

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KIMBOLTON ST JAMES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Leominster

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116890

Headteacher: Mr C Maurice

Reporting inspector: Mr P B McAlpine  
21552

Dates of inspection: 16-18 October 2000

Inspection number: 224782

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 aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kimbolton Leominster Herefordshire
Postcode:	HR6 0HQ
Telephone number:	01568 612691
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Pellow
Date of previous inspection:	15 October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a very small, popular school that has grown gradually in size since the previous inspection. There are 86 boys and girls aged from four to eleven years, organised in four classes. The school serves a large rural area. Economically and socially, the backgrounds of the pupils are very mixed; about one third are from farming backgrounds. One quarter of the pupils come to school by bus. All the pupils are white. Standards on entry fluctuate from year to year; they are broadly average when annual and individual differences are smoothed out. About 30 per cent are on the special educational needs register, which is above average; none have statements of special educational need but almost one in ten pupils at the school receives additional support from the local authority.

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

This is a good school. The pupils value education; they are keen, eager and well motivated. Their achievements are greater than national expectations. The educational value added by the teachers raises standards from average overall on entry to well above average by the age of eleven. The teaching is good. Learning is good. The management sets a clear purpose and direction to the work. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Standards at age eleven have risen over the past four years; the test results for eleven-year-olds in English, mathematics, and science are very high compared to other schools.
- The teaching is good and there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils are very good.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

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

- Standards in writing among the four to seven-year-olds lag behind those in reading and mathematics and are not as high as they should be.
- The use of assessment information to check on pupils' progress and to trigger extra support where necessary is underdeveloped, especially between the ages of four and seven.

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

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

Improvement has been good. Standards throughout the school have risen. This is particularly noticeable in the test results for eleven-year-olds when compared to the previous inspection, especially in English. High standards compared to other schools have been sustained over the past four years. The teaching has improved. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively, which is one of the reasons for the rising standards. Increased emphasis is placed on identifying and providing for pupils with special educational needs. Additional literacy support is provided for pupils in Years 3 and 4 where necessary. Together, these improvements are leading to fewer children failing to attain national expectations by the age of eleven and to more pupils attaining beyond those expectations. The four to seven age group is now organised into two classes instead of one, which is contributing to the rising standards in the infant key stage. The headteacher, his staff, and members of the governing body have responded positively to the issues for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The shortcomings in general policies and curricular documentation have been successfully remedied and are contributing to generally good levels of continuity and progression in learning. A broad curriculum has been successfully maintained at the same time as giving due priority to literacy and numeracy. The arrangements for checking the quality of teaching have improved and are satisfactory. Alterations to the buildings have improved the general learning environment.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	B	A*	A*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	
Science	A	A	A	A	

Standards have risen since the previous inspection. High performance among eleven-year-old pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has been sustained. This commendable success is because of good and very good teaching throughout the school. Although there are annual variations in proportions that attain expected national levels, mainly because of different numbers of pupils with special educational needs, particularly pupils experiencing difficulty with literacy, the proportion exceeding the expected national level has steadily increased each year. The results in English in 1999 were in the top five per cent of all schools nationally. The trend of improvement in results at age eleven has continued in 2000. The high standards in English in 2000 partly reflect very high attainment in reading; standards in writing are not as high as reading but are, nevertheless, well above the national average. At age seven, results in 1999 were broadly average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics; the proportion with special educational needs was relatively high. In 2000, the results among seven-year-olds are a significant improvement; they are much better than most schools in reading, better in mathematics, and broadly the same in writing. There were no significant variations in attainment between pupils of different gender or background.

The long-term achievement of the junior pupils is very good in all of the core subjects. When this achievement is compared with similar schools it shows that the educational value added in the seven to eleven age group is much better than most schools. In English, the 1999 results were in the top five per cent of similar schools. Between the ages of four and seven, achievements are generally good, especially in reading, with nearly all seven-year-old pupils in 2000 attaining results that were broadly consistent with their level of attainment on entry. Such comparisons in previous years show that the educational value added in the infant age groups was broadly the same as other schools between 1997 and 1999. The improvements in 2000 provide early indications that the value being added is increasing.

