

INSPECTION REPORT

URCHFONT C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Urchfont, Devizes

LEA area : Wiltshire

Unique reference number : 126366

Headteacher : Miss E. R. Templar

Reporting inspector : Mrs Elizabeth Camplin
3586

Dates of inspection : 12th – 13th December 2000

Inspection number : 224289

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:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cuckoo Corner Urchfont Devizes Wiltshire
Postcode:	SN10 4RA
Telephone number:	01380 840793
Fax number:	01380 840793
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. L. E. Cowen
Date of previous inspection:	8 th October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Elizabeth Camplin - O.I.N. 3586	Registered inspector
Peter Brown - O.I.N 9744	Lay inspector
Ken Watson - O.I.N 29378	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

E.B.C. Educational
Westward House
Llanishen Hill
Llanishen
Monmouthshire NP16 6QS

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Urchfont Church of England Primary is a very small school with an admission level of 12. There are 88 pupils on roll, ten of whom are under six years of age. One child attends part-time. The total has increased by 30 since the last inspection in 1996 when the school was removed from special measures. It has now achieved special Beacon School status. As such it provides support for other schools in specifically designated areas, including school improvement, raising standards in literacy and numeracy, assessment procedures and the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Results of baseline assessment between 1997 and 2000 show average attainment on entry compared with a sample of schools nationally. Predicted results of the present Reception group are higher. The percentage of pupils on the register of special educational needs is also broadly in-line with the national average but none has an individual statement. Children's backgrounds are wide-ranging and overall are typical of higher than average, rather than very highly advantaged, social and economic circumstances. The number of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is very low. As a percentage they are within the 8% or less benchmark category used for comparing statutory assessment results with similar schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Urchfont is a highly effective school. Standards are exemplary by the age of eleven and pupils achieve to full capacity in most of their work. The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding and she inspires teaching and learning of a consistently high quality. Despite its high unit costs resources are managed so well that the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils in their final year attain exceptionally high standards in all the statutory assessment tests. They achieved very highly compared with pupils in similar schools nationally in 1999 and 2000.
- Urchfont has earned Beacon School status primarily because of the determination and exceptional vision of the headteacher who is committed to enabling pupils to reach and sustain high standards.
- Pupils behave remarkably well and are eager to participate in all aspects of school life. They quickly gain independence and parents are justifiably proud of how motivated they are to help each other and to work hard.
- Teachers plan and assess carefully and make learning relevant and interesting. They use lesson time to the full to move learning on and the way they help pupils to make progress is sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils develop a mature approach to identifying and resolving practical problems related to everyday life. They extend their speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills at every appropriate opportunity.
- The quality of professional development, mutual support and educational partnership is so good it gets the best out of teachers, support staff, student teachers, governors, parents and volunteer helpers alike.

What could be improved

- Teachers and governors could be even more effective in fulfilling their responsibilities if (a) procedures were strengthened for recording the outcomes of staff meetings and (b) criteria for measuring progress with school development initiatives were more specific.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The improvement in the school since 1994 when it was failing to provide a satisfactory quality of education has been outstanding. The most significant change occurred within two years of implementing the action plan. There has been sustained improvement since the school was last inspected in 1996 by HMI when its substantial progress was clearly acknowledged. It was removed from special measures at

that time and is now deservedly a Beacon School providing an example to others in how to manage school improvement effectively.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A*	A*	A*	A*	well above average A
Mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*	above average B
Science	A*	A*	A*	A*	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

This is an exemplary set of results. Since 1997 pupils' performance has been in the highest 5% nationally. Eleven-year-old pupils either meet or exceed the rigorous statutory targets set by the school in the three core subjects. Standards attained in the lessons seen in English, mathematics, science and history were impressively high at both key stages. They were entirely consistent with the very good quality of work noted in samples of work. Most Reception children achieve well beyond the goals expected. They learn rapidly whether they start school as high, average or lower achievers. This progress is sustained at Key Stage 1. In the situation, at the lower junior stage, where children are learning to adjust to the different teaching style of a temporary teacher the pace at which children are extending their knowledge and skills has slowed down. At Years 5 and 6 pupils make remarkable progress and they fully exploit their learning potential. The most able reach very high standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT and many of the lower achieving pupils also exceed national expectations. All pupils excel in relation to their prior attainment at seven years of age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils want to give of their best at all times. They show very good attitudes to work, especially when it is very challenging and rewarding.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' respect for the school Code of Conduct is excellent. Their behaviour is co-operative, responsible and reliable in lessons and at playtimes. They have earned a reputation for high standards of behaviour when outside in the community.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and the quality of relationships are impressive. Pupils work harmoniously in a variety of groupings and are very caring of each other. They are very good at taking initiative and sharing responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and pupils are always keen to come to school.

