

INSPECTION REPORT

HARROLD LOWER SCHOOL

Harrold, Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109455

Headteacher: Mrs L Hall

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Gough
22361

Dates of inspection: 5th – 6th November 2002

Inspection number: 246909

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Lower school |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 - 9 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | The Green Harrold Bedfordshire |
| Postcode: | MK43 7DE |
| Telephone number: | 01234 720312 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr M Bridgman |
| Date of previous inspection: | February 1998 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--------------|----------------|----------------------|
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| 31753 | Mrs D Thomas | Lay inspector |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of Harrold, near to the town of Bedford. Pupils are drawn from the immediate locality and from surrounding villages. There are currently one hundred and thirty six pupils on roll between the ages of four and nine. Almost all pupils are of white ethnicity, and no pupil has English as an additional language. Only one pupil is known to be eligible for free school meals. This represents less than 1% of the school population and is very low in relation to the national average. Nine pupils are on the school's special educational needs register. This represents 6% of the school population and is well below the national average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The rate of pupil mobility is low, with six pupils having joined the school other than at the usual point of admission, and two pupils having left the school other than at the usual point of transfer. The children's attainment when they start school is generally above the expected level. The school received an Investors in People Award in July 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an excellent school that has very many strengths in its work. By the time pupils leave school at the age of nine, they are attaining standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and science, and exceptionally high standards in their art and design work. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. Pupils' attitudes to work and school are excellent, and the pupils are extremely well behaved at all times. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management for the school and enjoys the full support of a very loyal and hard-working staff, and a very well informed Governing Body. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average at the end of Key Stage 1, and when pupils leave school at the age of nine. Standards in art and design are exceptionally high throughout the school.
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and to learning. Their behaviour is excellent.
- The school provides a very good curriculum for all pupils, which is effectively enriched by a very wide range of additional learning experiences.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The Governing Body is very effective and the school is very well managed.

What could be improved

- The school has no significant weaknesses in any aspect of its work, but should continue to address the targets and priorities identified in the School Development Plan.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998, more than four years ago. Since that time very good progress has been made. The many strengths identified in the last inspection report have been successfully maintained, and in some cases further developed. All of the key issues have been successfully addressed. Standards continue to be high at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave school at the age of nine. Teaching, which was good at the time of the last inspection, is now very good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are now excellent, and this represents an improvement. The school has developed very good assessment procedures in English and mathematics and is currently working on assessment systems for other subjects. Resources and the outside accommodation for Reception

children have been developed, although the classroom is small and this makes it difficult for the teacher to plan practical activities. The library provision has been improved, and firm plans are in place for the construction of a new library extension over the next two years. The newly installed computer suite is having a very positive impact on standards and is very well used by all classes. The staff, headteacher and Governing Body are fully committed to maintaining and, where possible, improving the current high standards across many aspects of the school's work. The very good team work amongst staff and the high levels of commitment from all those involved with the school mean that the school is very well placed for further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 |
| reading | A | A | A | A |
| writing | A | A | A | A |
| mathematics | B | A | A* | A* |

| Key | |
|--------------------|----|
| very high | A* |
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

The table shows that, on the basis of the 2002 end of Key Stage 1 national test results, the pupils' attainment is well above the national average in reading and writing, and well above average in comparison with similar schools. In mathematics, standards are very high both in relation to the national average, and in comparison with similar schools, placing the school in the top 5% of schools nationally. Standards have been consistently well above the national average for the last four years, with the exception of 2000, when standards in mathematics temporarily dipped. The 2002 teacher assessments indicate that pupils' attainment in science is below the national average. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

The inspection findings indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science are well above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. The minor discrepancy between the test results and the inspection findings in mathematics is marginal. The discrepancy between the inspection findings and the science teacher assessments reflects the inaccuracy in the teacher assessments for 2002 which the school has recognised and has taken steps to address. As pupils move through the school they make very good progress in their learning and, when they leave school at the age of nine, their attainment is well above the level expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Key Stage 1, and by the time pupils leave school at the age of nine, the pupils' attainment in art and design is exceptionally high.

