

INSPECTION REPORT

BRASSINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brassington, Matlock

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112515

Headteacher: Mr C. Perkins

Reporting inspector: Mr G. D. Timms
21038

Dates of inspection: 11 – 12 November 2002

Inspection number:

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
School address:	School Hill Brassington Nr Matlock Derbyshire
Postcode:	DE4 4HB
Telephone number:	01629 540212
E-mail address:	cperkins@brassington.biblio.net
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D. Brown
Date of previous inspection:	10 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
21038	Mr G. D. Timms	Registered inspector
9446	Mrs H. Griffiths	Lay inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Sandfield Educational Consultants Ltd

16 Wychwood Drive
Trowell
Nottingham
NG9 3RB

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brassington Primary is a small rural school for four to eleven year olds serving the village and some other nearby settlements. The school has 45 boys and girls on roll; three children are in the reception year. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups and none have English as an additional language. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although there is a range of ability and different year groups can vary a good deal due to the small numbers of pupils. Children have differing pre-school experiences and some attend playgroups or nurseries but many do not. Six pupils (13 per cent) are on the special educational needs register, which is below the national average; none has a statement of special educational need. The main needs identified are learning difficulties. The pupils come from a range of social backgrounds but largely from very supportive homes. A below average proportion of the pupils (nine per cent) are entitled to free school meals.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school, which provides a very effective education for its pupils. The headteacher and key staff provide excellent leadership and management, the quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Standards are high and the pupils make very good progress. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average overall.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent.
- Assessment, tracking and target setting systems are very effective.
- The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school.
- The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is very strong and the provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good.
- Provision for the creative arts is very good and pupils attain high standards.
- The parents' relationship with the school is very positive.

What could be improved

- Standards in spelling are not high enough and pupils' phonic skills need to be improved.
- The accommodation causes inefficiency.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in November 1997 there have been significant changes, including many staff changes. The level of improvement has been very good and standards have risen sharply, especially since 1999. The key issues raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed. The leadership and management have improved and the new headteacher has a very clear vision for the school, which is shared with governors, parents and pupils. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now much better, as are the links with the parents. The National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been successfully introduced and the Foundation Stage curriculum for pupils in the reception year is now effectively planned to ensure they receive appropriate provision for their ages. The curriculum, teaching and resourcing of information and communication technology (ICT) has also improved a great deal since the last inspection. The school has a very good capacity to improve further in the future.

STANDARDS

Due to the very small numbers in each year group, standards and progress can vary widely. Overall, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. When they begin Year 1, the majority have achieved the expected early learning goals and in many cases, reception children are already working within the National Curriculum levels. The national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 showed that in reading, writing and mathematics standards were well above average. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. The evidence of the inspection is that these high standards are being maintained.

The national test results for Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. These results have continued the good improvements made in 2001 over previous years. When compared with schools with a similar intake, standards in English were above average and this is clearly a strength of the school. The pupils' imaginative and creative writing skills and language and vocabulary development are very good. Standards in science were average, while those in mathematics were below average. The lower result in mathematics was due to the weaknesses in this area of a very small proportion of the cohort. The evidence of the inspection is that standards in mathematics are higher than this result would appear to indicate. Standards in science and English are also above average.

The school's targets are based on the very good tracking systems that enable individual progress to be closely monitored. The targets set for 2002 were appropriate and were exceeded. The targets set for 2003 are more challenging but attainable given the pupils' present progress. Standards of work in art and design, music and dance are very high and support the imaginative writing skills developed in English. Standards in ICT are also high and the computers are used regularly and effectively through a range of subjects, especially in Years 5 and 6. Higher attaining pupils' achievement levels well above those expected due to the challenge they meet in much of the work provided for them. Those pupils with special educational needs also achieve good standards compared to their prior attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn, interested in their work and demonstrate a high degree of concentration. They show pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are friendly and polite and their behaviour has a very positive impact on the standards achieved.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils demonstrate a high level of responsibility in their learning and are developing into mature and effective learners. Relationships between pupils, and between staff and pupils, are very strong.
Attendance	Below average during the last full year due to a very small number of pupils having extended absences.

