

INSPECTION REPORT

LAWN JUNIOR SCHOOL

Brecon Close, Swindon

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126240

Headteacher: Mr C Brown

Reporting inspector: Jane McNeil
30711

Dates of inspection: 17th – 19th June 2002

Inspection number: 244945

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brecon Close Lawn Swindon Wiltshire
Postcode:	SN3 1JT
Telephone number:	01793 536179
Fax number:	01793 536179
Appropriate authority:	Swindon
Name of chair of governors:	Miss G Hanney
Date of previous inspection:	17 th November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
30711	Jane McNeil	Registered inspector
13548	Patricia Bowen	Lay inspector
27799	Andrea Nicholson	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Dorset School Inspection Services
Pupil and School Improvement
Education Directorate, Dorset County Council
County Hall
Dorchester
DT1 1XJ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lawn Junior School provides education for pupils aged seven to eleven. Of slightly smaller size than the average junior school, there are currently 232 pupils on roll, 115 boys and 117 girls. The pupils are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds with more than one third attending by parental preference. Whilst this reflects the continued popularity of the school, the number on roll has been falling year on year. This is due to a decreasing population trend in the immediate area. The size of the year group varies considerably. For example, whilst there are 67 pupils in Year 3 there are 46 pupils in Year 5. There is a relatively low turnover of pupils each year, although this has slightly increased since the secondary school was placed in 'special measures' following an Ofsted inspection last year. The majority of the pupils are white with 10 per cent coming from a variety of other ethnic backgrounds. Of the 14 pupils having English as an additional language, just one is at an early stage of English acquisition. Nine per cent of the pupils have free school meals, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, currently 35 per cent, is above average with most having moderate learning difficulties. Two pupils have statements of need, which is similar to most schools. Almost all the pupils transfer from the feeder infant school, which is on the same site.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Lawn Junior School is a very good school with many strengths. Overall, the pupils enter the school with broadly average capabilities and by the time they leave attain well above average standards in English and mathematics. The clear focus on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy has a positive impact on how very well the pupils achieve in these subjects. The success of the school is largely due to the good and very good teaching in all classes. The pupils respond positively to the caring ethos and are very enthusiastic learners. The success is also the result of the very good leadership of the long-serving headteacher and the good quality of teamwork that exists between all staff. The school lives up to its motto 'To Pursue the Best' and the pupils get a very fair deal whatever their age, gender, ability or ethnic origin. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English and mathematics are well above average and the pupils make very good progress in these subjects.
- The teaching is very good overall. It is consistently good and is very good for the teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior managers and governors.
- The pupils' very positive attitudes, very good relationships and very good behaviour have a positive impact on the way they learn and how very well they achieve.
- There is a wide range of subjects and topics for the pupils to learn about. Teaching time is particularly well utilised. The pupils' books and high quality displays show the variety of activities that the pupils enjoy.

What could be improved

- Further development of the systems by which the school reviews the quality of its work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in 1997. Then, standards in English and mathematics were found to be generally above average; they are now well above expectations by the end of Year 6. Whereas pupils were making at least satisfactory progress, the vast majority now make very good progress, including those with special educational needs. The school has successfully addressed the two weaknesses identified in the last inspection. The first related to eliminating any unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching is now much better, with far more teaching being very good and none being less than satisfactory. The second was to address a statutory omission in the annual pupils' reports. The reports are now of very good quality and fulfil all statutory requirements. The school has moved forwards in other areas too. The recently installed information and communication technology (ICT) suite is excellent, being well used by all classes in the infant and junior school. The curriculum timetable has been reviewed, with time being very well used to maximise learning opportunities for the pupils. Marking of pupils' work has improved. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is now very good. Even the pupils acknowledge that the school continues to move forwards; as one astute Year 6 pupil summarised, *'it's always seeking improvements'*.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	B	A
Mathematics	B	B	A	A
Science	B	B	A	A