At Reception, and at both key stages, pupils are very eager, willing and confident to try out new ideas and support each other. They demonstrate a tremendous pride in their school. Some children have temporarily lost some of their enthusiasm for school since their permanent teacher went on maternity leave in mid-November.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching is of very good quality, especially in English, mathematics and science. This results in children at all three stages having a highly effective environment in which to learn. Pupils are very carefully taught to acquire and apply basic literacy and numeracy skills. There is a particularly successful emphasis at present on supporting writing at Key Stage 1. The headteacher sets a standard that her colleagues work hard to emulate. Their combined commitment and expertise enables most pupils of all levels of prior attainment to maintain very high levels of concentration, interest, effort and independence as they work.

100% of teaching is satisfactory or better; and 56% is very good or better. Pupils make good or better progress in over 80% of lessons. Learning is least effective at the lower junior stage where children are adjusting to the teaching style of a temporary teacher.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. There is a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT. There is also sufficient time for appropriate coverage of foundation subjects and a broad range of extra-curricular activities. The First Aid club is particularly successful.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. All pupils' needs are taken into account. Equality of access irrespective of gender, age and capability is guaranteed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good. The school affords considerable emphasis to its curricular aims in these aspects of development and regularly checks to make sure it is meeting them. Though not identified directly during the inspection the school sees scope to extend opportunities for spiritual and cultural development through music at Key Stage 2.
How well the school cares for its pupils	School procedures for pupils' health and welfare are very good, with particular strengths in the way in which academic and personal development is monitored and promoted. Pupils and their parents are highly appreciative of the guidance and support provided.

The curriculum is organised very effectively to ensure that statutory requirements are met. Curriculum subjects are well documented and are being gradually reviewed and amended to take account of Curriculum 2000. The lack of a scheme for the Foundation Stage is being addressed. Parents at the Parents' Meeting were not conversant with the Child Protection Policy.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is a leader and manager of exceptional ability. She is supported effectively by a very committed staff team who shoulder shared responsibilities very well and who are now ready to become more independent middle managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very effectively led and organised and ensure statutory requirements are met in full. They could expand upon information in the prospectus about the Foundation Stage and the Child Protection Policy.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, staff and governors between them have developed highly effective procedures for checking on how well the school has progressed since its last inspection. Its evaluation of performance could be even better with sharper, more precise, indicators for measuring success.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are targeted skilfully to eliminate weaknesses, however small. The principles of best value are fully understood and very clearly demonstrated.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have a high regard for the headteacher and how she has worked to ensure the school's excellent reputation. • They are very appreciative of the school's welcoming, inclusive ethos and the standards of care shown by all members of staff. • They enjoy participating in curriculum evenings. • They are very positive about the quality of relationships between home and school, pupils and school staff. • They believe that homework helps their children to make progress. • They are pleased when consulted about school policy and future improvement plans. • They are proud of the Parents' Association and its involvement in fund-raising for a building extension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents identify a need for improvements to the buildings and would especially appreciate a covered waiting area. • A small number of parents want more guidance on how to help with mathematics homework. • Some parents would appreciate more written information in the prospectus about curricular provision at the Foundation Stage. • Some have concerns about the impact one teacher's maternity leave is having.

Inspectors agree with all the features of the school identified as strengths and the areas to improve over time. The school has appropriate plans to address issues raised, particularly provision in Class 3. It does its utmost to capitalise on the partnership with parents to ensure every child is happy and receives a high quality education.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils in their final year attain exceptionally high standards in all the statutory assessment tests. They achieved very highly compared with pupils in similar schools nationally in 1999 and 2000.

