

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STIFFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Grays, Essex

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 114885

Headteacher: Mrs Sheila Smith

Reporting inspector: Doreen Clery  
(OFSTED No: 3581)

Dates of inspection: 5 - 6 December 2000

Inspection number: 224241

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Parker Road Grays Essex
Postcode:	RM17 5YN
Telephone number:	01375 373601
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Jonathan Catton
Date of previous inspection:	10 June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is the largest primary school in Thurrock and, with 540 pupils on roll, is bigger than most primary schools. Numbers have risen since the last inspection. The majority of pupils are from white European backgrounds with seven per cent coming from a range of minority ethnic groups. There is a relatively high mobility rate among pupils (14 per cent during the last academic year) and the school's intake includes a small number of asylum-seeking families. Six per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language and 12 of these are at the early stages of learning English. There is a wide spread of attainment on entry with a significant percentage of children attaining low levels in literacy and mathematics; pre-school provision in the locality is limited. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average at 27 per cent.

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

This is a good school with some very good features. While standards remain generally below the national average, overall standards are rising. The school has a strong commitment to improvement and effective strategies have been put in place to support pupils' progress. The very good relationships, good teaching and strong leadership and management of the headteacher, senior management team and governors provide a very positive atmosphere for learning. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and are motivated by the relevant curriculum and good teaching.
- The school's emphasis on improving behaviour and its common approach to behaviour management are having a positive effect and so behaviour throughout the school is good.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and helps pupils to achieve their best.
- The broad and balanced curriculum provides a range of rich learning experiences.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide very good leadership.
- The school's very positive aims and values are reflected throughout its purposeful work and clear educational direction.

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

- Standards at Key Stage 2, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Attendance, which is not as good as it should be, in spite of the school's best efforts.
- Acts of collective worship do not fully comply with statutory requirements.

*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 previously inspected in June 1996 and, overall, has made good improvement since then. Very good progress has been made on the majority of issues identified. A stronger and more effective senior management team has been established and systems and structures have been put in place which are having a positive impact on learning and teaching. All subjects now have schemes of work and national strategies and guidelines are supplemented by other focused schemes. The School Development Plan is comprehensive, well organised and involves all members of staff and the governing body. Teachers, at both key stages, have high expectations and the quality of teaching is good across the school. While there are planned opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum, assemblies do not have a high status within the life of the school and still do not meet the requirements for collective worship. Standards in English and mathematics are not yet in line with the national average but, since the last inspection, there has been a steady improvement; this is in the context of increased turbulence within the school's roll.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	E	D
mathematics	D	E	E	E
science	D	D	D	D

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

Over the last three years the overall trend in results at the end of Key Stage 2 has followed the national trend of rising standards, albeit from a lower base. Results in the year 2000 were affected by a number of factors: a very high level of pupil mobility and an above average number of pupils with special educational needs, some of whom had emotional and behavioural difficulties. A closer analysis of the results shows that those pupils who were in the school from reception to Year 6 achieved broadly in line with national standards.

The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, in the year 2000, showed standards that were in line with the national average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. This represents good progress given that assessments made on entry to the school show that many children begin with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills.

The standard of work seen during the inspection indicates that the school is on line to meet its own realistic targets at the end of Key Stage 2 and to continue the trend of improvement. These are still set slightly below current national averages but represent a continued rise in standards. There are now more pupils achieving at the higher levels in English and mathematics. Good teaching, new initiatives such as adopting the national strategies and thorough monitoring and evaluation are all having an impact on raising standards generally. There are plans to give Year 6 and Year 5 pupils extra support over the next two terms and already there are extension classes for higher attainers in Year 6. The action taken by the school, through its improved strategies and structures for curricular planning and its focus on behaviour, is making a significant contribution to the good progress seen during the inspection. The whole-school approach to the teaching of basic skills is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment. The school has correctly identified those aspects of literacy and numeracy which still need attention; these include raising standards in writing and matching work more closely to individual learning needs in mathematics 'sets'.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy their learning; they are interested in their work, settle to tasks purposefully and concentrate well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils understand the school's expectations and their good behaviour in lessons contributes to the progress made.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils, and with staff, are characterised by mutual respect.