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

The pupils generally attain at least above average standards in national tests at the end of Year 6. There is an overall rising trend in the results being attained by the time the pupils leave the school, which mirrors that being seen nationally. The overall standards in 2001 were high, particularly when compared to schools in a similar position (using free school meals as the indicator). In the main, this reflects an increasing number of pupils attaining the higher level, Level 5. Considering that the majority of pupils enter the school with average capabilities they make very good progress over the four years. Inspection evidence confirms that the high standards attained in 2001 look set to continue. The majority of the current Year 6 pupils are attaining standards that are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The range and quality of writing seen in all classes during the inspection were particularly impressive. The school enables all its pupils to achieve very well, irrespective of gender or capability. This is mainly because the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is very good. It is also because the teachers have very high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, as shown by the challenging targets set for English and mathematics. These targets were slightly exceeded in 2001. Those set for 2002 may yet be met, despite four of the more able pupils leaving the school since they were agreed.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils enter into all aspects of school life with much enthusiasm, which contributes to their very good achievement.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils say that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour and these are ' <i>always sorted well</i> '. No poor behaviour was seen during the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils play and work very well together. There are very good relationships between pupils and teachers. Pupils say, ' <i>it's a friendly school, where everyone gets on with each other</i> '.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance rates are well above average. Pupils arrive at school on time and lessons start promptly.

The pupils know their school very well and were keen to tell inspectors about many of the strengths seen. They know that there are high expectations of them in terms of achievement and behaviour, making comments such as '*we are expected to do our best*' and '*we behave well*'. The positive approach towards encouraging good behaviour, self-respect and respect for others is evident throughout the school and is central to the school's aims and values. There are appropriate opportunities for the older pupils to take on additional responsibilities in the school, for instance setting out the hall for assembly and the four school counsellors of the week. Outside their own classrooms, there are limited opportunities for the pupils in other year groups to assume responsibility.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

When the quality, range and quantity of the pupils' work over the past year are considered alongside the lessons observed, the quality of teaching is judged to be very good overall. During the week of the inspection, the teaching was consistently good and in almost half of lessons it was very good. It was particularly good in English and mathematics. As a result, the vast majority of the pupils are very effective in their learning, irrespective of the class in which they are placed, their gender, race or capability. The educational support assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of the pupils with special educational needs. There is a strong commitment to teaching the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. The school's focus on improving the teaching of writing resulted in 20 per cent more pupils reaching the expected level in writing in 2001. The setting arrangements for mathematics are a key factor in the well above average standards seen. A key feature of the impressive teaching is the very high expectations that teachers have of what the pupils can achieve. Similarly, the teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they are teaching and ensure that the pupils know what they are expected to learn and achieve by the end of each lesson. As a result, the pupils work at a very good pace, maintaining much interest and enthusiasm for their work. There are limited opportunities for the pupils to use their own initiative within a 'normal week', but 'focus weeks' and visits ensure that pupils have some opportunities to use their initiative and develop their skills of

independence.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. Time is very effectively used. There is very good breadth and balance to the curriculum and teachers make it relevant to the pupils' experiences where they can. Planning is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very well co-ordinated across the school. The teachers have very high expectations of these pupils. They are very well supported in lessons and make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The small number are very well integrated and they make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall. The school makes very good provision for moral, social and cultural development and good provision for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good systems ensure the pupils' health, safety and welfare. There are minor inconsistencies in authorising the small number of absences that occur.

The rich curriculum challenges all pupils. There are very effective strategies in place for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Focus weeks, like the recent 'Performing Arts' week, are excellent initiatives to enhance the curriculum. A good range of extra-curricular opportunities is offered, including clubs and peripatetic music tuition. Curriculum planning is good and contributes to the improved teaching and pupil achievement. Teachers keep on-going records of pupils' progress, but there is no agreed whole-school system. There are inconsistencies in whether all or selected subjects are assessed and how often records are updated. The school works well with parents, although curriculum information in newsletters is sometimes too near the deadline to give parents sufficient time to respond.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is particularly effective in providing a clear focus on continuous improvement and academic success for all within a very supportive and caring environment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are well informed and fully involved. They provide a good level of support for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher evaluates teaching and learning effectively. Procedures whereby subject leaders can make a fuller impact on the standards attained in their subjects are not sufficiently developed.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Forward planning of expenditure is good. The school makes very effective use of the spacious accommodation and grounds, time and staff. It seeks to find

best value for money.