1. The school enables its pupils to consistently achieve outstandingly high standards at Key Stage 2 in all attainment targets for English, mathematics and science. School expectations are such that teachers and pupils aim for excellence and they work in an environment where aspirations are frequently realised. For four successive years all the results have been in the top 5% nationally.
2. The improvement in results since the headteacher joined the school is remarkable. In 1994 the school failed its first inspection because standards in English were below the national expectation at both key stages and were barely average in mathematics and science. High numbers of pupils were underachieving because their work did not challenge them. Their use of speaking, listening and writing skills was unsatisfactory. When Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) re-inspected the school in 1996 they found that standards had risen significantly. In less than two academic years infant and junior pupils had become increasingly competent in oral skills and those needed for advancement in number, reading, writing and science. The small Year 6 group reached the expected level for their age in the three tested subjects in 1997, and the high majority exceeded it. 100% reached level 5 in science and, for the very first time, a small percentage reached level 6 in English.
3. Many schools might have been content to sustain standards at the levels attained in 1997. This has not been the case at Urchfont. As the school provided the building blocks of essential knowledge, understanding and skills it expected children to capitalise even more on what they knew and could do. Accordingly, results have gone from strength to strength, with over 60% of pupils reaching level 6 in science this year and over 80% reaching level 5 or higher in English and mathematics. This would be a record to be proud of even if pupils' starting points were high and they maintained good progress between being tested at seven and then again at eleven. However, when Urchfont pupils' progress is compared with that of pupils in similar schools, and with their own test outcomes from the end of the infant stage, it is as good as it could be statistically. Comparative data proves pupils made the highest possible gains at Key Stage 2 in 1999 and 2000.
4. Most importantly these excellent results are all achieved in a climate that is supportive rather than pressurised. Pupils want to do well and they certainly give of their best in their time at the school.

Urchfont has earned Beacon School status primarily because of the determination and exceptional vision of the headteacher who is committed to enabling pupils to reach and sustain high standards.

5. When governors were seeking to appoint a new headteacher in 1995 they knew that leadership qualities and skills, and a sure grasp of school management, were going to be vital to restore the confidence of the community in the effectiveness of their local school. Teamwork was unsatisfactory at the time because morale was low. The curriculum was not as well planned and organised as it needed to be and systems were poor for checking on pupils' progress. The interview panel members were encouraged

by the enthusiasm and energy displayed by the successful candidate. They gained confidence and optimism from the clarity with which she outlined her ideas for managing essential change.

6. Governors were not wrong in their estimation. During her time at the school the headteacher has appointed and developed a successful team of teachers and classroom support assistants. She has gained the loyalty of them all, inspiring and rekindling the enthusiasm of staff who were in post prior to her appointment. The team's reputation for effectiveness has been solidly established and this is reflected by other teachers' visits to the school to improve their own practice. Beacon School status is deserved and is making a qualitative difference to standards in other schools, especially in core literacy and numeracy skills, and in the use of control technology.
7. One of the first things the headteacher did after she was appointed was analyse the school's statutory assessment results. She produced useful tables and graphs about the performance of pupils at both key stages. These highlighted where there were similarities and differences in the achievement of boys and girls, or in autumn and spring admissions. They indicated how well pupils performed compared with what was known of their prior attainment. She then carefully consulted staff and parents to seek explanations for patterns in the results. Together they identified where there were gaps in provision. They noted insufficient opportunities to plan and carry out investigations in mathematics, to use reading, speaking and listening skills widely and reinforce learning at home in ways that would encourage children and parents.
8. The headteacher took teaching and learning competence as her starting point. She acknowledged and sustained everything that was working well. She also led by example. She spent her first year working alongside staff demonstrating how activities could be planned to meet the needs of mixed-age group classes. Many training sessions were held on how to link planning and assessment effectively. As agreement was reached on the appropriate strategies to use the headteacher provided regular feedback to staff and governors on how their new systems were working. She also listened to parents' comments about how they wanted to help. Homework became part of the school's effective strategy for encouraging and sustaining progress.
9. The school has continued to deploy this systematic approach to school improvement. The headteacher's analysis of statutory assessment results is as rigorous now as it was then. Teachers have been highly successful in using the methodology advocated in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. They are equally successful in scrutinising samples of work from across the curriculum to pinpoint what children do well and to identify very specific next steps. Consequently the school effectively supports the needs of all its pupils. Lower achieving pupils, a significant percentage of whom are at Years 3 and 4, who need extra help with writing and spelling have individual targets for improvement. Classroom assistants have benefited enormously from special training in the use of support materials and they capitalise on time to reinforce knowledge of letter sounds and blends, accuracy in reading and writing common words and developing increasingly more complex vocabulary.
10. Middle and higher ability pupils have their targets too, and these are demanding both for younger and older children. For example, a Year 1 child was asked to devise a caption for a poster showing the practical use of electricity to light up the home. The quality of the language and use of punctuation was praised. Then the child was advised to consider next time the appropriateness of the letter styles, their size and impact. What, he was asked, is more important, the print or the picture? How can we draw attention to the message? An able Year 6 pupil who could confidently find the volume of a container

of baked beans was challenged to consolidate this work by finding the volume of a range of prisms.