The children's attainment when they join the Reception class spans the full ability range, but is above the expected level overall. The children make very good progress and, by the time they join Year 1, most attain beyond the early learning goals in each of the areas of learning, which are, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Excellent. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic and show very high levels of interest in their work. They contribute extremely well in lessons and are very highly motivated. From an early age pupils demonstrate exceptionally high levels of concentration and application. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Excellent. Pupils are extremely well behaved. They are polite and considerate of the needs of others. Many instances of kindness were seen during the inspection where pupils helped one another without prompting from their teachers. |
| Personal development and relationships | Excellent. Pupils get on very well with one another and show high levels of independence in their work. |
| Attendance | Good. Above the national average. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 4 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Very good | Very good | 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.

The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school, and is a strength. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught, and there are many very good opportunities for pupils to use and practise these skills in other subjects. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning, although this is an ongoing area of development within the school. The teaching of art and design is excellent, and has a tremendous impact on the pupils' progress and attainment.

Teachers of all age groups use questions particularly well to extend the pupils' learning, and to focus their attention on key teaching points. Often, teachers give pupils 'thinking time' which enables them to formulate and consider their answers, and enables the lower ability pupils to take a full and active part in discussion sessions. A very good feature of teaching is the way in which teachers encourage pupils to measure the extent of their learning, either through the evaluation of their own work and that of others, or by considering their learning in terms of whether they have achieved the learning objectives that were set at the start of the lesson.

Teachers present activities in a very enthusiastic manner, and this serves to motivate pupils in their learning. Problem solving activities are used very well to encourage the pupils to be creative in their approach, and to enable them to pursue their own lines of enquiry. Pupils are often asked to explain their methods of working, and this is highly effective in helping the pupils to clarify their thinking, and provides opportunities for the lower attaining pupils to hear the ideas of others. Teachers throughout the school have extremely high expectations of behaviour, to which the pupils respond very well. They also have very high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, but this is balanced by a great deal of praise and encouragement so that pupils are secure in their learning, and have no fear of failure. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent, and help to promote a very positive working environment.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Very good. The statutory curriculum is very well enhanced by a wide range of stimulating and exciting learning experiences. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class and when they are withdrawn from lessons. The new Code of Practice has been fully implemented. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. The school is very effective in the way in which it promotes pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collective acts of worship are joyous occasions and provide a very good opportunity for the school to meet as a community. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school has satisfactory procedures in place for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' health and safety. Assessment procedures for English and mathematics are very good, and the school is in the process of developing systems in other subjects. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Excellent. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school and is very well supported by the staff, parents and Governing Body. The role of the subject co-ordinators is well developed. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Very good. The Governing Body plays a crucial role in managing the school and is well informed and knowledgeable about the school's life and work. The Governing Body is very effective in the way in which it fulfils its role as 'critical friend' to the headteacher. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Very good. The headteacher, staff and Governing Body have a very good appreciation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A good quality School Development Plan effectively guides future development, and regular reviews provide opportunities for reflection and the evaluation of ongoing progress. |
| The strategic use of resources | Excellent. The school makes best use of the funds that are available, and is extremely effective in securing additional grants. The principles of best value are applied when measuring and evaluating the school's effectiveness |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are very pleased with the way in which the school is led and managed. • Parents agree that teaching is very good and that their children make very good progress. • There is a very good partnership between home and school which the parents appreciate. • Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. • Parents are happy about approaching the school with any problems, suggestions or concerns. • Parents appreciate the wide range of additional learning opportunities that the school provides. • Parent agree that the standard of behaviour in the school is very good, and that there are no problems with bullying. • Most parents are pleased with the levels of information that the school provides about their children's progress. | <p>A very small number of parents would like more information about their children's progress.</p> |

There are justifiably very high levels of parental satisfaction, and parents are very pleased with the quality of education the school provides. The inspection findings fully endorse the parents' very positive views of the school, but not their negative views. The school provides very good levels of information for parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average at the end of Key Stage 1, and when pupils leave school at the age of nine. Standards in art and design are exceptionally high throughout the school.