The standard of current work among eleven-year-olds is very high in reading, writing and mathematics. There are more pupils with special educational needs this year than last and the results for 2001 are not predicted to be quite as high as in 2000. The targets for this year are appropriate and challenging and the school is on course to meet its targets. The pupils with special needs, and those with low scores in previous tests, are well supported; nearly all are keeping up, or catching up, with national expectations. At age seven, current work is good in reading and mathematics but is not as high as it should be in writing. The small amount of work seen in science and the other subjects shows standards throughout the school are generally good, with art and design, design and technology, and music being especially strong among the non-core subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils generally take great interest in learning. They are conscientious, enthusiastic, and well motivated. The vast majority of parents report that their children like school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are attentive in lessons. They are polite to each other throughout the school day. No disorderly conduct, bullying or sexist behaviour was seen. The pupils say that there is no bullying and that the teachers deal with the very occasional argument and disagreement between children quickly. There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection.

Aspect	Comment (continued from previous page)
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Levels of self-confidence are very high. Pupils are appropriately involved in school routines and carry out their responsibilities well. They show good initiative, help each other, and can competently plan and organise their work. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good and consistent throughout the school.
Attendance	Very good. Well above the national average. Almost no unauthorised absence. Good punctuality.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is good. All of the teaching is satisfactory or better: this includes 73 per cent that is good and a further 20 per cent that is very good; the amount of good or better teaching, 93 per cent, is very high indeed. The quality of teaching is much better than the average national picture and has improved since the previous inspection.

There is great consistency to the teaching throughout the school, and this is one of its strengths; the very good teaching is in the seven to eleven age groups, with most being in Years 5 and 6. The teaching in English and mathematics is good throughout, with more than one third that is very good. Key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively in every year group. The teaching of writing is a strong feature in the seven to eleven age group. In the four to seven age group, not enough time is given to independent writing; this is mainly a curriculum planning issue rather than one of teaching quality. In the good or better lessons, the learning needs of all pupils are well met. Good teaching is provided for pupils with special educational needs and those needing additional literacy support. The pace of learning for pupils since joining their current teachers is good in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2. Being able to organise the infant pupils into two classes in the current and previous school year has made it more manageable for teachers to meet the different learning needs of the various year groups. Learning accelerates in Years 3 and 4 and is very good in Years 5 and 6.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. The shortcomings in documentation and planning identified at the previous inspection have been remedied. Continuity and progression in learning is effectively provided for in the planning. Educational visits and extra-curricular provision are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The guidance in the code of practice is followed. Individual education plans are of good quality. The support in lessons and when pupils are taught in small groups is effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. A significant strength. Collective worship and religious education meet statutory requirements. Pupils are effectively taught right from wrong, to become responsible members of a community, and to appreciate cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school where pupils are well looked after. The arrangements for child protection and for health and safety are appropriate.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has a class commitment for half of each week and supports learning in other classes for some of the remainder. He leads well through the example of his own teaching. The academic standards and the quality of teaching have improved in the three years since the headteacher was appointed. The teachers are united and work well together as a team. There is clear educational direction to the work of the school. Subject management is satisfactory. The roles of key stage coordinators are only partly developed and they do not give enough time to checking rigorously the progress of pupils from year to year. The impact of this shortcoming is noticeable mainly in writing.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The work of the governors is appropriately managed and they work well together. A range of committees and regular, if informal, visits helps keep the governors aware of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school; this is good practice. The governors' involvement in school development planning has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher checks the quality of the teaching in every class regularly. Test information is used to check overall standards but there are no adequate measures of progress.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The arrangements to manage the budget and support educational developments are appropriate. The principles of best value are applied appropriately.