The pupils are very enthusiastic about school. Some even state they 'don't like Fridays' because there is no school at the weekend. The excellent relationships support the high standards found and the pupils take their responsibilities seriously, showing a mature attitude towards all aspects of school life.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The teaching throughout the school is consistently very good. The teaching in English is very good, with a significant number of lessons that are excellent. Where the teaching is strongest, it is centred around developing pupils' knowledge of advanced descriptive writing and developing their vocabulary. Very good cross curricular links are made in the infant class where, for example, the text chosen by teachers is linked effectively to the present topic of *Night and Day*. The teaching in mathematics is equally very good and the use of ICT in teaching numeracy and data handling is very effective.

In both English and mathematics, teachers use the national strategies as a basis for their planning, but they do so flexibly and creatively to provide well for the mixed ages and abilities in each class. A major strength of the teaching is the relationships created between pupils and adults and this has improved sharply since the present headteacher took up the post. Teachers give pupils' independence and responsibility for their learning in a range of ways and the pupils respond by working with enthusiasm, interest and maturity. The teachers' assessments of their pupils are used well to track progress and plan future work. Individual targets are set and monitored and this is having a very real impact on standards. The teaching meets needs of all pupils well. For example, some pupils work with different year groups to support or enhance and enrich their learning at an appropriate level.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a very broad and balanced curriculum, but using time effectively to give an emphasis on the arts subjects. Extra-curricular activities are very good and include one off clubs for specific purposes, such as that set up to design and create a production of 'Twelfth Night'.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. All pupils are supported well on a day-to-day basis and teachers are very aware of individual pupils' needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school places a high priority on pupils' spiritual and cultural development through taking part in and appreciating a wide range of arts activities. The school has also focused on developing a successful programme for personal, social and health education, including citizenship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good, overall. The arrangements for assessing, recording, analysing and tracking pupils' progress are excellent, leading to the setting of very challenging but appropriate targets. Child protection procedures need to be strengthened.

The school places a high emphasis on the creative arts. The planning for dance, drama, music, art and writing is intended to broaden the curriculum offered to pupils, giving them the opportunity to use their very good basic skills. Each term one week is kept for arts based activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher has a very clear vision and this has resulted in the school being very clearly focused on both achieving high standards in the basic skills but also providing a range of activities designed to enrich and extend pupils' skills and talents.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provide staff with very good support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. Test results and other information is constantly monitored and acted upon to raise individual pupils' standards.

The strategic use of resources	Good. The limited resources available to the school are used appropriately to address identified priorities.
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The accommodation limits how well the school is able to provide for the pupils. There is insufficient space for working with groups or individuals, office space for administration and the headteacher, staffroom area for preparation work and a meeting room for discussions with parents and others. In addition, one classroom serves as hall, gymnasium and dining room and the preparations needed for this multipurpose role take up precious teaching time. The school has very good systems for ensuring best value in its work.

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 enjoy coming to school. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems and they feel the school works closely with them. • The school is well led and managed. • The teaching is good and the school expects their children to work hard and do their best. • They are kept well informed about how well their children are getting on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no areas of the school's work that a significant number of parents want to see improved, although a small minority would like more homework for their children.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. The homework provision is broadly typical for the Foundation Stage and infant children, and very good in the junior classes where it is largely based on the individual targets and pupils' specific needs, together with research work for the older pupils, based on their current topic.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are above average overall