1. On the basis of the 2002 end of Key Stage 1 national test results, the pupils' attainment is well above the national average in reading and writing, and well above average in comparison with similar schools. In mathematics, standards are very high both in relation to the national average, and in comparison with similar schools, placing the school in the top 5% of schools nationally. Standards have been consistently well above the national average for the last four years, with the exception of 2000, when standards in mathematics temporarily dipped. The 2002 teacher assessments indicate that pupils' attainment in science is below the national average. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
2. The inspection findings indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science are well above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. The minor discrepancy between the test results and the inspection findings in mathematics is marginal. The discrepancy between the inspection findings and the science teacher assessments reflects the inaccuracy in the teacher assessments for 2002 which the school has recognised and has taken steps to address. As pupils move through the school they make very good progress in their learning and, when they leave school at the age of nine, their attainment is well above the level expected for their age in English, mathematics and science.
3. Reading is very well taught throughout the school, and this has a very positive impact on the pupils' progress and attainment. A love of books is promoted by teachers, who enthusiastically share stories with the pupils, encouraging them to join in discussion about favourite characters and plots. The school is very effective in ensuring a good balance between pupils moving systematically through a structured reading scheme, and gaining breadth of experience at each level of difficulty. Parents are encouraged to support their children by listening to them reading regularly at home, and the vast majority of parents are very keen to do this. Pupils have regular reading practice in school, both individually, and through weekly 'reading workshops' which provide excellent opportunities for small groups of pupils to work with teachers, learning support assistants and parents, and to develop their skills of comprehension.
4. By the end of Key Stage 1, almost all pupils read fluently and with expression, varying the tone of their voices to reflect changes in the text. Pupils know how to break complex words down into more manageable parts, and this gives them the confidence and skill to tackle unfamiliar words. Good levels of additional support for pupils who have difficulties with reading raise their self-esteem and confidence and have a positive impact on the progress they make. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in reading, and in developing their love of a range of literature. The school library, although small, contains very good quality books which are attractive to the pupils, and pupils have regular opportunities to spend time in the library and to select books for reading at home.
5. The standard of pupils' writing is well above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and when pupils leave school at the end of Year 4. Pupils write for a very wide range of purposes, and show a very good understanding of the different styles of writing. Teachers provide very good opportunities for the pupils to develop and

practise their writing skills across the curriculum. For example, in their geography work, Year 1 pupils have written about their favourite and least favourite places in Harrold, and have given their opinions clearly. In Year 2, pupils have used their letter writing skills to good effect when they wrote a letter of thanks following a farm visit.

6. Pupils of all abilities successfully punctuate their written work, with higher attaining pupils making very good attempts at using speech marks and exclamation marks. Pupils are encouraged to use a wide vocabulary to make their writing interesting, and most pupils do this successfully. Pupils are greatly helped in their writing by the use of strategies such as 'story planners', which enable them to sequence their initial ideas, before developing them into an extended piece. In addition, the school provides regular extended writing sessions for pupils of all ages so that they have the time to complete lengthier pieces, and to practise skills such as drafting and editing. A strength in writing is the pupils' ability to sustain their ideas, and to bring their writing to life by the very good use of adjectives.
7. Pupils of all ages are taught cursive script from the Reception class onwards, and their handwriting is of a very good standard by the time they leave school. The use of A4 size exercise books encourages the pupils to present their work neatly, and helps the flow of pupils' ideas. The marking of pupils' work is often excellent, and is extremely helpful in showing pupils how they can improve their work further. There are some good opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their work in English.
8. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good at the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave school at the end of Year 4. In discussion sessions, pupils' comments and questions indicate that they have paid close attention to what is being said. Pupils use a very wide vocabulary to explain their ideas clearly and concisely, and their use of subject specific vocabulary is often very good. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson seen during the inspection, pupils confidently and accurately used the terms 'conductor' and 'insulator' to explain their work about electricity. Likewise, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were quick to point out that a cylinder shape could also be described as a circular prism.
9. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are enhanced by very good teaching. Teachers often give pupils 'thinking time' and this enables those who are slower at organising their thoughts to take a full and active part in discussions. Teachers provide very good role models for the pupils when they are explaining activities and giving instructions, and their persistence in ensuring that pupils answer the questions they have been asked, guarantees that pupils listen carefully. A good example of this was seen during the inspection when Year 4 pupils were asked which of their classmates they thought had worked very hard in the art and design lesson. Pupils began to explain which of the work on display they preferred, and had to be reminded several times to concentrate on the question that had actually been asked, and not the one they had incorrectly anticipated. Pupils have many very good opportunities to speak in front of larger audiences, such as in assemblies when they are asked questions, and in end of term performances. Pupils of all ages and abilities have high levels of confidence in their ability as speakers, and understand the need to project their voices when speaking in large spaces.
10. By the end of Key Stage 1, and when they leave school at the age of nine, pupils' attainment in mathematics is well above national expectations. Very few pupils attain below the expected level in their work and many go beyond what is expected for their age. Key Stage 1 pupils thoroughly enjoy their mathematics work, and are very keen to take part in lessons and activities. Pupils have a very secure grasp of number and very

