

INSPECTION REPORT

TETSWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tetsworth

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123031

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Walkinshaw

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sonja Öyen
7167

Dates of inspection: 4- 6 December 2000

Inspection number: 224717

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of children :	5 -11
Gender of children :	Mixed
School address:	15 High Street Tetsworth Oxfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Peter Papworth
Date of previous inspection:	4 November 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tetsworth Primary is a small community school in Tetsworth village, a farming and residential area three miles south of Thame. The number on roll has fallen from 57 at the time of the last inspection in 1996 to 46, 20 boys and 26 girls. As in most small schools, the number of children in each year group varies – there are 13 in Year 2 and only two in Year 1. Children start school the term in which they are five. During the inspection, two children who will start school in January were joining afternoon sessions with the two children who started in September. The teaching of the reception year and Key Stage 1 children is shared between the headteacher and a part-time teacher. Another part-time teacher takes all Year 3 and most Year 4 children in the morning. These children join the other Year 4, and Years 5 and 6 children in the afternoons. Nearly all the children come from the village with most living in private housing. No pupil is eligible for a free school meal. Eight children (17 per cent, below the national average) are identified as having special educational needs and two receive support from external agencies. No pupil has a statement of special educational need and no pupil has English as an additional language. On entry to school, the overall attainment of children is similar to that expected for their age but many show higher attainment in speaking, listening and in personal, social and emotional development. Tetsworth joins with four other village schools for activities throughout the year and also works in partnership with seven others in the Thame area.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Tetsworth is a happy, family school that is highly effective in developing children's independence and self-assurance. The children make at least satisfactory progress throughout their time at school although the rate of progress varies due to strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and curriculum. Children in Years 5 and 6 are making good progress and this is lifting standards. Overall standards in English, mathematics and science are similar to those expected for children's ages in all year groups. However, achievement for many children could be higher in several subjects, especially in writing. Standards have varied over the last four years but have kept pace with the upward trend seen nationally. The headteacher, appointed from September 2000, has renewed the sense of purpose and team spirit in the school. She is providing good leadership but much remains to be done to accelerate the pace of improvement and to ensure higher quality of provision and higher standards. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school has well established links with the village and works successfully with parents to involve them in the education of their children.
- The teachers draw effectively on the children's high enthusiasm for school to develop their initiative and independence as learners and problem solvers.
- The teachers plan their lessons conscientiously and are beginning to take into fuller account what they know about the children's attainment when deciding what children should learn next.
- The children feel part of a caring and supportive school family; there is a positive atmosphere and the children develop a mature outlook on life.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching to boost the rate of children's progress and their achievement across the curriculum but most especially in writing and number.
- Standards of presentation of children's work.
- The quality of the provision for children in the reception year.
- The effectiveness of governors and all members of staff in determining what the school does well and what needs to be improved in the long and short term.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement has been satisfactory since the inspection in November 1996 but the school has been slow to deal fully with the key issues related to raising attainment in music, challenging the more able children and preparing the children for life in a culturally diverse society. As a result, these remain as areas for improvement. The school has sustained most of the strengths identified and continued to give high emphasis to English, mathematics and science. While the school achieved good standards in 1997, standards have fluctuated since and reflect several changes and breaks in the leadership of the school that disrupted the programme of school improvement and the continuity of teaching. This partly accounts for the dip in standards at Key Stage 2 in 1998 and at Key Stage 1 in 1999. In the 2000 national tests, although the school met its target for Level 4 attainment in English, it did not meet it in mathematics. The appointment of a new headteacher from this September has given needed stability. She has done much this term to clarify the direction for the school, to evaluate the effectiveness of existing procedures and to identify what needs to be done to raise standards especially when compared with similar small schools. This has lifted morale and given impetus to the work of staff and governors in raising the quality of teaching and learning.

STANDARDS

As fewer than 10 children took the national tests for eleven year olds in 2000, comparative grades with all and similar schools are unreliable and have not been included. Standards are satisfactory. In the 2000 tests, the fact that not all the eight Year 6 children achieved Level 4 as expected for their age in English, mathematics and science lowered the school's overall results and hid good achievement particularly in mathematics and science where half of the children reached the higher Level 5. All the Year 2 children attained at least Level 2 as expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

A scrutiny of current work in books and in lessons shows that most Years 2 and 6 children are working at the level expected for their age in reading, mathematics and science. Several children do better than expected for their age and a small minority make slower progress. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are good. Although standards in writing are satisfactory, they are not high enough, especially at Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. The children are too used to being told what to write. Although the older Key Stage 2 children have good ideas, the quality of their work is lowered by poor presentation and by errors in spelling and punctuation. The rate of progress for children in Years 5 and 6 is accelerating and their current attainment in English, mathematics and science indicates that the targets for Level 4 attainment in the 2001 national tests are realistic. Many children show the potential to do better especially in mathematics and science.

