

INSPECTION REPORT

DANESFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Medmenham, Marlow

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110277

Headteacher: Mr D C Lewis

Reporting inspector: Dennis Maxwell
8798

Dates of inspection: 25th - 26th November 2002

Inspection number: 246976

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Watsham
Date of previous inspection:	12 January 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Danesfield Primary is a Foundation school for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. It is larger than other primary schools, with 387 pupils on roll. It is situated on the edge of Medmenham, near Marlow, and serves the local and wider community, including the nearby RAF married quarters. It is a popular school and around one half of the pupils come from outside the immediate area through parental choice. The socio-economic circumstances of the community serving the school are more favourable than those found nationally. The children's attainment on entry to the school is above average. The school does not serve school dinners and no pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Very few pupils come from ethnic minorities. Around 12 per cent of pupils enter or leave other than at the usual time, which is above average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well below the national average, with most of them having either specific learning or communication needs. Two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is below average. The school aims are driven by the principles of achievement, respect and care. The school gained an Investors in People award in 2000, and School Achievement Awards in 2001 and 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very successful and popular school that provides a very good standard of education for the pupils. Good teaching throughout the school enables pupils to make good progress so that they attain standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and science. There is a strong focus on basic skills. Interesting tasks that include all pupils provide good learning opportunities, although there are a few areas where current good practice and approach could usefully be shared. There is a good focus on pupils' personal as well as academic development. The staff and governing body have produced a very clear vision statement expressing the school's purpose as a basis for decisions and an improved development plan. The headteacher and senior staff provide very good leadership and management that underpins the work of the school. The value for money is very good.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by Year 6.
- Pupils' attitudes and relationships are very good; their good behaviour is promoted by the emphasis on responsible and mature behaviour.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. A significant proportion of teaching is very good or excellent.
- The school provides a good, interesting selection of learning opportunities, including good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The care and welfare of pupils is good. Arrangements to assess children in the reception class are very good, and procedures to keep track of progress in English, mathematics and science are good.
- There is a good sense of community and the school has very good links with parents.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership, supported fully by the senior staff and governors.

What could be improved

- A few opportunities and approaches for improving pupils' learning are not fully consistent with the good practice already in the school.
- The design of the school development plan does not take sufficient account of the main aims set out in the statement for the vision and purpose of the school.

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 January 1998 and has made very good improvement overall since then. The key issues identified for attention during the last inspection have been addressed thoroughly. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is excellent and standards have improved in consequence. The quality of teaching and subject planning has improved and has a good impact on learning and standards. The school provides a balanced curriculum, with mostly challenging and relevant tasks linked to expected standards for the age. Assessment procedures to track pupils' progress in the core subjects are good but are not fully worked out in the foundation subjects. The headteacher gives the school a very clear sense of direction. He has established good monitoring procedures of teaching and the curriculum linked to performance management.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	A*	A	A
mathematics	A*	A*	A	A
science	A*	A	A	A

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

Standards in the work seen in English, mathematics and science are well above average by Year 6. This maintains the standards in English noted at the time of the last inspection and is a good improvement in both mathematics and science. A significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching in Years 3 to 6 has a strong impact on standards. This is combined with high expectations of the pupils, purposeful tasks and good arrangements to group pupils by their prior attainment, so that pupils achieve better than is usually expected. The higher attaining pupils produce work of high quality, demonstrating their understanding and skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets. Standards of literacy and numeracy are well above average and pupils apply these skills confidently in other subjects, for example during science experiments. Pupils demonstrate mostly good ICT skills during lessons in the computer suites but there is scope for extending the range of applications in other subjects.

