

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BEDGROVE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110280

Headteacher: Mr D S G Fiske

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jean Harding  
21378

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2002

Inspection number: 250590

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ingram Avenue Aylesbury Buckinghamshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr A Benbow
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a school for boys and girls from 7 - 11 years of age. There are 444 pupils on roll; it is bigger than average size for junior schools. Most pupils are of white ethnic origin and few speak English as an additional language, but these pupils are fluent in their spoken English. There are no refugees, asylum seekers or any other group that may be disadvantaged. Compared with most schools, few pupils have difficulties with their learning. Only nine per cent of pupils have special needs; most have some learning difficulties. None has a statement of special educational needs. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals; the percentage is well below average. The school is situated in a residential area of private housing, but about 70 per cent of pupils come from outside the immediate area and the school is always over-subscribed. Few pupils join or leave the school at times other than the normal starting and leaving dates. The majority of pupils come from favourable socio-economic backgrounds and no pupils are looked after by people other than their own families.

Most pupils transfer from the Infant School on the adjacent site and there are very close links between the two schools. Attainment on entry to the Junior School is mostly higher than average, but a significant number of pupils do not work above the expected levels. The school values outside evaluation and has acquired a government School Achievement Award, Artsmark, Activemark, and Investors in People status since the previous inspection. The school has great difficulty recruiting teachers due to the high cost of housing in the area. There has been a high turnover of teachers over the last two years. The school has changed status since the previous inspection and now pupils leave after Year 6.

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

This is a very effective school that provides high quality education for its pupils. Standards of attainment in the core subjects are considerably higher than average and pupils of all abilities achieve well. Pupils love the school and their behaviour is very good. The teaching is very good and is based on a broad, highly relevant curriculum. Assessment is very good and pupils are cared for very well. All this is due to the very good leadership and management displayed at all levels of the school, which have been embedded over many years. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The contribution of the governors to the school's achievements is excellent. Given that it receives less money than many schools and that it does so well, it gives very good value for money.

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

- Pupils have standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science that are well above average in all aspects of the subjects, and they use their key skills of learning, including information and communication technology, well in other subjects.
- Pupils of all abilities make at least good progress in their learning.
- The leadership and management are very good and have produced a high-performing staff.
- The teaching is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent and their behaviour is very good.
- The curriculum is very broad and includes a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- There are very good procedures for assessment, and the information acquired is used very well to set targets for pupils' future learning.
- The support and the care given to pupils are very good.

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

- The formal procedures for identification and assessment of pupils who use English as an additional language.
- The long-term planning for further improvement.

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

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

The school was last inspected in June 1998 and received a very favourable report. Since then, through a rapidly changing educational environment and much higher expectations of schools and of pupils, it has made good improvements. The previous inspection found only minor issues for the school to improve, and these have been addressed very well. The school has successfully increased the rate of progress in science and mathematics of the higher-attaining pupils. Teachers have improved the consistency of the marking of pupils' work, which is now

very good. They have also improved the consistency in the setting and marking of homework and have communicated the criteria for its assessment to parents.

There are several other aspects in which the school has made significant improvements over the last four years. The National Curriculum test results have improved, especially in science. Pupils' standards of attainment in the investigation aspects of mathematics and science have improved. The curriculum has been enhanced, particularly in the emphasis on pupils' consistent use of information and communication technology. The procedures for assessment have improved. The accommodation has been extended and is now much better. More resources have been acquired, especially computers. In other aspects the school has maintained the same high standards that were reported before. The governors and headteacher were conscious that, in the light of such a good report in June 1998, they would have to work hard to demonstrate improvements. This they have done, but they are not complacent and still strive for even better performance. Given the current staff and governors, the prospects for further improvement are good.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools <sup>1</sup>
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	A	A	B
Science	B	B	A	A

**Key**

very high                    A\*

well above average        A

above average             B

average                     C

below average             D

well below average        E

very low                    E\*

There are, as yet, no standardised comparisons for the test results for this year (2002). The percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 is about the same as in 2001. In English 89 per cent of pupils attained the required level compared with 75 per cent nationally. In mathematics 84 per cent of pupils attained the required level, compared with a 73 per cent national average. In science 98 per cent of pupils attained the required level, compared with a national average of 86 per cent. However, a bigger percentage of pupils attained higher grades in mathematics and science than before. In English, 46 per cent of pupils attained a higher grade compared with the national average of 29 per cent, which is the same as last year. In mathematics 50 per cent attained the higher grade, compared with 28 per cent nationally, and this included two pupils who attained two grades above the expected level. In science, 73 per cent of pupils attained the higher level, against 38 per cent nationally. These grades were from a group that was not particularly able, including a few pupils with special educational needs. The targets for that year-group were exceeded, especially in science. The targets for 2003 have been set using predictions based on previous tests; they are lower than the grades obtained in 2002, and the pupils currently in Year 6 are more able. Given all that has been done, the school might consider raising the targets.