The headteacher has been instrumental in placing a strong emphasis on very good teaching and on very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The effectiveness of this is clear from the overall well above average standards being attained by pupils who enter with average attainment. This is in spite of the high turnover of teaching staff. The headteacher has also been effective in delegating management responsibilities to subject leaders and ensuring there is a common approach to co-ordinating each subject. There is effective monitoring of pupils' performance in tests. However, there is still more work to be done. Pupils' test papers are not analysed to identify and then address common weaknesses. Similarly, there is no established system for subject leaders to monitor the quality of teaching or scrutinise pupils' work to further improve standards. The educational support staff are well deployed and make a very good contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Other staff are valued and respected members of the staff team: for example, the pupils appreciate that the caretaker *'keeps the school clean and tidy'*. Learning resources are generally good. The ICT suite is particularly spacious and well equipped. The school has accumulated a large surplus in the budget, although it is likely that this will be reduced considerably by the end of the financial year. The inspectors agree that the governors have appropriately exercised financial caution in order to ensure that two classes per year group can be maintained for as long as possible.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Ninety questionnaires (39 per cent) were returned and 19 parents attended the meeting with representatives of the inspection team.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. • They feel comfortable about contacting the school with a concern. • Their children like school. • Their children are expected to work hard. • They value the good teaching. • Their children make good progress. • Their children behave well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The amount of homework and a more consistent approach to how this is marked.

As shown through questionnaire responses and views expressed at the meeting, parents hold the school in high regard. There were very favourable comments about almost every aspect of the school. The inspectors fully agree with all the things that most please parents. They found it provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, albeit reduced in number from the time of the last inspection. Where parents expressed a view about homework, it was as much to do with too much as too little. Inspectors found homework to be appropriate and that it makes a sound contribution to the school's and the pupils' success. Nevertheless, inspectors agree with parents that there are inconsistencies in the speed and regularity of marking which causes anxiety for some parents. There were a few concerns expressed about the high turnover of teaching staff. Parents can be reassured that pupils continue to achieve very well and that the governors have appointed staff of good calibre.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English and mathematics are well above average and the pupils make very good progress in these subjects.

1. The majority of the pupils enter the school with broadly average capabilities. By the time they leave many are attaining well above expectations in English and mathematics. The school's records show, and inspection evidence confirms, that the vast majority of the pupils make very good progress during their four years in the school. This includes pupils of all levels of ability, with boys attaining equally as well as girls. The small number of pupils with English as their second language also make very good progress.

2. The pupils attain impressive standards in writing. In part this is due to the high profile the school has given to writing for the past two years. The pupils make very good progress because they are offered a wide range of writing experiences and are specifically taught the skills to be 'good writers'. Many show maturity in their writing well beyond their years, particularly in their choice of vocabulary. This is because grammar, punctuation and the effective use of vocabulary are particularly well taught in literacy sessions. For example, Year 6 pupils have been writing complex and simple sentences. In creating their own stories, from a common opening chapter agreed the previous day, they put this learning to very good effect. One pupil's writing opened with: *'Neffi was beginning to regret going south. She had found herself walking along a damp, dark corridor. It was long and winding. At one point, Neffi thought she felt a breeze brush past her. Not much later she heard a shrill scream.'* Writing of such quality is common in Year 6 and greatly encourages the reader to want to continue. By the time they leave the school the pupils are writing stories and playscripts of length, using good punctuation and grammar, paragraphs and chapters. All pupils write a variety of types of poems. For instance, some Year 3 pupils chose to respond to the stimulus 'What is hot?' Responses ranged from the more obvious *'the sun is hot'* to *'a spicy hot curry and rice'* to:

*'A blasting bullet from a blazing gun
Inside the earth's core
Boiling lava from a volcano
The flames of the burning sun.'*

3. Pupils write for a variety of audiences and purposes. The Year 4 pupils were writing to Mr Brown either requesting that football is banned from the field or the reverse. The purpose of the lesson was to use 'persuasive, polite' language to achieve the desired effect. Year 5 pupils were retelling a story from another person's point of view. Year 6 pupils were writing an argument either for or against using the cane in schools, the majority being against! One pupil slightly hedged her argument with, *'In my opinion the threat of the cane should be enough to stop bad behaviour. The government is still in a quandary, so make your views heard!'* All pupils are used to drafting their work, sometimes more than once, in order to achieve a polished final piece of writing. They all have access to the recently installed computer suite, which enables additional opportunities for drafting and refining writing. The pupils' standards of handwriting and presentation are very good. The vast majority of pupils in the upper school write in pen and all pupils are encouraged to join their handwriting in a neat, cursive script.