By the end of the reception year, most children have made a good start and met the standard expected for their age in language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Most make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. In creative development however, they do not all reach the standard expected. The gaps in their experience, especially in creating music and combining materials and textures, also typify the curriculum for children in other years and standards are unsatisfactory throughout the school in art and design and music.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; the children enjoy school and are keen to learn. They work industriously and conscientiously especially when their interest is caught by something new or by practical activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; the children generally behave well. They show much natural exuberance but are often slow to organise themselves and to respond to instructions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; the children are happy and get on well together. They are self-assured, mature and very supportive and caring of one another.
Attendance	Good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children :	In the reception year	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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 is at least satisfactory in nearly all lessons but is not as strong as judged in the 1996 inspection. In two lessons in ten the teaching is good – it is more prevalent for the children in Years 5 and 6 where challenging activities are boosting their progress especially in English and science.

Throughout the school, there are strengths in the easy relationships between teachers and children, the conscientious planning of lessons, the preparation of materials and the regular setting of homework. However, the quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all children's needs are met fully and all children achieve well. The teachers' expectations of what the children can achieve are not always high enough. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, the pace was too slow and the content too easy to develop the younger children's skills in music.

The quality of teaching in the daily literacy and mathematics lessons is satisfactory overall. The teaching of the Year 3 and most Year 4 children as a separate group is helping to plug gaps in their learning from Key Stage 1, and also to raise standards in reading, writing and number work. In English and mathematics, the teachers do not place enough emphasis on making explicit to the children what they need to know to tackle a task successfully and what they need to do to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory for Key Stage 1 and 2 children; the curriculum for the five year olds lacks depth and variety. National Curriculum requirements are not being met fully for all children in information and communication technology and in design and technology due to a lack of resources.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Satisfactory; children often receive support from an adult and are given work suited to their needs in literacy and mathematics lessons. Less is done to tailor tasks in other subjects to ensure the children can work independently.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; all members of staff expect the children to consider others and to behave responsibly. Although the children develop a sound awareness of their local heritage and culture the provision is not as good in preparing them for life in a multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its children	The school acts as one family – the staff know the children really well and have their interests at heart.

The school has a strong partnership with the parents who are loyal, willing to help and appreciative of the way the school plays a key part in village life. Parents' ready support facilitates visits by children to places of interest that broaden and enrich the curriculum.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory; the headteacher is providing effective leadership and is initiating change. Other members of staff have yet to assume leadership in raising standards and improving the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory; many of the governors are new this term - all governors are very supportive, understand their role and through the committees are beginning to look critically at the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Developing; test results are analysed and compared with those of other schools. The teachers are tracking the children's progress but there is not enough information on what works well and what does not, especially in teaching and provision, to identify key priorities and to hold all to account in improving what the school offers.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; healthy reserves are being used to provide a third class in the mornings and additional funds are used effectively to provide resources and staff training. Parents' fund raising boosts the school budget considerably.

The school's Grade 2 listed buildings date from 1881 and provide less than ideal accommodation with interconnecting classrooms of different sizes and layouts. Staff and children are used to "making do". Good use is made of the village hall, village green and local sports centre for school events and physical education sessions. Despite the recent removal of outdated items, there is still much clutter and few quality resources especially for the youngest children. In several subjects, such as information and communication technology, design and technology and art and design, the lack of materials and equipment limits not only the children's experiences but also their progress and attainment. The impending installation of computer equipment provides a good opportunity to review the use of space, time and expertise.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher and staff are very approachable and parents are welcomed. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children are expected to work hard. • They feel the teaching is good. • School and parents work closely together. • They are kept up to date with how well their child is doing. • Their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible for their own actions. • The children behave well. • Their children are happy and like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. <p>A few parents raised the following concerns;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the amount of homework • their children sometimes found the work was too easy and became bored.