Attendance	Levels of attendance are below the national average, even though the school works hard to improve them.
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The school's ethos promotes purposeful attitudes and positive values.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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.*

Teaching was good or very good in 83 per cent of lessons observed during the inspection and there was evidence of excellent teaching. The remaining lessons were satisfactory and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Contributory factors of the good teaching are the systems for planning, effective management and organisation of pupils and a good range of activities which engage pupils in their learning.

At both key stages and for the children in the reception class, the quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. The school implements the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy successfully and planning in both subjects is very good. The use of 'setting' in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 and in mathematics at Key Stage 1 is generally working well and contributing positively to improving progress. However, in mathematics 'sets' at Key Stage 2, the work is not always sufficiently matched to individual learning needs and this results in insufficient challenge for some pupils. A strong quality of the teaching and learning in the school is the commitment of teachers to the pupils and the value teachers place on pupils achievements; this makes a positive impact on their learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provided is broad, balanced, interesting and well planned across all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The curriculum is much enriched by the links made between subjects, as well as visits and school events.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs; they are appropriately identified and the realistic targets set for their improvement and good quality support, provided by teachers and members of the support staff, ensure that they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for this small group of pupils ensures that they have good access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The overall provision is good. Pupils learn to develop respect and appreciation for one another and the environment. They learn to understand themselves and the impact of their actions on others. While opportunities for spiritual development are to be found in the curriculum, fewer opportunities are provided within the school's assemblies. The collective act of worship does not meet statutory requirements.
How well the school cares	Although the school is large, it is well organised to ensure that all pupils



for its pupils	are well known and valued as individuals. All adults in the building work very well together and provide good role models for the pupils.
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The school's strong commitment to equal opportunities is evident in all aspects of its work.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior management team. They have a firm commitment to raising standards and provide very clear direction for the work and development of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. They are very well informed and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide strong support and fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance fully and thoroughly through the analysis of results, evaluation of teaching and its school development planning.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing, resources and accommodation are used efficiently and effectively. Pupils derive great benefit from wisely targeted spending. High quality and stimulating displays, which reflect all areas and aspects of the school's work and the curriculum, enhance the complex open-plan building.

The school's financial planning and use of resources are guided by principles of achieving the best value in terms of the education provided.

## 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>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Their children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Children work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The school helps children become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A greater range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the very positive views of the school expressed by a majority of parents. The school does provide a range of activities, which includes sporting and musical activities and extension classes for Year 6; however, given the large number of pupils and the enriched curriculum already provided by the school, it is not possible to engage all pupils in extra-curricular activities.

At their meeting and in letters to the Registered Inspector, parents expressed concern that the school's uniform policy was included within the behaviour policy. Inspectors agree that an evaluation of the school's behaviour policy should take account of the parents' views with regard to uniform.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning**

1. Pupils' very positive attitudes towards their work and to other people are evident in all aspects of school life. These good attitudes are fostered in part by the good example of staff, their teaching and their high levels of expectation in regard to effort and good behaviour. The social skills and very constructive attitudes formed in the early years provide a good foundation for learning, which is well sustained throughout the school. Pupils take pride in their school and treat the building and all equipment with respect. The improvements, over recent years, to the building and its grounds provide a positive environment for pupils' learning. Pupil involvement in developing the outside areas – by planting bulbs and seeds and by planting and 'dressing' trees – leads to greater appreciation and responsibility for their environment. Evidence of this occurred when one of the inspection team was given clear guidance, by a boy in Key Stage 1, as to where she should not walk 'because there are plants under there'.
2. Pupils are generally positive about their work and settle to tasks readily. They take pride in their work and, in many of the lessons observed, they were totally absorbed in what they were doing. They work well independently and in pairs. A good example of paired work was seen in the class of the youngest children, where they were experimenting with sounds made by musical instruments. Children could wait for their turn, listen attentively to the sounds made by their partners and comment on the sounds; their pleasure in their achievement was clear. During the inspection, pupils' positive feelings about their work were evident in the way they canvassed inspectors to go and see their lessons and enthusiasm for learning was present in many of the lessons seen. In one Year 4 class, when pupils were developing their skills in instructional writing, through teaching a toy soldier to march, their pleasure and involvement were tangible.
3. Pupils respond positively to the systems in place and move around the school calmly and with purpose; they are pleased to help visitors find their way around the building and to engage in conversation about work on display. Inspection findings confirm the view expressed by the vast majority of parents, that pupils enjoy coming to school.

