

INSPECTION REPORT

SHOBDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shobdon, Leominster

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116734

Headteacher: Mr T Nickerson

Reporting inspector: Mr G Sims

28899

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 4th March 2003

Inspection number: 247678

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Neilson
Date of previous inspection:	16 th February 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of Shobdon in the north-west of the county of Herefordshire. It has 63 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11 and is much smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils come from the village and the surrounding rural areas. The socio-economic background of the pupils is generally average. Many parents are employed in manual or semi-skilled work, with a small percentage of parents involved in professional occupations. No pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds or from homes where English is not the main spoken language. A below average proportion of pupils join or leave the school, other than at the usual times of joining or leaving. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Just under a fifth of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is above average. Two pupils receive help for communication difficulties from outside specialists. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The attainment of children when they start school, at the beginning of the term in which they have their fifth birthday, is generally average. Apart from a fall in the number of pupils on roll, due to demographic changes, there have been no major changes since the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Shobdon Primary School is a good school with some very good features. The headteacher's unassuming, but determined, leadership sets just the right tone for this small village school, in which pupils are very happy and with which parents are very pleased. A closely-knit, dedicated staff provides consistently good teaching, to which the pupils respond with enthusiasm and hard work. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards by the time they leave the school. The hallmark of the school is its intimate, friendly atmosphere, characterised by the very good relationships, which exist between pupils and staff, and the pupils' very good behaviour. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher's very good leadership and the unstinting support and commitment of the staff combine well to provide an environment which is conducive to good learning and in which the pupils feel safe, secure and happy.
- The staff cater very well for pupils' personal development, which results in very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships throughout the school.
- The quality of the teaching is good. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve standards which, with the exception of writing, are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

What could be improved

- The quality of pupils' writing.
- The timetabling of lessons and the amount of time devoted to teaching some subjects, such as history and geography.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The improvement since the last inspection in February 1998 has been good. The school has not only maintained all of the positive features noted at that time, but has responded well to the key issues which were identified. Although still hampered by a shortage of resources, the school now makes better provision for information and communication technology, teachers' confidence has improved and standards in the subject have risen. The school now has effective procedures to monitor pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but assessment procedures in other subjects are still weak. The governors show good commitment to the school and, through the work of their various committees, monitor the school's progress effectively. The school's policy for special educational needs now meets statutory requirements. Staff have undertaken a significant amount of in-service training since the last inspection and are constantly seeking ways in which to improve the quality of their teaching. There has been a measurable improvement in academic standards over the last three years.

STANDARDS

National test results: In a very small school such as this, where a year group may comprise only 5 pupils, comparisons with national averages on a yearly basis can be misleading. Aggregating the school's results at the end of Year 6 for the last three years, standards have been above average overall, with well above average results in mathematics and science and average results in English. The overall results over this period have also been above the average for similar schools. When compared with the average for the previous three years, there has been significant improvement in all three subjects, and more than found in most schools. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2002 to mark this improvement. The school sets itself appropriate targets and is generally successful in meeting them. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 for the last three years have been very close to the national average and the average for similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. Since the last inspection, results in mathematics at the end of Year 2 have improved more than in other schools. They have also improved in writing, but results in reading are not as good as they were.