The inspectors endorse most of the parents' views. The small number of children and mixed-age classes give a strong feeling of family. However, the teachers do not always take the children's differing ages and abilities fully into account when planning lessons. Consequently the level of challenge is not always high enough for the oldest or the most able, nor is always wholly appropriate for the youngest or lower attaining children. The amount and regularity of homework are similar to that in most schools. Although there are few activities outside school hours, the children benefit from visits to places of interest and from activities held in other venues. The recent purchase of games and toys has widened the range of activities available at break-times.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school has well-established links with the village and works successfully with parents to involve them in the education of their children.

1. The very good partnership between the school and parents was also a feature identified in the last inspection. Governors, staff and parents acknowledge that the school has gone through an unsettling period since 1996 due to changes in the school's leadership and to periods of absence of a headteacher. This not only affected the continuity of teaching for the children in the reception year and Years 1 and 2, but also caused a hiatus in the programme of school improvement. Parents voiced concern but generally remained loyal to and highly supportive of the school. At the meeting with the inspectors prior to the inspection, parents were keen to point out that the appointment of a new headteacher had brought stability and a feeling of security in the school's future and their children's education.
2. The parents' strong wish to support the school and to be involved in the education of their children is reflected in the fact that three out of four parents returned the questionnaire and one in three attended the meeting with inspectors. In their responses and comments, the parents indicate a high degree of satisfaction with how things are. All agree that the school works closely with them and nearly all feel well informed about their child's progress.
3. Since joining the school in September 2000, the headteacher has given high personal priority to getting to know the parents, to restoring their confidence in the school and to raising the school's profile. She has developed work begun by the two acting headteachers in the previous school year and introduced her own ideas. The advantageous effects are seen in many ways.
 - Parents comment positively on the way the teachers are available in the playground at the end of the day and talk informally to parents about what their children have done.
 - Parents provide a high level of support in school. Many help daily in hearing children read, supporting them during group work and going with the Key Stage 2 children to the sports' centre for swimming and gymnastics sessions.
 - Parents also do jobs around the school and help when lunchtime staff are absent. Several parents and governors run after-school clubs such as the craft club where children recently made items to sell at the village fayre.
 - The weekly school newsletter keeps parents up-to-date with events and how they may be involved.
 - The prospectus is a comprehensive compendium of school information.
 - The main entrance of the school is being redecorated and reorganised to provide a more clearly defined administration area with information about the staff and what the school offers. The children's ideas and skills have been used very effectively to produce computer-generated portraits of all the staff. Photographs of school visits as well as samples of children's work also set a positive tone and celebrate achievement.

4. The governors, headteacher and staff, like the parents, value highly the school's well-established traditions which sustain the school at the hub of village life. Most traditions are linked to key events throughout the year. Good examples are the school sports' day on the village green, the distribution of harvest gifts to people in the village and the serving of the Christmas meal to the elderly by the Year 6 children. The headteacher is aware of the need to broaden the range of what the school can offer and also to address areas of weakness such as multicultural education. She has drawn up a suitable programme for this school year that draws on links with business, commerce, schools, universities and Local Education Authority personnel. While much has yet to take place, some aspects are already reaping benefits. The whole school recently visited RAF Benson and through an agreed joint venture with another school, Year 5 and 6 children will socialise with others of the same age as they participate in outdoor pursuits and fieldwork as part of a residential visit next year. While this will develop links with classes in another school, the headteacher also intends that the children should use the school's computer facilities to develop e-mail links with others in Europe.
5. Other initiatives planned include the development of the school garden and special theme weeks at different points in the year such as the multicultural week in the spring term to heighten children's awareness of different faiths, literary and music traditions as well as lifestyles. Such events promise to provide a wider range of opportunities for practical work in art, geography and science as well as enhancing the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
6. The work of the Parent Teacher Association has a highly beneficial effect on what the school can offer. Many parents regularly contribute to school funds through lottery tickets and a series of other fundraising events. For a school of its size, the amount of over £2,000 raised each year - £250 alone from a sponsored race last year – enhances the budget considerably and permits additional resources to be purchased including a commercial mathematics programme and equipment for the children to use in the playground at play and lunchtimes. In the past, parents have also donated to a trust fund to support the retention of teaching staff.

The teachers draw effectively on the children's high level of enthusiasm for school to develop their initiative and independence as learners and problem solvers.