The accommodation has been recently improved to create a more welcoming learning environment. However, noise levels in the junior classrooms are high because of poor acoustics, inadequate screens between the teaching areas, and an absence of carpets. In both of the junior classrooms, noise from the neighbouring classroom can sometimes make it difficult for pupils to hear and maintain concentration. The teachers have tried to minimise the problem by changing the location of blackboards, for example, but this has not been successful. The school does not have a hall suitable for physical education, or big enough to assemble all the pupils together, but uses a well-equipped community hall about one quarter of a mile from the school. The route to the hall is alongside a very busy main road. Reasonable measures to promote safety have been implemented; there is a well maintained, if narrow, pavement, flashing yellow hazard lights, road-signs, and the teachers wear fluorescent jackets. Even so, the inspectors have concerns about the pupils' safety when walking to the hall and about the suitability of the access to this provision in inclement weather.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The behaviour of the pupils is good.</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The teaching overall is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships between teachers and pupils are not consistently good throughout the school; because of this, some children do not like school.</li> <li>• The children's academic progress slows in Years 5 and 6.</li> <li>• Not enough information about the curriculum and about children's progress in school is provided.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities is narrow.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the parents positive views about behaviour, the personal development of pupils, the management and the teaching. The inspectors disagree with the views about relationships between teachers and pupils. Relationships are consistently good in every class; this is a very successful characteristic of the teaching. No child was found who did not like school. Some noise levels, however, can be daunting to younger pupils. The inspectors disagree with parents' views about academic progress in Years 5 and 6; progress accelerates in these year groups and the pupils benefit from very good quality teaching. They partly agree with parents' views about the provision of information. Annual reports to parents are of good quality; strong features of these are the clear statements about what children should learn next. Although not covered by statutory requirements, the amount of curricular information of the type that helps parents support their children's learning effectively is less than is commonly found. Inspectors disagree with parents' views about extra curricular

activities; the range is good, given the small number of teachers.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Standards at age eleven have risen over the past four years; the test results for eleven-year-olds in English, mathematics, and science are very high compared to other schools.**

1. High performance among eleven-year-old pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has been sustained over the past four years. While there are variations from one year to the next in the proportion attaining the expected national levels, mainly because of different numbers of pupils with special educational needs, particularly pupils experiencing difficulty with reading and writing, the proportion exceeding the expected level has increased each year. The previous inspection found standards to be good in English and average in mathematics and science. Standards now are much higher in each of these core subjects; the results in English in 1999 were in the top five per cent of schools nationally.

2. The trend of improvement in results at age eleven has continued in 2000. In each of the subjects tested, 86 per cent of the pupils attained the national level expected of a typical eleven-year-old. In English, 71 per cent attained a higher level; this amount of high attainment is significantly greater than most other schools. In mathematics and science, more than half of the year group attained a higher level; and this too is well above the norm. The high standards in English in 2000 partly reflect very high attainment in reading; standards in writing are not as high as in reading but they are, nevertheless, well above the national average. A small proportion of pupils who joined the school in Year 6 reduced the results in all subjects in 2000. Every pupil who joined the juniors at the normal time attained or exceeded the expected national level in every subject tested.

3. The long-term achievement of the junior pupils, a comparison of what they know at seven with their knowledge when aged eleven, is very good in all of the core subjects. All of the eleven-year-olds tested in 2000 had increased their knowledge and understanding by the nationally expected amounts since the age of seven and a significant proportion show an increase greater than expectations. When this level of achievement is compared with similar schools it shows that the educational value added by the teachers in the junior year groups is much greater than most schools. This positive picture of value added emerges from analysis of results from previous year groups and from the achievement of pupils currently in Years 4 and 5. Compared to similar schools, the results in 1999 were well above the norm in English, mathematics and science; in English, the 1999 results were in the top five per cent.

4. The standard of current work among eleven-year-old pupils is very high in reading, writing and mathematics. Nearly all eleven-year-old pupils can read a range of texts independently. They understand the main themes and events, using inference and deduction to broaden their comprehension of the text and to help identify unfamiliar words. More than half the pupils are already writing at the level expected by the end of the school year, with a significant number in reach of, or already attaining, a higher level. One girl, for example, wrote at length a ghost story that sustained suspense appropriately for the genre, used her very wide vocabulary effectively, choosing adverbs and adjectives powerfully to evoke the imagination of the reader. Her sentences were well constructed, often complex, and with accurate punctuation and spelling. Another pupil wrote a balanced argument with the content organised appropriately into paragraphs. When talking, the eleven-year-old pupils are very confident. They understand the main points in discussions and provide considerable detail to support the comments they make. Several pupils showed much delight at having poems they had written published in an anthology of children's poems. To reinforce what they were saying, they found the actual poems in their exercise books, talked through the drafting and editing process, explaining their choices, and quoted the number of poems submitted for selection to illustrate the extent of their achievement. In mathematics, every pupil in the age group can, for example, quickly and fluently convert percentages into decimals or fractions and vice versa. One boy explained that seven-twentieths is the same as 35 per cent and that he had converted the fraction by multiplying both the numerator and denominator by five. The work of eleven-year-old pupils shows that as they start their final year of school they already have the knowledge of long multiplication, simplification of fractions, and decimals that is expected by the end of the year.