Inspection findings: The attainment of children when they start in the Reception year varies considerably, but is generally fairly average for four-year-olds. Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, settling quickly into school routines and becoming an integral part of the school. They make satisfactory progress in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. By the time they start Year 1, most children achieve average standards for their age. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and, by the end of Year 2, are very secure in the standards achieved in reading, writing and mathematics, although few pupils achieve above average standards at this stage. Their attainment in science is above average. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and, by the end of Year 6, achieve well above average standards in mathematics and science. Standards in English are not as high; they are average, and pupils have good reading skills, but there is room for improvement in writing. Standards in information and communication technology are improving, and most pupils reach the standards expected for their age. Overall, pupils are achieving well and leave the school well equipped for the next stage of their education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They show interest in their lessons, which they enjoy. They participate enthusiastically and work hard. They concentrate well when working on their own or within a small group.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. In many lessons, the pupils' behaviour is excellent and they behave very well within the building and around the school. They are polite and helpful, and there is no evidence of disruptive, anti-social or oppressive behaviour. The school is an orderly, well-disciplined community.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships amongst the pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, and older pupils are particularly good at looking after younger pupils. The school could provide more opportunities for pupils to exercise greater independence in their learning.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are keen to come to school. The level of attendance has historically been above the national average. It fell last year to around the national average, but has improved again this year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of the teaching across the school is good. The combination of good teaching, well-disciplined classes, and pupils who show very positive attitudes to their work results in good learning and pupils who achieve well throughout the school. The teaching arrangements, in which pupils in Years 3 - 6 are taught by more than one teacher during the week and pupils in Reception to Year 2 receive full-time support from a teaching assistant, work out well because lessons are planned very carefully and there is good liaison between the staff. The teachers generally cater well for the widely differing needs and abilities of pupils in each of the three mixed-age classes. Arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs are very good and enable these pupils to make good progress. The quality of the teaching in English lessons is good, but there is not enough consolidation of what is taught in these lessons at other times during the day, nor are sufficient opportunities provided for pupils to develop their writing skills through work produced for other subjects, such as history, geography or religious education. The way teachers mark pupils' work is not always as helpful as it could be in pointing out where and how pupils could improve their work. Not enough opportunities are given for pupils to go back over completed pieces of work to correct their mistakes and make improvements. The teaching of mathematics is good, and pupils develop good numeracy skills. The teachers' confidence in the use of information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection and teachers now offer pupils appropriate opportunities to develop information technology skills. The teaching in some foundation subjects, such as history and geography, lacks depth because not enough time is devoted to teaching these subjects. Throughout the school, the very good relationship between staff and pupils is a significant factor in establishing a good learning climate, which contributes well to pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements and gives sufficient emphasis to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, not enough attention is given to some other subjects, such as history and geography. For a small school, there is a good range of well-supported extra-curricular activities, visits to places of interest and involvement within the local community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school has very good procedures for identifying pupils' needs and providing additional support. Teaching assistants are effective, and the special needs support teacher provides very good expertise and uses her time efficiently and well. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social	Very good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils are taught important core values and to have respect for all people. Teachers and other adult helpers

and cultural development	provide very good role models and encourage a climate in which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Appropriate attention is given to all matters of pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff treat pupils with care and consideration. As a result, the pupils feel safe and well cared for. The staff know their pupils very well and keep careful track of their progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and manages the school very well. The staff also share a common commitment to providing the best possible education for the pupils. The resulting synergy creates a very good ethos within the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors fulfil their statutory obligations well. They are very supportive of the school, and understand its strengths and areas for development. They maintain a careful overview of the finances and provide thoughtful input into strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school evaluates its own performance well and identifies appropriate areas for development. Although there are few formal opportunities for monitoring what happens in other classes, the staff work very closely together and coordinators have a good understanding of what is happening in their subject areas throughout the school.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school's finances are managed efficiently and effectively. Prudent use of finances has enabled the school to build some reserves to undertake major projects, such as the pending extension of the school's office facilities. In seeking to provide best value, the school compares its performance with others and undertakes appropriate consultation before making major spending decisions.

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. • The family atmosphere and the fact that the staff are so supportive. • The quality of the teaching is good and their children are making good progress. • They are kept well informed about what is happening and their children's progress. • The teachers are approachable and make parents feel welcome in school. • The school is led and managed well. 	<p>Parents are generally very pleased with the school. A very small number of parents made adverse comments regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' behaviour. • The way the school works with parents. • A quarter of the parents responding to the questionnaire felt the school could offer a wider range of activities outside lessons.
<p>[The views of parents are based on those expressed by the 9 parents who attended the parents' meeting and the 44 parents (70%) who returned the parents' questionnaire, some of whom also enclosed their own written comments]</p>	

Parents have a very positive image of the school and value highly the friendly atmosphere and the helpful staff. Inspectors agree with all of the positive comments made by parents, and feel there is little justification in the concerns expressed by a small minority. During the inspection, the pupils' behaviour was consistently very good. Staff are welcoming and receptive to parents. For a small school, the staff do well to provide a good variety of extra-curricular activities for the pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The headteacher's very good leadership and the unstinting support and commitment of the staff combine well to provide an environment which is conducive to good learning and in which the pupils feel safe, secure and happy.