7. In all the lessons seen the children showed a high level of enthusiasm for school. Nearly all parents agreed that their children like school where they are expected to work hard. Children eagerly talked about their liking for reading, going to different places and projects such as "designing" new cakes to have at the school party.
8. The teachers foster and build on the children's enthusiasm in how they plan and manage school, class and group activities. They have high expectations of the children's ability to work together, to organise and to take responsibility for what they do and they are effective in developing these self-help skills. Children are expected to get what they need and Year 6 children are often seen looking up words in dictionaries or using reference books and CD ROMS. Quick tasks, such as Year 6 children finding five facts about Christopher Columbus, prompt them to apply and refine their skills in locating information, scanning for words and summarising what they find. The children concentrate hard and are keen to do well.

9. Although many of the children show a relatively low boredom threshold, they are well motivated by practical activities. The headteacher revitalised her children's flagging attention by getting them to perform relevant sound effects to accompany the telling of the story "Jesus' Christmas Party". By using cue cards and highlighting the use of capital letters in "ROUND THE BACK!" and the number of times the letter "h" was used in "Shhhh!" she not only ensured the children's good progress in appreciating how to read aloud with expression, but also encouraged the Year 1 and 2 children to share what they knew with the reception year children. Children were later heard repeating the process independently. Similarly, after a game of guessing shapes from only partly displayed corners or edges, the two reception children later opted to repeat the procedure.
10. All the teachers value the children's ideas and ability to come up with their own suggestions to resolve problems. They actively encourage the children to discuss ideas and to use their knowledge and imagination to produce lengthy and often well crafted stories. Year 5 and 6 children's writing shows good use of phrases, idiomatic and figurative language as expected for their age. Their writing also includes effective literary devices such as the use of metaphors and the repetition of synonyms for effect as in "*complained, begged and pleaded*".
11. Year 3 and 4 children were keen to follow up at home the work done at school in seeing whether the springs inside toys were compressed or stretched when they were used. These children also enjoyed using cards to pair up fractions. One pupil was quick to assume the lead and with "Right, let's get cracking" organised the others into turning the cards face up and deciding how they would take turns so that it was fair for all.
12. The oldest Key Stage 2 children often show a highly competitive spirit and high level of engagement when working on problems and tasks. Year 5 and 6 children were intrigued by the concept of number palindromes arising from the addition of two numbers and set to with a will to find which numbers produced the desired effect. The excitement generated carried over into the next task of deciding where to place the numbers from eight playing cards in an addition sum to bring them closest to a given total. Such practical tasks are much enjoyed by the children and draw very effectively on their perception of number relationships and computation skills. As they discussed what they were doing and why, it was clear that a few children were already working above the level expected for their age. They quickly worked out number combinations mentally and used hypotheses to determine "best place" for large and small numbers.
13. Children are also developing mental agility in playing the "four-in-a-line" game available in the playground at play and lunchtimes. Children often work together to decide where to place their token to stop their opponent getting a line and to increase their own chances of winning. Although younger children often copied the actions of older players, they too showed a developing awareness of tactics and the usefulness of bravado as a strategy to ensure they won.

The teachers plan their lessons conscientiously and are beginning to take into fuller account what they know about the children's attainment when deciding what children should learn next.

