

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FALKLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Newbury

LEA area: West Berkshire

Unique reference number: 109871

Headteacher: Mr Alan Askey

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham Sims

28899

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2002

Inspection number: 246945

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Judy Cuthbertson
Date of previous inspection:	9 <sup>th</sup> February 1998

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Falkland Primary School is situated on the southern outskirts of Newbury. It has 383 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11 and is much larger than most primary schools. The school is very popular and has been over-subscribed for a number of years. Most pupils live in privately owned houses located near to the school where socio-economic circumstances are well above the national average. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, and no pupils have English as an additional language. These figures are well below the national average. Very few pupils join or leave the school, other than at the usual times of joining or leaving. Fewer than two per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below average. Around 10 per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is below average. Eleven pupils receive help from outside specialists for a range of needs, including dyslexia, autism and moderate learning difficulties. Five pupils have a Statement of special educational needs. The school's admissions policy changed last year, and children now enter the school in the term in which they have their fifth birthday. Previously, children had had one term less in the Reception class. The attainment of children on entry to the school varies widely, often according to their pre-school experience, but the overall level of attainment is above average. Since the last inspection, the number on roll has increased by around 20 per cent, new classrooms and a computer suite have been added, and modifications are currently being made to the main building. Although there was a high turnover of staff in the year before the inspection, the school's staffing situation is stable. The inspection took place at the very beginning of the school year, when pupils had only had a week in which to settle into their new classes.

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

Falkland Primary School is a very good school, which is led and managed very well by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors. They have high expectations, provide very clear educational direction and are constantly seeking to improve the school. Their new initiatives are building successfully on the school's already well-established reputation for high academic standards. The good quality of the teaching and the way pupils apply themselves to their work result in good progress and in standards which are well above average by the time they leave the school. There is a positive ethos throughout the school, which provides very good value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and manages the school very well. He receives very good support from the governors, deputy headteacher and staff, all of whom are committed to making further improvements to an already very good school.
- The staff set high standards and pay careful attention to pupils' personal development, resulting in a very positive ethos throughout the school, characterised by hard work, very good behaviour and very good relationships.
- The quality of the teaching throughout the school is good. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve standards which are well above the national average.

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

- The ways in which staff help pupils to understand how to improve their work.
- The way the curriculum is organised to help pupils deepen their understanding and develop the ability to learn independently.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school.*

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

The improvement since the last inspection in February 1998 has been good. The school has not only maintained all of the positive features noted at that time, but has looked critically at the quality of education it provides, drawn up sensible development plans and made further improvements which have made it an even better school than it was. Although some work still remains to be done, the two key issues from the last inspection have been tackled effectively. Significant improvements have been made to the school's provision for information and communication technology, standards are rising, and staff are seeking ways of making greater use of new technology. Much thought has gone into improving the standard of pupils' writing. The teaching of writing is more focused, pupils have a better understanding of how to structure their writing, and teachers have a much clearer idea of how pupils are progressing. Standards in writing are above average, but pupils are frequently careless with their spelling and sentence construction, and there is still room for significant improvement in this respect. Other developments, identified and pursued by the school, have led to other improvements. The leadership rôles of staff, from senior teachers through to subject coordinators, have been developed. Responsibilities are delegated more effectively, and subject coordinators are taking a greater rôle in leading and developing their subjects. Significant improvements have been made to the school's accommodation through the construction of additional classrooms, the installation of a computer suite and

better facilities for children in the Reception. The school has developed very good systems for reviewing its own practice so that, despite a high turnover of staff since the last inspection, the good quality of the teaching has been maintained. The school's leaders and staff show a strong commitment to further improvement.

## 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			similar schools <sup>1</sup>	Key
	all schools				
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	A*	A	A	B	Very high A* Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E Very low E*
Mathematics	A	B	A	B	
Science	A	A	A	A	

The table of results indicates that the school has achieved consistently high standards over the last three years. In 2001, the results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average and, overall, were well above the average for similar schools. The results in 2002, for which national comparisons are not yet available, show further improvement, particularly in mathematics. The school's results were well above the national average at the time of the last inspection, but have continued to rise, at a similar rate to the national trend of improvement. The school consistently sets itself high targets and is generally successful in meeting them. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were above the national average in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading. When compared with similar schools, they were average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. The results for 2002 were similar to the previous year in reading and mathematics, but showed improvement in writing. Since the last inspection, results in reading and writing have improved much more than in other schools, but have not improved in mathematics.

