue to improve the quality of education provided by the school the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Improve the quality and consistency of teachers' marking to show pupils clearly what they have done well and how to raise the standard of their work.

(Paragraphs 29-30)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

25

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	14	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	28	56	16	0	0	0

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

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)	449
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	18
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	108
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	32
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	32	29	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	29	30
	Girls	25	27	27
	Total	50	56	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (88)	92 (91)	93 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	30	31
	Girls	27	27	27
	Total	54	57	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (89)	93 (96)	95 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	26	28	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	20	23
	Girls	26	25	27
	Total	49	45	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (85)	83 (82)	93 (97)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	24	25
	Girls	25	26	26
	Total	49	50	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (82)	93 (78)	94 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	9
Indian	27
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	372
Any other minority ethnic group	34

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	1019363
Total expenditure	998292
Expenditure per pupil	2218
Balance brought forward from previous year	72969
Balance carried forward to next year	94040

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	449
Number of questionnaires returned	111

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	52	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	52	3	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	55	15	3	1
The teaching is good.	46	52	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	50	18	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	29	8	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	37	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	32	52	11	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	51	43	1	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	47	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	43	10	1	6