

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BARNABAS OLEY CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Great Gransden

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110814

Headteacher: Mr Peter Adams

Reporting inspector: Mr Fred Riches  
23235

Dates of inspection: 30 October - 1 November 2000

Inspection number: 224985

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior and infant  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Great Gransden  
Sandy  
Bedfordshire

Postcode: SG19 3AE

Telephone number: 01767 677294

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Neil Parker

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Barnabas Oley Primary School has 127 boys and girls on roll aged four to eleven years. It serves the villages of Great and Little Gransden and Waresley and 25 per cent of current pupils attend from outside this catchment area. The school has just expanded from four to five classes. Children's attainment on entry to the school is above average overall. A high proportion are very able, showing gifts and talents from an early age. A few start school with knowledge, skills and understanding which are below average for their age. Almost all pupils are of United Kingdom heritage, with a very small percentage from an ethnic minority background. The school has approximately 19 per cent of pupils on its register of special educational needs. This is about average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need. Just two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well below the average.

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

This is a very effective school. As a result of good teaching and sensitive leadership by the headteacher, very ably supported by an effective governing body, pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards are high. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards are very high in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- The school plans an interesting, relevant, broad and well-balanced curriculum.
- The school ethos is one of care for each individual, with very strong parent and community links.
- Thoughtful, sensitive and imaginative leadership by the headteacher, very well supported by staff with management responsibilities and a perceptive governing body.
- Teaching is good, ensuring that pupils of all abilities learn successfully.

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

- Standards in information and communication technology, although improving, are not as high as they could be.
- Assessment and individual target setting procedures are not tight enough.
- Outdoor facilities for reception class children do not promote regular planned play and learning opportunities, as advocated in the foundation stage curriculum.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. The second area for improvement is already a top priority in this year's school development plan and the school had also already identified the other two points as areas to be addressed.*

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

The last inspection, in March 1997, found good standards and satisfactory teaching at Barnabas Oley. Since then the quality of teaching has improved and standards have risen at both key stages in English, mathematics and science. Improvements in the monitoring of teaching, and school development planning are evidence of improved leadership and management. The headteacher, staff and governors have addressed almost all of the key issues from 1997 successfully. Curriculum planning, then a weakness, is now a strength. Better development planning and monitoring of teaching underpin the improvements. Pupils still spend insufficient time developing and applying their skills in information technology, however. Overall, though, the school has made good improvement. It is in a good position to maintain and build on the high standards and good provision now in place.

## 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	A*	A	A*	A
mathematics	A*	A	A	A
science	A*	A*	A*	A*

Key	
Very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
Very low	E*

As the table shows, standards are well above average and well above those of similar schools (those with up to eight per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals) in English, mathematics and science at age eleven. In English and science the school's results are among the top five per cent in the country. In science they are also among the top five per cent of similar schools. The table shows that this trend of high results has continued over the past three years. (With very small year groups, it is of course possible for considerable fluctuations in particular years when only one or two pupils have special educational needs.) Standards at age seven are also high. Test results in reading, writing and mathematics are in the top five per cent nationally. Standards in reading and writing are well above those of similar schools and in mathematics they are above those of similar schools. The school has met its targets for the year 2000 and is on course to meet those set for 2001. Standards throughout the school in the current year in these core subjects clearly continue to be as high as they should be for pupils of all abilities. Pupils who show particular talents and gifts are recognised and respond well to the challenging work set. Those with special educational needs also make good progress in their learning. The school's organisational arrangements, with mixed-age classes and some split year groups, clearly have no detrimental effect on pupils' learning. Standards in information technology are satisfactory, but not as high as they could be.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show enthusiasm for their work and concentrate very well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are happy in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well mannered.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils throughout the school relate very well to each other and to adults in the school. They accept responsibility gladly and older pupils show considerable initiative.
Attendance	Good. Above the national average.