Most pupils come from favoured and supportive home backgrounds. The overall level of attainment on entry is above average, but children display widely differing degrees of readiness for schooling. Most groups of entrants contain a number of children whose attainment is below average, as well as those who have had a significant amount of instruction in literacy and numeracy. By the end of their time in the Reception, which for some may be as little as one term, most children exceed the expectations for this stage of education and have received an effective preparation for their more formal schooling. The inspection findings show that pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading, on which the school places considerable emphasis and where standards are well above those normally found. Standards in mathematics and writing are also above average but, unlike reading and mathematics, few pupils achieve really high standards in writing. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 5, and they make particularly good progress in Year 6. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above those found in most schools. There are, however, some weaknesses in pupils' writing. Although many pupils write well, using different styles for a range of purposes, their writing is frequently careless and contains too many spelling and grammatical errors. Throughout the school, there is evidence of very good work in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education. Standards in information and communication technology are improving rapidly. Overall, pupils are achieving well and leave the school very well equipped for the next stage of their education.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show a mature and responsible attitude to their learning, particularly at the top end of the school. They work very hard in lessons, and are keen to make the most of the many activities and opportunities the school offers them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are aware of the high standards of behaviour expected and do their best to live up to them, both within the classroom and around the school. They follow the school's rules and routines, and do as they are asked by staff without fuss. As a result, the school is an orderly and well-disciplined community, where learning is rarely interrupted by inappropriate behaviour.

<sup>1</sup> The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Year 6) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

Personal development and relationships	Pupils respond well to the school's provision for their personal development, but sometimes they lack the opportunity to be independent and creative in their learning. Relationships with adults and amongst pupils are very good. Most pupils are mature and confident in their dealings with others. They work and play well together, and show respect for adults.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance levels are well above the national average. They have risen over the last year, as most parents have responded positively to the school's requests not to take holidays during term-time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The combination of good teaching, the enthusiastic participation of all pupils, and well-disciplined classes, results in good learning and pupils whose standards of attainment improve at a faster rate than in most schools. The school monitors the quality of teaching through the observation of lessons and the moderation of pupils' work to ensure that pupils receive the best possible learning opportunities. Throughout the school, the pupils' ability to concentrate and work productively has a positive effect on their learning. The teachers plan their lessons carefully, cover all aspects of the curriculum thoroughly and, generally, cater well for pupils of all abilities. However, the length of some lessons and the nature of some tasks preclude pupils from deepening their understanding or gaining the fullest benefit from the topics covered. Nevertheless, the more able pupils achieve well. In the most recent national tests, well over half of the pupils exceeded the national expectations in English, mathematics and science. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good, with high quality input provided by the deputy headteacher in mathematics and by the special educational needs coordinator and teaching assistants in English. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. Plenty of opportunities are provided for pupils to consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills through work undertaken in other subjects, although not enough attention is given to helping pupils understand how they can improve the quality of their work, particularly their writing. The teaching of reading is given a high priority in Years 1 and 2, and voluntary helpers and teaching assistants play a significant rôle in helping pupils to develop good reading skills. The teaching in the Reception class provides an effective introduction to school, although the style of learning differs markedly from the more formal nurseries attended by some children, and some parents do not fully understand what the school is aiming to achieve by giving pupils greater independence and a more informal learning environment. Pupils' independent learning skills are developed well through homework challenges, but pupils could be given greater opportunities within the classroom to develop greater autonomy in their learning. The teaching of information and communication technology has improved markedly since the installation of a computer suite, although teachers could still make better use of new technology as a tool for learning in other subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school fulfils statutory requirements well and provides its pupils with a good range of opportunities to learn, both inside and outside the classroom, including visits to places of interest and residential experiences. There is a shared commitment to meeting the needs of individual pupils. Greater flexibility in the way the curriculum is organised could help pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding and to develop greater independence.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for the relatively small number of pupils with special educational needs is managed very well. Systems are efficient and effective and help pupils to make good progress throughout the school. Pupils could, however, be more involved in setting targets within their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. The staff provide very good rôle models, and they expect and achieve high standards of discipline. There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and pupils are taught to value the individual, whatever their racial or cultural background, and to take responsibility for each other.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff treat pupils with care and consideration. Pastoral policies and procedures are comprehensive, thoughtful and well implemented. The staff know their pupils well and keep careful track of their progress. Some health and safety matters have been referred to the governors for their consideration.





## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and manages the school very well. As a result, the school runs efficiently and effectively. The very good ethos within the school owes much to his leadership and the direction he gives to staff. He receives very good support from the deputy headteacher and subject coordinators, who have become much more effective in leading their subject areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their statutory obligations very well. They have a very good understanding of the school and share a common vision for its future development. They maintain a critical and careful overview of the finances and provide thoughtful input into strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher's own analysis of the school, the school's development plan and subject coordinators' termly reviews show that there is a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Very good systems have been established to ensure regular review and analysis of the quality of education the school provides.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its resources and manages its finances very well to provide for the needs of the school and its pupils. In seeking to provide best value, the school uses very good procedures to compare its performance with others, undertakes appropriate consultation before making major spending decisions, and then analyses carefully the results of these decisions. All staff are fully involved in deciding the priorities for school development, but the school could consult parents and pupils more widely.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They like the school and feel that their children are receiving a good education.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• They are comfortable approaching the school.</li> <li>• Standards of behaviour are good, and their children are becoming mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents are not happy with the provision for homework</li> <li>• Some are dissatisfied with the extra-curricular activities available</li> <li>• Some do not feel well informed about how their children are progressing.</li> </ul>
<p>[The views of parents are based on those expressed by the 19 parents who attended the parents' meeting and the 170 parents (40%) who returned the parents' questionnaire, some of whom added their own written comments]</p>	

Parents are very supportive of the school and the staff. Their positive views are well founded. The dissatisfaction of a small number of parents with homework and the information they receive on their children's progress is partly justified. The policy and arrangements for homework are unclear but, despite this, some of the homework given to pupils makes a very positive contribution to their academic progress and their development as independent learners. Annual reports do not make clear how well pupils are doing, nor what they need to do to improve, but there are good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers, both formally and informally. The inspection team finds no justification in parents' concerns with regard to extra-curricular activities. The school provides a very good range of activities, although their popularity means that not all pupils can participate in all of the activities of their choice.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**The headteacher provides very good leadership and manages the school very well. He receives very good support from the governors, deputy headteacher and staff, all of whom are committed to making further improvements to an already very good school.**

1. The pivotal aspect for the success of Falkland Primary School is the very good leadership provided by the headteacher, who has been at the helm for 16 years. He is a strong and well-respected leader who has a very clear vision for the school and the skills to motivate staff and pupils to work towards that vision. Staff and governors speak highly of the quality of his leadership, and the extremely positive response to the parents' questionnaire, with regard to the way the school is led and managed, also indicates that parents have a very high opinion of the headteacher's ability to lead and manage the school.
2. The headteacher's length of service has not lessened the desire to ensure that the school provides good quality education. He has maintained his impetus for improvement, and the school's leadership has become even more effective since the last inspection as he has sought to involve other staff more fully in leadership and management rôles. The positive ethos which pervades the school owes much to his calm and thoughtful style of leadership, the emphasis he gives to establishing good inter-personal relationships and the attention given to each individual, regardless of race, background or ability. The high academic standards achieved by the school come as a result of his good understanding of the curriculum and the needs of primary-aged pupils and his determination to provide high-quality education for them.
3. As well as providing very good leadership, the headteacher manages the school very well. The school runs efficiently and effectively because procedures are clear and understood well by all staff. Staff have clearly designated rôles and responsibilities, and careful thought has been given as to how best to employ the school's support staff to maximum effect. One member of the support team, for example, takes responsibility for the school library and provides technical support for information and communication technology. These rôles reduce the burden on other staff and help the school to run more effectively. With very good support from the governors, financial matters are managed very carefully. Under the headteacher's guidance, efficient and helpful administrative staff ensure that the day-to-day routines of the school run smoothly.
4. There is a very good working partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, who share a common vision and determination to move the school forward. The decision to release the deputy headteacher from classroom responsibilities has been sensible, as it enables her to have a greater involvement in the day-to-day management of the school, as well as allowing her to use her own very good teaching practice to provide intensive support for specific groups of pupils and to develop the teaching skills of other members of staff.
5. The governing body also plays a crucial rôle in the strategic management of the school. The governors fulfil their statutory obligations very well. They provide effective support for the headteacher and staff, as well as maintaining a critical overview of the way the school is run and monitoring the school's planned development. Good procedures ensure that governors are fully informed about what is happening. They monitor the work of the school carefully through regular committee meetings, by inviting the headteacher and subject coordinators to present reports and give presentations on specific aspects of the school, by analysing the school's test results, attending local and national initiatives, and by joining staff meetings and working groups. They visit the school regularly, carry out health and safety inspections and observe what happens in the classroom. As a result, the governing body is not only very well informed about what happens in school, but is well placed to provide critical and helpful input into the school's strategic planning and to help the staff work towards the school's main priorities for development.
6. The headteacher has, successfully, sought to develop the rôle of the subject coordinator, or subject leader, since the last inspection. Coordinators are now expected to complete a termly review of their subject, outlining the progress made with their subject development plan. These termly reviews link