good mental agility skills. Most pupils have immediate recall of number bonds up to twenty, and this speeds up their written work. Teachers ensure that pupils have a good range of opportunities for using and practising their number skills across the mathematics curriculum. For example, pupils add and subtract units of money, length, weight and capacity. Pupils enjoy taking part in practical activities which help to consolidate their understanding of important and difficult mathematical concepts. For example, Year 2 pupils use mathematical apparatus very well when at the early stages of carrying out more complex subtraction calculations, to show how hundreds can be converted to tens, and tens to units so that 'sums' such as one hundred and one take away seventy six can be carried out with ease. Pupils are also very confident about partitioning numbers so that they can more easily understand place value. For example, when adding numbers together, such as nineteen and twenty, pupils would partition nineteen as one 'ten' and nine 'units', and twenty as two 'tens', making it easy to group all of the 'tens' together and then to add on the 'units'.

11. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to use mathematical vocabulary to explain their ideas, and this means that their explanations are often clear, concise and precise. Very good emphasis is placed on problem-solving, with the result that pupils confidently tackle quite complex problems, and gain an understanding that there are often many different ways of achieving the same outcome. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils achieved particularly high standards when they considered strategies for multiplying numbers by ten and one hundred. They had a very good grasp of moving numbers one or two places to the left as a quick way of making written calculations, and had a firm understanding that the decimal point was fixed. Most pupils had a very good knowledge of how to check their multiplication by using the inverse operation of division, and this checking device is used by pupils throughout the school. Pupils make very good progress as they move through the school in all aspects of the mathematics curriculum, because of their own extremely positive attitudes to the subject, and because of very good teaching.
12. By the end of Key Stage 1, and by the age of nine, pupils attain standards in science that are well above national expectations. Pupils make very good progress as they move through the key stage, and benefit from very good teaching and careful and thorough coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Very good emphasis is placed on pupils learning through practical investigation and experimentation, and on pupils developing an appropriately wide scientific vocabulary so that they can explain their work accurately. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills to write accounts of their practical science activities, and to record their observations and findings. Pupils have a secure scientific knowledge and have a very good understanding as to what constitutes a fair test. Activities are often very challenging and this ensures that pupils attain high standards in their work. For example, having found out through investigation whether the changing of bread into toast was reversible or permanent, pupils then froze both the toast and the bread to find out whether the process of thawing 'undid' the effects of heating the bread, and changed it back to its original state.
13. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently make predictions about the outcome of their investigations and reach conclusions in the light of their findings. For example, during the inspection, Year 2 pupils predicted and then tested which materials would make the best electrical conductors and insulators. They systematically worked through the materials that had been provided, and quickly started to make generalisations about their findings, such as 'metals are good conductors of electricity'. With careful intervention from the teacher, higher attainers started to consider whether all metals would make good conductors, or just some, and this new learning led them to a higher level of understanding. Pupils tackle their scientific work with excellent

attitudes, and very high levels of motivation, which contribute to the very good progress they make and the high standards they achieve.