These test results reflect the standards of attainment in evidence during the inspection. Standards in these core subjects are high, and rising, especially in mathematics and science. The evidence also shows that pupils of all abilities achieve well and that all make at least good progress during their time in the school. Pupils of lower and higher ability do particularly well. A few pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls in evidence in the school, but boys attain higher grades than most boys nationally. Also, within the school, boys do better than girls in mathematics tests. There is no difference in the attainment of pupils of different backgrounds, or for those of non-white ethnic origin.

This short inspection did not examine work in most other subjects, but the small amount of work seen showed that standards of attainment in other subjects are at least in line with national expectations for pupils of this age, and certainly above expectations in information and communication technology. Pupils use their skills of learning well in other subjects, particularly listening, reading, writing, and information and communication technology. Pupils' skills in speaking, although good, are less well developed.

<sup>1</sup> 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils concentrate very well and make great intellectual efforts in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, especially in lessons. There have been no exclusions and bullying is not a problem.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships between all pupils, and pupils and staff. Pupils' personal and social development is very good.
Attendance	Very good. Much better than many schools.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.*

No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, and evidence of teaching over time is that the quality is very good. As a result pupils learn very well, are aware of their own learning, and know how to improve. Staff generally have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and basic skills are taught very well. The planning of lessons is good, especially in the inclusion of information and communication technology in all subjects. However, although work is planned to meet the needs of all pupils, the formal recording of this could still be better. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are high and they use a very good range of strategies and resources to enhance their lessons. Teachers' management of their pupils is extremely good and is based on excellent relationships and a good-humoured atmosphere in the classes. Classroom assistants are used well and they give very good support to teachers, both in the classrooms and during withdrawal sessions for pupils with special educational needs. Lessons generally go with a swing but the pace in a significant number is rather too leisurely, and this reflects the long time given to lessons on the timetable. Marking is very good and ensures that pupils know how to improve their work. Homework is generally consistent and is used well to complement work in the classroom.

Due to the emphasis on presentation, pupils show great pride in their work. Pupils work hard, both for the sake of the study, but also to please their teachers. They show enormous interest in their lessons. Most are acquiring good skills of independent learning, although this could still be better if they were set more independent tasks and used research tools on their own more. Pupils of all abilities learn very well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	It is very broad, reasonably balanced and highly relevant to pupils' needs. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities and great use of the outside world to promote learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good and effective. The school makes good use of the advice from the local education authority.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory in reality, but there are few procedures to ensure that all these pupils have a curriculum that is entirely appropriate to their needs. There is no policy for action, and no specific assessment of these pupils' language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall, and particularly good for pupils' social and moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school and its procedures to ensure pupils' welfare are very good. The assessment of pupils is also very good and the results of testing are used well to ensure pupils' progress.



The timetable could be planned more efficiently; some lessons are too long, and the work expands to fit the time available. These long lessons in some subjects reduce the time available for other subjects and religious education. Lesson planning rarely specifies the opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural thinking, and this is an area for further development. The school makes very effective efforts to extend the learning of more able pupils. It also makes great efforts to involve parents in their children's education.

**HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is strong leadership at all levels. The headteacher sets very high standards. He is well supported by the deputy head and senior staff. Co-ordinators lead their subjects very well. The management of almost all aspects is very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Extremely well. They are very involved and know what to expect and how to make improvements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Governors know the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school understands the principles of obtaining the best value and generally uses these very well. Financial planning is very good.

The accommodation and resources are good and used well. There are plenty of staff, but the turnover of teachers is a threat to the school's continuing success. There is a 'whole-school' feeling that benefits pupils due to the teamwork on the staff that it engenders. There are good procedures for checking the quality of teaching, however, these could be improved.

**PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p><i>That their children:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• like school;</li> <li>• make good progress;</li> <li>• behave well at school.</li> </ul> <p><i>That the school:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides good teaching;</li> <li>• is well led and managed;</li> <li>• has high expectations and expects the pupils to work hard;</li> <li>• is approachable if they have questions or concerns.</li> </ul>	<p><i>A small minority of parents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are unhappy about the homework provided;</li> <li>• would like more information about how their children are getting on;</li> <li>• would like the school to work closer with them;</li> <li>• would like more activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Parents are strongly supportive of the school. They think it is a very good one, and the inspectors agree with them. The evidence supports all the parents' positive views. Nothing was seen during the inspection to support the negative views of some parents. Homework is well organised and there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The headteacher is usually available, especially at the beginning and end of the school day, and staff welcome parents' participation, and are happy to discuss any aspect of the school's work or parents' concerns.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Pupils have standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science that are well above average in all aspects of the subjects, and they use their key skills of learning, including information and communication technology, well in other subjects.**

1. Pupils join the school with standards of attainment in these subjects that are, overall, above national averages and expectations, and they leave with standards that are well above average. The standards are high because pupils are taught well and have excellent attitudes to their lessons.
2. Pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 is well above average. In all three subjects pupils are over two terms ahead of the national level when they leave the school. No standardised comparisons are yet available for the 2002 tests, but the statistics suggest that the school has done very well. The percentage of pupils who attain higher levels in the tests is high, although this year (2002) only 27 per cent attained a higher level in writing, and 23 per cent attained a lower level. Although this reflects a less able group in that year, the school is aware that this is an area for improvement. The 'whole-school' writing tasks have been instigated to boost pupils' attainment in writing, and are having a positive effect. Half the pupils attained a higher level in mathematics this year, including two pupils who attained a Level 6, which is two grades higher than expectations. Nearly every pupil attained at least the expected level in science this year, and a commendable 73 per cent got the higher level. In 2001, pupils attained grades in science that were well above those found in similar schools.
3. The quality of work seen during the inspection also bears out the positive picture of standards painted by the test results. Pupils' standards of all aspects of English are well above average in listening, reading and writing. Pupils have good speaking skills but very high standards were not evident during the inspection. Pupils are mature and enthusiastic readers. They read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction and know how to retrieve information from the library. Pupils from all year-groups told inspectors that they undertake little research of their own, such as using the library, and this is an area for improvement. Pupils' standards in writing are above those expected and well above in some aspects. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and have a clear handwriting style. They produce written work in a range of styles and can structure their work well. Some pupils produce too little and this is a disadvantage in tests.
4. Standards in mathematics are also well above average and in this subject many pupils have made very good progress since they joined the school. Pupils in the top sets attain some very high standards, especially in work on shape and measures, and pupils in lower sets mostly attain at least average standards by Year 6, and their calculations are founded on secure understanding. Many pupils in Year 5 are already working at the level required for pupils at the end of Year 6.
5. Pupils' attainment in science is well above average, in all aspects of the subject. The school has paid particular emphasis to scientific investigations, and this has been very successful in ensuring pupils' understanding and secure scientific thinking. Pupils in Year 6, for instance, can explain gravity and friction and can discuss fair testing to check on these forces. The co-ordinator is aware that the work on investigations, and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the principles, could still be improved; she has active plans to set targets for individual pupils and for groups in this most important programme of study.
6. Very little work in other subjects was observed or scrutinised during this short inspection, but that seen was at least in line with national expectations. However, checks were made on pupils' attainment in information and communication technology and their use of these skills across the curriculum, because the school has put so much into this subject. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is above average, and well above in some aspects. The school has made very good use of its large investment in computers and related equipment and pupils confidently access and use information from a variety of sources and can present work elegantly

using information and communication technology. They work at above the expected levels in all the programmes of study.

