

INSPECTION REPORT

The Gattons Infant School

Royal George Road, Burgess Hill

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125940

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Davidson

Reporting inspector: Mrs Lesley Robins
5848

Dates of inspection: 29 January to 31 January 2001

Inspection number: 225368

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Royal George Road Burgess Hill West Sussex
Postcode:	RH15 9SL
Telephone number:	01444 235071
Fax number:	01444 230050
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Christopher Finch
Date of previous inspection:	25 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
5848	Lesley Robins	Registered inspector
17315	David Holroyd	Lay inspector
23689	Susan Hails	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Bexley Advisory Services
Bexley Council
Directorate of Education and Leisure Services
Hill View, Hill View Drive
Welling
Kent
DA16 3RY

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Gattons is a large community infant school with 299 children on roll. It has increased in size since its last inspection when there were 196 children in the school. The children come from a wide range of social backgrounds. There are just five traveller children, five children from other ethnic groups and three at an early stage of learning English. About 22% of the children have been identified as having special educational needs and this is the proportion typically found in most schools nationally. The children's special educational needs include speech and language difficulties, some general learning difficulties and autism. The children's attainment when they come into the reception classes is average, although there are some very able children and a few with significant difficulties.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very successful school where all the children learn well and grow in confidence. They achieve high standards in many subjects of the curriculum and in their personal development. The school benefits from the excellent leadership of the headteacher, who receives very good support from the governors and senior staff. The quality of education the school provides, particularly the teaching, is of consistently good quality. Although its costs are comparatively high, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The children achieve particularly well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The children's skills in investigative science and in using computers are good, and they produce high quality art and design and technology work.
- The children are lively, interested learners, who behave very well, and get on very well with each other and with adults.
- The many strengths in the teaching are leading to good learning for the children.
- The school provides very well for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school works very successfully in partnership with the parents.
- The headteacher, the senior staff and the governors provide strong, well-focused and supportive leadership.

What could be improved

- Some children arrive late for school too often.
- The school has not fully clarified the basis for withdrawing some small teaching groups of children from lessons and has no clear systems for ensuring that these children do not miss important parts of lessons or of school life when they are withdrawn.

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 overall. Since its last inspection, the school has successfully maintained its good standards and quality and in a number of aspects has improved on them. The school was last inspected in November 1996. That inspection found the children's attainments and the quality of education in the school to be good, but identified three areas for improvement. These have been dealt with successfully. There is now an effective senior management team, including a permanent deputy headteacher, giving good support to the headteacher. The teachers' planning and ways of assessing children's progress are now good. The subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science now have good procedures for checking the curriculum and standards in their subjects. The governors have improved the ways in which they keep themselves informed about standards of achievement in the school. The standards the children achieve in the subjects of the curriculum are as good as those found in the last inspection and in design and technology (DT), they are better. The school is making better use of computers in classrooms than was previously the case. Standards of behaviour are better than those found in the last inspection. The quality of teaching is even better, with more very good teaching

than was found in 1996. Strengths such as good support for the children's personal development, care and concern for their well-being, and effective partnership with parents have all been maintained.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	C	A	A	B
Writing	E	B	A	B
Mathematics	E	A	A	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

This table shows that in 2000, the school's test results were well above the national averages. In reading and writing, the results were better than those found in similar schools. In mathematics, the school's results were well above the results for similar schools. Standards in the mathematics tests are particularly good. The school's average points scores in reading, writing and mathematics have all been improving over time. These results accurately reflect the standards in the lessons and work seen during this inspection. Although not required to do so, the governors agree with the local education authority targets for the children's achievements in the tests each year. These targets are challenging and last year were successfully met. In English, the children's writing, spelling and handwriting are particularly good. In mathematics, they have a secure grasp of number facts and are good at working out sums in their heads. In science, they gain good understanding of scientific processes such as observation and fair testing. The children are competent and confident in using computers. In the other subjects of the curriculum, the high standards in the children's painting, drawing, design and creative work are of particular note. The great majority of children in the reception classes are on target to reach successfully the standards expected of them by the end of the reception year. All of the children achieve good standards for their ages and abilities, and notably the more able children are doing well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The children enjoy their lessons. They are keen and take a pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The children understand well what is expected of them. They know and follow the school and classroom rules and routines. They are attentive in lessons and well behaved in assemblies. They are particularly sensible at the busy lunchtimes when the school hall is very full.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The children learn to be concerned for each other and become increasingly responsible as they get older. They are confident and friendly with adults. They co-operate and share well in lessons.
Attendance	Satisfactory, but some children arrive late for school too often.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