14. Since the last inspection there have been several changes in the teaching staff and only one of the four teachers was at the school in 1996. The quality of teaching is not as high as reported then but is satisfactory overall with good teaching in one lesson in five, more frequently for the Year 5 and 6 children. Strengths in the teaching of English and science are fostering the children's progress especially in reading and using information to write their own accounts. As reported in the last inspection, *"all the teaching is underpinned by good relationships between teachers and children"*. The children and teachers know each other well. The smaller classes for Key Stage 2 pupils in the morning result in a high level of interaction and discussion. Children often receive much individual or small group support in these sessions and this is boosting progress especially in Years 5 and 6, and there is potential for the children to attain good standards. Given the early time in the school year, most Year 6 children are working towards Level 5, the level higher than that expected for their age, in aspects of English, mathematics and science.
15. The headteacher, who shares the teaching of the reception year and the Key Stage 1 children with a part-time teacher, has worked successfully with all the staff to improve the quality of curriculum and lesson planning. The strength of linking subjects identified in the last inspection has been sustained but the key strength now is the clear and detailed breakdown of what the children are to learn and how this will be taught. Key learning intentions are shared with the children and also displayed in the classroom. Although the format used by the teachers varies, a common element is the identification of links between lesson content and National Curriculum programmes of study. In the best planning, the teachers identify the work expected of the different age groups, different attainment groups and also relevant homework to extend lesson content. All the teachers are planning in detail for daily literacy hours and for mathematics lessons.
16. A common strength of the teaching is the conscientious preparation of lessons and materials to guide the children's work. In several lessons seen, the teachers had gathered together resources or made items both to interest the children and to assist them in their work. This is particularly effective for the reception year and Key Stage 1 children who much enjoyed naming the three dimensional shapes of different chocolate boxes. The preparation of sheets giving details of their daily tasks ensured that older Key Stage 2 children consulted each other and their sheets rather than disturbing their teacher who was often working with individuals.
17. In their planning the teachers often identify relevant technical terms in English, mathematics and science that they want to introduce and want the children to understand and use. The teacher's probing questions about multiple trials, friction and force ensured that Year 4, 5 and 6 children explained well what they observed when using Newton meters to investigate the effect of pulling training shoes across different surfaces. Such work is not only developing the children's skills in conducting their own scientific enquiries but is also ensuring a sound understanding of concepts and principles.

18. All the teachers evaluate their own teaching critically. They work well as a team to discuss and share ideas and their comments on lessons and children's work during the week show insight and awareness of relevant factors such as not picking up on children's ideas, too short a time allowed for children to complete tasks or confusing instructions. These comments are not always used consistently to help plan the next lesson although during the inspection, there were occasions when the teachers reflected on comments passed in discussions and amended their planning or approach. In a mathematics lesson for Year 3 and 4 children, the teacher's change of question from "How should you do it?" to "Tell me how you did that?" and reference to double numbers helped the children to begin to appreciate there are different strategies and short-cuts to halve and quarter numbers.
19. A good example of careful, well thought out planning was the group task for the Year 6 children to decide which "new" cake should be available at the Christmas party. Over time this involved the children in the full design and technology cycle of investigating the problem, deciding on a solution, planning what to do, making the product and evaluating how effective they had been. The full task meant that children had to use, apply and refine their skills of designing and conducting a customer survey of what people liked to eat at a party, summarise their findings, compile a recipe and design posters and product labels. This effectively combined work in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design as well as design and technology. The teacher's timely intervention had developed the children's range and type of questions for their interviews and her list of tasks for the session provided an audience and purpose for their work. In discussing their work, the children showed a good knowledge of healthy foods and consumer preferences as well as some of the features of eye-catching advertisements such as the use of red, different fonts and slogans.
20. The headteacher has initiated this term a comprehensive system of tracking the children's progress and projecting each child's attainment. As a result, all the children have been set targets in English and there is a high focus on evaluating whether weekly targets have been met. Such measures are sharpening the teachers' awareness of how well the children are doing and what they need to learn next. The system is still in the early stages and is not yet followed consistently by all the teachers. However, the analysis of what the children already know and can do has identified gaps in the learning of the Year 3 and 4 children in both English and mathematics and the teacher is adapting her lessons accordingly.
21. Teachers and support staff are systematically recording the children's progress. A notebook summarising what Year 3 and 4 children are to do in the morning sessions also acts as a valuable record for comments about how well the children with special educational needs tackled their tasks. In both this class and that for the reception year and Key Stage 1 children, the adults are using labels very effectively to jot down significant achievements before later sticking them on the children's records. This is building into a useful ongoing record of children's progress and providing helpful contexts such as "having talked about ph/f, ... recognised ph in sphere".

Children feel part of a caring and supportive school family; there is a positive atmosphere and the children develop a mature outlook on life.