4. Similarly, the pupils make very good progress in reading. For example, there is a daily session devoted to purposeful reading activities. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to look at and discuss the contents of books. They are very familiar with reading for pleasure and for gaining information, with both being offered in the daily session at some

stage. The focus of the teacher and educational support assistant on one group for a specific 'guided', taught session has helped to raise standards of reading. The pupils regularly evaluate the books they read. One example from a Year 5 pupil reviewing 'Lizzie Zipmouth' by Jacqueline Wilson reflects *'someone else should read this because it's an inspiration to people not to judge others by the outside'*, grading it with the highest ranking of five stars.

5. Standards in mathematics are well above average by the age of eleven and the vast majority of the pupils make very good progress during their time in the school. There are several reasons why the pupils achieve so well:

- The setting arrangements across the school enable the pupils' needs to be particularly well catered for;
- The National Numeracy Strategy is very well established in all classes, evident in lessons and planning;
- There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of the basic skills of number;
- 'Mental' sessions are well used to reinforce the four rules of number. Quick-fire questioning heralds the start of many of the lessons, providing very good opportunities for the pupils to practise known skills and improve their speed of mental recall. In Year 4, pupils in the lower set were rapidly recalling addition and subtraction facts to 20. In the upper Year 5 set, the pupils were given just two minutes to record number facts related to 60. They worked industriously. Answers such as '15x4', '1200, 20', '40 being two thirds of 60', 'not a prime number', 'a quarter of 240', '12 and 5 are factors of 60' show their very good knowledge and recall of number operations. By Year 6, the more able pupils were identifying pattern in numbers and were able to 'continue the pattern' from one/four, two/seven, three/ten. This was expertly followed by the teacher teasing out the formula, $N = 3n+1$;
- There are many opportunities for the pupils to solve problems, with an expectation that they are able to explain their reasoning. They are encouraged to try out a variety of ways of solving a problem and are aware that there is not necessarily a 'right way'. This was clearly evident in a very good lesson with the Year 6 upper set. Here, the pupils were given a rectangular grid and asked to find the maximum number of 'shortest routes' possible to reach each intersection, given a common starting point. Their perseverance with this challenging task was impressive; not one pupil gave up! The lesson was very well rounded off by recording 'majority' responses and then identifying the pattern, which was well linked to 'Pascal's triangle', introduced earlier in the lesson.

The teaching is very good overall. It is consistently good and is very good for the teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics

6. In the 18 lessons observed, the teaching was seen to be consistently good, with almost half being very good. In any inspection, particularly a short inspection, percentages can be misleading. Therefore, the overall quality of the teaching is judged through consideration of additional evidence, including pupils' books over the past academic year, the very good displays across the school, and discussions with pupils and parents. This shows that teaching is very good overall, particularly in English and mathematics, and represents good improvement since the last inspection. There is no evidence to suggest that any teaching is unsatisfactory.

7. The consistency of the teaching is impressive, with the pupils getting a very fair deal irrespective of the class or year group in which they are placed. The teachers have implemented very effective strategies to ensure that teaching time is used to maximise the learning opportunities for the pupils. There are four lessons of one hour's duration each day, but additional time has been particularly well thought out. For example, following morning registration there are 15 minutes before the start of the first lesson. Here, daily activities are

planned which engage the brain and often reinforce previous learning. In one instance the pupils in a Year 5 class were completing an exercise to refresh their knowledge of electrical circuits. Another slot of 'additional time' is immediately following morning play. Here, for 25 minutes, all classes have a reading session. During this time, the teachers and education support assistants each concentrate their energies on one focus group for 'guided reading'. This dedicated time is a main factor in how advanced many of the pupils are in their reading. The danger of having such a 'tight' curriculum is that the pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use their own initiative or learn from their mistakes. This was evident to a degree, although initiatives such as the excellent 'focus weeks' and use of visits ensure that pupils do have some opportunities to develop skills of independence.