## 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 is at least satisfactory in all lessons. It is good or better in 91 per cent of lessons, including almost 19 per cent in which it is very good. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils learn successfully because teachers choose stimulating and imaginative activities in lessons. They achieve well because teachers engage them in commenting, asking questions and explaining their understanding. Teachers know the pupils in their class very well. They mark pupils' written work meticulously, providing helpful comments which offer encouragement and show that they know what they need to do to make progress. Teaching is good for children in the foundation stage, at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2. Teachers challenge higher attainers very well, as shown in two separate lessons on Greek Mythology, one developing historical knowledge and the other literacy skills. They also support and challenge pupils with special educational needs well throughout the school by setting appropriate targets and ensuring pupils focus on working towards these. One area for improvement is the use of assessment, learning objectives and targets for classes, groups and individuals. Teachers do not routinely specify the objectives behind the activities in their planning, for example, or clarify them to pupils in lessons. Pupils, therefore, occasionally complete activities well, but without focusing on their specific learning content. Teachers throughout the school, including those who have classes where year groups are split, do, however, match tasks appropriately to pupils of all abilities. The quality of teaching in English is good and sometimes very good. In lessons seen during the inspection the highest quality observed was in English and history. Teachers are implementing the literacy strategy successfully. Displays in the school show stories of high quality, with lively use of phrasing and vocabulary. Numeracy was not a focus in this short inspection. In the one lesson seen, teaching was good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Broad, well balanced and carefully planned. Meets all statutory requirements. Planning includes stimulating visits and visitors (such as the recent archaeologist) and activities which excite pupils' interest. Planning for the new foundation stage is well advanced, but outdoor provision is not fully developed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Close liaison between the co-ordinator, class teachers, assistants and support agencies ensures well-planned individual education programmes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Teachers encourage pupils to reflect on the meaning of life and the way they live; they involve all classes in negotiating rules; the school celebrates good behaviour in assemblies; staff offer pupils opportunity to collaborate and to show responsibility and initiative.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. All staff, including lunchtime and catering personnel, show real care and concern in the way they talk to pupils; child protection procedures are fully in place.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives very good, sensitive, thoughtful leadership, showing care for all staff and pupils; the 'Investors in People' initiative is sharpening development planning; the monitoring of teaching is improving everyone's practice. Staff with management responsibilities are committed, efficient and hardworking, though subject monitoring is underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors are astute and bring considerable expertise in their support of the school. They keep abreast of educational developments and fulfil their corporate monitoring role as critical friend very effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Development planning and some aspects of monitoring have improved. The school is not content with high standards, but seeks to improve still further on the quality of provision. For example, the school is currently seeking to develop a love of books alongside pupils' high reading standards.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school is budgeting carefully for the extra class and building improvements. It deploys staff effectively and makes good use of resources and the site. Governors and headteacher apply the principles of best value well in their decision-making.

## 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 and the school expects children to work hard and do their best;</li> <li>Children are making good progress;</li> <li>Behaviour is good and the school is helping children become mature and responsible;</li> <li>Leadership is good and parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem;</li> <li>Children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about how children are getting on;</li> <li>Explanation about charging for extra activities.</li> </ul>

*The school issued 127 questionnaires and 86 replies, a representative sample, were received.*

The inspection team agrees wholeheartedly with parents' positive views. Only one statement met with any significant disagreement, with 79 per cent agreeing, but 17 per cent 'tending to disagree' with the statement 'I am kept well informed about my children's progress'. The inspection looked carefully at annual pupil reports and found that the quality is good and has improved since the introduction of phrase banks, which teachers use with great care, adding their own phrasing where necessary. (The school felt that the change from handwritten to word-processed reports might lie behind the concern expressed.) Another possible explanation is the fact that the school has not yet held parent consultations on pupils' progress this term, delaying them until baseline assessments can be fully reported. The inspection team does feel that assessment and target setting procedures require development. The school will be addressing these through the action plan. This will naturally lead to further sharpening of focus in reporting and consultation with parents, which will meet the concerns expressed by a minority of parents. The school stipulates very clearly its charges for additional activities and readily supports children whose families may find payment difficult. This latter aspect is not always clarified in letters, but is understood and known by most parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Results of national tests for seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds over the past few years show continuing very high standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards for eleven-year-olds in summer 2000 were in the top five per cent nationally in English and science. In science, all pupils who took the tests reached level five. The school was therefore in the top five per cent when compared with similar schools (those with fewer than eight per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals). Results for seven-year-olds also show very high performance for the school, among the top five per cent nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

2 Inspection observations show these very high standards continuing in the current year and reveal some of the quality behind the results. For example, writing on display in corridors and rooms and in pupils' books shows expressive use of vocabulary and impressive variety in sentence structure. Pupils composing modern-day myths and tales create well-developed plots in their short stories. Their vivid scene setting and character description holds the reader's interest and the outworking of the tales captures the imagination. Older pupils resolve plots in fascinating, humorous and sometimes unexpected ways. One memorable excerpt from a modern-day version of Little Red Riding Hood, by a younger junior pupil, read as follows:

'Come in', called a croaky voice.