in with the school's annual assessment cycle and the production of the school's annual and strategic management plans. As a result, coordinators now have a much clearer picture of what is happening within their subject areas, of the standards achieved by the pupils, and of aspects which need to be developed. In many subjects, such as English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, this greater involvement has resulted in initiatives which have led to improvements in the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by the pupils.

7. Under the headteacher's guidance, the school has become very good at evaluating what it does, and formulating and carrying out plans for improvement. The headteacher monitors the work of the school closely through a programme of formal observations, review meetings with subject coordinators, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, as well as his more informal day-to-day interactions with staff, parents, governors and pupils. Team leaders, coordinators and governors also have their formal agenda for monitoring their areas of responsibility. Through these various means, the staff gain a very clear picture of areas that need to be developed and, through the school's annual development plan, these are tied in to the government's and local authority's priorities to provide a clear focus for improvement. Formal procedures for monitoring and improving the performance of staff are linked in to the priorities outlined in the school's development plan and provide a further means of raising standards.
8. As a result of this very good leadership, the school is continually improving, and is able to meet new circumstances and adapt to the changing demands of governmental priorities and the needs of its pupils. In the last two years, effective changes have been made to the way the school is led and managed, resulting in a redefinition of the rôles of senior members of staff, greater involvement of subject coordinators and more critical self-evaluation of its own performance. The considerable development of the school's site to cater for an increasing number of pupils has been handled sensitively and with much thought and careful planning. As a result, the school has good teaching facilities, with the benefit of well-appointed areas for teaching music, information and communication technology and pupils with special educational needs. Refurbishment of the area used for teaching children in the Reception has resulted in a much more appropriate environment for the education of the school's youngest children. The school has developed good procedures for the induction of new staff so that, despite a high turnover of staff since the last inspection, the good quality of the teaching has been maintained. Since the last inspection, standards have risen throughout the school and improvements are being made in areas that had previously been identified as weaknesses, such as pupils' writing and information and communication technology. The school manages all of these changes without forsaking all of the other good features, which mark it out as a very effective school.

**The staff set high standards and pay careful attention to pupils' personal development, resulting in a very positive ethos throughout the school, characterised by hard work, very good behaviour and very good relationships.**

9. A very positive ethos pervades all areas of the school. Pupils and staff are very clear about what is expected of them; the staff set high standards and the pupils respond very well. The teachers' expectations are made clear through teaching in assemblies, religious education and personal, social and health education lessons, and staff are consistent in reinforcing these expectations. Positive attitudes to school are fostered from the school's initial contacts with parents and children, for example, through home-school visits and the caring manner in which children are received when they start school. The school's policies on all matters to do with pupils' welfare, health and safety are thought through carefully and then reinforced positively. For example, staff seek opportunities to praise pupils for what they have done well and recognise the contribution of all pupils, regardless of ability. Well-established routines give pupils the security of knowing what to expect on a day-to-day basis, whilst visits and visitors to the school and the school's involvement within the local community provide variety and interest and help pupils to cope with different circumstances. Participation in the school's extra-curricular activities and the encouragement to participate in clubs, societies and groups outside school offer an outlet for pupils to receive recognition for talents which are not necessarily developed through the normal school curriculum. The school's residential visits for older pupils have a particularly positive impact on their personal development.
10. Parents are very pleased with the attitudes and values which the school promotes. They give fulsome praise for the way staff treat and care for their children and know that they are welcome to

approach staff if they ever have any concerns regarding their children's education. The pupils themselves are very happy with their school. They enjoy coming to school each day and feel their teachers are friendly and helpful. They acknowledge that there are occasional instances of misbehaviour, but are quick to point out that these are short-lived and that the teachers will sort out any problems quickly and well. They are free, therefore, of any anxiety about bullying or repressive behaviour of any kind. All pupils, regardless of their background, are well integrated members of the school community. The school takes care to make pupils aware of, and respond positively to, those from different circumstances. Pupils raise funds for various charities, and pupils from two local special schools are included regularly in the school's activities. A parent of different ethnic background was particularly keen to point out how successfully the school fosters good racial relationships, and confirmation of her views was evident during the inspection in the daily interaction between staff and pupils.