8. The key strength of the teaching is the very high expectations that the teachers have of their pupils. As a result, the vast majority of pupils achieve very well in lessons and particularly well in literacy and numeracy. This was evident in several ways, to include:

- The teachers' positive and enthusiastic approach really makes the pupils sit up and listen. The lessons have a clear start and there is a clear expectation from teachers and pupils that learning will take place. The teachers ensure that pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn and achieve in each lesson;
- Teachers' questions during the lesson, such as those generally to the whole class, *'how could that have happened?'* or specifically to one pupil, *'tell me what you think the answer is?'* keep pupils on their toes. The pupils listen carefully because they are never quite sure when they will be next asked a question;
- The literacy and numeracy strategies are very well taught, with teachers having secure subject knowledge. The range of work they cover each year is very good, all aspects being taught in depth. The very good teaching of writing skills is worthy of particular mention. This has been a key focus area for the school during the past two years and has paid dividends; in the 2001 tests for Year 6 pupils, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level in writing was 20 per cent higher than the previous year. There is a very good range of writing experiences in all year groups, which includes poems, letter writing, playscripts and writing stories of length;
- There is an expectation that work will be well presented. Routines are clearly very well established. Neat handwriting is expected as the norm. All work is dated with headings that reflect the objective of the lesson and worked is ruled off on completion. The quality of work is very good in all classes. Worksheets are used sparingly and those seen were generally of a good quality. The exception was in Year 3, where a few were insufficiently challenging;
- The quantity of work produced is impressive and reflects the very high expectations that teachers have of what the pupils can achieve in the time available. There is almost daily recording of work in English and mathematics;
- The work challenges pupils of all abilities. Whilst covering broadly the same work with the whole class, the teachers ask a range of questions within the lesson which are pitched at the level of the individual child. Tasks are pitched towards the needs of the average and more able pupils. Teachers make sure that those who find the work more difficult are very well supported in lessons, so that they have every opportunity to attain equally high standards. This works very well and is a key feature of much of the work of the educational support assistants.

9. The relationships between teachers and pupils throughout the school are very good. The pupils respond very well to the challenges presented to them by their teachers and appreciate the good teaching they receive. In discussions with them, they were very complimentary. Comments included *'teaching and learning are good'* and *'teaching is very good, sometimes better than others but never less than good'*. They value the personal support they receive from their teachers, for example *'teachers are kind and help you with*

your work, 'teachers sort our problems out well' and 'they give up their own time to run clubs and we appreciate this'.

10. Very good use is being made of the recently installed ICT suite to support teaching and learning in a number of subjects as well as to develop the pupils' ICT skills. The suite is used by all pupils in the infant school as well, a very good initiative for promoting greater liaison between the two schools. The displays in the ICT suite showed a good range of progression of skills from the reception children to those in Year 6.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior managers and governors.

11. The parents were exceptionally supportive of the leadership and management of the school. Ninety-nine per cent of the questionnaire returns indicated a positive response to the statement 'the school is well led and managed'. Those parents attending the meeting reinforced this. The inspectors endorse the views of the parents; leadership and management of the school are very good overall. In particular, this is the result of the very effective leadership and management of the long-serving headteacher. He provides very clear educational direction, which is raising standards still further and yet effectively maintains the strong pastoral ethos of the school. He successfully fosters a team spirit that engages all those who work in the school in a desire to seek improvement in all aspects of the school. Whilst emphasising the importance of the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, he has ensured that the wider curriculum is also given high priority, so that the pupils experience a particularly interesting, broad and relevant curriculum. The good improvement since the last inspection, particularly the improved teaching, owes much to his very effective leadership and management. His commitment to all pupils getting a very fair deal by being in the school is particularly evident. A worthy example was his willingness to teach a class full time last summer in the absence of a teacher, so that the pupils' learning was not disrupted. This cannot have been an easy time, balancing the teaching commitments with his responsibilities as a headteacher. It is also very much to his credit that standards have continued to rise despite the recent high turnover of teaching staff.