1. The results of national tests vary from year to year due to the small number of pupils in each cohort. However, the overall picture is of standards in English, mathematics and science that are usually above, and often well above, average. When the children start in reception, the early assessment of their attainment indicates levels from below to above average. For example, the present small reception group are already attaining at an above average level, although last year's year group had more below average levels of attainment. The present group are articulate, lively learners and have made very good progress since starting school. They are likely to achieve the expected early learning goals by the time they start Year 1, and even exceed these in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
2. The national test results for Year 6 pupils in 2002 showed a continuing trend of improvement since the poor results attained prior to 2001. In English, standards were again well above average nationally and in mathematics and science they were above average. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds the results in mathematics were disappointing due to the attainment of a very small proportion of the pupils. This was also reflected in the results compared to the pupils' prior attainment due to children joining and leaving the school during the junior years. The evidence of the inspection supports the good levels of attainment shown in the tests.
3. Standards in ICT have improved and are now above those usually found in schools. The resources available for pupils have been extended and modernised and teachers have had training to develop their knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum. Parents have been kept fully informed about the changes, especially with regard to Internet access. In a very short space of time, pupils have become adept at preparing text over or merged with illustrations taken from websites. Older pupils create good slide presentations using the computers and their understanding is developed further by the routine and effective use of computers and projection equipment, especially by the headteacher. Resources from the Internet, such as very good pictures of volcanoes or images from space exploration, are all used to help develop pupils' imaginative vocabulary.
4. In mathematics, Year 1 and 2 pupils are able to order and count using ordinal numbers and the majority of the Year 2 pupils are familiar with the term. Very good questioning leads pupils to the idea of a queue at, for example, a supermarket checkout or a bus stop. Challenging homework is effectively linked to the class work by asking pupils to find other examples of ordinal numbers in the real world. In Years 3 and 4 pupils have a sound understanding of some basic fractions and of the term denominator. By Year 6, however, they can use tenths and hundredths accurately in calculations and are able to convert probability from 'out of ten' to tenths, to decimals, to percentages and to ratios. Older pupils create and interpret line graphs accurately, and very good use of ICT by the teacher helps create a learning ethos with pupils interested and involved.
5. One of the major strengths in standards is the quality of the imaginative and creative writing found in the school. The pupils' writing skills have improved since 2000, when this was an area identified as a weakness, and this has resulted from some flexibility in the use of the National

Literacy Strategy and more direct teaching of writing skills. For example, the teachers model writing very effectively and often make very good use of ICT to share their work with the class, and this helps improve the pupils' attitudes towards writing. In addition, the use of ideas from the whole class to create group writing of stories or poems also helps raise the profile of writing without putting too much of a focus on an individual's skills. This develops gradually until the older pupils are very comfortable writing and sharing their writing with others. An aspect of writing is introduced at the start of the week and this remains the focus throughout the week's work. For example, during the inspection the focus was on metaphor, similes and personification in Years 5 and 6, resulting in some very effective and imaginative factual writing about volcanoes. These writing tasks are organised and managed to enable teachers to focus on a particular individual or small group each day and this direct input results in the very good progress and high standards evident.

6. The scrutiny of pupils' writing shows that they use very mature language in, for example, creating an atmosphere of fear. This is supported by the use of very good role models. For example, writing is often based on very imaginative texts, such as excerpts from *The Hobbit*. When their work is finished, it is often imaginatively presented and neat. The marking of the work is very supportive, positive and thoughtful, making appropriate suggestions for improvement. Dialogue is well written and correctly punctuated by the higher attainers. Pupils write at length; one piece of writing, for example, ran to three chapters, although spelling skills are poorer than the imaginative use of adventurous words, especially among the less able.
7. One of the methods used to create some thoughtful imaginative and factual writing is the use of role-play or 'hot-seating', where one pupil takes on a role and others question them about their life. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 3 and 4, a Year 4 pupil became a character from the book being used as the text for the week and others demonstrated their good knowledge of the character through the questions they asked. In one excellent lesson merging imaginative and factual writing, Year 5 and 6 pupils were inspired by very good pictures of volcanoes, through very effective use of ICT, to produce descriptive writing using a range of metaphors, similes and personification. The task was also linked to pupils' individual targets in writing and reflected some very good modelling by the teacher. The quality of the writing often produced by pupils is emphasised by a number of pupils having recently had their writing published in an anthology of children's writing.