11. The pupils have very positive attitudes towards work. They listen well when their teacher or other pupils are speaking, and are keen to answer questions and participate in discussions. In a good lesson in Year 1, for example, pupils sat on the carpet at the start of an information and communication technology lesson and listened quietly and attentively to the teacher's explanations, and many were eager to answer the teacher's questions. In most classes, pupils settle down very quickly to the work they have been given. In a good English lesson in Year 6, for example, silence reigned almost as soon as the pupils had started their tasks, as all were intent on completing their written assignments. Pupils' positive attitudes extend to the work which many undertake at home. Each year, as part of their topic work, the pupils are set a research challenge, which results in them submitting a written report with accompanying diagrams and illustrations. A number of examples were observed in which pupils had worked hard at their tasks and produced well-researched reports.
12. The standard of behaviour throughout the school is very good. The very good behaviour within every classroom has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The teachers are free to teach without having to spend time dealing with inappropriate behaviour, and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner and behave very well when gathered in large numbers. In an assembly for all of the pupils in Years 3 to 6, for example, the behaviour was impeccable as pupils entered the hall quietly and listened attentively to the headteacher. Pupils are polite and courteous in their dealings with adults and visitors to the school, and staff and parents commented on the good reputation the school has gained for pupils' behaviour when they are away from the school on residential visits or school trips.
13. The very good relationships which are in evidence throughout the school owe much to the commitment and care demonstrated by all of the adults working within the school, from teachers and support staff through to the office staff, site controller and lunchtime supervisory staff. The staff take an interest in the pupils' lives and interests outside school, which reinforces the care shown by staff within the classroom. Specific initiatives help foster good relationships between older and younger pupils. Pupils in Year 5, for example, read with children in the Reception and pupils in Year 1. As a result of the school's efforts, relationships between adults and pupils are very good. The pupils feel valued and have confidence in approaching the staff. They take part willingly in class discussions and are prepared to ask questions when they do not understand. The pupils also relate well to each other, and this also helps them to make progress in their work as they collaborate with others sitting at their table, work with a partner or listen to what other pupils have to say.
14. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the level of attendance is very good. Although the previous year's attendance level fell to below the national average, a drive to dissuade parents from taking holidays during term-time has moved the level back to well above the national average. Pupils are keen to come to school and their learning benefits from the very good level of attendance.

**The quality of the teaching throughout the school is good. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve standards which are well above the national average.**

15. Even though the inspection took place right at the start of the school year, when staff were still getting to know their new classes, well over half of the lessons observed during the short inspection were good and a number of lessons were very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The quality of work seen in pupils' books from the previous year indicates that teaching is of consistently

good quality during the year, as do the standards achieved by pupils in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. Although a few who attended the pre-inspection meeting for parents felt that there is some inconsistency in the quality of the teaching from one class to the next and that some of the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently, almost all of the parents who responded to the questionnaire stated that the quality of the teaching is good. Pupils find their teachers helpful and appreciate the way they help them to learn.