'I was surfing the net,' said little blue denim jacket.

The teacher's imaginative introduction of a modern day version of a familiar tale has successfully created a model for the pupils and they have eagerly latched onto the opportunity to write in a humorous style.

3 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take the process a step further. Instead of using a known story set in a different time, they develop their own mythical monster tales. One depicts 'The Fate of the Icacgon', telling how a Scot named Joch ended the reign of an icy monster by lighting a match in a cave on Ben Nevis and creating 'a most spectacular waterfall'. Another tale of 'Joe the Great', tackling the Gurumplum who breathed daggers, reflects the tradition of David and Goliath or St George and the dragon stories, with good, often in the humblest forms, overcoming evil in the end. The pupils have clearly grasped the notion of the underlying message behind the tales and show considerable maturity in their powers of expression.

4 Other writing samples show the breadth of opportunity offered, which helps lead to the very high standards achieved. Year 4 pupils write about 'The Shipwreck' and prepare instructions for survival on a desert island. Play writing, reports of visits, accounts of activities, letters, diaries and written explanations of mental strategies used in mathematics combine to offer an excellent range of writing opportunities.

5 While the examples are taken from work by higher attainers, showing how well they are challenged, samples from pupils of all abilities are displayed. Teachers clearly recognise and celebrate the achievements of all pupils and it is clear that everyone has enjoyed the process of thinking through the format and creating the finished pieces of writing. Standards in spelling are very high and handwriting is good overall. Much of the work displayed also shows good use of word-processing skills, the most developed area of information and communication technology.

6 Reading standards are high throughout the school, but staff have noticed that not all capable readers enjoy reading. It is a mark of the school's commitment to the highest quality educational provision that teachers are not satisfied with well-developed reading skills. The school has embarked on a series of carefully planned strategies to develop pupils' enjoyment in reading. The pattern of the action planned is an excellent model for focused action plans to support the overall school improvement plan.

7 The literacy co-ordinator has analysed the situation in consultation with pupils and staff and presented a paper summarising findings to the governing body. The paper suggests a series of strategies, which the governors have approved. The use of interesting reading material, supported with a series of cards which help pupils, teachers and parents to discuss the text, the plot, the characters and various other aspects, lie at the heart of the strategy. The school is aware of both the positive and negative effects of strict adherence to reading scheme books. Teachers and parents share the appreciation of the value of structure, but the unfortunate possible side-effects. Inspectors found evidence to support teachers' views when listening to pupils reading and talking about their books. Higher attainers as young as six or seven, for example, enjoyed talking about characters, plots and favourite authors. Less proficient readers tended to focus on the stage number of the book they were reading as one of the major pieces of information to share. The co-ordinator is piloting the use of discussion cards and involvement of parental support in her own class before holding a meeting for interested parents across the school.

8 Though this inspection focused its attention on English and information technology, a few examples of relevant and stimulating activities in mathematics explain the standards reached in this subject. Displays show, for example, weather charts which older pupils have created from first-hand collection of information. One stimulus for accuracy is the sharing of weather information with a partner school in Ireland. In the only numeracy lesson observed, the teacher engaged the pupils in explaining their mental strategies and challenged them in pairs to work out a series of mental calculations within a set time limit. Pupils' focused application to the tasks and the quality of their oral explanation offered clear evidence of why they attain high standards. The quality of teaching and support ensured again that pupils of all abilities achieved well.

### **The school plans an interesting, relevant, broad and well-balanced curriculum**

9 One of the key issues for action from the last inspection in 1997 was for the school to develop long term plans for National Curriculum subjects, in order to ensure that all programmes of study are covered adequately. The school's present curriculum planning systems show that headteacher, staff and governors have fully addressed this issue. The school has successfully introduced the national literacy and numeracy strategies and at the same time planned a broad and balanced curriculum for the foundation stage and for Key Stages 1 and 2. What was a weakness in 1997 has become a strength.

10 Particularly impressive is the way staff ensure the relevance of the curriculum to pupils of the full primary age range by planning a series of activities, including visits and visitors, to stimulate and hold their interest. The school curriculum policy specifies that teachers should plan a visit in connection with each topic or theme studied. By linking subjects through themes where appropriate, and by sharing information about the planned curriculum with parents at the start of each term, the teachers focus pupils' thoughts on the overarching theme and encourage them to discover more for themselves. By planning activities which focus on skills to be developed in each National Curriculum subject, the teachers ensure that pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skills through involved interest in their tasks.