7. There is no difference in the attainment that can be put down to pupils' different backgrounds, ethnic origin or home language. All pupils are tracked through the school to check how well they are doing. Pupils are tracked by gender and so the school is aware that boys do not attain as well as girls in writing, as is often the case nationally. Staff have put in place appropriate procedures to deal with this, and there are very good male role models, which may inspire boys to do well. However, boys have better grades in the national tests than boys nationally, and better than girls in mathematics within the school. There was little evidence to suggest that boys' and girls' attainment was any different during the inspection, although the tendency for boys to take longer to get down to work was noted. Pupils are not tracked by their home language, and this is a weakness which the school should address.
8. Having acquired the key skills of learning, pupils use them well in all subjects. Pupils listen very well to staff. They rarely need instructions, or to have information repeated, and show, by their sensible questions, that they understand what is required. Most are confident and articulate when speaking, but are not as fluent as they might be when talking on a formal level. Although drama is built into the curriculum, the school does not sufficiently plan for extension work in speaking, such as formal debate and presentations by pupils, which might enhance skills in speaking. Pupils use their reading skills well across the curriculum. Few older pupils need any help, but a significant number in the current Year 3 classes, do not have well enough developed reading skills to be able to cope with the technical vocabulary of subjects such as mathematics.
9. Pupils use their writing skills very well across the curriculum. Their work is very well presented and usually properly spelt and punctuated. Word-processing is used appropriately, but perhaps more use could be made of this for pupils to draft and re-draft work, instead of re-writing their final draft. Pupils' mathematical skills are used well in other subjects, such as science and geography. Pupils know which calculation to use in order to process information. Elegant graphs and charts are produced using information and communication technology, which is also used well in other subjects. Pupils know how to use computers to access information as well as to present their work beautifully. Pupils' use of information and communication technology is much better than is seen in many schools and this school's investment in advanced technology has proved very effective.

### **Pupils of all abilities make at least good progress in their learning.**

10. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires and at the meeting with inspectors, almost all parents felt that pupils of all abilities made good progress. Parents of more able pupils and of those with special educational needs felt the same. Inspectors agree with parents. The school makes good efforts to provide work that is appropriate to the needs of all pupils and the results of this is clear to see in the National Curriculum test results, especially for higher or lower attaining pupils. However, the 'average' pupil has not been forgotten and suitably challenging work is set for all pupils.
11. A few parents are critical of the school, as pupils are not set by ability for English. The structure of the National Literacy Strategy enables staff to give all pupils work appropriate to their needs in English and, generally, all pupils make at least good progress. Pupils with the greatest difficulties have extra help during withdrawal sessions and this is effective, but still they would benefit more if account were taken of their particular difficulties within lessons in other subjects. The school makes good use of the expertise of local education authority specialists in assessing pupils with special educational needs.
12. The school's policy of grouping pupils by ability in mathematics has proved highly effective when considering the achievement of all pupils. Older pupils, who are very able, work in small groups, on a regular basis, and this is proving very successful in extending their mathematical thinking and also their confidence in trying new ways of looking at problem solving. More able pupils are definitely not set work that is too easy. Pupils who find mathematics difficult are appropriately supported in lessons, and some make especially good progress in consolidating their learning.

These pupils benefit greatly from the variety of tasks that teachers produce to ensure that they have secure understanding of the concepts before they move on to other work.