The leadership and management demonstrated by the headteacher and key staff are excellent

8. The headteacher and staff have worked very hard and very successfully to turn the school around after a period of decline. The headteacher has a very clear vision of the way the school needs to develop and provides excellent leadership and educational direction for its work. The governing body are very supportive of the work done by the headteacher and they are aware of the way the ethos of the school has changed, and the way that it has grown in popularity amongst the parents and local community.
9. The headteacher aims to monitor the teaching and learning through one formal observation of each teacher a term. These result in some good professional discussions about the teachers' work and the observations are appropriately linked to the performance management policy. In addition, samples of pupils' work are scrutinised to provide more information about how well they are achieving. The issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. In addition, discipline has improved, and the subject leadership is now much better, resulting in improved provision and raised standards.

10. The school development plan provides a very good foundation for the improvement work in the school. The small size of the school makes the prioritising of developments vital and the leadership is very clearly focused on raising standards as well as keeping a broad curriculum with its focus on the arts. All subject leaders create detailed action plans for their areas of responsibility. These are realistic and contain appropriate actions linked to the available funding.
11. The governing body has worked hard to address the issues raised at the last inspection, especially regarding their role in monitoring and promoting the curriculum and they now have a strong role in holding the school to account for its performance. The governors are very supportive of the school's focus on the creative aspects of the curriculum and they appreciate the intention not to create too narrow a curriculum while still achieving very good results in the core subjects. Governors are much more aware of how the school is performing and the headteacher shares data with them at an appropriate level of detail for them to be able to monitor the school's work very effectively. There is a good committee structure and the curriculum committee in particular has a strong monitoring role, through questioning in some depth the school's work and how well the pupils are doing. Governors do not have a regular programme of visits to the school. Members of the committee support staff through, for example, helping with the writing of policies. The governors are correctly involved in monitoring the school's budget and they are aware of the value for money they obtain through, for example, projects such as the part time Foundation Stage teacher and the improvements to the ICT provision. The governors have a very good four-year strategic plan. This covers the whole body and the work of committees and provides a useful focus for their work.
12. The governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have a good strategic overview of what the school needs to do to continue improving. For example, they are aware that the buildings make the management of the school very difficult with little space for administrative work, for the headteacher to have confidential discussions with parents or staff, or for teachers to have an appropriate area where they can work or relax. One member of the premises committee has undertaken a very good feasibility study to help inform the others of the likely needs and costs, financially and in time and effort, for the extension of the building.
13. Due to the small size of the school, the budget is very tight and the school has little flexibility in the amount of money it can use for new developments. The governing body and the headteacher work hard to ensure that the school provides best value in its work. Pupils and parents are consulted about aspects of the school's work. The assessment information enables the governing body to compare how well the school is doing with other schools locally and nationally. The school challenges itself to raise standards and is good at self-evaluation. The school makes very effective use of other grants available and this has a very positive impact on standards. For example, very efficient use is made of a teacher for the Foundation Stage, employed on a part time basis with other local small schools, with the intention of developing better provision for the youngest pupils.

The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school

14. The school has a very good team of teachers with a range of experience. In nearly two-thirds of the lessons observed the teaching was very good, while in just over a fifth it was excellent. Almost all of the rest was good. The high standards observed reflect the hard work that has

gone into the planning, delivery, assessing and resourcing of the curriculum that has taken place since the present headteacher took up the post.