11 A recent example of this is in the visit of an archaeologist. During the visit, pupils discovered the nature of an archaeologist's work and had first-hand experience of a 'dig', as they extracted finds from prepared boxes. They developed historical enquiry skills alongside their knowledge about Ancient Greeks and understanding of their customs. Using the same theme, they read Greek myths and composed the stories mentioned earlier in the report. In a literacy lesson observed, pupils compared and contrasted ancient and modern versions of the same myth, developing their reading and comprehension skills as well as their analytical understanding of how language works. In art, they created clay pots, mosaic tiles and relief tiles portraying events in the lives of gods and goddesses. They used the theme to develop geographical knowledge and used the mythical monster stories as a stimulus for work in design and technology, to create creatures with moving parts. They developed their word-processing skills when drafting and editing their writing.

12 Other striking elements of the school's curriculum provision are the annual residential trip for the oldest pupils and the good range of opportunities to sing, make music and play instruments. The two-year planning cycle, organised in consultation with the local education authority, appropriately addresses the curriculum planning challenge faced by many small schools with mixed year-group classes. With the expansion of the school to five classes, the school is adapting its cycle to match the new organisational structure. All teachers from each key stage plan jointly the annual curriculum and the weekly pattern for each term. This ensures continuity and avoids repetition of the same work in different years. It also goes some way to ensuring a good match of tasks to pupils' ability.

**The school ethos is one of care for each individual, with very strong parent and community links.**

13 There is a strong sense of community throughout the school, in lessons and around the school at play and lunchtimes. All staff show care for the children. At lunchtime, the catering staff serve meals calmly and with a smile. Lunchtime supervisory staff on the playground and in the hall set a friendly family tone to the atmosphere. There was a notable absence of aggressive behaviour throughout the inspection and a clear sense that the calm atmosphere, with children playing happily in groups and talking chattily to each other was a natural part of the school's everyday experience.

14 In each classroom, the teacher and pupils have agreed a set of rules for the year and pupils are aware of their teachers' expectations. As a result, they are actively involved in lessons, listen well, contribute readily to discussion and sustain concentration. When required, they collaborate in a focused way on shared tasks. Pupils' very positive attitudes to work and their very good behaviour stem from the way they are treated by the adults in the school and the way they are involved in decision-making about their community. One excellent example of the pupils' very good relationships with each other and the encouragement of older pupils to develop independence, initiative and responsibility is in the orienteering course designed by Year 6 pupils last summer. Following their field trip to Grafham Water, pupils returned eager to bequeath their school a course before leaving. They planned, designed, trialled and created a course, adapting it for use by pupils of different ages, before organising sessions for different year groups. The finished laminated maps and triangular painted and varnished wooden markers, all finished to a high quality level, now offer the school a lasting resource.

15 The strong support of parents and the community is apparent in the number of parents helping in school, participating in school and community events and in the various editions of the 'Bugle', the school's regular termly magazine. The Parent Teacher Association plays a very supportive role in fundraising and in sustaining the community life of the school. Links with the church and village are strong. A recent enactment by pupils of a Great Gransden

Pageant, written by the headteacher, is typical of the rich experiences offered, which give children a sense of pride in their school and an awareness of their local heritage.

16 Care for individuals lies behind the thoughtful organisation of classes. The care begins with a very good series of strategies for welcoming the youngest children and their families. The school creates a close partnership between home and school from the outset through a very well organised sequence of meeting and visits for parents and children. The induction process also involves very good liaison with the local playgroup which shares the school site.

17 Like many schools, Barnabas Oley has to combine more than one year group within classes and the year groups which have to be split vary annually, depending on pupil numbers. The headteacher and staff know pupils and their families well and take considerable care in making the most appropriate provision for each child. They consider each individual's attainment, maturity, friendship groups and the balance of gender range of needs and abilities in each class. Having formed a view, they consult parents and explain the rationale behind placings individually. The current levels of academic performance, the happiness of pupils and the very good relationships within classes are evidence of successful care and consultation in placements.