**The leadership and management are very good and this has produced a high-performing staff.**

13. The school is doing very well and the headteacher and governors have a clear idea of how to improve. They are not at all complacent and constantly strive for excellence. However, even although the outcomes, in terms of pupils' achievements, are of vital importance to them, they are not obsessed with the end result. The broad nature of the education provided, including the ethos of the school and the partnership with parents and the community, is equally important to the senior management. This wide view of education has produced a school that is moving forward, but looking outwards.
14. The leadership of the headteacher is of very high quality. All members of the school community paid tribute to his commitment and to his success in building a high-performing team. He has played an essential part in the setting of high standards. He has facilitated a 'whole-school' approach to everything that is done, which has ensured consistency and conformity to set procedures. He ensures clear communication and demonstrates clarity of vision and sensitivity to the concerns of staff, parents and pupils. He has established the supportive culture and the special style of the school. His management is very good. In most aspects of the school he has instigated secure systems and structures that ensure consistent work practices. He heads a disciplined, organised school where communication is very good.
15. The headteacher is supported by an effective deputy headteacher and senior management team. The deputy headteacher has been instrumental in bringing into the school many initiatives that have helped raise standards. The management of the subject co-ordinators is also very good. The school makes good use of year-group leaders, but more could be made of their skills if there was a better overview of the teaching timetable, which is not as efficient as it could be. The lack of a curriculum co-ordinator means that small deficiencies of the overall curriculum planning have not been spotted. The management of aspects such as special educational needs and pastoral issues is good, but the management of the provision for pupils using English as an additional language, although satisfactory, needs further thought to be as effective as it could be.
16. There are procedures in place and policies to direct the work of almost all aspects of the school. The school runs very well on a day-to-day basis and this helps staff to concentrate on essentials. The governors are very keen on outside accreditation to monitor whether the school is doing as well as it could. The school has had very favourable reports from outside assessors, such as that for Investors in People, and has achieved a School Achievement Award, and Artsmark and Activemark awards in the last two years. All this helps to keep staff and pupils striving to improve, and has had a positive effect on teaching and standards.
17. The internal monitoring of teaching is quite good, but could be better. Records of lesson observations are detailed, but there is more emphasis on teachers' input rather than on pupils' learning, and this is a weakness. The senior management team undertakes book searches but the emphasis is on presentation rather than on levelling the work scrutinised in terms of attainment. The performance management of staff is very good, with very good procedures for induction of new staff and for training. An aspect that could be improved would be further management training, which would improve evaluation skills. Opportunities are sometimes missed to instigate 'best practice', as few staff have seen this in other schools.
18. The governors are very well involved and provide excellent leadership for the school's work. Led by a knowledgeable chair, governors not only give support but also are truly involved in evaluation of the school's performance. They know what is going on and insist on top quality in everything. They have faced the difficulties over the recruitment of good teachers with determination and imagination. They are fully aware of the possible drawbacks in the turnover of staff and are making appropriate contingency plans. The financial planning and control is very good, and although the school faces the shortage of funds and the uncertainty about future funding, with realism, the long-term strategic planning should be better. Money has been well spent and very

good improvements to the accommodation were very well planned. The high quality of the environment and the resources improve the working conditions and help teachers to do their best. Governors and staff work very well together for the benefit of pupils.

### **The teaching is very good.**

19. The teaching over time has been very good. Half of the teaching observed during the inspection was very good and no lesson observed was graded as unsatisfactory. There was evidence of very good teaching from all the school's full-time permanent teachers. Very good teaching was observed in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and also in information and communication technology. Lessons in most other subjects were not observed.
20. There are many strengths in the teaching and these ensure that pupils learn well. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, and staff teach basic skills very well. There is a very good emphasis on the proper use of technical language, such as in English and mathematics. The planning of lessons is good, but would be even more effective if teachers structured their lessons in greater detail, especially in terms of the time taken for each part of the session and the differentiated work to be given to pupils of different abilities.
21. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils in terms of work and behaviour, and this is key to the success of their lessons. Pupils rise to this and make very good intellectual and creative efforts in their learning. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 4, for instance, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were exemplary, due to the challenging work and the ethos set by the teacher. Pupils are very well behaved and have excellent attitudes to learning, and this is partly due to the sensitive management by staff. Due to the very good relationships within the classrooms pupils respond very well to the work and show a great deal of interest. The atmosphere of study, generated by staff, enables pupils to concentrate very well and this is of great benefit to their learning.
22. Teachers mark pupils' work very well and pupils are left in no doubt about what they must do to improve. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers make supportive comments and are constructive in suggesting further work. Staff use a very wide range of strategies to help pupils learn and make excellent use of a wide range of resources, especially information and communication technology. Homework is also used well to consolidate pupils' learning. Skilled support staff are used well in lessons, and they make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils who have special educational needs.
23. Aspects of teaching that could be further improved are the balance of teaching strategies employed and the use of time. Although most lessons go with a swing, the pace of a significant number is rather leisurely. This is partly due to the organisation of the timetable when some lessons are planned for a significantly longer time than is usual. Also, several instances were noted when the pace of the lesson dropped, due to over-long explanations, and when pupils' writing flow was halted because the teacher kept on stopping pupils to check on understanding. The opening part of a significant number of lessons, where teachers explain the purpose of the session and give pupils essential information, sometimes goes on for too long. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, and are keen to impart this knowledge, and also their love of the subject; this is fine, but restricts the time that pupils have for independent learning. It also impinges on the time that pupils have available for writing on their own at length. As speed and output are essential when doing writing tests, this is something that the school might consider, in order to give pupils even more practice in this aspect. The lessons are sometimes planned for long periods of time, such as 75 or 80 minutes; this extra time, which is at the expense of other subjects, is not well enough planned to ensure that pupils' learning is most effective. The work planned expands to fill the time available.