14. The art work in the school is inspirational, and pupils are achieving excellent standards and making excellent progress. One of the significant strengths of art teaching is the way in which teachers progressively build on the pupils' skills, developing them year by year. Pupils of all ages regularly follow a learning pattern of translating drawings or sketches into a two dimensional representation, before interpreting their ideas into a three dimensional form. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils have drawn sea-shells, paying good attention to the detail of the shell pattern, which they then transferred onto damp paper, using water based felt-tip pens so that the edges would smudge. They then transferred the design onto fabric, using inks, and outlined the spiral pattern of the shell using embroidery stitches. This process of moving from two dimensions into three dimensions means that pupils have a very good range of experiences, and an excellent understanding of the 'design' element of the art and design curriculum.
15. Pupils have an excellent understanding of colour which stems from their very early experiences in the Reception class where they are encouraged to mix their own paints, and to explore ways in which colours can be mixed and blended to achieve quite different effects. Year 4 pupils have recently produced excellent screen prints of objects, such as fruits, using any combination of three 'rainbow' colours to depict their ideas. This work is of excellent quality, and the attractive display is vibrant, colourful and cheerful.
16. Throughout the school, the art work shows a maturity that is unusual for pupils in the lower school age range. Many pupils are very confident about making abstract representations, and are keen to be original in their work, and to produce exciting and innovative pictures, models and artefacts. Portraiture is very well taught, and the portraits produced by older pupils in the school show an imaginative use of line and colour as the pupils seek to reproduce feelings and emotions, as well as to depict the shape and features of the human face. Very recently, the Year 4 pupils have produced excellent pictures of violoncellos, using some of the work of Picasso as an initial stimulus. They have created their collage pictures using a variety of paper that is printed with words, pictures or musical notation, and have distorted the final images to create extremely imaginative and arresting pictures. The excellent standards are the result of inspired and excellent teaching across the age range, and the pupils' excellent attitudes to the subject.

Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school.

17. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and has a significant and very positive impact on the pupils' learning and on the standards they achieve. Fifteen lessons were seen during the inspection. Teaching was excellent in 27% of the lessons seen, very good in 46% of lessons, and good in 27% of lessons. This is an extremely good picture.
18. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught in all classes, enabling pupils of all abilities to make very good progress and to achieve the highest possible standards in their work. The way in which teachers assess the pupils' progress in English and mathematics is very good, and assessment information is used very well to ensure that the pupils' learning is systematically advanced. Within individual lessons, teachers provide many very good opportunities for new learning to take place, and for pupils to consolidate and practise previously acquired skills. Activities are closely matched to pupils' abilities, and very good support from learning support

assistants gives the lower attaining pupils very good levels of confidence. There are many very good opportunities for pupils to use and practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, such as when they write accounts of their visits to places of historical interest, or take measurements in science or design and technology. Teachers throughout the school are also very effective in the way in which they encourage pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning across the curriculum, and pupils have made very good progress in this aspect of their learning since the computer suite was opened at the end of the last school year.

19. Teachers make exceptionally good use of questions to probe the pupils' understanding and to extend their learning. For example, in a Year 1 history lesson seen during the inspection, pupils were asked about the differences between the contents of their own houses and those from the Victorian era. Because of the very good use of questions, pupils quickly drew the conclusion that the introduction of electricity was a significant factor, and accounted for many of the differences they had observed. Many questions are open-ended, and this encourages pupils to give more thought to their answers and promotes high levels of creativity and originality. For example, in lessons such as art and design, pupils are often asked to say which features they like, or might improve, in their own and their classmates' work. Their evaluations are often very perceptive, and helpful in highlighting areas for improvement.
20. Teachers throughout the school are extremely enthusiastic, and are very successful in making lessons interesting and exciting for the pupils. For example, in a Reception class lesson seen during the inspection, the teacher had prepared the lesson extremely thoroughly, and had brought in ten different teddy bears, cutlery, crockery and food, so that the children could develop their understanding of one to one correspondence by giving out plates, cups, knives, forks and food to each of the bears who were attending the 'picnic'. This high level of preparation is evident in all classes, and ensures that lessons run smoothly, and that pupils are well motivated in their learning.
21. Problem solving activities are used very well to encourage the pupils to be creative in their approach, and to enable them to organise and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are often asked to explain their methods of working, and this is highly effective in helping the pupils to clarify their thinking, and provides opportunities for the lower attaining pupils to hear the ideas of others. Teachers celebrate originality and encourage pupils to be imaginative and inventive in their work. As a result, pupils of all abilities have the confidence to experiment, to explore, and to be individual in their work.
22. Without exception, lessons are very well planned. Lesson objectives are clearly stated in teachers' planning, and are discussed with pupils at the start of lessons so that they know exactly what is expected of them. Teachers revisit the learning objectives at the end of lessons, and use them to help the pupils to evaluate what they have learned. The many very good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work, and that of their classmates, help them to become aware of strengths and weaknesses in their own learning, and contribute to the very good progress they make.
23. A significant strength of teaching is the way in which teachers encourage pupils to find things out for themselves and to develop independent learning skills. By the time they leave school at the age of nine, almost all pupils are very independent learners who know how to access information from books and from the computer, and who can quickly make sensible decisions about how to proceed with their work. Teachers encourage the pupils to be inquisitive and to find things out for themselves, and this is

especially evident in subjects such as science, where pupils are keen to go beyond the parameters set by the teachers so that their learning is extended further. For example, during a science lesson seen during the inspection in Year 2, pupils finding out about which materials made the best conductors started to explore why the wires connecting the batteries and the bulbs were good conductors when they were apparently made from plastic. They quickly realised that the core of the wire was made from metal, and that the plastic sleeve was a safety feature.