5. There are more eleven-year-old pupils with special educational needs this year than last and the results for 2001 are not predicted to be quite as high as in 2000. The targets for 2001 are appropriate and challenging and the school is on course to meet its targets. The pupils with special needs, and those with low scores in previous tests, are well supported; nearly all are keeping up, or catching up, with national expectations. This reflects the appropriateness of the work given to them in lessons and the effectiveness of extra support provided by teachers, including the headteacher, and by learning support staff.

6. The small amount of work seen in science and the other subjects shows standards in this age group to be generally good, with art and design, design and technology, and music being especially strong among the non-core subjects. The standard of singing is high, and displays of pupils' artwork show their good control of paint.

### **The teaching is good and there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs**

7. The teaching is good. None of the teaching is less than satisfactory; 73 per cent is good and a further 20 per cent is very good. The amount of good or better teaching, 93 per cent, is very high indeed. The quality of teaching is much better than the average national picture reported in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools most recent annual report. All of the teaching at the time of the previous inspection was satisfactory or better but one or two shortcomings were identified in planning and in meeting the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment in the same class. These shortcomings have been largely remedied and, for this reason, the quality of teaching has improved.

8. There is great consistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school, and this is one of its strengths. The very good teaching seen during the inspection is in the seven to eleven age groups, with most being in Years 5 and 6. In a very good literacy lesson in Years 5 and 6, the pupils were very effectively taught the characteristics of instructional writing. The teacher's subject knowledge was extensive and this enabled her to ask pertinent questions and provide clear, precise explanations. When praising pupils, she explained clearly the reasons for the praise and this helped other pupils understand what they must do to be successful. The work built effectively on the previous lesson in which pupils had learnt about imperative verbs. Preparation was meticulous, with a series of relevant questions for different pupils identified in advance of the teaching. In a very good lesson in Years 3 and 4, the pupils quickly learned about synonyms and how to use a thesaurus to find different words with comparable meanings. The plenary session thoroughly involved all pupils, showed how well motivated they were, and helped confirm for the pupils the progress they had made by stating the lesson objectives.

9. The teaching in English and mathematics is good, with more than one third that is very good. Key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively in every year group. In a good lesson in Year 2, the pupils were taught the characteristics of regular three-dimensional shapes through shared explanation and demonstration, which drew attention to features such as the shape of faces and the number of corners and edges. Guided practical work helped pupils to model the shapes and understand, through their senses, the significance of corners, faces and edges to different regular solid shapes. Independent tasks led to pupils consolidating their knowledge of the various characteristics. The plenary was well used to establish the extent of learning by showing how the lesson objectives had been achieved. In a good lesson in the Reception Year and Year 1, the teacher shared her high expectations for learning with the pupils, for example, by identifying clearly the key words that she wanted the pupils to learn. Good checking of pupils' knowledge led to a child who confused 'b' and 'd' being given extra teaching. Good relationships, effective role-play by the teacher, and a letter recognition game played at the end of the lesson, helped to make the learning fun and efficient.

10. In the good or better lessons, the learning needs of all pupils are well met. The teachers constantly check that all pupils are involved and that their concentration is sustained. Resources are used well. In a good design and technology lesson taken by the headteacher, for example, resources were used very effectively to teach pupils about levers and basic techniques for making joints that move. Good teaching is provided for pupils with special educational needs and those needing additional literacy support. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are appropriately detailed and used to guide work in lessons. The progress of pupils on the special needs register is reviewed regularly and the records show how sensible decisions, such as providing additional literacy support, tailored help for these pupils and increased their progress.