1. The success of this small village school owes a great deal to the dedication and hard work of the teaching staff, guided sensibly and sensitively by the headteacher's very good leadership. The headteacher has built a closely-knit team of staff who work very well together and are committed to providing the best education they can for the pupils. Because of the friendly, family atmosphere, and the obvious care and concern shown by the teachers, the pupils feel safe, secure and happy within their school environment which is conducive to good learning. Parents and pupils, justifiably, have a very high opinion of their school and of the headteacher's leadership.
2. The headteacher has a heavy teaching commitment of three and a half days a week, which leaves little time to deal with the large amount of administrative work and to ensure that the school's management systems function effectively. Much of this work is undertaken out of school hours, but the headteacher also takes a pragmatic and sensible approach to his leadership role, balancing his time well and ensuring that priority is given to the most important tasks, which are dealt with efficiently and well. The school does not have as many formal systems in place as other schools, but the school functions smoothly and well because the staff are so cooperative and helpful, turning their hands to whatever needs to be done. The school has three part-time teachers, all of whom contribute far more to the school than the hours for which they are paid. It is this willingness, and the harmonious and good-natured working relationships, which parents appreciate so much and which sets a good example for the pupils.
3. Although the systems for monitoring what happens in school are largely informal, the headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. This understanding is strengthened because the staff work as a team, sharing a vision for the school's development and a determination to bring improvement wherever possible. Staff have shown they are adaptable to change, for example, taking on new initiatives, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, with determination and enthusiasm, and sharing their skills and expertise with each other. The headteacher seeks to bring the best out of his staff, by providing good opportunities for them to develop as teachers, and professional development is seen as an important priority.
4. Priorities within the school's past development plans have been appropriate and have led to a good range of improvements since the last inspection. They have focused on areas of major importance, such as information and communication technology, where provision has improved, teachers' confidence has increased and standards have risen. Pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is monitored much more carefully than before, and the school's efforts to raise standards in these subjects have clearly been successful. The pupils' performance in the national tests over the last three years has been significantly better than in the previous three years. The two areas of weakness identified during this inspection have already been identified by the school. One of the main priorities this year has been to raise the standard of pupils' writing, and the headteacher has flagged up the need, during the coming year, to re-examine the balance of the school's curriculum and the way lessons are timetabled.

5. The headteacher and staff are supported well by active and committed governors, who have a good understanding of the school and its strengths. The headteacher keeps the governing body up to date with school matters and changes in legislation, and discussions with governors during the inspection show them to be well informed and to have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Despite the uncertainties of a fluctuating income, the headteacher and governors manage the school's finances very efficiently and effectively, and have enabled the school to embark on a small building project which should provide better office accommodation in the near future.

The staff cater very well for pupils' personal development, which results in very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships throughout the school.

6. Parents feel that this is a very caring school. They are very pleased with the attitudes and values promoted by the school and are particularly pleased that their children enjoy coming to school. This is due, in no small measure, to the attention given by the staff to the pupils' personal development, by providing a friendly and welcoming environment and ensuring that each pupil, from Reception through to Year 6, is treated and valued as an individual. As a result, the pupils are confident, friendly and outgoing and have very positive attitudes to their school and their work. They are keen to learn, and work hard. Their behaviour, overall, is very good and, in many of the lessons observed during the inspection, it was exemplary. The quality of their relationships with the staff and with each other is also very good.
7. All of the adults who work in the school provide very good role models for the pupils. They treat pupils in a respectful manner and, through their responses in lessons, show that they value pupils' opinions and contributions. Through assemblies and citizenship lessons, they encourage pupils to develop self-respect and to respect each other. Because the staff treat pupils with care and consideration, the pupils feel confident that any problems which might arise will be sorted out by the teachers, but they are quick to add that problems, such as bullying or harassment, rarely occur. The small size of the school helps to generate a family atmosphere; all of the staff know all of the pupils well. The pupils know each other, and the older pupils show genuine care and concern for the younger ones.
8. The pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are very good, and they are fostered well by the staff who provide interesting lessons and give pupils a good reason to want to learn. In the infants' class, for example, the excitement of seeing newly-hatched chicks provided not only a really good stimulus for learning, but some memorable moments of awe and wonder as the children observed the chicks' first faltering steps after emerging from the egg. At the end of an excellent science lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, pupils did not want to stop working because they had become so absorbed in investigating and plotting the growth of their bean plants. During the inspection, pupils commented that they found their work fun and that it was not boring. In all of the lessons observed, pupils worked quickly and productively, enabling teachers to cover a good deal of work in each lesson. Pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and are keen to answer the teacher's questions. They change from whole-class activities to working on their own or in groups quickly and sensibly, and concentrate well.
9. The pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. Indeed, for much of the time, the pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils are very aware of the standards expected and meet their teachers' high expectations. They await their turn to speak, listen politely