11. Pupils thoroughly enjoy discussing these new challenges with their teachers. The determination to improve is a powerful contributory factor in the progress they make.

Pupils behave remarkably well and are eager to participate in all aspects of school life. They quickly gain independence and parents are justifiably proud of how motivated they are to help each other and to work hard.

12. Inspectors were impressed by the response to school shown by Reception and Year 1 children. They display high standards of behaviour, powers of concentration and a willingness to participate in all class discussions and activities. They listen very attentively but when asked questions their hands shoot up and they often ask sensible questions or offer their own suggestions. They enjoy sharing what they have learnt. Such occasions include going to the board to match words with similar endings or sounds, or explaining to the class how they 'spent' 10 pence on Christmas items. These young children react immediately without any fuss to the teacher's signal to clear up and gather on the carpet at the end of group activities. They respect her request not to interrupt when she is directly teaching a small group. When asked to work independently they do so quietly and are similarly well behaved at assemblies.
13. The way in which children grow in independence and confidence is sustained in the upper Key Stage 1 class. Their response in a history lesson exemplified how well they co-operate, use time productively, adapt to working in new peer groupings, and shoulder special responsibilities. They were divided into five groups of mixed ability to think together about possible answers to five probing questions relating to the Great Fire of London. One child with good writing skills was chosen as the scribe but there was a clear expectation that all members of the group should help decide what information to record. This they did, moving sensibly and quickly when the signal came to transfer to the table where they could find each question in turn. They enjoyed the sense of discovery each time. Their discussions, constantly encouraged and supported by the teacher, were animated and purposeful. Finally when, towards the end of the lesson, they shared their ideas and explanations they listened respectfully and took pleasure in each other's achievement.
14. Pupils in Class 3 are currently getting used to the different teaching style of a temporary teacher as their normal classteacher has recently taken maternity leave. Some are finding the process of adjustment quite difficult and have suffered some loss of enthusiasm for lessons. They show this at the start when they take a few minutes to settle quietly. What is noticeable, however, is the way pupils try to help and encourage each other whenever they can. For example, as they studied the text of a large book about 'Coastline Journeys' to try to pick out main points they shared their understanding of the meaning of the way sand dunes are formed. Group collaboration in the lesson was good. For example, lower achievers gained much satisfaction from sharing their ideas for essential information to include on a party invitation and from reporting back on their opinions about how good one example of an invitation to a birthday celebration was. The activity enabled them to think critically, use their prior knowledge of receiving invitations, and reinforced their awareness of the conventions of good manners when invited to attend special events.
15. In the upper junior class pupils work harmoniously in a variety of groupings and continue to be very caring of each other. It was noted, for example, that a more able pupil spontaneously and unobtrusively went to assist another child when the student teacher

had to temporarily leave the group to attend to a child who was unwell. Older pupils made very effective use of time and showed appropriate respect for safety when working in pairs to plan and carry out an investigation about evaporation and condensation. They help with daily routines such as operating the overhead projector at assembly and clearing away chairs and tables after lunch. They also provide a lead in taking decisions at meetings of the School Council. They collate and pass on pupils' suggestions about such things as how to improve the cloakrooms or develop the outside play area.

16. The reputation children have for exemplary conduct out of school was emphasised by parents, governors and other supporting adults who came into contact with the team. It is clear that, wherever they are, whatever they are doing, pupils respond positively to the school's expectations to take pride in their work, their school and each other.

Teachers plan and assess carefully and make learning relevant and interesting. They use lesson time to the full to move learning on and the way they help pupils to make progress is sometimes outstanding.