11. The pace of learning for pupils since joining their current teachers is good in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2. Their exercise books show regular and appropriate gains in knowledge over the course of the previous few months. The headteacher now has the funds to be able to organise the infant pupils into two classes. This organisation of pupils into classes is making it more manageable for teachers to meet the different learning needs of the various year groups and is one of the main reasons for the improved results at age seven. The pupils' work and their performance in lessons shows that learning accelerates in Years 3 and 4 and is very rapid in Years 5 and 6, reflecting the strength of the teaching.

## **The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils is very good**

12. The parents at the pre-inspection meeting, and in their responses to the questionnaire, think that the behaviour of the pupils is very good and that, with very few exceptions, they enjoy coming to school. The inspectors fully agree with these positive views of parents. This level of behaviour has been sustained since the previous inspection.

13. Pupils arrive at school on time and immediately become involved socially on the playground. Levels of respect for each other's possessions and for school property are high. In discussions, pupils say that the school is very good and that they like the teachers and the lessons. They think that the teachers trust them and they appreciate the opportunities that teachers give them to take some decisions for themselves. The pupils report no bullying; they say that minor disagreements are quickly sorted out by the headteacher.

14. The pupils are very well behaved at playtimes; relationships are pleasant and friendly. Older pupils take turns to help out with younger pupils and carry out their responsibilities well. In the older pupils' play area, boys and girls share the same space for football and netball without dispute, organising themselves sensibly and purposefully. Several boys play with model vehicles made from construction kits; their play is respected and unobstructed. In lessons, all of the pupils demonstrate interest and intellectual engagement with the teaching, reflecting the good skill that teachers demonstrate in motivating pupils. At playtime and in the classroom, pupils work in an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour, bullying or sexism. This is because relationships between children and with teachers are very constructive. There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection.

15. The teaching encourages pupils to reflect on what they do. The younger pupils show that they feel secure in the classroom and playground. Older pupils are confident in their own abilities and know what they must do to improve. In discussions, the older pupils demonstrate that they are developing a set of values that help them become self-disciplined. School routines are well established and pupils show considerable initiative in helping these routines to function.

16. Attendance is well above average. There is very little unauthorised absence and punctuality is good. The data shows that attendance has been consistently high for the past three years. At least one third of pupils have perfect attendance records, which is excellent. The registers are correctly completed and up to date. The unauthorised absence reflects two pupils whose parents took them on extended holidays in term time.

## **The provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good**

17. Spiritual development is well provided for through collective worship and religious education. The provision is inspected and reported on separately. Statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education are met. Links with the church are good. The pupils regularly visit and participate in services, such as harvest thanksgivings.

18. The provision for moral development effectively teaches pupils right from wrong. One of the strengths of the provision is the high expectations that teachers have of the pupils and the good role models the teachers provide. The pupils readily talk about the playground and classroom rules, demonstrating an understanding of the reasons for the rules and an acceptance of them. The teaching is helping the pupils, particularly the older pupils, to understand the values and principles that underpin the rules and conduct towards one another. In a good personal, social and health education lesson in Years 5 and 6, the pupils discussed bullying and how to respond to it. The teacher asked questions like "is it better to keep quiet about bullying or to tell someone". The pupils' responses were very thoughtful. One boy commented, "if you keep quiet it keeps on happening". The responses showed that all of the pupils had developed a strong sense of fairness and justice and had acquired an understanding of the underlying principles that differentiate right from wrong. By sharing experiences, the teaching helped pupils to develop personal strategies to deal with difficult situations, and to realise that what often seem to be personal experiences are common to others.

19. The very effective provision for social development is helping pupils become responsible members of a community. This is very much helped by the small size of the school, which is appropriately exploited by the headteacher and his staff to create a strong sense of interdependence. This emerges in the playground, for example, where older pupils help keep younger ones safe and occupied, in the pupils' involvement in school routines through jobs such as milk monitor, and in corporate preparations for events such as world book day. There are good links with local churches, which lead to opportunities for pupils to make appropriate contributions to communal activities. A relatively wide range of extra-curricular activities, including competitive sports and

residential outdoor education visits, helps develop collaborative skills and teamwork. Links have been established with a school in Tanzania; the headteacher from that school has visited and talked to pupils about her school; one of the staff is to visit the school in Tanzania as part of a cultural exchange. Links of this kind help raise awareness of the global community, in this instance through the Christian community, raising awareness of the needs of others in the process, as well as providing insights into other cultures.