The table above shows that standards in English, mathematics and science were well above both the national and similar schools averages in 2002. Pupils on average attain standards that are around one year beyond those expected by the end of Year 6. The category A* shows standards that were in the highest five per cent nationally. The trend in standards is in line with the nationally improving trend. The proportion of pupils reaching a standard that was better than expected in English was very high, and in mathematics and science was well above average, showing the impact of teaching on high standards. The school exceeded its targets in English and mathematics in 2002 and is on course to meet the suitably challenging targets for 2003. Standards by Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national average and above the average for similar schools in 2002.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good and a strength of the school. The pupils' interest, perseverance and involvement in activities contributes well to the quality of their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school's consistently high expectations for considerate behaviour helps pupils to think about and achieve good personal discipline. There were no exclusions during the previous school year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good through the school. As pupils leave or join the school children adjust well to form new friendships. Their good personal development has a positive impact on progress and learning.
Attendance	Children want to be at school with their friends and to learn, so that attendance is very good and pupils are punctual. There are very good procedures to support regular attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 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 quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. A significant proportion of teaching is very good or excellent. All the lessons observed were at least satisfactory, indicating a good improvement since the last inspection. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good. Pupils' work indicates a firm emphasis on number, although there are very few examples of challenging mathematical investigations. The teaching of ICT is mostly good, making good use of the facilities of the ICT suites such as demonstration using the interactive screens. This promotes good learning and is an improvement in teachers' confidence and subject knowledge since the last inspection. The teachers establish high expectations, with tasks that usually provide well for all groups of pupils. In a science lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils were challenged to set up their own investigations about dissolving sugar. Most lessons provide good learning experiences, but a few do not promote independent learning skills sufficiently. Teachers plan carefully but seldom include a note of the teaching and learning approach to be used. Classroom teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs, through sensitive and thoughtful support.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Teachers follow well-structured programmes of study in Years 1 to 6 that provide a good foundation for learning with pupils' needs in mind. In the reception classes literacy and numeracy have a strong emphasis, allowing less time for other areas of learning in the reception class. The school's planned curriculum meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive good support through the co-ordinator's effective management. Education plans have clear targets which inform planning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils receive appropriate support if required so that they make the expected progress and take a full part in lessons. Provision is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The good provision encourages pupils to consider others. Staff promote moral and social understanding well through their daily contacts with pupils. There are a few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, and opportunities to prepare pupils for life in today's diverse cultural society, in line with the school's good action to prevent racism.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All adults demonstrate a high level of care for the children. Procedures for child protection and for their health and safety are good. There are good procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and to promote good behaviour. The headteacher applies very good procedures on the few occasions when his intervention is needed. Assessment is very good in the reception classes; good in the core subjects; and developing but not consistent in other subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has very effective links with parents. The parents appreciate the good, open relationship with the school. They find it easy to discuss a problem.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy provide very good leadership and management so that the school has a strong sense of purpose and direction. The senior staff fulfil their responsibilities very well. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Decisions are based on very clear principles designed to promote high standards. The improvement plan sets out clear subject priorities but the structure does not fully reflect the aims and vision statement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have good arrangements to visit the school; they fulfil their statutory duties well. They work productively with the headteacher to provide good direction. They have made significant improvements to the building, facilities and grounds and are alert to any concerns expressed by parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has a thorough understanding of strengths and weaknesses gained through a good combination of formal observations and evaluation by informal class visits. Procedures for setting clear expectations and accountability for all staff are effective. There are good procedures to keep track of how well the school is doing. Governors have good arrangements to evaluate how well their decisions are helping to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school deploys the staff well to promote high standards. Specific grants are used well for their intended purposes. The accumulated funds from previous years were spent for carefully planned improvements to ICT provision. The school has a very low amount of funds to carry forward to next year. The level of staffing is good. The accommodation is satisfactory, although several classes do not have water and sinks. The quality and range of learning resources is good. Most classrooms value and display children's work, although this is not consistent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and behaviour is good. • The school helps their children to grow up. • They find teaching is good, so children work hard and make good progress. • They feel comfortable about mentioning a problem. • They think leadership and management is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several parents do not think children receive the right amount of homework or that they are well-informed about how their children are getting on. • Several parents do not feel the school works closely with them. • Many parents do not think the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views. The amount of homework given is usually appropriate for the age but is not always set consistently. There are good opportunities overall for parents to be informed about their child's progress through annual reports and formal occasions as well as informal contact after school. The school offers a similar number of activities outside lessons to other schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by Year 6.

1. Standards in the work seen in English, mathematics and science by Year 6 are well above average. These very good standards are the result of effective teaching, with a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching through the school, so that pupils achieve well. Teachers give a strong emphasis to understanding and interpreting text, to help pupils gain a sense of how language conveys meaning and character. The approach to English and literacy recommended by national guidance are followed well but the teachers also bring their own interests and enthusiasm to make the text come alive. In an excellent lesson with clear links to history in Year 6 the teacher's skilful use of questions brought out the meaning of words such as 'uninhibited' and 'deceptive' from the poem 'The Evacuee'. At the same time she ensured that English grammar and parts of speech were highlighted, such as adjective and metaphor, to extend and reinforce pupils' learning. The lesson continued with a well-chosen task designed to encourage pupils' expressive language. She used the good strategy of having pupils work in groups of four to stimulate ideas so that they produced expressions such as 'Hullabaloo of children boarding' and 'Small suitcases bobbing'. The pupils showed high standards from the impact of the excellent teaching.