to others, follow the teachers' instructions and are cooperative. The teachers are good at including elements within their lessons which reinforce positive attitudes and values. In an English lesson in the infants class, for example, the teacher used a traditional Chinese story, not only to stimulate pupils' writing, but also to reinforce the importance of kindness and consideration. The youngest children quickly learn what is expected of them and also behave very well. The pupils' behaviour is also very good within the school building and outside during break times. The pupils are polite and helpful, and there is no evidence of disruptive, anti-social or oppressive behaviour. The school is an orderly, well-disciplined community.

10. The staff consider that all adults and children who come into the school should be treated with respect in a warm, calm, happy and welcoming atmosphere. This philosophy is worked out well in practice, as the quality of pupils' relationships with the staff is very good. It is the product of mutual respect, where teachers listen to what pupils have to say, are supportive and helpful, and where pupils show politeness, but a trust and confidence in those who are there to help them. The pupils' relationships with their peers are very good. They collaborate well when working with a partner or in small groups within the classroom. Older pupils have a very good sense of concern for the younger pupils, and these vertical relationships not only give a strong sense of confidence to the younger pupils, but help the older pupils to develop a sense of responsibility. A particularly good feature is the way pupils, who join the school during the course of the school year or come into a well-established class at the start of the year, are made to feel welcome and immediately become part of the family community. One pupil who came from a much larger school said that she was made to feel welcome and found everybody really friendly. Good relationships also extend beyond the school, as pupils are encouraged to think about the needs of others, both within their own community and in the wider world. Pupils respond by organising activities for charity at various times in the year. The pupils are also well aware of their duty to care for the environment in its widest sense. Pupils in the infants' class, for example, were being encouraged to think of their duty to care for animals.

The quality of the teaching is good. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve standards which, with the exception of writing, are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

11. The quality of the teaching in all three classes and from all of the teachers is good. During the inspection, most of the lessons observed were good or better, none were unsatisfactory and two were excellent. The teachers prepare their lessons very carefully and relate very well to the pupils, who are enthusiastic and work hard. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science which, overall, are above average by the time they leave the school. The views expressed by parents who completed the questionnaire and those who attended the parents' meeting indicate a very high degree of satisfaction with the education provided by the school. Parents feel very strongly that the teaching is good, that teachers expect their children to work hard and that their children are making good progress, and the inspection findings endorse these views.
12. Because of improvements and a more rigorous approach to the teaching, standards have risen since the last inspection. However, with very few pupils in each year group, the school's results can fluctuate considerably from year to year. The effect of one pupil gaining, for example, a Level 4 instead of a Level 3 in their national tests, can move the school's results statistically from average to above average. In the national tests in 2002, the results of the nine pupils in Year 6 were similar to the national average in

English and mathematics and were well above average in science, but the results in mathematics were not as good as in the previous two years. Nevertheless, the results in all three subjects were substantially higher than those achieved at the time of the last inspection.

13. A clearer picture of the progress made in recent years is gained by aggregating the school's results for the last three years, during which time standards have been above average overall, with well above average results in mathematics and science and average results in English. This picture coincides with the findings of the inspection team for the current cohort of pupils in Year 6. When compared with the previous three years' average, the overall improvement is seen to be much more than that found in most schools. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2002 to mark this improvement. Most pupils achieve the nationally expected standard of Level 4 in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, and an increasing proportion are achieving the higher Level 5.
14. Overall, results at the end of Year 2 have also improved since the last inspection, although results in reading are not as high as they were. There have been gradual improvements in the school's results in writing and significant improvements in mathematics. The aggregated results at end of Year 2 for the last three years have been very close to the national average in all three aspects, reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils achieve the nationally expected Level 2 but, with the exception of mathematics, few pupils achieve the higher Level 3. This overall picture mirrors the inspection findings for pupils at the end of Year 2.
15. A key factor in ensuring the pupils make good progress is the thoroughness with which teachers plan their English, mathematics and science lessons to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are covered thoroughly and the widely differing needs of pupils in mixed-age classes are catered for. There is very good liaison between the teaching staff and teaching assistants, which is an important element in ensuring that the job-sharing arrangements in the two junior classes work smoothly and to the benefit of the pupils, and that teaching assistants are fully aware of what the teacher is wishing to achieve in a lesson. Teachers have clear objectives for their lessons which are shared with the pupils, generally using wording which pupils can readily understand. In an English lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, the teacher had phrased the objectives as questions to help pupils understand what they were attempting to achieve during the lesson. In this lesson, the main objectives were linked clearly and very well to texts and stories with which pupils were already familiar, thereby arousing pupils' interest and helping to focus their concentration. As well as covering the planned syllabus thoroughly, teachers also ensure that they deal with weaknesses they have diagnosed through the marking of pupils' work. An English lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, concentrated on developing pupils' use of adjectives, which the teacher had previously diagnosed as a weakness.
16. Separate short teaching sessions in English and mathematics, usually taken by a teaching assistant, are planned for pupils with special educational needs or those experiencing difficulty in a particular subject, and these are proving effective in helping these pupils to make good progress. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored carefully, and some of these pupils make very good progress as a result of the short withdrawal sessions which they have with the special educational needs teacher each week. Great care is taken to cater for the needs of the five Reception-aged children, who participate in many of the whole-class introductory sessions, thereby learning how to be part of a larger group and to participate in discussions, but are also withdrawn by the teaching assistant or class teacher for their