22. Like many small schools, Tetsworth is very successful in promoting a feeling of family. In their responses to the questionnaire, 100 per cent of parents agreed that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Parents comment that their children settle very quickly at school as they are well looked after by the staff and by the other children. During the inspection it was difficult to identify the children who were “tasting” afternoon sessions before starting school in January as they merged imperceptibly with the others. Similarly, it is frequently difficult to differentiate between the year groups as all get on so amicably.
23. There are many instances of brothers and sisters in the same class who share friends. At play and lunchtimes older children frequently join in the play of younger ones or invite them to join in with them. This easy mixing benefits the children in several ways. Firstly, all the children know one another. Parents comment on how their children warmly greet others when out of school and how much they know about each other. Secondly, the younger children learn from watching the older ones and also from being helped by them. Year 1 and Year 2 children helped the reception year children to recognise words and letters by mouthing initial sounds and by urging them on to have a go. There were many smiles and cries of “Yes” when the children got them right. Such constant support and reassurance ensure that children feel “at home” and in turn, develop a willingness to offer their ideas and opinions.
24. The children know the school rules and what is expected of them. Most children behave well in and out of lessons although boisterousness and exuberance occasionally bubble over. Year 6 children, very excited about going to another school to sing carols, tumbled over one another to get ready. Many children, even though they want to please their teachers, sometimes show disregard for instructions to do things quickly and a degree of arrogance in doing things their way rather than how they have been asked. This stems in large part from a high level of self-assurance and confidence in knowing that they are allowed an amount of leeway by the teachers. The teachers have established what they expect of the children but are willing to compromise and to give children their head. As a result, the children develop a high degree of confidence.
25. When talking amongst themselves and with adults, most are mature, articulate and ready conversationalists. Many relish debate and discussion and often show a well-developed ability to express their views and reasons, and also confidence in opposing and challenging others’ views. However, this sometimes means that the less confident or shyer children are over shadowed and say little. When asked about their task, Year 6 children explained volubly what they had been doing and what it involved. They corrected each other politely to ensure that everything was clear to the listener and that no details were omitted. One Year 6 girl showed her maturity as a reader in ably comparing the writing styles of Jacqueline Wilson and Ann Bryant, qualifying her views with reference to examples from books she had read.
26. Parents and staff comment positively on the way the children behave and conduct themselves when visiting other places or representing the school at different functions. The teachers have confidence in the children’s ability to cope with situations, to behave in a sensible manner and to rise to the occasion such as reception year and Year 1 and 2 children telling the parents in assembly about their visit to RAF Benson.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The quality of teaching to boost the rate of the children's progress and their achievement across the curriculum but most especially in writing and number.

27. Although the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, there is occasional unsatisfactory teaching for the reception year, Year 1 and 2 children. Weaknesses in lessons throughout the school over time also constrain all the children's learning and attainment especially in writing and number.
28. Weaknesses in the teaching lie in the failure to vary the pace of lessons, the lack of explicit teaching of what the children need to know to improve their work and too low expectations of what the children can achieve. In too many lessons, especially in the afternoons there is a lack of urgency in the teaching and activities occasionally spin out to fill the time available. This slow pace is echoed in the children's work and in their more leisurely approach to work, tidying away and getting themselves organised. Although the children complete work, they do not achieve as well as they could, especially in art and design and music where standards are unsatisfactory in all year groups.
29. The organisation of the school day and the timetable provides little opportunity for children to develop their skills and ideas especially in art and design, music and religious education. Many subjects are linked effectively but the teaching is not always planned well enough to ensure that the children develop new insights. For example, the use of themes such as Egypt in history provides relevant and meaningful links with looking at Egyptian art but the teachers do not use such themes well enough to teach systematically art skills and techniques and to ensure that the children use a wide variety of tools and materials. The limited range of art resources exacerbates this situation. The school has a huge stock of exercise books but lacks the range and quantity of resources needed to ensure that all National Curriculum requirements are met in art and design, design and technology and in information and communication technology. To compensate, the teachers often bring items from home or "make do" with what there is.
30. In several English and mathematics lessons, the teaching was not effective enough to ensure that all the children made good progress. In writing and mathematics lessons particularly, the teachers do not place enough emphasis on helping the children to realise the processes involved in becoming an effective writer and user of numbers.
31. A scrutiny of the writing on display and in the children's books shows that Year 1, 2, 3 and 4 children have not achieved as well as they could in writing given their good vocabulary and fluency in expressing themselves. They have few strategies to help them in spelling words or in crafting their writing and as a result many limit what they write. In 1999, the Year 2 children were almost a year's progress behind in writing and as Year 4 children they have not made enough progress to ensure they all consistently attain Level 3 as expected for their age. Although all seven Year 2 children attained Level 2 as expected for their age in the 2000 national tests, two were still in the relatively early stages of writing and only one did better than expected for a seven year old. This represents only satisfactory progress given the children's average attainment on entry to school. Similarly, the test results of the eight Year 6 children in 2000 indicated only satisfactory progress over Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science. Four failed to reach Level 4 as expected for their age in mathematics and two in science. Overall the school did not do as well as similar schools in these subjects.