2. The very good expertise of a teacher in a Year 6 mathematics lesson provided good challenge on the topic of data handling, using pie charts. Pupils understood the difference between discrete and continuous data, and had very good mental calculation skills as they related fraction, decimal number and percentage values. The highest attaining pupils showed they had very clear understanding of tabular data on favourite colours of boys and girls. Pupils showed great interest and high levels of achievement by devising complex questions about the information, sustained and extended by very good teaching.

3. In a delightful yet challenging introduction to a science lesson on dissolving sugar in Year 6, the teacher took on the role of Professor Clueless as she showed how not to carry out an experiment while indicating complete confidence in the method. During the discussion that followed pupils were very keen to point out faults, such as that hot and cold water were used, that more hot water was used and that differing amounts of sugar were put in the flasks. Pupils demonstrated good basic understanding of the need to control the variables, and in the ensuing practical sessions most pupils devised carefully thought out procedures for their own investigations. The teacher's high expectations and opportunities for pupils to make their own decisions created very good opportunities for pupils to act as young scientists. Several groups worked out how to produce reliable results, varying the quantities for example and carefully keeping other factors constant, and recording their results in a table. Most pupils interpreted their results by noticing patterns - such as that the sugar took less time to dissolve in the hotter water - demonstrating well above average standards overall.

Pupils' attitudes, relationships and behaviour are strengths of the school, promoted by the emphasis on responsible and mature behaviour.

4. Pupils behave well and have very good attitudes to work and school. They are keen to come to school and expect lessons to be interesting and challenging. Very young children who have only attended school for a few weeks quickly gain confidence and take part fully in the activities and school life. The pupils are polite and considerate to each other, their teachers and learning support assistants. During several lesson the teachers arrange for pupils to work together to promote both learning and social development. This was noted, for

example, during an ICT lesson in Year 5, when those pupils who were recognised as likely to be more productive on their own were placed individually while others enjoyed the interactions with friends as they worked. Pupils are co-operative and support one another well and learning is enhanced.

5. Relationships are very good amongst pupils, including between boys and girls where during grouped work in a Year 6 science lesson they contributed equally to the design and measurements of their investigations. These relationships form an effective basis for teachers' management of pupils and to improve learning. No pupils have been excluded in recent years. Pupils develop a good understanding of other people and their motivation. Some pupils in Year 6, for example, used their capacities for imagination, empathy and understanding to discuss the feelings of children and parents when evacuated during WW2. Instances of oppressive behaviour are very rare and are dealt with very effectively by the headteacher, using excellent procedures.

6. Most pupils listen attentively and sustain concentration well during lessons, helped by the thoughtful interactions with the teachers. A few pupils demonstrate high levels of effort and intention to succeed. Pupils usually exhibit good self-control and are very interested in the lesson. They are keen to answer questions and are eager to learn. They enjoy their work and try hard to achieve well. They treat resources responsibly. Pupils' ideas or suggestions are listened to carefully by their peers and teachers. They are willing to offer ideas and risk being wrong because they understand that their efforts will be respected and valued. Pupils are so keen to participate in lessons that they often raise their hand before preparing an answer, sometimes even before the question has been asked. They also participate very keenly in the appropriate range of extra-curricular activities.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A significant proportion is very good or excellent.

7. There are many strengths to the quality of teaching throughout the school which promote a good quality of learning. The very good or excellent teaching has a major impact on standards so that pupils achieve better than would be expected. All the lessons observed were at least satisfactory, indicating a good improvement since the last inspection. Much teaching of English and mathematics is very good or excellent, with thorough attention to a wide range of skills for literacy and numeracy. Pupils' work indicates a firm emphasis on language and number. Pupils study a broad range of well-chosen texts that stimulate interest and promote a love of literature as well as providing a good basis for working on language structure. In mathematics a broad and substantial range of number work is provided, with a very few examples of challenging mathematical investigations. The teaching of science is good and usually provides pupils with a good basis of practical experience from which teachers help pupils to draw conclusions. The teaching of ICT is good, making good use of the excellent facilities of the ICT suites such as demonstration using the interactive screens. This promotes good learning and is a good improvement in teachers' confidence and subject knowledge since the last inspection.