**Thoughtful, sensitive & imaginative leadership by the headteacher, very well supported by staff with management responsibilities and a perceptive governing body**

18 The headteacher, governing body and staff with management responsibilities have worked very closely together since the last inspection to address the key issues for action. Among these were the need to 'provide for routine monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school'. The headteacher has put in place systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and enabled teachers to observe each other's lessons, as well as visiting other schools to share best practice. These monitoring activities have resulted in clear improvements in the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. The headteacher's thoughtful and sensitive approach to monitoring has also resulted in the development of observation and feedback skills which develop trusting relationships and a culture where good practice and weaknesses can be shared constructively.

19 The other area of leadership which required development after the last inspection was school development planning. The headteacher and governors have again made good improvements in their approach to this aspect of the school's work. The decision to bid for an 'Investors in People Award' shows once more the school's quest for the highest standards. This award requires a high level of clarity in policies and documentation underpinning practice and looks for excellence in strategic planning systems. The development plan covers all aspects of the school's life and work, sets out national, local authority and school priorities, delegates responsibility for each item, identifies costs and training implications, and works to a manageable timescale. In its current all-encompassing form, it does not differentiate between aspects which are being maintained and those which are priorities for improvement. This makes it look rather daunting. Also, several of the criteria for measuring success are linked more to the completion of tasks than to improvements in outcomes for the pupils. Overall, however, the plan provides a useful framework to underpin the school's development.

20 Governors bring considerable expertise as well as wholehearted support to their work for the school. Their contribution to the monitoring of budgeting and expenditure and of curriculum provision and standards is considerable. Governors show a very clear understanding of their role of critical friend and fulfil this with an appropriate balance of support and challenge. The curriculum committee gives excellent support and is currently

seeking ways of improving governors' focused monitoring visits to the school by preparing observation and reporting guidelines.

21 Other factors in the strength of the school's leadership and management are the headteacher's commitment to the school's links with the church and village community and his readiness to involve the school in imaginative initiatives, such as the e-mail link with a school in Ireland. Through his modest, supportive style, he has successfully built a very positive team spirit among all staff, parents, volunteers and governors. Teachers feel their work is recognised and valued and are therefore able to contribute to the team effort through their individual co-ordinator and management roles. The roles of special needs co-ordinator, literacy co-ordinator and early years co-ordinator are particularly well fulfilled. The monitoring element of the subject co-ordinators' roles is not yet fully developed, however. While staff have a clear overview of planning and a positive input into training and resourcing, their roles do not yet include the monitoring of standards across the school or pupils' overall progress through the school in their subjects.

### **Teaching is good, ensuring that pupils of all abilities learn successfully.**

22 Teaching is good or better in over nine out of ten lessons, including almost one in five where it is very good. Throughout the school, teaching is always at least satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection, when 16 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. Although the sample on a short inspection is small, there is clearly a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than in 1997. Teaching is good for children in the foundation stage, at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2.

23 Pupils of all abilities show enthusiasm in lessons. This is because their teachers relate well to them and because teachers prepare interesting activities. They learn particularly well through class and group discussions. Teachers encourage pupils to listen well and to participate fully in discussions. They phrase questions so that pupils have to explain themselves clearly. Teachers listen carefully to pupils' answers and comments and respond individually to them. This is a mark of the best lessons seen. Pupils engage actively in the lessons and teachers ensure a good balance of pupil talk and teacher talk.

24 Teachers know pupils very well and pupils feel confident in the knowledge that their teachers like them and want them to do well. Teachers' meticulous marking shows their care for the pupils and the written comments, sometimes addressed to the pupils and sometimes as reminders to themselves, give a clear picture of where pupils have succeeded and when they need to do better.

25 Lessons observed and pupils' work samples confirm that teachers challenge higher attainers very successfully. The school's results in national tests also bear this out. In a lesson on Greek Mythology, the teacher involved Year 3 pupils in recapping on the previous half term's learning. Pupils' enthusiasm and high levels of knowledge were clear as they responded to their teacher's description of technical terms, such as 'libation' and 'sacrifice'. They asked questions which showed the depth of their understanding and interest. 'Would they sacrifice a certain animal for a certain god?' asked one. Another suggested that the 'Z' in Zeus would help remind her that one of his symbols is a flash of lightning.

26 Teachers also give very good support to pupils with special educational needs. They set appropriately challenging targets for their individual education plans in valuable consultation with the special needs co-ordinator and, where needed, with the local education authority support teacher. They deploy teaching assistants very carefully and brief them fully about their work with groups and individuals, always ensuring that pupils focus on working towards their individual targets.