15. Where classes are shared between more than one teacher, the staff work closely together, planning and delivering the curriculum, ensuring that the provision is consistent and that pupils benefit from having more than one teacher. They use their expertise well by, for example, teaching subjects they feel confident with. This happens, for example, in ICT when the Year 5 and 6 teacher also teaches skills to Years 3 and 4. The teachers' planning takes very good account of pupils' learning styles. For example, in many lessons the teachers identify activities that relate to pupils' visual, active or auditory learning; this is evident in the use of visual stimuli in writing lessons for Years 5 and 6. The school has also identified the fact that these methods support the boys' writing skills very effectively, whereas previously they achieved less well than the girls. This results in teachers being clear about the methods they are using and the learning they expect pupils to achieve. This information is shared with pupils through good learning objectives, making clear what they are expected to learn that lesson and often how it fits in to their rest of their work. These objectives are often returned to at the end of lessons so that pupils can assess how well they have learned. Teachers also work closely with the very good quality support staff who help the reception children and those with special educational needs. They share planning ideas and assessments made during lessons. This has a very positive impact on learning and is a very efficient way of using the available support staff.
16. Some of the strongest aspects of the teaching are the excellent relationships created between pupils and between pupils and teachers. This results in pupils being very willing to accept advice and to listen to teachers' suggestions. The older junior pupils have prompt sheets to remind them of advanced, descriptive writing techniques and these are very effectively used to keep all written work at a high level. In many lessons pupils of all ages are given time to reflect on their work and this creates a very effective learning ethos and willingness to self evaluate. This also results in pupils being willing to try out different techniques. In one lesson, for example, they began to use different parts of speech, such as adverbs or verbs, to begin a sentence, creating an attention-grabbing effect. In almost all lessons, the pace of the teaching is very good and the expectations are very high. Where the teaching was comparatively less successful, pupils had insufficient opportunities to develop their mathematical understanding using practical materials and some pupils' misconceptions were not entirely successfully addressed.
17. Teachers use imaginative ways to inspire their pupils. In particular, excellent use is made of ICT, especially in the Year 5 and 6 class, where the computers are easily available. In one lesson in Years 3 and 4 an excerpt from a film version of the text was used to help illustrate how a character was described and developed. In the mixed age classes, work is targeted at the abilities of pupils, rather than their ages, and this enables more able pupils to work with older ones, while those learning at a slower rate are able to do some of their work with younger pupils. This flexibility is a natural and accepted part of the daily routine in the school.
18. Lessons have a very good structure and almost all end with a good summary of the learning achieved, often through imaginative means such as 'hot-seating' characters from the text. This technique was used to particularly good effect in a history lesson in the infant class, when pupils had the opportunity to question a volunteer playing the role of Samuel Pepys, whose diaries had been a focus for their work. This followed up an earlier lesson when pupils' had performed role-play exercises to help create a picture of the period. These imaginative and

well-planned activities lead pupils to a much deeper understanding of the causes and reasons for the Fire of London, as their questions showed.

Assessment, tracking and target setting systems are very effective

19. The headteacher has devised a system of tracking individual pupil's progress that provides the school with very detailed and useful information about achievement. The data is kept on a self-devised spreadsheet with a complex but effective system for identifying individual pupils, how well they are achieving and what levels they are reaching. It enables the swift identification of underachievement and of pupils who are doing very well.
20. This data is used very effectively in planning future work and addressing areas where results indicate pupils' knowledge and understanding are less well developed. For example, this year the headteacher is tracking examples of pupils who are achieving less well than they should over time, with the intention of addressing the reasons for this. Staff are provided with the predictions of achievement for the pupils in their classes with the below average highlighted and twice a year assessments are done to track the progress being made. The governing body have opportunities to review the data, at an appropriate level, and this gives them a very good idea of how successful the school is. Assessment information is used very effectively in planning work in the infant class when, for example, during work on sequencing a story the Year 2 pupils had the additional tasks of identifying connectives.
21. The assessment information is also used to set targets for pupils. There is a high turnout at parents' evenings as these are based around the individual pupil targets and include good advice on how parents can help and support their children at home. The targets are regularly referred to during lessons and this constant focus, and the high profile the targets have in all aspects of the pupils' work, enables pupils to successfully address weaknesses and consolidate any improvements made. The homework set for pupils is often based on their targets, especially with regard to spelling and handwriting targets, with on-going research topics for the older pupils.
22. Pupils have useful record folders that contain their target information and records of completed targets, including what they have done at home as well as at school to address the targets. There is a termly summary sheet of National Curriculum levels, mathematics assessments from the commercial scheme used and a sample of writing that has been assessed and given an appropriate level. These folders are building into a very useful profile of pupils' achievement.