12. The headteacher is well supported by his deputy headteacher and senior managers. For instance, the deputy headteacher led the review of curriculum timetables, to ensure appropriate time is allocated to each subject and that teaching time is fully used every day. This ensures that there is no slippage of time and maximises the learning opportunities available for the pupils. All senior leaders effectively lead by example, particularly in being very good classroom practitioners. They have a secure collective understanding of what is working well in the school and what needs to be improved. This is achieved through evaluations of the school development plan and analyses of the pupils' attainment and progress in a variety of performance tests during the year. For example, the focus of the school development plan for the past two years on 'improving writing' is evident in all classes and through the improved test results. The teachers share examples of pupils' writing in staff meetings to gauge progress and levels being attained by a range of abilities. Inspectors were particularly impressed by the quality of writing in each class.

13. The governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively, are supportive and have a good understanding of their roles. The committee structure works successfully and the governing body has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have ensured that the improvements identified in the last report have been addressed successfully, one of which related to improving the quality of teaching. The past two years have been a particularly turbulent time for the school with regards to teaching staff, with a number of staff leaving for a variety of plausible reasons. This high turnover of staff was naturally of concern to some parents. They can be reassured that the governors have been particularly

successful in securing good staffing appointments. There is currently a good balance of age and experience within the teaching staff, with teachers new to the profession or school being well supported by the rest of the team. The monitoring of the school is achieved through governors visiting, the 'governor of the month' and having regular reports about progress in subjects from the subject co-ordinators. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs has received training, is well informed and provides a good level of support. The governors are rigorous in reviewing and addressing health and safety issues relating to the accommodation and grounds. There is close and effective involvement in financial planning. Governors have a good understanding of the finances made available to the school and seek ways to bid for additional monies for specified projects, such as the central heating boilers. The principles of obtaining best value from purchases and contracts are effectively applied. There is a strong commitment to providing education within single-age classes, hence the governors' prudent long-term planning of how to make best use of the large surplus in the budget.

The pupils' very positive attitudes, very good relationships and very good behaviour have a positive impact on the way they learn and how very well they achieve.

14. Pupils in all classes have very good attitudes to their work. Many show maturity in their learning well beyond their years, particularly in their use of vocabulary. They know that they are expected to work hard and do so with a will. Almost without exception the pupils work with diligence and much enthusiasm. They are united in their praise for their school, comments including '*Mums are really impressed with the school*', and '*it has a really good reputation*'. Overall, their positive attitudes to their school are a key factor in why they achieve so well.

15. The pupils take great pride in the work they produce. The quantity and quality of work in their exercise books are impressive. It is quite clear that the rigour seen during the two-day inspection is typical of the 'normal' life of the school. Almost all work is very well presented, mostly with cursive joined handwriting; this is in spite of the speed at which they work. Pupils automatically remember the routines of dating and heading each piece of work. They were very keen to talk about work completed earlier in the year and their part in the very good displays around the school.

16. Pupils work very well when asked to do so independently. For example, during the daily session of 'guided reading' the teacher appropriately focuses on one group for the majority of the time. The other pupils do not interrupt, knowing and doing exactly what is expected of them. Some become totally absorbed in the books they are reading for pleasure or information. Equally, they work very well in pairs or within small groups. Although there are very high expectations of what they must achieve individually, they can quietly discuss the task with their partners and help one another in their work. There is a danger that this could lead to more dominant partners leading the way and other pupils merely copying. This was not the case and all pieces of work seen differed from their partners in some way. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 6, 'exploring patterns in numbers', much discussion took place in what was a particularly challenging task. However, the pupils approached and recorded their work in a variety of ways.

17. Pupils know that the staff care very much for their well being. They spoke about the school being '*loving and caring*'. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. There is seldom a need for any pupil to be admonished, and no incidences of poor behaviour were seen during the inspection. The pupils say that behaviour is '*99.99 per cent very good*'. They know that good behaviour is rewarded. For example, in discussions with the youngest pupils, one Year 3 pupil proudly stated that the school has '*good rewards and sanctions*'. Clearly, the staff place greatest emphasis on the rewards system. The weekly awards,

displayed in the school foyer, are celebrated in assembly and valued by the pupils. They equally value the 'special' time they can gain as a class. For example, in one Year 4 class, good work results in a paper clip being added to the chain. When the chain reaches the floor the pupils can choose a special treat, often opting for additional playtime. The pupils are clear that poor behaviour is not tolerated, albeit they see this limited to just one or two pupils. They say that *'teachers sort it out. If they can't do it then the headteacher can'*. They know that sanctions include *'missing parts of playtimes'*, *'telling parents'* and *'being suspended'* (the latter two being said with some trepidation!).