Although the school did as well as others in English, within this result children's reading scores were higher than their writing scores.

32. The headteacher is trying to encourage Year 1 and 2 children to write on their own without the support of an adult. This works well when the children see a clear purpose for their writing such as jotting down the questions to ask Joseph or a shepherd who came to see the baby Jesus. The children wrote their own labels for their plans of RAF Benson but not enough use is made of similar opportunities to encourage children to apply and develop their reading and writing skills as part of ongoing school and classroom life throughout the day.
33. The teachers are following the suggested format for the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson. The initial class sessions are not always at a quick enough pace, especially in mathematics to sharpen the children's thinking or to develop an intuitive awareness of letter combinations, word analogies, number relationships and number groups. Too often, the same work is done by all rather than planned to ensure that there are challenges at an appropriate level for the higher and lower attaining children.
34. Too many opportunities are missed to emphasise key features and effective strategies, such as the use of adverbs to describe explicitly what a character does, or ways to construct an effective biographical paragraph and ways to break down a number problem into simpler steps before attempting a solution. Consequently the children have not enough to draw on when they are asked to redraft or evaluate their own work. Although the teachers mark the children's work regularly, not enough use is made of comments to tell the children what they have done well and what they need to do to improve or to reach their targets.

Standards of presentation of children's work.

35. The quality of the presentation of the children's written work does not always echo the quality of the content or that of their oral work. The children's work is often untidy, with careless spelling and punctuation slips and immature handwriting. Few Year 6 children have a fluent, easy hand that promotes quick work especially when time is limited. Although the children have a good knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation rules, they do not consistently apply them in their work. As a consequence, the overall standard falls. The children are not used to checking and self-correcting their work. As reported in the last inspection, the children are too content with their first effort and show too little discipline in ensuring that their work is neat and well presented. When given a set purpose such as to display their work, they take care and time but on other occasions are more slipshod.
36. The school has been slow to introduce a common style of joined handwriting. The 1996 report highlighted "*insufficient systematic progress towards cursive script*" and this still holds true.
37. The teacher who works with the Year 3 and 4 children in the morning is setting a good model in the high standard of her work on the blackboard and in the way she organises and manages the classroom. This is less evident throughout the school where the standard of classroom and school display does not always meet the high quality standards the headteacher seeks.

The quality of the provision for children in the reception year.

38. By adding the revision of the provision for the youngest children to the list of school priorities for this year, the headteacher is rightly acknowledging that the two children in the reception year are not receiving the quality of curriculum and experiences recommended for children in the Foundation Stage (to the end of the reception year). More children will join the class in January. The headteacher is aware of the principles underlying national curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. She has met statutory requirements in assessing the children's attainment on entry, but is justifiably conscious that much more needs to be done to put all the principles into practice.
39. In their planning, the two teachers who work with the reception year children refer to the early learning goals in the six areas of learning expected of children of this age. They draw appropriately on the stepping stones outlined in national guidance and also on local authority guidance to identify those activities where there is a particular teaching focus. However, the quality of this planning is not always shown in practice. The reception year children are often included with the Year 1 and 2 children in activities that are frequently too challenging for them. As a result, the children lose attention and find it hard to show what they can do. In one unsatisfactory lesson, the reception children enjoyed using wooden sticks to tap the steady beat of "drip, drop" along with the Year 1 and 2 children but made minimal progress in tapping out "pitter patter" as the teacher gave them little support in realising how to achieve it.
40. The good level of the children's personal, social and emotional development ensures that they cope well with class situations alongside the Year 1 and 2 children. This often masks their lack of understanding. When taught on their own, their level of engagement is high. The teachers are more effective in meeting the needs of all the children in the class when they organise time to work with the reception year children and focus their learning. The children are often willing to repeat the task independently and delight in rehearsing activities they have done previously. However, the classroom is arranged much more to suit the needs of the Year 1 and 2 children than to provide a continual wide range of activities that invite the reception year children to explore, experiment and extend their skills and knowledge. The headteacher has cleared the room of unwanted and old resources but there is still much clutter and a lack of clearly defined and well organised areas to encourage the children's independence and learning in finding and replacing what they need. Although the teachers have gathered some props to prompt role play, there are few occasions when this is a planned activity and little has been done to use themed play as a means of encouraging the children to read, write and count.
41. The quality of the curriculum is limited also by the lack of resources especially in the area of mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. As a result, the children experience a narrow range of activities. Although there is little outdoor play equipment, such as wheeled toys, the children benefit from regular physical education lessons and play sessions outdoors with the older children, and in better weather have access to the adventure playground and orchard areas.