24. Teachers throughout the school have extremely high expectations of behaviour to which the pupils respond very well. They also have very high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, but this is balanced by a great deal of praise and encouragement so that pupils are secure in their learning, and have no fear of failure. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent, and help to promote a very positive working environment.

Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and to learning. Their behaviour is excellent.

25. Pupils' attitudes to school and to work are excellent and have a very significant and positive impact on their learning. From an early age, Reception children are encouraged to develop independent learning skills, and to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning. They can be trusted to organise themselves quickly and sensibly when they are working in small groups on shared tasks. For example, during the inspection, those children who had been asked to play 'skittles', to reinforce their knowledge of number bonds up to ten, quickly formed a queue and within minutes the game was underway with no fuss, or squabbles about taking turns. As pupils move through the school, they become increasingly competent and independent when making choices and decisions about their work, and are very confident when solving problems.
26. The school promotes a very positive work ethic, and pupils of all ages agree that it is 'cool' to work and to do one's best. This is reflected in the pupils' very enthusiastic responses to all activities that the teachers present. Pupils respond very well to challenge and, because of the very successful way in which teachers promote the pupils' self-esteem and confidence, are keen to find things out for themselves, and have no fear of failure. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson seen during the inspection, pupils were very highly motivated when they were asked to find out which objects would make the best electrical conductors and insulators. Working in small groups, they approached the problem very methodically, and the higher attaining pupils were keen to go beyond what had been asked of them, and as a result started to work at a very high level, and to draw sophisticated conclusions about their findings.
27. Pupils have unusually high levels of creativity, which are enhanced and extended by the many very good open-ended opportunities that the teachers provide for them. Originality is celebrated and promoted, and from an early age pupils are encouraged to come up with new and imaginative ideas in their work across the curriculum. Some of the pupils' art work is stunning, and shows the pupils' confidence and willingness to 'depart from the norm'. This is most evident in their portrait work, where pupils often use vibrant colours for features, and are comfortable about working in the abstract. However, originality is also very successfully fostered in subjects such as mathematics, where pupils find different ways of exploring mathematical problems, and in science where pupils are encouraged to pursue their own lines of enquiry.
28. In lessons, pupils are extremely responsive, and are very keen to answer and ask questions and to take part in discussions. Pupils of all abilities have lots of ideas which

they are keen to share, but they are equally willing to listen to the views of others. When working individually, pupils show very high levels of concentration, and produce very good amounts of written work. Pupils take a real pride in the presentation of their work, and try hard to respond to their teachers' suggestions for improvement. Pupils work very well together in pairs and in small groups, and willingly consider the ideas of one another. For example, in a Year 1 history lesson seen during the inspection, pupils worked very well in pairs, discussing the contents of different rooms in their houses, and pooling ideas, so that the information could be shared with the rest of the class. Pupils of all abilities are very confident in their work, and this is as a direct result of the way in which teachers value their contributions, and the secure and caring learning environment the school provides.

29. The standard of pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils of all ages are self-assured, and extremely polite, helpful and friendly. They have unusually high levels of self-discipline, which are evident, for example, when they are briefly left unattended, and continue to work conscientiously and quietly. Pupils move around the school in a very orderly fashion. They willingly, and without prompting by adults, hold doors open for one another and for their teachers. Pupils show very high levels of respect for others, and for property, and have a very good understanding of the need to consider the feelings of others. Of note is the way in which older pupils consistently set an excellent example for younger pupils. For example, Year 4 prefects monitor pupils' behaviour as they come into the hall for assembly, and understand that in their role as prefects, they need always to set the highest possible standard of behaviour for others to follow. In class, occasional incidents of inappropriate behaviour from newcomers to the school are ignored by other pupils, and, as a result, new pupils quickly come to realise that bad behaviour is not only unacceptable to teachers, but also to their classmates.
30. At playtimes, pupils of all ages play well with one another, and, although Reception children have their own play area, they are often to be seen mixing with the older pupils who look after them well. Since the last inspection, the school has purchased many very good quality outdoor games and equipment. This play equipment is very well used by the pupils, and provides a real focus for pupils as they organise games and practise skills such as 'French skipping'. As a result of this investment, pupils' playtime behaviour has improved since the last inspection.