There is a wide range of subjects and topics for the pupils to learn about. Teaching time is particularly well utilised. The pupils' books and high quality displays show the variety of activities that the pupils enjoy.

18. The school provides its pupils with a rich curriculum, covering the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education. A good balance has been struck between the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the wider curriculum. The headteacher and governing body have given appropriate importance to the achievement and maintenance of an interesting and relevant curriculum. All pupils have equal access to the school's curriculum. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. The time available for teaching is used very well, with timings being recently adjusted to make more effective and efficient use of time.

19. The teachers make the curriculum relevant to the pupils' experiences where they can. For example, pupils in Year 5 visited Wood Street as part of their geography topic on Swindon. Other curriculum areas were incorporated into their work, making it more meaningful for them. For example, they sketched the buildings and made clay tablets of shops in the street. They interviewed shopkeepers and produced graphs of the number of vehicles travelling through Wood Street in a 15-minute period. After the visit, they wrote 'thank you' letters. For instance, part of one letter to the hardware store included *'it was amazing how you cut those keys and that you can sell only one nail or screw at a time. Also your electric pepper grinder was so wicked'*, before signing the letter *'Yours thankfully'*.

20. The teachers capitalise on the learning opportunities from topical events in the country and worldwide. For example, in the coverage of the recent World Cup, pupils located the countries on a world map, following where England was due to play. Pupils in Year 4 wrote acrostic poems, where each line of the poem started with the appropriate letters 'WORLD CUP'. One very good example reflected the mood and hopes of the nation:

*Winning in good spirits
Owen scoring a penalty
Running across the pitch in celebration
Losers crying on their knees
David Beckham holding aloft the shiny cup.*

*Congratulating the winners
Up off their seats as the winners parade the cup
People celebrating victory and friendship.*

21. The annual 'focus week' proves to be a huge success, much enjoyed by everyone involved in the life of the school and inspirational for enhancing pupils' learning. The enormous statue of 'Norman' stands as a continual reminder of the success of the Arts week in 2001. This year's focus on the 'Performing Arts' is still very much in the minds of the pupils. They all enthused over the visiting 'story teller' who started the week's activities. Of the many appreciative comments of the week, some of the memorable ones included *I enjoyed working on changing the story teller's stories, because our team worked really well*

together, and *'my best bit was going into groups and making up mini-plays because I like acting and performing'*. Displays of the Year 6 designs for the story teller's chair were very thoughtful, showing front and side elevations and including a variety of appropriate features, such as retractable footstools, drawers for his books, cushions and levers. Puppets were designed, made and evaluated, for example papier-mâché puppets in Year 5 and shadow puppets in Year 6.

22. The pupils are encouraged to think of ways in which their own school can be improved. All year groups have the opportunity to talk with the headteacher each term. As a result of these discussions, more outdoor play equipment was purchased and the 'buddy bench' initiative introduced. The pupils in Year 3 have recently brainstormed ways in which to improve the overgrown garden. They have some imaginative ideas, most of which may be possible to achieve. Their 'wish list' would include the recycling of paving slabs, picnic benches, a pergola, a water feature, a bird table and a birdbath.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Further development of the systems by which the school reviews the quality of its work.

23. The school is judged to be very good overall, with well above average standards being attained, pupils making very good progress and teaching being very good. However, the school has the capacity and will to improve further. There are aspects of the school's work that lack rigour. These relate to systems for reviewing the quality of its work to aspire for even greater improvements in standards:

- The role of the subject co-ordinator needs a firmer focus on raising standards. The school has successfully established the role of the subject leader for each National Curriculum subject and religious education. Where staff leave, temporary 'holding' appointments are made. Subject files are maintained, which show a consistency of format and approach across the school. All subject leaders complete an annual evaluation of what has been achieved in their subject. From this, they each compile a plan for future aspirations. Action plans state the priorities for development, the steps needed to achieve each priority, the personnel involved and the timescales. This consistency of approach is good practice. However, the plans are insufficiently focused on the most important changes that will make the most difference to pupils' achievements. Neither do they provide a basis for measuring the success of actions taken in terms of their impact on pupils' standards;
- There are no formal opportunities built into the school improvement planning cycle for teachers to observe the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, the best practice is not being recognised or used to further improve others. The headteacher certainly does have a clear view of the quality of teaching in the school. He has observed all teachers in the classroom and provided written and verbal feedback of strengths and areas for improvement. Similarly, the deputy headteacher has observed the two teachers new to the profession and again written feedback was provided. However, this good practice does not extend to other teachers, in particular to the subject co-ordinators. In part this is not totally the fault of the school. For example, there were planned opportunities for the numeracy co-ordinator to observe teaching. However, the high level of staff turnover, which included the numeracy co-ordinator, meant that the plans were abandoned;
- There is insufficient evaluation of the work the pupils produce over time. The headteacher regularly looks at a sample of pupils' books from each class and across the ability range. Occasionally he makes comments in the pupils' books as to how well they are achieving and informally discusses the work with the teachers. Pupils' work is also shared in staff meetings, for a specific purpose such as 'writing'. However, the subject co-ordinators have not scrutinised pupils' work across the year groups. Therefore they

have insufficient depth of knowledge of the standards being attained, the quality and quantity of work in each subject area or whether the planned curriculum is being sufficiently taught. Similarly, the teachers have not received written feedback, with recognition of their strengths in each subject as well as any advice for further improvement;

- There has been insufficient emphasis on analysing the pupils' answers in test papers to identify strong areas of the teaching and learning or to look for common errors that can then be addressed through planning;
- Systems to track the pupils' progress over time are in need of further development, although there are strengths. For example, the pupils' actual attainments in tests are well analysed and their progress is monitored on an annual basis through end of year results. Challenging targets, based on National Curriculum levels, are then set for individuals and all year groups to be attained by the end of the next academic year. The marking of pupils' work is good overall and shows a generally consistent implementation of the school's marking policy. Pupils in most classes are set specific targets for improvement in literacy and mathematics, for example 'to improve the use of capital letters'. The pupils are aware of their targets, and teachers often make reference to them in marking comments. However, although satisfactory overall, the records kept by teachers are not detailed enough to be fully effective in supporting each child's academic or personal development. There are a number of different procedures being used, but these lack consistency. The school is aware of the need for a whole-school approach and has started to trial different methods. For example, a new system was adopted at the start of the academic year, but was discarded because it was time consuming and not particularly helpful. Despite the inconsistencies, there are good models being used within the school. In a very good example, one teacher records the progress of every pupil in each subject towards the stated learning objectives of the term, using a colour-coded system to show the level of success per pupil.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In the context of its many strengths and the high quality of education it already provides, the school should now:

- 1) **Further develop the systems by which it reviews the quality of its work, by:**
 - Further developing the role of subject leaders, ensuring that initiatives are well focused on raising standards;
 - Introducing a planned programme for observation of lessons and scrutiny of a range of attainment of pupils' work by the headteacher and subject leaders;
 - Developing a common format for providing written feedback to teachers on the quality of their work, which identifies strengths and areas for improvement;
 - Analysing pupils' test papers to identify and address common weaknesses;
 - Ensuring a consistent approach to the way in which teachers keep records of the pupils' progress in all subject areas.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
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
Number	0	8	6	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	44	33	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		232
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		78

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.6
---------------------------	-----

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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	36	33	69

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	32	31	35
	Girls	26	25	29
	Total	58	56	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (81)	81 (90)	93 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	32	32	35
	Girls	26	26	29
	Total	58	58	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (79)	84 (93)	93 (84)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	10
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	209
Any other minority ethnic group	9

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	29

Education support staff: Y3 – Y7

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	95

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	502,832
Total expenditure	493,596
Expenditure per pupil	2,110
Balance brought forward from previous year	40,673
Balance carried forward to next year	49,909

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	232
Number of questionnaires returned	90

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	44	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	53	0	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	50	12	1	2
The teaching is good.	54	42	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	49	9	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	20	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	45	39	9	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	73	26	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	38	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	56	14	1	2