### **Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent and their behaviour is very good.**

24. Inspectors had several discussions with groups of pupils as well as observing them in lessons. All the inspectors were very impressed by pupils' attitudes to school and their approach to learning.

Pupils show great enthusiasm for all school activities. They enjoy learning and speak highly of staff for whom they have great affection and respect. They settle down well to work, for instance when a Year 6 group wrote a poem. Pupils know what they want from the school, and are happy that they are given it. The only real criticism that older pupils had about the school was about the swimming pool; they would like it deeper and warmer, with a smart cover!

25. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good and it is usually good around the school and playground areas. Their comments to inspectors reflect the strong moral code set by the senior management. Pupils told inspectors that there was no unkindness or bullying, but that they were absolutely confident that the staff would sort things out if there were. Pupils tolerate other people's idiosyncrasies with amusement, and most show a mature approach to different points of view. There is a refreshing lack of any issues about gender or race among pupils in the school.
26. Attendance is very good, as is punctuality, and pupils consider that such standards are essential in growing into responsible individuals. Older pupils show initiative and personal responsibility, but these attributes are not developed as much by the school as they could be. For example, there is no School Council, which many schools find valuable, and the teachers choose the prefects.

**The curriculum is very broad and includes a very good range of extra-curricular activities.**

27. The curriculum provided is very good. It is very broad and highly relevant to pupils' preparation for secondary education and life in general. It is balanced, but not as well as it could be. It covers all statutory requirements and has ensured very good teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. The school strives to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils. There are many extras provided, including peripatetic music lessons for several instruments, a wide range of visitors and well planned curricular visits. The residential trips were praised by parents and pupils alike and these do much to enhance pupils' personal and social development. The community and outside areas are used well to promote learning and links with partner schools are good. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and the governors have moved with the times to ensure that this is relevant to the modern world. Parents are appreciative of the hard work of staff to put on productions in drama and music. An area for further development is the inclusion of the opportunities to extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and especially multi-cultural awareness within lesson planning.
28. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good in terms of the range and take-up by pupils. This is especially commendable given the high staff turnover. More able pupils are catered for well in the inclusion of an optional Latin course, and there are several sports available, including separate football for girls who want to play on their own, without boys. A large number of pupils take part in the choir and the orchestras.
29. The school has coped well with the problems of how to include the compulsory swimming element in the physical education curriculum. This is an issue that concerns a few parents. The pool on site is used successfully, but the governors are aware that it is not ideal. However, they have sensibly taken the view that it is less of an issue to use the pool they possess than to use valuable time and scarce funds in transporting pupils to a local swimming pool.
30. Pupils of all abilities are well catered for in the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs have good quality extra help, and more able pupils have extension work given to them. This has been particularly successful in mathematics. The possible difficulties of boys are taken into account and boys in this school have a good crack at the whip with regard to their teaching.

**There are very good procedures for assessment and the information acquired is used very well to set targets for pupils' future learning.**

31. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good. A whole raft of strategies is used, including many standardised tests. Pupils are monitored consistently from the time they start at the school until they leave, targets for individual pupils in English and mathematics are set and revised regularly. An especially good feature is the consistency of the recording from all teachers,

which is not always demonstrated even in good schools. A new 'on-line' assessment system has been tried out and has been found to be very useful. Valuable files of moderated work are kept on selected pupils, to guide newer teachers. Support staff are involved with on going monitoring of pupils and play a part in the assessment process. Pupils are appropriately involved in their own assessment and target setting.

32. Teachers make very good use of all the information they collect on their pupils' attainment. Optional national tests in mathematics are used to place pupils in sets, and the grades attained by pupils in the tests taken at the end of Year 6 are predicted with some accuracy, although some pupils have surprised staff with how well they have done. Pupils with special educational needs have sound individual education plans, but teachers do not always use these when they plan lessons. This is an area for improvement.
33. An extension of this high quality work is being considered. There are no targets for groups or individuals for science which the co-ordinator thinks might be useful. The school has active plans for the identification and monitoring of any pupil who might be gifted and talented, but this has not yet been acted upon. A further improvement would be to refine the assessment process for pupils' communication skills which, at present, is rather basic.