The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is very strong and the provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good.

23. The coordinator has worked hard over the last two years to design and implement a curriculum to develop pupils' personal, social and health education based on a commercial scheme that she has adapted. The focus on this area came about through the staff's reaction to children claiming that they had no friends and the recognition that this was an aspect of the school's provision that had been neglected in the past. In addition, the school had a negative ethos that staff were working hard to change, to make learning more exciting and interesting. A significant amount of teaching time is given to this subject each week, largely through circle time sessions but also through opportunities to discuss matters in other subjects, such as healthy food in science.

24. In one very good lesson in the infant class, a 'circle time' session was used to develop very good speaking and listening skills and to consolidate rules of discussion, such as only speaking one at a time and looking at the speaker when listening. They warm up by pulling faces to illustrate different feelings such as happiness or anger. This session gave pupils a good opportunity to share experiences about times when they have felt friendless, after input from the teachers using a puppet to introduce the theme. The lesson resulted in pupils feeling valued and developing their self-esteem and social skills to a high level.
25. In a Year 3 and 4 citizenship lesson, pupils discussed what makes a 'happy society' and the issue of bullying. Pupils clearly understood many of the issues and maturely listened and answered questions. Of particular note was how well the teacher involved all of the pupils and the tasks resulted in very good opportunities for pupils to work independently and to develop their own ideas. Throughout the school there is a very good focus on developing effective listening skills and an appreciation of how important these are in learning.
26. Pupils have personal development diary sheets within their profile folders. Part of this system includes a good response to bullying, enabling pupils to put their worries on paper in a confidential 'Help me now' box. A questionnaire completed by pupils helped the staff to target particular individuals who were perturbed by what were often very minor issues. Pupils are responsible for monitoring their own targets before they are reviewed with teachers. Visitors such as the police, fire safety officer and the local vicar have all helped develop the pupils' understanding of these aspects of the local community and citizenship.
27. A newly organised school council has been set up, with elected representatives from each class. They meet fortnightly with support from the personal, social and health education coordinator. This has already had considerable responsibility given to it after money was provided to purchase games apparatus and equipment for playtimes. These have proved popular and successful in improving the provision for outdoor play and pupils consulted a range of catalogues, as well as discussing ideas with their classes, before deciding on how best to spend the money. A further idea arising from the council was a 'buddy' bench where pupils could sit at playtimes if they were upset or lonely and needed a friend. They have also been responsible for drawing up a rota for the use of parts of the field or playground for football. A planned development for their work is to become a 'class ambassador' with the purpose of welcoming visitors and demonstrating good manners.
28. Further responsibility is given to pupils through a range of jobs and all pupils have such opportunities at some point. Classes have table monitors and register monitors. Other older pupils confidently use the compact disc player in assemblies and in dance clubs. Pupils sensibly and safely help prepare the Year 5 and 6 classroom for assemblies, lunchtimes and physical education.
29. One assembly each week is specifically given over to ensuring opportunities for awe and wonder. The school works hard to introduce pupils to faiths and cultures different to their own, partly through visits to the nearest Hindu and Sikh temples. In the next arts week, the theme is Africa and this is intended to develop pupils' understanding of the art, music and dance of very different cultures than their own. The pupils' moral development is enhanced through the clearly understood and agreed sanctions and rewards found in each class, such as house points, certificates and trophies, to which pupils respond very positively. Teachers' personal development records are monitored weekly and they feed into pupils' targets and the annual

reports to parents. They regularly raise money for charity appeals and show some understanding of the need for so doing.

30. The creation of a cave in the infant classroom has resulted in a very imaginative play area for the youngest children. As part of the topic on 'Night and Day', the cave is dark but has small lights to represent stars and when these were first lit they resulted in some genuine wonder from the children. Further thoughts about the stars were then encouraged through the use of music and a quiet time for reflection. Awe and wonder plays a large part in many lessons in the infant class. It was displayed when a volunteer took on the role of Pepys in a history lesson, and again in literacy when the character from the book wrote to the children to give them their task for the day, involving the use of a storyboard to sequence the events in the story.