#### **Behaviour throughout the school is good**

4. Pupils respond positively to the school's consistent and effective approach to behaviour and discipline. They understand that there are clear expectations of acceptable behaviour and agreed sanctions. It is clear that the school's emphasis on improving behaviour and its common approach to behaviour management are having a positive effect. In discussion, a group of pupils in Year 6 commented that behaviour had improved within the school; they thought rules were strictly enforced and overall behaviour was good. These same pupils were fully aware of the school's policy on bullying and said that 'bullying is rare and we learned how to cope with bullying last year'. The school's imaginative initiative in appointing a Pupil Support Assistant, who works with any children who need to talk about their worries or about whom there is a concern, helps to ensure that pupils are supported in taking responsibility for their own actions. In addition, the 'friendship stops', which are identified places in the playground where pupils go when they are feeling lonely or vulnerable, helps to build friendships and diffuse possible conflict.
5. In lessons observed during the inspection, behaviour was never less than satisfactory; almost all behaviour was good and in over half the lessons seen behaviour was very good. A significant contributory factor to this good behaviour is the quality of teaching, which ensures that pupils are busy listening to their teachers and are fully focused on their tasks. Inspectors agree with pupils and parents that behaviour in the school is good.

## **The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and helps pupils to achieve their best**

6. All the lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory or better. The striking feature is the very high proportion of good (57 per cent) and very good (26 per cent) teaching. In these lessons, in particular, all pupils made good, sustained progress in their learning. This marks a considerable improvement from the last time the school was inspected. On that occasion one third of lessons were good or very good and there was also a worrying number of unsatisfactory lessons at Key Stage 2. This is obviously no longer the case and, in fact, some of the high quality teaching is to be found in this Key Stage. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for instance, high expectations and a brisk, purposeful teaching style led to a really focused session learning about angles. The pupils readily responded to the task of drawing and measuring the angles of a five-pointed star. The teacher continually challenged her pupils, reminding them 'You have to be extremely accurate'; making her pupils think through asking 'Does anyone have a hypothesis about the sum of the angles?' and going on to consider an extension task for homework: 'Can you make the same star with equal angles?' The pupils' concentration and perseverance in tackling the problem were of a very high level and so they produced neat and often very accurate work. Their obvious enthusiasm for the subject came through in many comments such as: 'Maths is fun because it's taught in a fun way'.
7. There are a number of factors that make the teaching successful. The quality of the teachers' planning is very good. They plan together in year group teams, drawing on one another's experience, and use the national guidance and their own school-based schemes. This means that there is a consistency in the teaching and ensures progression from year to year. All teachers have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils in their classes and so work is generally pitched appropriately in lessons. Teachers also manage their lessons very well. Strategies for controlling behaviour are consistent and there is an expectation that the pupils will behave well. The pupils are usually very interested in their work because teachers use a wide range of resources and interesting methods to teach the various subjects. For instance, in a science lesson in Year 5, the pupils were learning about the passage of the sun across the sky and its effect on casting shadows. In pairs they used a tower of cubes to represent a block of flats and a torch to simulate the light from the sun. They stood a hoop upright in front of the tower and carefully took the torch around the outside edge to mark the course of the day. The pupils watched in some wonder as the length of the shadows changed with the differing positions of the torch. "Wow, it's way small!" exclaimed one of them as the light shone down from above. The pupils were not only successfully learning key scientific knowledge and understanding but also how to set up and record a scientific investigation. Their teacher constantly reminded them about the principles of fair testing and recording accurately as they drew around the shadows they had created. The pupils used a well-prepared recording sheet on which to present their results. It is not surprising that they were very enthusiastic about their learning. Similarly, pupils in a Year 1 class were excited when they were able to relate their learning of the previous day to their current work in literacy; they remembered the correct words and meaning of 'fiction', 'non-fiction', 'contents' and 'blurb' and responded enthusiastically to composing labels for their teacher's well-prepared enlarged text. They shared their teacher's pleasure in the progress they were making.
8. Teachers are very competent in teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Although the school was not a pilot for the National Literacy Project, teachers adopted its methods and programme of work four years ago and integrated it with the Early Reading Research Project already in use. The positive effects of the National Literacy Strategy, along with the regular structured teaching of phonics – whereby words are 'segmented and synthesised' – are evident in the good progress being made by pupils from the Foundation Stage to Year 4. Teachers are confident in their teaching of literacy and have good knowledge of the subject. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were learning to construct complex sentences; their interest was gained and their understanding strengthened by the teacher's very effective strategy of physically cutting up sentences and 'dropping' one simple sentence into another. The methodology for teaching mathematics closely follows the National Numeracy Strategy. All lessons begin with an emphasis on mental calculation and teachers handle these short sessions well. One of the Year