27 Teacher's planning is very clear in terms of activities to be undertaken and their preparation of resources is always very good. Teachers introduce lesson activities and give very clear instructions on what is to be done. The school's planning format for numeracy lessons includes learning objectives specific to each lesson. This aspect is missing from lesson plans in other subjects and as a result, teachers tend not to specify the objectives to pupils at the outset of lessons. While pupils readily participate in discussions and undertake the tasks set, teachers are missing opportunities to focus pupils' thoughts on what it is they are learning through the activities.

28 Throughout the school, teachers match tasks appropriately to pupils of all abilities. Staff are particularly aware of the importance of this in classes which contain pupils in a year group split between two classes.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Standards in information and communication technology, although improving, are not as high as they could be**

29 The school took a number of appropriate steps to improve the quality of provision for information technology after the last inspection, when there was insufficient coverage of the subject and teachers' knowledge and expertise was unsatisfactory. Staff were trained in the use of the equipment and initial improvements were noted. However, three and a half years on, standards are satisfactory, but not as high as those in other subjects. They are not as good as they should be and overall, there has not been sufficient improvement since the last inspection.

30 One factor that has led to the findings of this inspection being similar to those of the last is a change in staffing. The other main factor has been the rapid introduction of new equipment and resources. The school has recognised the need to develop and has purchased better hardware and software, but the training received by staff was on equipment that has been entirely replaced. Since the previous co-ordinator left, the headteacher has nominally co-ordinated the subject. After the initial efforts to improve standards through staff training, there were further staffing changes. The school has been aware of the need for further input and has looked to the introduction of the national grid for learning and associated training to provide this. It has not made the subject a priority in its development plan, however. A new co-ordinator was appointed at the start of the autumn term. The governing body, aware of the rapid changes, having agreed initial funding for training to tackle the weaknesses highlighted in 1997, is seeking guidance on how best to proceed with the present challenge. The school has just begun its training under the 'New Opportunities Fund', but initial comment from staff reveals some uncertainty about the value and quality of the training.

31 Work samples displayed around the school and those kept in the co-ordinator's portfolio show that work undertaken covers a much broader spread than during the previous inspection. Samples show the youngest pupils using the mouse to click and drag and other pupils in Years 1 and 2 using the keyboard to support work in literacy, typing out sentences with words containing 'ay', for example. These pupils also use software programs to support work in numeracy. Displays show that all pupils in the two oldest classes have good experience at drafting and editing using word-processing skills. The older pupils also benefit from an interesting simulation program, where a volunteer governor guides groups as they investigate and solve crimes. The portfolio also shows the use of scanners, following pupils' use of digital cameras during educational visits. Individual pupils have clearly discovered how to add text to images and to develop the image on the original photographs. Older pupils

have also discovered information during the study of Ancient Greece by using CD-ROMs. They have sent e-mails to a school in Ireland and used a sensor to detect changes in light, under the direction of parents and teachers.

32 However, pupils throughout the school have no individual records, books or portfolios to look back over what they have covered or achieved in the subject. As a result, there is little opportunity for the school to monitor pupils' progress or the breadth of each individual's experience in word-processing, using spread sheets, gathering, storing and retrieving information, using control technology or modelling. Pupils do experience these activities and teachers use dated lists to ensure equality of access to computers, but planning is not tight enough to create sufficient regular access to raise standards. Nor is there a clear assessment system to track pupils' progress.

33 The new co-ordinator is eager to introduce a scheme of work and to use her own expertise to support staff. The school is undecided about which scheme to adopt and governors are naturally reluctant to move ahead without reassurance that the steps taken will not again result in merely temporary gains. The school is aware that the choice of scheme of work clearly needs to consider how well the scheme provides for the development of skills in information and communication technology. It also needs to bear in mind how well the scheme supports studies in other subjects. The omission of this subject from the current priorities in the school development plan is surprising. It is clearly the top curriculum priority for improvement.

### **Assessment and target setting procedures are not tight enough**

34 The school has identified assessment and target setting procedures as an area for development. The inspection finds current arrangements satisfactory, but agrees with the school that this is an area ready for improvement. Following the successful introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies and with the introduction of annual optional tests from Years 3 to 5, the school has several sound assessment measures in place. However, the information gained from assessments is not yet used to track all pupils' progress closely. Those on the school's register of special educational need at stage 2 or beyond have clearly identified targets which they work towards. Their progress is monitored termly. In an increasing number of schools this good practice has been developed in a manageable way to promote all pupils' learning.