Provision for the creative arts is very good and pupils attain high standards

31. The school's ethos gives a high priority to the creative arts through work in dance, drama, music, writing, art and design. The headteacher has a strong belief in ensuring that the curriculum is broadened and deepened through the arts and that this focus enables pupils to develop their basic skills in ways that encourage creativity and enrichment. This vision is shared with the staff, governing body and parents. Each term the school holds a creative arts week, enabling teachers to work on extended projects with the pupils, giving them the opportunity to take their learning further than the normal timetable allows. The standard of the twice-yearly production is praised highly by parents.
32. After consultation with pupils, the staff recognised the need to provide some interesting and exciting extra-curricular activities. As well as sport, extra-curricular activities focus on the arts. There are clubs for dance, music and art as well as activities set up for particular purposes. For example, last term a Shakespeare club was set up to create a very successful production of Twelfth Night. The school makes very good use of staff and parental expertise. For example, a parent who is a local artist helps with the art club while a teaching assistant runs the music club. Visiting experts in theatre and music have been used to, for example, give pupils opportunities to use instruments from other cultures than their own.
33. In an assembly during the inspection, the dance club performed a modern interpretation of the creation of the earth, moving very effectively to the chosen music to create a picture of earth, wind, water and fire. The pupils performed with clear enjoyment and a high level of skill. The work illustrated earlier creative poetry writing based on the same theme, and the excellent use of ICT enabled a video of one pupil reading her work to be projected onto the ceiling of the classroom.
34. In one music lesson, infant pupils sang songs with actions very enthusiastically. They learn a range of sounds they can make using parts of their bodies and are then given the task of accompanying a song with those sounds. This creative approach helps pupils compose sounds and control the dynamics of their voices, as well as developing very good listening skills.
35. The focus on these areas of the curriculum is intended to provide real challenge and enrichment for pupils. The aim is to inspire children, to build their confidence and to encourage them to use their imaginations. In addition, this work provides opportunities for staff to build the confidence of pupils, especially those who may find learning more difficult in academic subjects. From an early age, pupils learn to perform and to be an audience. For example, the

Year 1 and 2 pupils performed an action song using glove puppets they had designed, made and evaluated, to an audience of reception children.

36. In art and design, pupils have worked in the style of the sculptor Andy Goldsworthy to create an excellent collage of the sun, very effectively using natural materials including willow, clay and autumn coloured leaves. Year 2 pupils draw with pen and ink, and use a watercolour wash to create excellent pictures in the style of Quentin Blake. In Years 3 and 4, pupils create good, imaginative collages, following observational drawings of window views. These they are turning into fairly abstract creations using a range of materials and techniques including printing from polystyrene tiles. Examples of work from the art club show good skills being used in tie dying and batik to create large works, used to provide a background to a dance performance. Older pupils paint large works from observational drawing, showing a mature use of colour and media.
37. The coordinator for the arts provides very knowledgeable and enthusiastic leadership with considerable art expertise that enables her to promote the subjects in a positive and confident manner, resulting in the very good improvements made since the last inspection. Although planning is closely based on the National Curriculum and other nationally accepted schemes of work, the coordinator is devising her own four-year plan for the subject, which will enable the school to cover the curriculum and build on the very good work already evident. An overall arts action plan identifies appropriate training for teachers and clearly links pupils' work in the arts subjects to accelerated and active learning.