20. The cultural development of the pupils is well promoted through the curriculum, particularly through history, geography, art and music. The pupils are acquiring a broad knowledge of the cultural heritage of this country through their studies of different periods. This is helped by regular visits to museums and places of local interest. Studies in art introduce the pupils to western artists such as Manet, Paul Klee and Picasso. The pupils also learn about art from other parts of the world, including Egyptian wall paintings, Islamic wall and floor tiles, African textiles, and Australian aboriginal art. In music, they have the opportunity to learn about a range of composers and musical styles, such as American blues, jazz, and classical music. Visitors, including artists in residence such as those who provided a Shakespearean workshop, enhance the provision.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Standards in writing among the four to seven-year-olds lag behind those in reading and mathematics and are not as high as they should be**

21. At age seven, current work is good in reading and mathematics but not as high as it should be in writing. In the 1999 national tests at age seven, the results were well below average in writing, mainly because of the number of pupils with special educational needs. In 2000, when there were fewer with special needs, standards in writing rose to about average. However, the same children managed to achieve above average standards in reading and mathematics. In writing, about one third of the pupils who attained the national level did so with relatively low pass scores and only 10 per cent attained a higher than expected level. This compares with 60 per cent attaining a higher level in reading and 30 per cent in mathematics, showing that there is underachievement in writing compared to reading and mathematics. A comparison of test scores at age seven with the same children's baseline assessment scores when aged four shows that several of them should have achieved more in writing.

22. The teaching of writing is a strong feature throughout the junior years. In the infant years, more time needs to be given to independent writing; this is mainly a curriculum planning issue rather than one of teaching quality. The children's work shows relatively few opportunities to write more than a single sentence independently and too many occasions when they write only single word answers on worksheets. When children do write, it is largely about recent events that have happened to them. The pupils are taught to write stories and letters but this does not happen often enough. There are only a few instances when they write at length in other subjects, especially in Year 2, when more opportunities are necessary for pupils to develop the ability to sustain their writing. The teachers' planning for literacy shows good provision for reading and basic literacy skills but not enough provision for shared and guided writing.

### **The use of assessment information to check on pupils' progress and to trigger extra support where necessary is underdeveloped, especially between the ages of four and seven**

23. The arrangements for assessing attainment are satisfactory but the information gathered is not used sufficiently to check the progress made by individuals or by groups; nor are measures of achievement used to check the overall performance of each key stage or the school as a whole. At a classroom level, this may lead to teachers not noticing any slowing of progress, especially by more able pupils. At a management level, it can lead to inefficient school development planning.

24. In a school of this size, with year groups that are always small and sometimes very small, average attainment results can be a misleading guide to performance because one or two individuals can have a disproportionate effect. In baseline assessments, for example, when individual differences were smoothed out, the average for one group of entrants was slightly higher than the average for the county. Close examination showed that about 50 per cent of them had typical attainment for their age and 30 per cent had low attainment. Only about 20 per cent had higher than typical attainment but their individual scores were so high that it shifted the group score into the above average category. In 1998, the results of national tests at age seven were below average, which might indicate that the infant key stage is not doing very well. However, 40 per cent of that year group had special educational needs. When the same pupils were tested at age nine, using optional national tests, every one of them had increased their knowledge by expected amounts and those with low attainment

were catching up on national expectations. This measurement shows that the achievement of the pupils is good even though their attainment is still below average; this is a more accurate reflection of the performance of the school and is consistent with the good teaching that is found.