16. The very good leadership provided by the headteacher and other staff with responsibilities ensures that appropriate attention is given to monitoring the quality of the teaching and the standard of pupils' work, in order to identify areas for development and to maintain as high an overall standard of teaching as possible. Subject coordinators are providing increasingly good leadership and clearer guidance for other staff. Initiatives, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively and have had an impact on raising standards. The training provided for teachers in information and communication technology is allowing much more effective use of new technology. All of these factors make a positive contribution to the quality of the teaching and have an impact on the standards pupils achieve.
17. The school has maintained high academic standards since the last inspection. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have continued to improve and have remained consistently well above the national average. The results achieved in 2002 were the school's best ever. The pupils' work scrutinised during the inspection indicates that standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science, despite the fact that standards in writing lag behind those in reading and mathematics. The picture is also positive at the end of Year 2, where the results in 2001 were well above the national average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. The overall results in 2002 were slightly better than those achieved the previous year. Although the overall level of attainment is above average when children enter the Reception class, until recently most pupils have only had a short amount of time in the Reception, and a third have had no time in the Reception class before joining Year 1. Overall, therefore, it is clear that pupils are making good progress throughout the school and that they leave well equipped for the next stage of their education.
18. The teachers cater well for pupils at both ends of the learning spectrum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well organised. The special educational needs coordinator and assistants have a very clear understanding of pupils' needs. Good teamwork ensures that pupils' individual education plans are reviewed regularly and implemented within the classroom, as well as during the sessions in which pupils are withdrawn from their normal class for specialist tuition. Comprehensive records are kept for each pupil, so that teachers know what pupils' needs are and what work is appropriate for them. A measure of the school's success with these pupils is the fact that almost all of the pupils achieve the nationally expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6, which represents good, and in many cases very good, progress.
19. Higher-attaining pupils also make good progress and a substantial proportion exceed the standards expected for their age. In the 2002 national tests, a third of the pupils achieved Level 3<sup>2</sup> in mathematics and getting on for half achieved this level in reading. The results of the higher-attainers are even more impressive at the end of Year 6, where over half of the pupils achieved Level 5 in mathematics, almost two-thirds in English and over two-thirds in science. There is little significant variation in the results of boys and girls. The results highlight the very good progress made by some pupils in the junior part of the school, where pupils reap the benefit of the good start made in the infants and the positive attitudes which are instilled from an early age.
20. The teachers plan their lessons well, have high expectations of the pupils, adopt appropriate teaching methods and use resources well in order to motivate the pupils and help them to learn. In a good religious education lesson in Year 2, for example, much thought had been given as to how to help pupils to understand what it means to be an important person within the local community. Because examples were chosen well and related to the pupils' own experience, they understood the concepts being taught. The high standards expected of pupils' behaviour allow mature discussions to take place. In a good geography lesson in Year 4, for example, many pupils were able to

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2 The national expectation is for pupils to achieve Level 2 by the end of Year 2 and Level 4 by the end of Year 6.

contribute to the discussion enthusiastically, but in an orderly manner, thus broadening everybody's experience and understanding of the topic under discussion. Clear guidance is given to teaching assistants so that they can make effective contributions to the lesson. In a good information and communication technology lesson, for example, the teacher had written clear guidance notes for the two staff helpers, with different pictures of what would appear on the computer screen so that the helpers were well briefed and knew what to expect. The very best lessons are characterised by an extra degree of enthusiasm, plenty of variety and a fast pace. In a very good mathematics lesson for pupils with special educational needs in Year 5, for example, the teacher used a variety of different practical activities, conducted in a lively manner and at a brisk pace to maintain the pupils' interest and to develop their mathematical understanding.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The ways in which staff help pupils to understand how to improve their work.**

21. All of the staff are good at providing pupils with positive encouragement. For instance, most teachers endeavour to write an encouraging comment at the end of each piece of work that they mark. However, teachers are not as good at pointing out where pupils have made mistakes or indicating how they could improve their work. This lack of a rigorous and critical appraisal of pupils' work denies pupils the opportunity of reaching even higher standards, and is one of the reasons why the standard of pupils' writing lags behind the standards achieved in reading, mathematics and science. Most pupils are able to write fluently and, by the time they reach Year 6, they have a good understanding of different writing styles and use a good range of vocabulary. This is because teachers cover the English curriculum well, encourage pupils' reading and develop the range of pupils' vocabulary through discussions in class. A substantial amount of time is spent teaching the mechanics of grammar, punctuation and spelling during the literacy hour, but pupils are not good at putting these principles into practice. In addition, pupils are not particularly good at checking their writing carefully and critically in order to avoid careless errors. As a result, pupils' writing, which in many respects is good, is frequently spoilt by inaccurate spelling (for example, a pupil in Year 3 includes the words 'nise', 'cind' and 'cood' when writing for religious education), or incorrect grammar or punctuation (for example, a pupil in Year 5 writes, 'Lots of sailors died, of starvation, disease or the may of been drowned.').
22. Teachers frequently correct errors when working with an individual pupil or with a group of pupils during the course of a lesson or, as a result of their observations when checking pupils' work around the class, they will draw the attention of the class to common mistakes or use the last part of the lesson to draw conclusions. In a good English lesson in Year 6, for example, the teacher intervened part way through the lesson to draw pupils' attention to a point she had noticed a number of pupils writing incorrectly. However, the same rigour is not applied when marking pupils' work, and few teachers expect pupils to revisit the work which has been corrected in order to learn from their mistakes or find ways of improving. In some classes, the teachers are diligent in their marking and write correct answers in for the pupils, but rarely are pupils asked to go back and correct their own work, re-think their conclusions or find better ways of expressing their answers, and there is little evidence of the pupils taking active note of such corrections. In some classes, the marking consists only of ticks, even when a sentence contains spelling or grammatical mistakes, and a positive comment at the bottom which acknowledges the effort made by the pupil, but does little to help them understand what was particularly good about the piece of work or what could be improved. Even less attention is paid to pupils' writing which is produced in the context of subjects other than English. Spelling errors are rarely corrected, for example, when pupils write up an investigation in science, with the result that pupils are unaware of the mistakes they are making and incorrect spellings become ingrained.
23. The school has developed some good procedures for assessing the standards pupils achieve in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and teachers are developing a much more accurate perception of what pupils need to do in order to achieve a higher level. Staff are starting to use these assessments to devise individual targets for pupils, but the practice has yet to become fully embedded in daily practice so that pupils have a really clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. Good individual education plans are drawn up for pupils with special educational needs, and pupils' views are sought when drawing up these plans. However, although teachers are