2 teachers very effectively explored the number facts around 24 with her class and progressed on to counting forwards and backwards in tens from this number. In the main part of lessons there is usually a good proportion of direct teaching and interactive work with the whole class or in groups. In both numeracy and literacy, teachers draw their lessons together with a plenary, which celebrates success, recaps on the learning or introduces an extension or what might come next.

### **The broad and balanced curriculum provides a range of rich learning experiences**

9. The school provides a broad, balanced and rich range of opportunities for learning for pupils of all ages. Teachers are very well informed about national initiatives and developments and make good use of all available guidance to inform their planning of the curriculum. All of the curriculum co-ordinators have a strong overview of their subject and a good understanding of the way forward for the school. Many of the current national initiatives have been easily adapted into the working of the school. For instance, the creative and rich opportunities for learning, which are a common feature of the reception classes, easily match the requirements of the new Foundation Stage curriculum. Structured mathematics lessons, now part of the Numeracy Strategy, had been taught for some time beforehand. The National Literacy Strategy was introduced when it was in its draft stage and the Early Reading Research Project, already being used, was incorporated into this. All other subjects of the curriculum are carefully planned and follow detailed schemes of work with good consideration given to the linking of subjects. The impact of all this is noticeable in the improvement in pupils' achievements. All of this marks considerable progress since the last inspection when there were some weaknesses in curricular planning.
10. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs; these pupils are appropriately identified and realistic targets set for their continued good progress. Special educational needs teachers, learning assistants and other members of staff all play a very valuable role in ensuring equality of access to the curriculum.
11. The weekly and daily planning systems are very thorough. Usually, at the beginning of lessons, teachers make it very clear to their pupils what the learning intention will be and reinforce these intentions at other times throughout the session. This not only helps pupils to understand the point of the lesson but also gives some reference against which teachers can assess the progress pupils make. In a handwriting lesson, for instance, a Year 2 teacher told her class that the intention was to learn how to form words that have an 'ai' blend. She gave a very good demonstration of how to write the words, frequently referring to observations that she had made previously about their handwriting and knowledge of phonics. The pupils made very good progress in this lesson due to the teacher's really positive approach to their learning, high expectations and ongoing assessments of how well they were doing.
12. This is a school that enriches the statutory curriculum with a wide range of special events, visits and visitors. It makes the approach to learning creative and interesting for its pupils in all subjects. The geography curriculum is a good example of this. It is supported by fieldwork in and around the local area, visits to various sites along the river Thames - including the Thames barrier - as well as residential school journeys. Barnaby, a travelling teddy bear, accompanies staff and children on worldwide trips and photographs are displayed of his exploits. Several of the Key Stage 2 classes have interesting displays featuring different environments or 'What's in the News?' All of this promotes a worldview and helps foster a developing sense of people and places. The art curriculum also provides pupils with the opportunity to develop creativity and imagination while using a range of techniques and materials. The resulting work is of a good standard.
13. Each year the school takes two weeks off timetable to focus on different themes; recently, there have been an Enterprise Week to improve the school grounds, a Creative Arts Week looking at different continents, a Millennium Week and a World of Work Week. These weeks provide opportunities for some creative planning and the work currently on display, produced in this term's

Maths Week, is evidence of the high standards achieved through this enrichment of the curriculum.

14. The school's curriculum also places a good emphasis on citizenship and social and moral development. 'Circle times' focus on a range of different issues. In a Year 3 class pupils showed great maturity and empathy when discussing thoughts and feelings about a situation that began with a story where someone had been bullied. They could identify with feeling 'embarrassed', 'sad', 'cross' or 'furious' if the situation had happened to them. Their teacher helped them to see all sides of the argument very effectively and learn how they might respond in similar situations. A wide range of appeals and charities has been supported at various times; these include the British Heart Foundation, Children in Distress, NSPCC and local hospices. This fund-raising further develops pupils' social awareness and compassion within the context of the wider world.