8. In general, teachers establish high expectations, with interesting, relevant and well-chosen activities that usually provide good challenge for all groups of pupils. Many lessons are thoughtfully prepared and provide good learning experiences; and most lessons encourage pupils to gain or use independent learning skills. Teachers manage pupils well to hold their attention so that their gains in knowledge, skills and understanding are often good in lessons. Teachers plan carefully, with clear objectives, but seldom include a note of the teaching and learning approach to be used. Marking is regular, and praise is usually used sensibly. Some marking provides clear and focused guidance on how pupils may improve. A few teachers employ the good strategy selectively of confirming what a pupil has achieved

through the work. On most occasions teachers' daily assessments and classroom strategies help to challenge and meet pupils' learning needs, for example by preparing alternative work-sheets for pupils of differing prior attainment. Classroom teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs, through sensitive and thoughtful support. All teachers value pupils' ideas and answers so that there is usually a good sense of interest, purpose and effort.

9. There is a real depth to the quality and skills of teaching as demonstrated by several very good and excellent lessons. The range of very good teaching, more usually in English, mathematics and science, shows that curriculum planning, monitoring and management by subject leaders are effective. Teachers apply behaviour strategies well to hold pupils' attention and correct minor incidents. Many questions encourage pupils to use expressive language or to explain their ideas, while some questioning is expressed so as to get factual, correct answers. On-going assessment in class is good.

The school provides a worthwhile and interesting selection of learning opportunities, including good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

10. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. It meets all statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Religious education is taught to all classes according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school implements the nationally agreed frameworks for literacy and numeracy very well, which has a marked effect on pupils' learning. The school has adopted national guidance for other subjects to provide a good basis for planning. The teachers make a good choice of activities for the pupils so that they have good learning opportunities to gain new skills and experience.

11. The numeracy curriculum enables pupils generally to gain a secure grasp of the skills, and a good range of strategies for calculation is included through the years. Higher attaining pupils explain their methods clearly. There is a consistent emphasis on confident calculation through the school, and a few examples that challenge and develop pupils' understanding of the relationships to be found in broader investigations.

12. Appropriate policies are in place and have been agreed with governors, including for personal, social and health education and for sex and drug education. These are taught as part of a well-planned and effective programme for personal, social and health education throughout the school. There is also a good range of extra-curricular activities. Virtually all Year 6 pupils attend residential courses. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. There are good links with local pre-school playgroups and schools.

13. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they have full access to the curriculum. Pupils are well supported in class by teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils also receive additional help for reading, spelling, handwriting, and some for behavioural difficulties. All class teachers contribute and refer to pupils' individual education plans and pupils make good progress towards their agreed targets. Support is mainly in class although some pupils are withdrawn for additional literacy support. Teachers ensure that this does not impede progress in other subjects.

The care and welfare of pupils is a strength. Arrangements to assess children in the reception class are very good, and procedures to monitor pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science are good.

14. Teachers have good oversight of the personal development of pupils, for example through frequent informal discussions. A suitable range of records is kept so that teachers are able to provide sensible targets for pupils' personal development as well as for English and mathematics. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the core subjects are good and contribute to raising standards. The school tracks pupils' progress using the results from very good baseline assessment in the reception class through to regular testing in Years 1 to 6. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is good in English, mathematics and science although practice varies in the other subjects and is still developing. The learning intentions for lessons and the skills are identified in teachers' plans, and usually take account of pupils' differing learning needs.

15. The management of pupils' behaviour is good. Teachers make good use of other adults in lessons by ensuring that learning support assistance is well directed according to pupils' identified social or learning needs. Teachers are skilled in establishing good relationships with their pupils, which both promotes pupils' learning and contributes to their well-being. Their strategies for including all pupils within the activities are effective in ensuring that pupils are usually fully engaged and find their work interesting. Specific provision for pupils with special educational need is aimed at those who are identified as having problems, enabling these pupils to make good progress in relation to their targets.

There is a good sense of community and the school has very good links with parents.