25. Throughout the school, the teachers are building up a detailed profile of test and assessment scores for each pupil; this very good practice has been happening for about eighteen months. The infant teachers are using the information from baselines to set individual targets for attainment at age seven; the junior teachers use the seven year old test results to set targets for age eleven; this, too, is good practice. The information collected in the infants relates mainly to reading; there are no interim checks at the end of the Reception Year or Year 1 in writing or mathematics. The information in reading has not been used to check on progress towards the targets, or to revise the targets where this is necessary. Several five and six year old pupils have reading ages that are two or more years in advance of expectations but their target at age seven has not been revised upwards. Other pupils appear to show little difference in their reading attainment between the checks made at the end of the Reception Year and those in Year 1; this apparent slowing of progress shown by the records has not been investigated. While the teachers are confident they know the pupils well and that all pupils are progressing appropriately in reading, and no evidence other than the records is found to contradict this, the systems for ensuring that progress is monitored nevertheless lack rigour.

26. In the 2000 national tests at age seven, a comparison of each child's result with their baseline score on entry shows that their achievements in reading were at least satisfactory and for most they were good. A similar picture is found for mathematics. In writing, however, several pupils did not do as well as their baseline scores suggested they might, and certainly not as well as they managed in reading. The current system for checking on progress in writing is not refined sufficiently for early signs of slow progress to be revealed and this is one reason why the underachievement in writing has not been noticed.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

27. The headteacher and the infant teachers, with the support of their colleagues and the governing body, need to remedy the underachievement in writing at age seven and raise standards in this subject to the same level as those in reading. To prevent underachievement arising again in writing and in other subjects, and to evaluate the performance of the school accurately, the headteacher and key stage coordinators, with the support of the governing body, need to measure regularly the progress of individual pupils in English, mathematics and science. They should analyse the information annually to evaluate the performance of year groups, key stages and the whole school.

- **Key issue 1:** to raise standards in writing to where they should be, the headteacher and his staff in the infants and Foundation Stage, with the support of the governing body should:
  - improve the teaching of shared and guided writing in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2;
  - identify in the medium and short term planning the opportunities for sustained independent writing, especially in Year 2; the planning should specify the number of opportunities each term, with at least one opportunity each week, the subjects in which they will occur, the genres to be taught, and the learning objectives;
  - introduce objective systems to check regularly on the attainment and progress of each pupil from entry at age four to their national testing at age seven;
  - set targets for improvement and report regularly to the governing body on progress towards achieving these targets.(Paragraphs 21-22)

- **Key issue 2:** to improve the measurement of pupils' progress, the headteacher and his staff, with the support of the governing body, should:
  - use the good range of national, optional, and standardised test data that is already collected to check at least once each year that the momentum to each pupil's learning is maintained in reading, writing, mathematics and science; they should rigorously ask themselves whether each child with high attainment, typical attainment, or low attainment has made enough progress; they should revise individual targets upwards where this is appropriate;
  - identify the pupils in each year group whose progress is less than expected and decide on appropriate action, where necessary, to increase the rate of learning so that they can catch up with where they should be;
  - analyse the progress of year groups to evaluate the performance of key stages and the whole school; and use this information to help decide priorities for school development.(Paragraphs 23-26)

28. In addition to the key issues, the governors should consider the following for inclusion in their action plan:

- measures to reduce the noise levels between the two junior classrooms (page 9);
- increasing the amount of curricular information for parents about the work each term in each class (page 9);
- the lack of a school hall suitable for physical education or big enough to assemble all the pupils together (page 9).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20	73	7	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	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	86
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

(NB the reasons for the relatively large number leaving have been investigated; the pupils left for typical reasons, mainly to do with parents moving out of the district; the mobility does not reflect large scale parental disagreement with the school.)

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	6	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	4	5	5
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78	83	83
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	4	5	5
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78	83	83
	National	82	86	87

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	8	2	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	1	1	1
	Total	9	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90	90	90
	National	68	69	75

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	86
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

*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)	4.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.7
Average class size	21.5

#### **Education support staff: YR-Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-00
	£
Total income	189201
Total expenditure	196559
Expenditure per pupil (based on 94 pupils)	2091
Balance brought forward from previous year	729
Balance carried forward to next year	-6629

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	97
Number of questionnaires returned	53

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	30	9	4	2
My child is making good progress in school.	45	47	6	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	57	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	55	9	0	0
The teaching is good.	62	32	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	45	19	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	23	7	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	30	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	36	11	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	49	45	4	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	32	6	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	45	17	4	9

### Other issues raised by parents

All of the significant issues raised by parents are included in the table in the report summary.