### **The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide very good leadership**

15. The clear vision and strong effective leadership of the headteacher make a significant contribution to the success of the school. She has a direct concern for the sustained improvement of quality and standards and manages all aspects of this large school's work very efficiently. The deputy headteacher works closely and effectively with the headteacher and, since her appointment, has made a significant contribution to the school's development. The headteacher knows the school well and the decision to strengthen the senior management team, by the appointment of three assistant headteachers, is proving to be beneficial to the school. The senior team ensures that policies are consistently implemented and that teachers receive the support and guidance they need. As a result of their thorough analysis of the school's results, strengths and weaknesses are identified and effective strategies implemented. All those involved in the management of the school have a very clear view of what has been achieved and what needs to be done further.
16. Since the last inspection, the role of the co-ordinators has been developed effectively. In particular, the two English co-ordinators and the co-ordinator for mathematics have successfully introduced and implemented the national strategies and developed staff's knowledge, understanding and confidence through regular in-service training. The Early Years co-ordinator, who is also the co-ordinator for staff development, ensures that all members of staff have equal access to a wide range of courses; her experience and expertise inform and affect the good practice evident in the foundation classes. The two co-ordinators for special educational needs have a thorough understanding of this aspect of the school's work and manage it well.
17. The governing body is active and knowledgeable. It is well organised and governors work hard within an effective committee structure. They have a good understanding and informed view of the work of the school and a clear view of the way forward. The practice of governors 'adopting' a class, and continuing this attachment as the class moves through the school, deepens their understanding of the curriculum and the day-to-day running of the school. At their meeting before the inspection, governors said that they were well informed by the headteacher and involved in meaningful consultation.

## **The school's very positive aims and values are reflected throughout its purposeful work and clear educational direction**

18. The school has a very purposeful ethos and everyone works hard to maintain this. Its aims, which have a high profile throughout the school and in all its documents, provide a clear picture of the values for which it stands and its approach to learning; they are relevant and comprehensive. The school is successful in meeting its stated aims. There are very good working relationships within the school: between adults, between adults and pupils and among pupils. Communication is very good and the School Council provides an effective forum for pupils to make their views known. The council is valued by pupils and this was evident, during the inspection, when a boy was observed asking his representative to make his views felt at the next meeting.
19. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve its planning for development. The current plan, which is informed by the views and knowledge of governors and staff, is thorough and comprehensive; it provides a clear and strategic view and is an effective tool for managing change.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Standards at Key Stage 2, particularly in English and mathematics**

20. Over the last three years the school's results, at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics, have been either below or well below national averages. However, standards have been rising in the school, at the same pace as the rising standards nationally. Given that the results at the end of Key Stage 1 are frequently in line with national averages, there is the implication that standards should be higher at Key Stage 2. Last year, however, (year 2000 cohort) there were a number of highly relevant factors that worked against this assumption. There was a high level of pupil mobility and a significant number of pupils who took last year's tests had not been at Stifford throughout their primary education. This cohort also contained an above average number of pupils with special educational needs, some of whom had emotional and behavioural difficulties. The standards of work seen in English and mathematics during the inspection show that the school is on line to meet its own realistic targets of 61 per cent at Level 4 and above in English and 70 per cent in mathematics. These are both below the current national averages but represent a significant rise, particularly in the mathematics scores, from last year. There are now more pupils achieving at the higher levels in this subject and in English. Good teaching, new initiatives, such as adopting the national strategies, and thorough monitoring and evaluation are all having an impact on raising standards generally. There are plans to give Year 6 and Year 5 pupils extra support over the next two terms and already there are extension classes for higher attainers in Year 6.
21. The school is aware of aspects that it still has to work on in English and mathematics in its drive to raise standards in this key stage. A priority of the current development plan is to raise standards in writing, particularly for boys. Standards in spelling have risen throughout Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 but they are still low overall in Years 5 and 6. While the 'setting' for mathematics is proving to be successful there is still a wide range of ability within each set. Work is not always sufficiently matched to individual learning needs and investigative and problem-solving mathematics does not feature highly in the work planned. The school is aware of the need to improve this aspect of the mathematics curriculum to ensure that pupils at different levels of ability develop their understanding and are appropriately challenged. In addition, not enough use is being made of computers to support the learning in mathematics. Similarly, although there is evidence of information and communication technology being used effectively to develop extended writing, there is insufficient use of computers in the drafting stage of written composition. However, several strategies have been put in place to raise standards in English and there are signs that these are already beginning to have a positive effect. Notable among these is the use of individual 'white boards', on which pupils can try out their ideas before committing themselves to paper; these boards were put to good use in a Year 6 spelling session