The parents' relationship with the school is very positive

38. The parents are extremely happy with the way their children learn and all those who returned questionnaires strongly expressed the view that their children enjoy going to school. They feel that the staff have high expectations and this helps get the best from their children. The findings of the inspection support the parents' positive views about the changes since the last inspection, the quality of education provided and the excellent leadership and management.
39. Parents are emphatic that the school has improved a great deal since the last inspection. Some of those most positive about the changes had moved children away from the school in the past; others had decided to educate at home. They had now returned their children to the school as word spread regarding the changes being made by the new headteacher and staff. They now feel that the leadership and management of the school are very good and that the school works much more closely with parents. They are finding the school much more approachable and staff are willing to listen to concerns or suggestions that parents have to offer.
40. At the parents' meeting with the inspection team all present were very positive about standards in English, mathematics and particularly ICT. They were also very appreciative of the fact that the school did not neglect other aspects of the curriculum. Parents are very supportive of the work done in the creative arts and they praised various aspects of this work. For example, one parent spoke of how watching the last school production left them with tears in their eyes and the hairs on the back of their neck standing up.
41. The parents are happy with the quality and quantity of information they receive. They find the annual reports on their pupils' progress useful and specific to their children and they appreciate the termly opportunities offered to share their children's targets for improvement, so they are able to support the work of the school at home. While they would like to be invited to some assemblies, they appreciate that the poor accommodation makes this difficult. The Friends'

Association plays an important role in raising money for the school, but equally importantly members give their time and skills in making costumes and scenery for productions.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in spelling are not high enough and pupils' phonic skills need to be improved.

42. The teaching of phonic skills is now a more consistent part of the curriculum for the infant pupils. In one very good lesson pupils were led through an accurate reading using the sound 's' and they are beginning to blend sounds together as in 'igh'. However, this has not always been so in the past and many of the older pupils rely on the context of words, or their recognition of them through prior use, to enable them to read unknown words and they are less secure when trying to sound out or to blend sounds into words. This limits the strategies available to them when reading.
43. This lack of phonic knowledge also has a negative impact on pupils' spelling skills and the teaching does not make clear how sounds can be used in correctly spelling longer and more difficult words. Although the language development is very good, and pupils' imaginative vocabulary is growing, insufficient time has been given to spelling skills. This has been partially addressed through the use of a few minutes at the start of the day or afternoon to practise writing and spelling words specific to the tasks being completed. Although pupils make good attempts at spelling, they often lack accuracy, even though the school puts a high degree level of importance on self-evaluation. For example, Year 6 pupils still make errors such as 'abowt', 'talking', or 'herd' for heard.

The accommodation causes inefficiency

44. The Year 5 and 6 classroom also acts as dining room, assembly hall, gymnasium and computer suite. This results in teaching time being lost every day as furniture is moved and resources are re-distributed. The staff and pupils manage this process very well but it does detract from the curriculum available, especially in physical education and for the other classes in ICT.
45. One small room serves as secretary's office, administration area, headteacher's office and staffroom. This results in a lack of privacy in many discussions and phone calls, difficulties in providing a reasonable area for staff to relax or to prepare lessons and difficulties in providing for pupils' medical needs. The administration space is very cramped and storage is difficult. There is no room for the headteacher to hold confidential discussions with staff, pupils or parents. The feasibility study carried out by governors into extending the school provides ways of dividing up the work necessary for such a big project.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school has an appropriate school improvement plan. In addition to carrying out the priorities in the plan the headteacher, governing body and staff should:

- (1) raise the standard of pupils' spelling skills and phonic knowledge and understanding;

(see paragraphs 6, 42, 43)

- (2) improve the accommodation to provide more space for administrative purposes and to ease the burden on the middle classroom.

(see paragraphs 41, 44, 45)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

18

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

14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	11	2	1	0	0	0
Percentage	22	61	11	6	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

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)

46

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

4

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

7

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

3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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	44	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	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	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	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

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14
Average class size	14

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47.5

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	140 013
Total expenditure	150 959
Expenditure per pupil	3 145
Balance brought forward from previous year	3 050
Balance carried forward to next year	-7 896

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	92
Number of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	23	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	43	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	43	11	0	2
The teaching is good.	77	19	0	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	21	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	92	6	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	88	10	0	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	79	19	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	81	17	0	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	33	0	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	29	0	2	2

Other issues raised by parents

The views of parents at the meeting supported the very positive views expressed in the questionnaire returns, especially with regard to the improvements in the school over the last two years since the present headteacher took up his post.