16. The school has very effective links with the parents that are shown through the high levels of support for school initiatives and the agreement to most statements in the questionnaire. A very few parents do not feel they have a good partnership with the school. For the very great majority of parents they feel they have good relationships with the school. Parents express positive views about most aspects of what the school does. Most parents find that the school expects their children to work hard; they are satisfied by the progress their children make and the standards they achieve. They feel less well informed about their children's academic progress but are very confident that the school is approachable if they require any further information. Parents also have a high level of confidence in the standards of teaching and management at the school. They find that the school is effective at helping pupils to mature, so behaviour is good and nearly all report that their children enjoy school. Several parents question the amount of homework provided. A significant minority is less than satisfied with the activities provided outside lessons. Inspection findings support the parent's positive views of the school, but the amount and nature of work provided for pupils to do at home was found to be appropriate for the ages of these pupils, although not fully consistent. The school does offer a similar number of activities outside lessons compared with other schools.

17. Communication between parents and the school is good. There is a fortnightly newsletter as well as frequent letters sent home so that parents are kept well informed of any action they may need to take and of forthcoming events. Parents mostly find it straightforward to have a word with their child's class teacher at the end of school and there are good arrangements to make an appointment if parents wish. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well presented, providing the essential information clearly and giving a good feel of what the school is like. Annual reports meet statutory requirements although parents tend not to like the computer-derived text. Teachers make useful observations about pupils' strengths and weaknesses and about their personal development through the year. Carefully considered targets are set for all pupils. The school has surveyed the views of parents

through a good consultation process and taken action in the light of these findings.

18. The contribution by parents to their children's learning is very good, since parents provide support by listening to them read at home or discussing homework. Several parents come in to school to help as well as joining adults to help on school outings. On occasions parents provide helpful experiences for lessons. Parents also give a high level of support for the school through the Parents and Friends Association, which also provides significant funds to support school developments and resources.

The headteacher provides very good leadership, supported fully by the senior staff and governors.

19. The headteacher gives the school very clear direction through his positive style and commitment to improvement. The headteacher and senior management team together provide very good leadership and management based on clearly expressed educational principles formulated in the school's vision statement. This indicates good and continuing improvement since the last inspection. There is a strong team spirit and interdependence amongst the staff that enables them to identify and tackle positively areas for improvement. The headteacher uses his observations from good monitoring procedures to form good views of priorities, taking very good account that all members of staff are included and supported for well-managed change. Since the last inspection he has worked closely with the governing body to plan and implement improvements that are having a clear, positive impact on the quality of work and standards. For example, the high quality ICT suites provide excellent facilities that teachers are using to enhance pupils' learning.

20. The headteacher has very good arrangements for staff appraisal. The agreed targets are part of a wider system to observe lessons in order to improve them and to provide support where weaknesses are identified. The targets set clear expectations and accountability on all teachers and are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and hence on standards. The headteacher and senior staff have taken firm action in linking national guidance to medium-term planning to provide a helpful structure and progression in all subjects. They make formal lesson observations with good arrangements to prepare teachers as well as to follow this up with constructive comment. The effects of having clear targets against which their work is evaluated are to be seen in the strong leadership provided by the senior management team. They rightly give staff professional development a high priority in order to manage and implement change. The procedures and support arrangements put in place by the headteacher encourage the whole staff to work together and to share a clear vision for the school. All of these procedures are having a strong impact on learning.

21. The role of subject leaders has also strengthened through the governors providing funds for planned class release time, for example for monitoring, subject development or lesson observations. This is giving the teachers an improved view of their subject throughout the school, and of relevant strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders have planned opportunities to check colleagues planning, although similar procedures to ensure they are able to contribute their expertise at the time of planning are not in place. The subject leaders also check pupils' work.

22. A particularly influential and effective exercise was undertaken by the whole staff and governing body together, where over two days they debated and agreed a statement expressing the vision and purpose for the school. This expresses the clear educational priorities upon which decisions and action are to be based. The current school improvement

plan sets out priorities over a three-year period, based largely upon the action plans of subject leaders.

23. The governing body works closely with the headteacher. There are good arrangements to visit the school with links to a subject or class, so that relationships between members of the governing body and the teachers are productive. This provides useful information about the quality of provision, current problems and a shared view of need so that governors provide very good direction for school developments. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and have a strong sense of commitment to the school. They have a very clear view of educational priorities that are supported very well through their financial planning, and by the expertise of the school administrative staff.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

A few opportunities and approaches for improving pupils' learning are not fully consistent with the good practice already in the school.

24. There is evidence of much good practice in the approaches to teaching and learning, but there are aspects which are not fully consistent or developed through the school. By putting these together under this heading it indicates features in common. The planning seen during the inspection was clearly set out, with learning objectives and tasks. However, teachers make little reference to the teaching methods or the intended approach to learning.