when pupils wrote out words they were asked to spell, showed them to their teacher and to one another and quickly corrected any mistakes they had made. The pupils commented on how useful they found the boards. The involvement of one teacher in a course on boys and writing is resulting in the introduction of further constructive approaches. Personal writing journals are being introduced in the upper Key Stage 2 classes and these are encouraging pupils, especially boys, to write for pleasure. Further development of these strategies, along with the continuation of 'setting' for English and the additional teaching support offered to pupils in the lower set, should ensure that standards are raised.

### **Attendance which is not as good as it should be, in spite of the school's best efforts**

22. As was the case in the last inspection, attendance remains below the national average at 92.9 per cent; unauthorised absence is higher than the national average. A contributory factor to this lower level of attendance is the high number of holidays taken during term time. The school's strong focus and guidance inform parents of their statutory responsibilities regarding attendance and identify the procedures to be followed; this results in the majority of pupils attending school regularly. Systems for monitoring attendance are good and registers are completed courteously and efficiently. Some pupils find it difficult to come to school on time but punctuality throughout the rest of the day is good.

### **Acts of collective worship do not fully comply with statutory requirements**

23. The last inspection reported that not all assemblies met statutory requirements in that they did not include a collective act of worship. Assemblies usually incorporated moral elements but few opportunities for spiritual enrichment or reflection were provided. While the school has taken steps to develop its programme of assemblies - in that these now take place in classes, year groups and key stages, in addition to the whole school – they still lack sufficient opportunities for meaningful spiritual development. Pupils' good work and behaviour are recognised and celebrated and the assembly diary shows that moral and social education feature strongly in the school's programme. However, while some religious stories are told, there is evidence that the meaning of these is not fully developed and pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to relate these to their own experience. Singing did not feature in the majority of the assemblies observed during the inspection and, while recorded music was played as pupils entered the hall, they were not encouraged to listen carefully or to develop their awareness of the effect and power of music. Overall, assemblies do not have a high status in the life and work of the school.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

- Continue to develop the very good strategies already in place to raise standards of attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - extending the use of personal writing journals;
  - providing more opportunities for word processing to be used in the drafting of written work;
  - ensuring that, whenever possible, additional support is given to pupils in the lower English sets;
  - providing activities which more closely match pupils' individual learning needs in mathematics sets;
  - making more use of computers and placing greater emphasis on investigations in mathematics. (paragraphs 20 and 21)
- Continue to place emphasis on the importance of regular attendance and discourage parents from taking holidays in term time. (paragraph 22)

- Ensure that the statutory requirements for collective worship are met and the quality of the school's assemblies is improved by:
  - developing the use of music in assembly, through singing and listening attentively to recorded music;
  - ensuring that there is a focus for pupils' attention and that all pupils can see the illustrations and hear the text being read;
  - providing meaningful opportunities for reflection. (paragraph 23)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	23	57	17	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		508
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		70

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		136

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	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	45

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	92.9
National comparative data	94.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	46	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	41	37	39
	Girls	42	41	42
	Total	83	78	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (89)	87 (89)	90 (86)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39	37	42
	Girls	42	42	42
	Total	81	79	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (90)	88 (98)	93 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	43	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	26	35
	Girls	20	13	28
	Total	47	39	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (60)	52 (66)	84 (78)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	28	27
	Girls	19	16	19
	Total	35	44	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (48)	59 (51)	61 (63)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	10
Black – other	5
Indian	9
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	2
White	427
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*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	18	3
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– Y 6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	26.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5
Average class size	24

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

Total number of education support staff	10.7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	308

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/00
	£
Total income	931753
Total expenditure	1005394
Expenditure per pupil	1839
Balance brought forward from previous year	105569
Balance carried forward to next year	98550

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	508
Number of questionnaires returned	193

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	35	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	3	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	52	5	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	51	11	1	4
The teaching is good.	52	46	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	47	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	39	6	5	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	35	1	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	41	49	6	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	43	43	7	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	47	3	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	33	24	7	15