The school provides a very good curriculum for all pupils, which is effectively enriched by a very wide range of additional learning experiences.

31. The school fully meets statutory requirements in terms of its curricular provision, and provides a very good curriculum for pupils of all ages. In addition, the school provides many additional exciting, stimulating and enriching learning experiences, which very successfully enhance and extend the pupils' learning, and which contribute significantly to their overall attainment and progress. This very rich curricular provision is a significant strength of the school's work.
32. From an early age, the Reception children are involved in trips around the local area, such as when they go to the Country Park to look at the changes that occur in the natural environment as the seasons change from summer to autumn, or when they visit a working farm. These activities bring learning to life for the children and are very successfully developed back in the classroom as the teacher sets up supporting displays and leads discussions. Reception children are also involved in whole school activities, such as the annual school picnic, or the Asian dance display, which has very recently taken place, and these opportunities serve to reinforce the children's place in

the whole-school community, and provide them with very good social opportunities as they mix with older pupils.

33. As they move through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils take part in many more activities, all of which very effectively promote their learning across the curriculum. There are regular visits to places of local interest, and also many opportunities for visiting speakers to come into school to share their areas of expertise. Pupils still talk about a visit from an African musician and artist who helped them to compose and perform African drumming patterns and to design and make African clay masks. Recently pupils have also enjoyed participating in a spectacular science workshop, where they improved their understanding of aspects of light and sound, as they took part in a wide range of fun activities. Many of these additional learning experiences are funded by money that the headteacher raises through bids, as the school is very conscious of the need to keep costs as low as possible. The school's charging and remissions policy ensures that parents and carers who have difficulty in paying for educational visits can be supported, thereby ensuring equal access for all pupils.
34. The school very successfully operates three annual residential trips for pupils from Year 2 to Year 4. Year 2 pupils are taken to a local church, where they 'camp out' for two nights, and enjoy taking part in a series of educational visits to places such as a butterfly farm, and a working flour mill. In Year 3, pupils go to a local conference centre from where they are in easy reach of Snibston Technology Park, and a National Trust property. In Year 4, the headteacher, accompanied by staff and a member of the Governing Body, takes pupils to France for five days. The pupils greatly enjoy these experiences which do much to increase their confidence and social competence, and which increase their knowledge and understanding across a wide range of curriculum areas.

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The Governing Body is very effective and the school is very well managed.

35. The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent. Since the last inspection, she has been very successful in continuing to move the school forward, whilst at the same time, maintaining the many strengths that were described in the previous report. The headteacher's management skills are excellent, and she has an astute grasp of the strengths of the school and the areas where there is still room for further improvement. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future development of the school, which is shared by staff and governors. There is an excellent team spirit amongst staff, and this helps to create a very positive and happy learning environment. Change is well paced, and staff are fully involved in decisions about the school's development. As a result, teaching and non-teaching staff are pulling in the same direction, and are highly motivated in their work.
36. The Governing Body plays a pivotal role in the management of the school and is very effective in carrying out its statutory duties. Governors are well informed and knowledgeable about the life and work of the school, and their role as 'critical friend' to the headteacher is very well developed. There is a very good range of expertise within the Governing Body which is used well to effect improvement. The involvement of the Governing Body in the management of the school is very good and governors take a proactive role in the decision making process. Individual governors have key responsibilities which they fulfil effectively, and the committee structure within the Governing Body enables good levels of discussion about new initiatives and ongoing developments. The School Improvement Plan is a good working document. Targets are appropriately costed and prioritised and reflect the needs of the school. The

regular review of progress towards targets enables the Governing Body to reflect critically on the educational direction of the school and to manage change effectively.