### **The support and the care given to pupils are very good.**

34. This is a very caring school. All parents and pupils interviewed testified to this. The ethos is one of support but challenge. It has the feel of a small rural school with its ethos of community and open approach. There is great emphasis on good relationships, and this benefits staff as well as pupils. The 'family' atmosphere means that all staff keep a close eye on pupils' welfare as well as their personal and social development. Appropriate systems and structures are in place to ensure pupils' safety and welfare, such as an anti-bullying policy and a new policy for child protection. Systems to ensure good attendance are very good. There are in-built hazards at the entrance to the school, due to the site and the volume of traffic, and the governors are working with the local education authority to reduce the effect of these.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

#### **The formal procedures for identification and assessment of pupils who use English as an additional language.**

35. Last year there were 24 pupils using English as an additional language and currently there are seven pupils. As well as English, five or six different languages are spoken at home by current pupils, and the school considers that their spoken English is fluent. However, there are no special arrangements to monitor these pupils apart from the school's usual arrangements of tracking pupils by ability, gender and ethnic origin. Although pupils using English as an additional language make as good progress as their classmates, the school cannot guarantee that this is always the case. A senior member of staff has been appointed as co-ordinator for English as an additional language, but there is no policy to guide the practice, and no special assessment of their spoken and written fluency in English, which takes into account home language factors. In relation to target setting for these pupils, the teachers need to be able to plan work appropriately, and so a clear view of the attainment and potential for pupils' learning is an essential requirement. At present there are no plans for development of this assessment in the school development plan.

#### **The long-term planning for further improvement.**

36. The school has done very well over a long period of time and this is due to the detailed planning for improvement and the overt striving for excellence. Operational management is good, although some priorities do not have specific enough success criteria so that governors can measure what they have achieved. However, the formal planning for the school's improvement mostly covers only one year, and there are few strategic plans that would guide the development over the longer term. An example is the lack of firm planning for the identification and support of any pupil who might be gifted and talented, even though this has been identified as something that the school

wishes to improve. One reason for this is the governors' uncertainty about the funding arrangements from the local education authority until the start of a financial year. Another is the uncertainty about the level of direct funding from the government, through the Standards Fund. The headteacher states that the school, like all primary schools in the local education authority, is heavily dependent on this government cash, and this is a factor inhibiting planning. The known problems of the recruitment of teachers is also hampering long-term planning. All these factors constrain definite plans for future development. However, in an area where it is difficult to attract good teachers, it is even more important to plan for the future in order to match resources to the changing environment. The headteacher and governors are thinking creatively about how to attract the best teachers. They are appropriately considering the salary levels as well as other factors that are beneficial to teachers who are developing their careers. This is good application of the 'principles of best value'.

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

37. Whilst there are no major weaknesses for the school to address, there are two issues that the governors should act upon in order to improve what is already a very effective school.
- Improve the formal procedures for identification and checking on the progress of pupils using English as an additional language by:
    - devising a policy;
    - tracking pupils using home language as a criterion of difference;
    - providing training for the co-ordinator in assessment of the levels of pupils' fluency.  
(Paragraph 35)
  
  - Improve the long-term strategic planning for the school's improvement by:
    - extending the formal planning to cover a longer timescale;
    - liaison with the local education authority about acquiring information about funding for subsequent years;\*
    - exploring ways of recruiting suitably qualified and experienced teachers.\*  
(Paragraph 36)

\*The governing body is already considering these issues, which are a problem for many schools.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	8	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	50	33	17	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 four percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	444
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

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	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	46	50	96

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	42	44	46
	Girls	48	42	48
	Total	90	86	94
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (91)	90 (85)	98 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	38	43	44
	Girls	45	41	47
	Total	83	84	91
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (81)	88 (84)	95 (87)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to 2000.

## Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

## Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
358	0	0
0	0	0
14	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.2
Average class size	28

### Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	76

## Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	774,715
Total expenditure	772,225
Expenditure per pupil	1,809
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,585
Balance carried forward to next year	21,075

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
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	444
Number of questionnaires returned	239
Percentage of questionnaires returned	54

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	43	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	53	3	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	45	0	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	52	7	1	8
The teaching is good.	49	44	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	49	13	3	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	41	5	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	33	50	8	3	7
The school is well led and managed.	46	44	3	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	48	1	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	49	10	0	9