own separate activities for much of the day. The staff are imaginative in overcoming the school's severely restricted facilities for pupils of this age. The school also caters appropriately for the more able pupils. In a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, the teacher provided more challenging tasks for a small group of pupils which required them to apply their knowledge and skills in a much deeper way as they sought to write procedures to produce various geometrical shapes on the computer and combine them to produce the shape of a house.

17. The teachers have good subject knowledge, and their explanations are clear, logical and methodical. Wide-ranging discussions are important features of many lessons. Teachers ask probing questions, and pupils are very keen to respond and participate. Because they treat pupils respectfully and correct errors in a very pleasant manner, pupils are not afraid to have a go or to make mistakes. Because the pupils are so well behaved, the teachers can employ enjoyable teaching methods to help the pupils to learn. A mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, in which pupils were learning to give precise instructions, finished very successfully as one pupil was asked to act as a robot, responding exactly as instructed by the other pupils, who endeavoured to guide her from one part of the classroom to another avoiding all of the various obstacles in the way. The pupil followed her classmates' instructions impeccably, and everybody learnt, in a very practical way, the importance of precision in framing and giving instructions.
18. The teachers use resources imaginatively and well. In a good English lesson for the infants, the teacher used toy animals effectively to focus pupils' attention, and some Chinese silhouette pictures complemented the text which was read and provided a very good stimulus for pupils' writing. In a very good English lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher used a PowerPoint presentation to recap key features of the fables pupils had been studying. In the same lesson, the teacher used a large flip-chart with words and sentences printed onto strips of card which were moved around, according to pupils' suggestions, to show them how to make their sentences more interesting and imaginative. In a science lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, resources had been carefully prepared for pupils to conduct and record an investigation as to how quickly different types of sugar dissolve.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The quality of pupils' writing.

19. Standards in pupils' writing have improved throughout the school since the last inspection as a result of the attention given by staff to this aspect of pupils' work. However, writing still remains the weakest aspect of pupils' work and needs to be an area for continuing development. The school has recognised this, and writing is one of the main priorities on the school's current development plan.
20. The skills of writing are generally taught well during English lessons. In a good English lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, the teacher gave helpful suggestions to pupils about how to improve their writing by providing a better story opening and reinforced important features such as leaving appropriate spacing between words and demarcating sentences with full stops. The pupils use their own word-books effectively to look up the spelling of words. In Years 3 and 4, pupils were learning how to make their writing more descriptive by including imaginative adjectives, such as 'boastful', 'conceited' and 'aggressive'. In a good English lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher helped pupils to gain a better understanding of how to split their writing into paragraphs and of the importance of the opening sentence of a paragraph. Pupils are well aware of the importance of planning their writing carefully, of using powerful words

and complex sentences, and ensuring that they have a good opening and ending to their writing.