37. One of the headteacher's particular strengths is her ability to locate and secure additional funding which enables the school to offer a wealth of additional learning opportunities for the pupils. For example, in the past year, money from several different grants has enabled the school to purchase a set of hand bells, to develop music and drama within the school, to purchase musical instruments, and to buy in the services of a screen printer to develop this aspect of art and design. During the past year, the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was very effectively fostered when a visiting speaker led whole-school workshops linked to aspects of African music and art, and more recently pupils throughout the school benefited from taking part in an Asian dance workshop.
38. The headteacher and Governing Body are committed to continuing to improve the quality of the pupils' learning environment. The newly installed computer suite is having a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and is very well used by all classes. Pupils of all ages and abilities are making very good progress, and already standards in information and communication technology are starting to rise rapidly. There are firm plans in place for the building of a new library, which when finished will provide a very attractive additional learning space. The headteacher and Governing Body have been very active in securing the necessary funding for this challenging project, and their proactive and confident approach to such ventures is a typical feature of the excellent leadership of the school. In the longer term, the school has plans to replace the two mobile classrooms which are currently used by the Reception and Year 1 pupils.
39. The way in which the headteacher and Governing Body monitor and evaluate the school's provision and performance is a strength. There is regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher, which includes lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Staff benefit from clear feedback about their teaching, which enables them to highlight areas for professional development, and to celebrate and share their strengths. As a result of rigorous but helpful monitoring, teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection, and is now very good throughout the school. The headteacher is currently the mentor for other headteachers in the local area, and this additional experience gives her a good measure of how effective the school is in comparison with similar schools. To ensure best value, the school sets challenging targets, has very good self-evaluation procedures, regularly solicits the view of parents, and successfully measures the cost-effectiveness of major spending decisions
40. There is a very positive and purposeful atmosphere in the school, which is underpinned by the excellent relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils of all ages and levels of attainment are very highly motivated and have excellent attitudes to work. The school has a very strong equal opportunities policy, and a racial equality policy, both of which are clearly reflected in practice. Whilst the headteacher, staff and Governing Body are very keen to maintain the current very high standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1, and when pupils leave school at the age of nine, this is not at the expense of other subjects. The school recognises the needs of individual pupils, and is highly committed to ensuring that pupils enjoy their learning, and that they are happy in school. The school is very warm, welcoming and friendly, and there are justifiably very high levels of parental satisfaction. The school is giving very good value for money.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school has no significant weaknesses in any aspect of its work, but should continue to address the targets and priorities identified in the School Development Plan.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- The headteacher, Governing Body and staff should continue to implement the proposed developments outlined in the School Development Plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 15 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 11 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 4 | 7 | 4 | | | | |
| Percentage | 27 | 46 | 27 | | | | |

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 six percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR– Y4 |
|---|---------|--------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | N/A | 136 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | N/A | 1 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR– Y4 |
|---|---------|--------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | N/A | 0 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | N/A | 9 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0 |

| 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 | 2 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.2 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2002 | 15 | 15 | 30 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|--|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 14 | 13 | 14 |
| | Girls | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| | Total | 29 | 28 | 29 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 97 (100) | 93 (96) | 97 (100) |
| | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 14 | 12 |
| | Girls | 14 | 15 | 14 |
| | Total | 27 | 29 | 26 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 90 (100) | 97 (100) | 87 (100) |
| | National | 85 (85) | 89 (89) | 89 (89) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 131 | | |
| White – Irish | | | |
| White – any other White background | | | |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | | | |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 2 | | |
| Mixed – White and Asian | | | |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | | | |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | | | |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | | | |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | | | |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | | | |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | | | |
| Black or Black British – African | | | |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | | | |
| Chinese | 3 | | |
| Any other ethnic group | | | |
| No ethnic group recorded | | | |

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 7.4 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 21 |
| Average class size | 27 |

Education support staff: YR– Y4

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 7 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 90.5 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | N/A |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | N/A |
| Total number of education support staff | N/A |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | N/A |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | N/A |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001/2002 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 346956 |
| Total expenditure | 348,262 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2580 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 38319 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 37013 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 1.6 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 2 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 136 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 67 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 57 | 42 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 52 | 42 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 51 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 41 | 54 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| The teaching is good. | 64 | 34 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 38 | 52 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 64 | 32 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 72 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 36 | 59 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 64 | 34 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 59 | 37 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 72 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 |