17. There were very reliable indicators, even before any lessons were observed, of high quality classroom practice at the Foundation Stage and at Key Stages 1 and 2. After the first introductory visit to the school, portfolios of work in English, mathematics and science were made available so that insight could be gained into how the school assesses developing knowledge, understanding and skills from year to year. The range of work provided evidence of outstanding planning for teaching literacy and numeracy. The breadth and variety in these samples was impressive. Even more importantly, so was the thought invested into evaluating pupils' work in order to explain clearly what they had done well and where they had potential to improve. The purpose of the commentary was clearly to share new learning points with the children.
18. It soon became evident that these moderated samples of work were not done in isolation. They serve a real and continuous purpose. The key points for development are incorporated into individual improvement targets and retained in individual assessment folders. Pupils select samples of their work to place in these folders at regular intervals. As they do they help to check whether they have met their targets and when they know they have succeeded they record this by colouring in a star.
19. By Class 4 pupils are able to independently identify and write some of their own future targets. Relevant examples are to find out more about the style of a particular author, become more accurate in estimating and checking calculations in mathematics, or be more precise and analytical in describing methods for managing investigations in science.
20. The majority of lessons are either very good or excellent. High quality is achieved because teachers capitalise on thorough preparation and planning. They use their own time, the skills of supporting adults, and learning resources, very well. Teachers have the flair and skill to communicate learning intentions effectively and in most lessons their management of pupils is excellent. They deploy pupils effectively in different types of groupings, often organised by ability, but at other times by mixed gender or friendship groups of two, three or four. They are invariably rigorous in their own use of subject specific vocabulary, and probing questioning skills. They expect children to concentrate, listen intently and use the same repertoire of language as they speak or write.
21. In a mathematics lesson, for example, children from Year 1 and 2 were introduced to Carroll diagrams. The lower achieving group were taught how to sort and classify odd

and even numbers more or less than five, whilst the more able were challenged to use the same method to sort numbers that were greater or fewer than 55. At the end of the lesson this group accurately described how they had made their Carroll diagram. Then they questioned the rest of the class about their understanding of what they had learnt. These older infants were similarly encouraged to use appropriate terminology in history such as the term 'eye witness' when discussing the writing of the diarist Samuel Pepys. They discovered the meaning of archaeologist and archaeological dig when studying a poster to find out more about how historical artefacts are sometimes discovered. These six and seven-year-olds have a good understanding of the division of time into years, decades and centuries, and they already distinguish between sources of reliable evidence, hearsay and biased opinion.

22. The impressive emphasis on subject vocabulary was often demonstrated in Class 4. One example was when working with Roald Dahl's text 'George's Marvellous Medicine'. Pupils were expected to critically evaluate his use of words to describe the sounds made by the ingredients in the magic mixture. The teacher asked how the use of language could be described and also why the passage was difficult to read aloud. One pupil suggested it was because the author had used so much alliteration but the teacher probed further to find out whether the class could improve on the answer. Back came the suggestion it was because of onomatopoeic words. This terminology correctly described how in the particular extract some words echoed sounds associated with their meaning.
23. Finally, at the end of lessons, teachers are usually vigilant in checking understanding of new concepts or ideas, summing up and acknowledging what has been achieved. They then prepare pupils for the way they will build on their learning in the next lesson.

Pupils develop a mature approach to identifying and resolving practical problems related to everyday life. They extend their speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills at every appropriate opportunity.

24. Numerous examples were seen of children's developing understanding of how to use speech, number, mathematical concepts and different kinds of writing effectively. They are clearly able, when required, to think quickly, logically and rationally. They respond creatively and imaginatively in many ways to express ideas, opinions, feelings and emotions.
25. These skills were seen to begin at Reception where children were acting out Christmas traditions. This interest was fostered by the skilled deployment of a classroom assistant. She guided the children's imaginative play, maximising the use of the classroom's 'Santa's Grotto' and a wall chart containing the names of children in other countries who were awaiting parcels from Santa Claus. Children chose the gifts, wrapped them up and 'delivered' them, matching them up to pictures and names on the map. They tried hard to describe where the toys were going and why they had chosen them.
26. Analysis of assessment results at Key Stage 1 shows that children have in the past been relatively weak in spelling and writing compared with very high standards in reading and mathematics. Therefore much attention has been given to addressing these aspects of learning. The emphasis is firmly on writing for real purposes, looking for repetition and patterns in words and the structure of writing, and on developing self-checking strategies. One such example is Year 1's work on instructions. Some children were asked to work independently to compose and order lunch-time routines and expectations. They thought logically about how to draw, order and caption their ideas

correctly using the present tense ending 'ing' to convey the sequence of steps from setting the tables to eating sandwiches. The teacher's commentary showed children had achieved their task and made good use of either a dictionary or wordlists to check and correct spelling.