aware of pupils' individual targets, these are not shared fully with the pupils so that they are aware of the next steps they need to take.

24. The school's provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection and staff are seeking ways of using new technology to help pupils' learning in all subjects of the curriculum. However, teachers do not yet exploit the use of new technology enough to help pupils improve the quality of their work. There are, for example, few instances of pupils using a word processor to produce first drafts of their writing, with time then taken for teacher and pupil to consider how the work could be improved and to produce a final draft. Indeed, in a number of pieces of work produced on computer, the finished product still contained mistakes which could quickly and easily have been corrected to produce a much better final result.
25. Most parents generally feel they are kept well informed about how well their children are doing, although a sizeable minority would like to be better informed. The written annual reports meet statutory requirements, but do not give parents sufficiently clear indication as to how well their children are doing in relation to the expectations for their age or of the progress that has been made during the year. These reports could usefully contain more information about pupils' progress and more specific targets so that both parents and children have a greater understanding of what and how aspects of the pupils' work could be improved.
26. A number of parents commented adversely about the school's practice of setting homework challenges, assignments which pupils have to research and write about independently over a period of a few weeks. The inspection team felt that these homework challenges can be very beneficial to the pupils and contribute significantly to their ability to learn how to work independently. Pupils could, however, benefit much more from these assignments if teachers provided greater feedback on the finished product. Most of the finished pieces of work receive a congratulatory comment from the teacher, but rarely any comment which shows pupils which aspects of the project have been done particularly well and which could be improved. Pupils are not told at the outset what criteria will be used in order to judge the quality of their finished project, and so pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of how their project will be assessed.

**The way the curriculum is organised to help pupils deepen their understanding and develop the ability to learn independently.**

27. Overall, the school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. The formal curriculum is enriched through a wide range of visitors to the school, visits to places of interest, and residential experiences for older pupils. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available, with opportunities for musical, sporting and other enrichment. Occasional weeks with a special focus, such as an arts week with an artist in residence, visits to a synagogue and a Hindu monastery, and links with a school in Nepal provide cultural enrichment. The school's planning for the statutory National Curriculum enables pupils to achieve high overall standards but, at times, the way the curriculum is organised prevents pupils from gaining a deeper understanding of the topics covered or inhibits their ability to develop greater independent learning skills.
28. The school is about to embark on a review of its timetable and the way the curriculum is organised in the light of guidance which has recently been published. Very little time is allocated to history and geography in the infants and little to physical education in Year 2. There are also imbalances in the time allocated to subjects in the juniors. Each class has a fairly rigidly structured timetable, which suits some subjects and topics, which need to be taught on a weekly basis, well, but does not provide sufficient flexibility for subjects which could benefit from a shorter, but more concentrated, period of teaching, such as a project in design and technology or a major cross-curricular topic.
29. Some of the timetabled lessons are too long for pupils to sustain their concentration and some are not long enough to develop pieces of work in depth. In the infant classes, the mid-morning session is very long, especially when devoted entirely to teaching mathematics. In some of the lessons observed, pupils' group activities expanded to fill the time available, whereas a shorter session would enable pupils to learn just as much, and would leave time for other things. A similar phenomenon occurs in some of the junior classes, especially when a whole afternoon is devoted to one subject, such as science, and the interest of both teacher and pupils flags towards the end of the session. In contrast, some of the shorter teaching sessions do not always allow work to be