The effectiveness of governors and all members of staff in determining what the school does well and what needs to be improved in the long and short term.

42. Most of the governors are newly appointed this year and are inexperienced in the work of governing bodies but are highly supportive, keen to help the school move forward and well aware of their role. Many have professional and personal expertise that should assist them in managing committee work and all are quickly acquiring information about the school and educational matters through visits to the school and through reading the contents of the governors' weekly "blue box". Presently the governors rely heavily on the headteacher to supply them with the information they need. She is working closely with the chair of the governors and with the chair of the finance committee to ensure that she and they are kept fully informed of progress, current priorities and spending patterns.
43. Much has been done in this term to clarify and establish working practices for the committees. The chair of the finance committee has conscientiously drawn up relevant procedures to monitor spending from different funds and to ensure the school maintains a balanced budget. Governors are adamant that spending should reflect the needs of the children and have drawn on reserve funds to continue to provide a third morning class. They are aware of the need to look at the children's progress, the standards achieved and to consider best value principles but they have not yet established systematic procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of what the school does. As such they are not able to hold the school truly to account.
44. The headteacher has a clear vision as to what she wants the school to be. She has taken time in her first term to identify what she sees as the school's strengths and weaknesses, many of which are also identified in this report. However, her teaching commitment and the sheer amount of things to be done means the pace of improvement is slow. Governors, staff and parents agree that she has given the school a new sense of purpose and their willingness to help indicates at least satisfactory potential for things to move more quickly. The school development plan provides only a scant outline of key priorities for this and the next two school years. It is a poor tool to guide governors and staff on the school's targets and how they are to be achieved. The absence of timescales, responsibilities, progress points and success criteria gives the governing body little guidance on monitoring progress and the effectiveness of action to date.
45. Weaknesses in the leadership and management of subjects contribute to the lack of a clear overview of the school's needs. The coordinators are not used to assuming responsibility for standards in their subjects throughout the school. Although the headteacher has begun a programme of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and provision, the other teachers have not yet taken the same active approach. They are using information from test results and assessments to identify strengths, gaps and trends in children's learning but are not using all information available to evaluate critically how things can best be improved given the school context.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the quality of education further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

1. Strengthen the quality of teaching by
 - ensuring the explicit teaching of strategies and skills in writing and number development;
 - using assessment information to relate lesson planning even more closely to individual needs;
 - raising teachers' expectations of what the children can achieve;
 - providing resources to ensure National Curriculum programmes of study can be taught fully in all subjects.

2. Improve standards of presentation by
 - implementing fully a handwriting and presentation policy;
 - raising the quality of display in the school to ensure that the children appreciate and understand what they are striving to attain.

3. Raise the quality of the provision for children in the reception year by
 - following national curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to provide an appropriate and challenging environment especially in creative development;
 - ensuring that the range of resources and timetable reflect the children's needs and stage of development in the six areas of learning.

4. Strengthen the role of the governors and all coordinators in critically monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the school by
 - identifying specific priorities for school improvement this year and the next two years;
 - ensuring that the school development plan provides clear information on targets, timescales, responsibilities, success criteria and progress points;
 - implementing fully a programme of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school to identify what works well and what needs to be improved.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	21%	71%	7%	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 children

Children on the school's roll	YR- Y6
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	46
Number of full-time children eligible for free school meals	0
Special educational needs	YR- Y6
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	8
English as an additional language	No of children
Number of children with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of children

	No of children
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	46
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to children 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 children of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of children excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR- Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.9
Number of children per qualified teacher	15.9
Average class size	15.3

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	20

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	126595
Total expenditure	121769
Expenditure per pupil	2064
Balance brought forward from previous year	19944
Balance carried forward to next year	24770

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	46
Number of questionnaires returned	34

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	62	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	56	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	50	15	0	0
The teaching is good.	65	32	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	35	0	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	32	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	38	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	29	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	41	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	44	35	0	9