25. Within the planning, teachers do not usually identify useful links with literacy or numeracy for other subjects, although these skills are often present in practice. There is a tendency for the introductory session to be long, which allows less time for pupils to work in groups or independently.

26. The teachers usually make good use of the facilities in the excellent ICT suites, for example by giving demonstrations using the interactive white board or the tutor control. These promote good discussion and enable the pupils to observe the commands required. At present useful links and applications of ICT within lessons for other subjects are not often planned so that this aspect is under-developed. The present arrangement whereby classrooms do not have a computer is not encouraging teachers to continue tasks outside the ICT suite.

27. There are good occasions when pupils are given choice in the tasks, for example in posing their own questions in science; or in their ICT designs using images from Picasso; or in their phrasing for poetry. However, on a few occasions insufficient responsibility is placed on pupils to make decisions for their learning. At present there are few opportunities for pupils to research their own questions or problems, for example in pursuing challenging mathematical investigations, the experience of which leads directly into the demands of GCSE coursework. The development of problem-solving, research and independent skills, including for the creative arts, is currently not a strong feature.

28. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is carefully planned with an emphasis on developing the children's language and literacy skills, and their mathematical understanding and numeracy skills. This emphasis, for children in their first weeks at the school, tends to narrow their experiences in the other areas of their learning, for example for knowledge and understanding of the world, or creative development. The time-table for the reception classes is set out according to subject headings suited to Years 1 - 2, and does not set the mornings out with reference to the areas of learning set out in national guidance for reception classes. As a result, opportunities to extend pupils' experience in these areas are limited, as are opportunities to keep track of pupils' progress in them.

29. The school's assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science provide a good basis for forward planning. Assessment procedures in the other subjects are at varying stages of development. There is not yet a formal whole-school approach in these subjects to track pupils' progress securely and provide useful information for further teaching. The process of using assessment information and thereby adapting planning to match pupils' prior attainment remains an area for further development.

The design of the school development plan does not take sufficient account of the main aims set out in the statement for the vision and purpose of the school.

30. The school arranged for the staff and governors to meet together over two days to discuss the over-arching purpose of the school. This was a highly productive exercise. They produced a very-well formulated statement for the school's vision, with clear educational qualities to underpin their decisions and work. This is evident in the life of the school and in the purposeful ethos. The school development plan in its present form, however, does not take full account of the thinking of the statement. The headings are not clearly linked to the principles within the statement and it is not set out in a way that illustrates sufficiently clearly how identified priorities and targets relate to these principles.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Review and improve the opportunities and approaches for pupils' learning so that they are consistent and build on the good practice already in the school, by:
 - Developing a wide range of basic learning skills, including for the creative arts.
 - Applying literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across subjects, for example, writing about mathematics.
 - Negotiating with pupils about their learning.
 - Ensuring that creative links are made between subjects.
 - Supporting staff in the reception class in reviewing the curriculum.
 - Formulating opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their learning.
 - Improving the quality of assessment information and matching tasks to pupils' prior attainment.
 - Extending the opportunities for independent learning, for example in research.
 - Listing the intended approach to learning within lesson planning.
 - Developing pupils' problem-solving skills; and providing challenging investigations.(Paragraphs: 24-29)

- (2) Improve the design of the school development plan, taking further account of the principles expressed in the school's statement of its vision and purpose, by:
 - Preparing a simple structure for the major aspects of the school's life and work, and cross-referencing these to the principles contained in the statement.
 - Setting out the principles and relating them to how they support standards.
 - Evaluating improvements by including relevant references to the principles within the success criteria for targets of the development plan.(Paragraph: 30)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	6	13	3	0	0	0
Percentage	12	24	52	12	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	387
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	54

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	26	29	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	25
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	53	53	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	96 (98)	98 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	26
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	53	54	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	98 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	36	19	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	31	31
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	50	50	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (96)	91 (91)	91 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	31	33
	Girls	19	18	19
	Total	53	49	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (94)	89 (87)	96 (96)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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	278	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	50	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	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)	16.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	27.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	183.35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	876 752
Total expenditure	875 502
Expenditure per pupil	2 216
Balance brought forward from previous year	(974)
Balance carried forward to next year	276

Figures in parentheses indicate negative values

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

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	387
Number of questionnaires returned	156

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	35	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	55	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	50	1	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	53	14	1	1
The teaching is good.	56	42	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	51	15	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	43	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	44	19	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	36	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	41	3	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	44	20	4	5