35 The headteacher has rightly prioritised the introduction of closer assessment and target setting during the current academic year. Teachers' weekly planning format does not promote good assessment, as no learning objectives are specified, except in numeracy. Teachers do not routinely share lesson objectives with pupils. Nor do pupils have a picture of particular targets for them to aim at, as a class, as groups or as individuals.

36 While the school makes every effort to ensure careful organisation of pupils in classes with split year groups, it is in this context that the lack of close assessment, monitoring, target setting and tracking leaves the school open to parental concern. This is an extremely sensitive issue in small schools across the country, where classes with split year groups are unavoidable. As reported among the school's strengths, staff take great care in organising these classes, currently involving pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 5. Teachers' annual plans ensure that all pupils in Year 2 will cover the same curriculum although some are in Class 2 and some Class 3. Arrangements are just as careful for Year 5 pupils in Class 4 and Class 5. Teachers also plan their termly timetables together, so that the aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding covered in each subject are the same, although the timing and the context may be different.



37 What is not fully in place is a common assessment and monitoring system to track pupils' progress throughout the school. For these classes with split year groups, a common system would check that pupils have similar opportunities to record their learning and how well each pupil is doing. Either class teachers would monitor pupils' progress jointly or the headteacher and subject co-ordinators might have an overview. Informal arrangements for liaison between teachers are good, but do not currently involve close joint assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress against expected targets. The school is in the process of looking at its assessment and target setting systems. This is a priority area in the current school development plan. The headteacher has attended recent training and is up to date with current educational research and practice in this field. Staff training is already scheduled. The school is set to fill this gap in its provision during the course of the coming year.

**Outdoor facilities for reception class children do not promote regular planned play and learning opportunities advocated in the Foundation Stage Curriculum.**

38 Key staff have carefully planned the introduction of the new foundation stage curriculum for children up to the end of the reception year. The school's plans refer appropriately to the six areas of learning and to the associated early learning goals for children about to engage on the first levels of the National Curriculum. Matching assessment opportunities are not yet fully in place, but are set to correspond to the series of stepping stones within each area of learning. The accommodation for the reception class does not allow for easy access or supervision to a specifically designed outside area for play and learning. Staff and governors are aware of the need to develop this facility and have included plans within the current school building improvements. In the meantime, the reception class teacher has to organise separately timetabled outdoor sessions, rather than using the outdoor space as an integral part of the learning environment.

39 The school intends to use the outdoor area for all areas of learning - communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, as well as creative and physical development. The structured environment and array of activities will offer much greater opportunity for pupils' personal, social and emotional development than the current timetabled class sessions as they build their knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

40 In order to build on the current strengths in leadership, the quality of education provided and standards achieved, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in information technology throughout the school by
  - introducing an agreed scheme of work
  - introducing a system for keeping individual pupils' work in the subject
  - allocating more time to the development of skills and application across the curriculum;
- (2) Sharpen assessment and target setting procedures so that the school has a clearer picture of pupils' progress through the school;
- (3) Develop curriculum arrangements for outdoor learning and play at the foundation stage by improving accessibility to the outdoor area and resources.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	11
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	18	73	9	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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE(full time equivalent) for part-time pupils)	127
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	10 (9)	8 (11)	18 (20)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	17 (20)	17 (20)	17 (20)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (100)	94 (100)	94 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	17 (20)	17 (20)	17 (20)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (100)	94 (100)	94 (100)
	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	4 (7)	8 (6)	12 (13)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	11 (11)	11 (9)	11 (13)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (85)	92 (69)	92 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	12 (11)	12 (9)	12 (13)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (85)	100 (69)	100 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Separate statistics for boys' and girls' attainment are not included when year groups contain fewer than 11 pupils of either gender.

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	108
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.9
Average class size	25.4

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y^**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	95

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000
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Total income	224814
Total expenditure	227412
Expenditure per pupil	1896
Balance brought forward from previous year	12594
Balance carried forward to next year	9996

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	127
Number of questionnaires returned	86

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	24	8	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	55	37	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	42	6	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	43	9	1	6
The teaching is good.	62	31	1	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	49	17	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	31	3	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	30	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	34	48	10	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	40	50	9	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	33	8	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	48	9	0	10