21. One of the reasons pupils' writing skills do not develop as well as they could, is that not enough opportunities are given for pupils to consolidate the skills which have been taught well. A scrutiny of pupils' work in subjects like geography, history and religious education reveals that there are very few opportunities for pupils to consolidate their writing skills, or indeed their learning in these subjects, through written activities. The pupils do not learn, therefore, how to use their writing skills in other contexts. The amount of time available in English lessons alone is insufficient to give pupils enough opportunities to practise and perfect their writing skills.
22. Many English lessons contain a focus on specific spelling patterns. These short sessions draw pupils' attention to important rules of spelling, and they are given some opportunity to practise these spellings during the lesson. However, pupils forget quickly, and not enough opportunities are built into lessons in subsequent weeks to reinforce these rules so that pupils can consolidate their learning. Few occasions were observed in lessons other than English in which teachers used natural opportunities to refer back to what had been taught in a previous English lesson. In mathematics, teachers ensure that there is constant repetition and practice of basic concepts of number. This repetition is fundamental to pupils' learning, but similar principles are not applied sufficiently to help pupils consolidate their learning in English.
23. A further factor, which prevents pupils from making better progress, is the quality of teachers' marking. Although there are instances of the teacher providing detailed comment and analysis of what pupils have done well, there are far fewer indications to show pupils how they can improve their work. The marking of many pieces of work consists of little more than a cursory tick and a brief encouraging comment, and gives pupils no real understanding of how well they have done or what they could do better. The teachers rarely make any comment on the quality of pupils' English when work is produced for other subjects. As a result, pupils perpetuate mistakes, unaware that they are continuing to use incorrect sentence construction or to spell words incorrectly. Not enough attention is given to pupils revising or correcting their own work. Even when teachers do make helpful comments, there is little indication that pupils have gone back to improve a piece of work in the way suggested, or that they have made an effort to learn how to spell a word previously written incorrectly. The school has yet to exploit fully the power of using word processors to help pupils correct and redraft their writing.

The timetabling of lessons and the amount of time devoted to teaching some subjects, such as history and geography.

24. Since the last inspection, the school has, in line with the government's initiatives, devoted its major energies to improving standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics. However, a significantly large part of the day is devoted to these subjects so that, on many days, the time from arrival at 09:00 in the morning to 13:30 in the afternoon is, with the exception of breaks and assemblies, devoted entirely to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. This leaves just an hour and three-quarters each day in which to cover the National Curriculum for all other subjects, and this amount of time is insufficient to cover the curriculum for these subjects in any depth. A scrutiny of pupils' work in geography and history, for example, shows that very little work is undertaken in these subjects.
25. The school day is not structured as well as it could be and, at present, the timing of break and lunch, rather than the needs of the curriculum, dictates the length of lessons. As a result, the literacy 'hour' becomes a literacy 'seventy minutes'. Sixty-five minutes are devoted to numeracy lessons, compared with the recommended time allocation of between 30 and 40 minutes. In contrast, history and geography receive, on average, just 30 minutes of teaching a week, which is insufficient to cover these subjects in depth. The removal of guided reading sessions from the literacy hour, and the inclusion of timetabled sessions for handwriting and other literacy activities, result in a further reduction of the time available for other subjects. A further factor affecting the amount of time available for teaching is the length of time devoted to teaching in Years 3 to 6, which is an hour a week less than the recommended amount of time for junior pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- i. Improve the quality of pupils' writing* by:
 - ensuring that work introduced during English lessons is consolidated effectively at other times during the day and in subsequent lessons;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills through work produced for subjects other than English;
 - being more rigorous when marking pupils' work in pointing out where pupils could improve and ensuring that pupils learn from their mistakes.
- ii. Provide greater depth to the teaching in foundation subjects, particularly in history and geography, by:
 - ensuring that lessons are timetabled in a more efficient way during the school day*;
 - devoting more time to the teaching of these subjects;
 - establishing better cross-curricular links so that teaching in one subject enriches the teaching in another.

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

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

11

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

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

16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	1	6	2	0	0	0
Percentage	18	9	55	18	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		63
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		12

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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

The school's results are not reported in this format when there are 10 or fewer pupils in the year group, in order to avoid identification of individual pupils.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

The school's results are not reported in this format when there are 10 or fewer pupils in the year group, in order to avoid identification of individual pupils.

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	60	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	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

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.31
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.0
Average class size	21

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	38

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	

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

Number of pupils per FTE adult	
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	196,767
Total expenditure	177,148
Expenditure per pupil	2,394
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,660
Balance carried forward to next year	54,279

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	63
Number of questionnaires returned	44
Percentage of questionnaires returned	70

Percentage of responses in each category¹

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	37	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	39	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	50	7	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	59	5	0	0
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	32	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	25	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	55	34	11	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	64	34	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	36	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	39	20	5	5

¹ Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.