27. The English portfolio contained excellent pieces of work by older pupils. They were wide-ranging and included current affairs, moral issues and job applications as well as poetry, fiction and drama. In each case the writing was well structured and convincing. The presentation matched the purpose and also exemplified some effective use of information technology and graphics to produce promotional leaflets or brochures. Pupils composed key statements, for example, about the benefits and disadvantages of watching television and then set out their arguments for and against in precise bullet points. In his clearly headed summary one boy sought the views of his peers on the strengths of each carefully argued case. Clearly the level of debate and exchange of ideas leading up to this exercise had prompted much serious thought and reflection and resulted in some interesting and valid conclusions.
28. In the mathematics' portfolio there was work covering virtually every aspect of the programmes of study but always with a strong emphasis on attainment target 1, using and applying mathematics. Some of the youngest children had successfully worked out how many apples were needed if all Year 1 pupils were to receive half an apple each at a class party. In response to a higher level of challenge older infants recorded their methods for working out how many litres of squash would be needed for every child in the school to have a cupful on sports day. Younger juniors investigated the area of the running track. They calculated how much additional field area would be needed to extend the 8-lane track to 10 lanes. The oldest and more able measured extra tarmac added to the playground area and calculated the cost per square metre of the additional play space. Interest in football prompted an investigation of match results. One pair of pupils compiled a league table and used the computer programme 'Information Workshop' to produce a graph showing how successful their chosen clubs had been in earning points and ranking.
29. In one excellent lesson Year 5 and 6 pupils followed up a shopping trip for party food by calculating the cost of individual items in multi-packs. They used good strategies such as rounding up and down, dividing by six and using simple percentages such as 50% and 25%. The most able ended the lesson understanding that bills include value added tax of 17.5% and found they could work out how much this represented of given totals.

The quality of professional development, mutual support and educational partnership is so good it gets the best out of teachers, support staff, student teachers, governors, parents and volunteer helpers alike.

30. During the inspection the team met with many adults associated with the school. Discussions highlighted how positive they felt about the range of opportunities available to develop their skills and practice or to work collaboratively for the good of the pupils.
31. The headteacher was very pleased with the way in which governors had set about negotiating her performance management targets to raise standards in spelling and writing. She was also impressed by how stringently governors had sought evidence of success in meeting them.
32. Teachers were enthusiastic about their shared work on planning and assessment, their training with cluster schools on literacy and numeracy, and most of all their experience of observing and providing feedback to each other about their lessons.

33. Classroom assistants acknowledged how helpful educational courses in the use of language materials has been in enabling them to improve their support for children who require additional help with spelling and writing. They value the regular meetings with teaching colleagues to discuss their contribution to lessons and to share perceptions of how well children are responding to their input.
34. Governors learn a lot about how successfully school policies are translated into practice when they visit lessons. The chair of governors remarked on the joy of seeing children's sheer excitement as they developed skills in mental mathematics. She also explained how welcome governors feel if they attend staff meetings to discuss progress with action related to the School Development Plan.
35. Student teachers on their first teaching practice are wholeheartedly grateful for the high quality of training they are receiving from the school. They acknowledge how well briefed they are about the teachers' plans they will work from or those they themselves will need to prepare for lessons. They feel they have learnt about many teaching strategies as well as about the content of the primary curriculum. They have been impressed at the variety of imaginative activities the teachers are able to identify for any given topic or subject.
36. Volunteer helpers fully enjoy their involvement in lessons and other school activities. The Parents Association has raised a considerable sum of money to add to 'seed' money grant for an extension to the building. Parents and friends of the school were seen working alongside teachers. Graphic accounts were given too of parents and governors giving up part of a weekend to fulfil the School Council's request for redecorated cloakrooms. They recently worked together to paint the walls and ceilings in bright primary colours, much to the children's obvious appreciation.
37. This spirit of co-operation will be fully demonstrated on the last Friday of term when staff and governors will cook and serve the Christmas lunch and then organise a party on the following day in the Village Hall. For all concerned the reward is seeing how their efforts help the children. In the words of one parent at the Parents' Meeting, they and the children are astounded by the learning opportunities offered at Urchfont.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Teachers and governors could be even more effective in fulfilling their responsibilities if (a) procedures were strengthened for recording the outcomes of staff meetings and (b) criteria for measuring progress with school development initiatives were more specific.