developed in any depth, as pupils start to become interested and involved in a piece of work, when it is time to pack up and divert the attention to something else. Some teachers have a fixed notion of how long a particular part of a lesson should last. During the inspection, a number of instances were observed when it was clear that the pupils had understood the teacher's introduction and were ready to move on, but the teacher continued to deal with the same matter until the next part of the lesson was scheduled to start. Rather than reinforcing what was being taught, further repetition caused some pupils to become restless, as they wanted to move on to new things.

30. Whilst pupils are given plenty of scope to develop their talents and abilities to learn independently in some of the homework challenges they are given, similar opportunities are lacking in some classes, where the work is heavily directed by the teacher and pupils have little opportunity to exercise their individual discretion. Science investigations, for example, are conducted in a pre-determined manner, and rarely are pupils given the opportunity to devise and carry out their own investigations. In Year 6, the teachers successfully linked the development of information technology skills with history, as pupils were given the task of developing a multimedia presentation on the Second World War. However, the scope for pupils to use their imagination and to vary the format and structure of their presentation was limited because the overall format had been pre-determined by the teachers. In a few lessons, the teacher elicited pupils' ideas about how to tackle a problem, but gave no opportunity for pupils to try these out as the chosen method was that originally planned by the teacher. Many pupils have computers at home and show an eagerness to experiment with different ways of presenting their work or carrying out research. Apart from their homework challenges there is, as yet, little scope for pupils to experiment with the use of new technology to assist their learning in other subjects.

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

31. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

- i. Help pupils to gain a better understanding of how they can improve their work, by:
- being more rigorous in the way they mark pupils' work and ensuring that pupils learn from their mistakes;
  - pointing out ways in which pupils can improve the quality of their writing, not only in their English work, but also in written work produced for subjects other than English;
  - helping pupils, especially those with special educational needs, to become more involved in the setting and realisation of short-term, achievable targets;
  - making greater use of information and communication technology as a tool for reviewing, evaluating and modifying their work;
  - providing clearer communication in the annual reports to parents on the progress pupils have made and the steps they need to take in order to improve;
  - providing pupils with clearer feedback on their homework challenges.

*[Paragraphs: 21 – 26]*

- ii. Seek more flexible ways of organising the curriculum\* in order to help pupils deepen their understanding and develop more effectively as independent learners by:
- reviewing the way the curriculum is organised and the amount of time allocated to each subject;
  - encouraging teachers to adopt a less rigid timetable and giving them the flexibility to shorten or lengthen lessons as needs require;
  - providing greater opportunity for pupils to devise and carry out their own investigative work in science;

- providing more open-ended tasks in other subjects which help pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and develop greater independence
- encouraging pupils to make greater use of information and communication technology to support their learning in all subjects.

*[Paragraphs: 27 – 30]*

\* These issues have already been identified as priorities in the school's development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

26

Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

20

[In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	12	11	0	0	0
Percentage	0	12	46	42	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 three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	–	383
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	–	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	–	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	–	26

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance\*

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.4

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year (2001/02)

### 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
	2001	32	23	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	28	32
	Girls	23	23	23
	Total	48	51	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (82)	93 (75)	100 (84)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	32	29
	Girls	23	23	22
	Total	49	55	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (82)	100 (84)	93 (84)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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	27	33	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	24	27
	Girls	32	26	32
	Total	55	50	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (84)	83 (79)	98 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	25	27
	Girls	30	28	31
	Total	53	53	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (84)	88 (77)	97 (89)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
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
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

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

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
348	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0

*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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9
Average class size	29.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	249

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	762,138
Total expenditure	749,056
Expenditure per pupil	1,809
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,230
Balance carried forward to next year	44,312

### **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	7

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	422
Number of questionnaires returned	170
Percentage of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	34	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	44	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	40	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	49	18	4	2
The teaching is good.	53	45	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	54	14	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	29	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	39	2	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	38	54	7	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	79	20	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	38	1	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	36	14	2	10