38. Staff and governors are highly proficient in analysing and comparing test results and were quick to identify relative weaknesses in the achievement of 7-year-olds in writing and spelling in 2000. Their conclusions about the reasons for this and subsequent detailed action plans were valid and clear.
39. The co-ordinators already have proof that remedial action is having the desired impact on standards. They have introduced the same easy to maintain system for tracking pupils' progress at Key Stage 1 that they have deployed so successfully at Key Stage 2. Children who display poor spelling skills now have a specific programme closely matched to their needs. The headteacher has test data to show that they have made significant gains since September in the accuracy of spelling words from the high frequency list. Teacher assessments are now more detailed and suggestions for

improvement are 'user friendly' from the perspective of the children. The formation of a more able literacy group has resulted in better teaching of more advanced writing skills. Children now have a good understanding of what they must do to plan, draft and revise their work to make stories lively and interesting as well as grammatically correct.

40. The information given above is known to the teachers who meet together every week. They share their conclusions about this and every subject action plan in depth and decide how what they have noted affects future planning. The outcomes of these discussions are not, however, systematically recorded. This means that part-time teachers, temporary teachers, and classroom support assistants, do not have easy access to information about what has been reviewed and what decisions have been taken as a consequence. They usually find out informally but this is not foolproof and is an inefficient aspect of communication. In the case of a temporary teacher joining the team in mid-November, and a teacher whose contract is for only two sessions per week, some decisions have been missed or explained only briefly. Potentially this could have an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and learning in their classes or teaching groups. The situation could be quickly remedied by keeping minutes so that an effective record is regularly maintained.
41. The School Development Plan is well organised. It takes as its focus the complete range of management responsibilities, and sets a clear agenda for moving the school forward. It shows how resources and funds are targeted to supporting action for improvement. It describes a process of review to ensure that policies and practice that work efficiently can be maintained.
42. Targets and success criteria are identified for every School Development Plan initiative. However, some targets are broad and the criteria too open-ended to make the task of measuring improvement in standards simple. For example, the aim in music is to raise standards and the success criteria is to produce a scheme of work that can be easily used to support planning, teaching and learning. The co-ordinator, whose main class responsibility is at Key Stage 1, has recently started to teach junior pupils with the intention of using her expertise to ensure appropriate progression and continuity in the programmes of study. Discussions revealed that she has already identified aspects of achievement at Key Stage 2 that she wants to improve. She has noted that some pupils are either reluctant or find it difficult to explain their views and feelings about different musical styles and forms. However, this clear attainment objective is not part of her written action plan whereas an audit of resources is included. The success criteria could be that by the end of next term older pupils will have responded well to the appraisal focus, made good use of new resources, and become far more proficient in expressing views about music than was the case in the previous term.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43. The school should now :-

Enable teachers and governors to be more effective in fulfilling their responsibilities by :-

- i. Strengthening procedures for sharing the outcomes of staff meetings;
(*paragraph reference number: 40*)
- ii. devising more specific success criteria for subject action plans that predict easily

identifiable gains in standards achieved or the quality of teaching and learning.
(*paragraph reference number: 42*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	44	25	19	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

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)		88
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		1

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		16

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	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.60
National comparative data	5.20

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.30
National comparative data	0.50

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

Attainment data for boys and girls at both key stages, in the form of numerical tables, is omitted from the report because the number in each gender group is fewer than ten. This complies with DfEE Circulars 7/99 & 8/99.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	8	8	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (75)	100 (88)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (88)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	6	7	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (100)	92 (100)	92 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	11	11	11

Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (82)	85 (73)	85 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	78
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, 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)	4.20
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	185838
Total expenditure	163263
Expenditure per pupil	1835
Balance brought forward from previous year	40692
Balance carried forward to next year	63267

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	88
Number of questionnaires returned	57

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	25	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	82	18	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	70	26	4	0	0
The teaching is good.	89	11	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	74	21	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	89	11	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	72	26	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	89	11	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	18	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	32	0	0	5