In the sample of lessons or parts of lessons seen during this inspection, the teaching was always good. It was very good in half of them and this is a greater proportion of very good teaching than was found in the last inspection. The daily literacy hours and mathematics lessons are particularly well taught; teachers have a very secure grasp of what is required and ensure their lessons have good structure and pace, so that learning proceeds well and the children gain good literacy and numeracy skills. Careful planning and good use of support staff and parent helpers ensure that children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the more able children, learn successfully.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum for the reception children is a particular strength. These children benefit from very appropriate and lively activities, including well structured play, that give them a good start to their formal schooling. For the children in Years 1 and 2, the curriculum is well planned and enriching, often with a good practical focus to the work, so that children are well motivated and make good progress. The curriculum caters well for all the children, including those from different social and cultural backgrounds.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Procedures are effectively organised by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The special needs of individual children are identified as early as possible. Plans to help their learning are well written and adhered to. The support staff are committed and concerned and know individual children well. A particular strength is the effective liaison between support staff and teachers and the in-class support for children with special educational needs, so that they can participate successfully in lessons. A weakness is that the basis for withdrawing children from lessons is not always clear and there is no clear system for checking the impact of withdrawal on the learning experiences of individual children.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The very few children who are at an early stage of learning English are making good progress. They are successfully integrated in lessons and participate well. The Bengali children benefit from some extra support from a specialist ancillary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Opportunities for children to reflect on personal experiences and feelings and to think about moral values are well provided. The school's positive approaches to managing behaviour and encouraging the children to be responsible are very effective. Cultural experiences such as learning about the art and music of Africa, maypole and country dancing are very enriching.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school has good procedures for ensuring the children's safety and well being. There is real concern for the children as individuals.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership is excellent; she sets high standards for herself, the staff and the children and is very supportive in helping people to meet those expectations. The deputy headteacher works in close

	partnership with the head and successfully fulfils a pastoral role with the children and the staff, as well as leading developments such as target setting for individual children. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) have successfully led improvements in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors have a secure understanding of what is expected of them and conscientiously fulfil their responsibilities. They are very supportive of the school, but at the same time ask good questions about the work of the school, acting as effective "critical friends." The governors are successfully developing their understanding and application of the principles of "best value."
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Each year there is a very thorough analysis of how well the children did in the national tests for seven year olds, and areas for improvement are clearly identified. There are very effective procedures for checking and improving the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Appropriate use is made of funds for special educational needs. The teaching and support staff are well trained and work successfully to promote good learning for the children. All teachers, except those newly qualified, have a management responsibility and can therefore support the work of the school in many different areas. Resources for learning are well maintained and organised. The school's accommodation is well used to support the children's learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • The behaviour is good. • Their children get the right amount of homework. • The teaching is good. • They are kept well informed about their children's progress. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school has high expectations of the children. • The school works closely with the parents. • The school is well managed and led. • The school helps the children to become mature and responsible. • They think the school has improved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents are not happy about the arrangements for extra-curricular activities. A few are unhappy about the fees that are required and a few others think the school could provide more extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team fully endorses the parents' views on the many positive features of the school. The inspectors also judge that arrangements for extra-curricular activities are appropriate. The French, keyboard and violin clubs are subject to a fee, but arrangements are in place to support any parents who feel they cannot afford the charges for keyboard and violin tuition. Parents who wish their children to participate in the French club can talk through the charging arrangements with the headteacher. These children are very young and have a very full school day. It is not unusual for an infant school not to provide many extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The children achieve particularly well in reading, writing and mathematics.

1. In 2000, the Gattons pupils achieved very well in the national tests. The school's results in all three tests were well above the national averages and were better than those found in similar schools. Notably, the children's achievements in mathematics were very good, with results well above those for similar schools. Apart from a dip in 1998, the children have been achieving well in the national tests since 1997 and there has been improvement in these results over time. The school has maintained the good standards in English and mathematics found in the 1996 inspection and in English has improved the achievements of the more able pupils, which was judged to be a slight weakness in the last inspection. A very good proportion of children reach the expected level 2 or the higher level 3 in these tests, showing that the average and above average ability children are achieving well.
2. The children in the reception classes are making good progress towards the standards expected of them by the end of the reception year in language and literacy and mathematics. They are gaining a good grasp of initial sounds and some are beginning to learn about sound blends such as "sh" and "ch". They are learning successfully about writing through shared writing activities with their teachers and many readily attempt to write independently. For example, in one session a boy started writing letters on a whiteboard during a structured play session, when children were engaged in a wide range of activities. The oldest reception children have good knowledge of the alphabet and initial sounds and can write their names correctly. They are using their alphabet knowledge well in their writing to spell simple words accurately. For example, one wrote, "I wet to the swings". Another child wrote "buonn" for "bone", and knew that "dog" had a "d" and a "g". There was an excellent attempt at spelling Father Christmas: "FRAT CIKSH". In their mathematics, the reception children are gaining good knowledge about shapes, with some being able to name shapes such as cylinders and cuboids. The children understand mathematical terms such as light and heavy and know how to make scales balance. They are making good progress in counting accurately and recognising numbers.
3. A notable strength in the standards seen in the Year 1 and 2 classes during this inspection is the good quality of the pupils' spelling, writing, handwriting and presentation of their work. The systematic teaching of phonics and spelling in an interesting and purposeful way means that the pupils make good attempts to spell independently and are soon spelling simple words accurately. They use these skills well in their reading. Handwriting is very well taught so that by Year 2, all pupils are using joined up writing confidently and competently. They benefit from being given many interesting topics for their writing and opportunities to write in different styles and for different purposes, so their literacy skills across the curriculum are well developed. The range of writing pupils have produced includes simple short stories, a letter to a friend, an account of their science trip, lists of instructions, character descriptions, get well cards for Humpty Dumpty, personal memories, information leaflets and simple book reviews. By the end of the reception year, the children make good attempts to write unaided, spelling simple words accurately. In Year 1, the pupils produce some good quality story writing for their age, with the more able children starting to use joined up writing. By the end of Year 2, the pupils write at greater length, spell more difficult words such as "meanwhile" correctly and make increasingly accurate use of punctuation. The more able pupils write extended pieces with imaginative vocabulary and use of phrases.

4. In mathematics, the oldest pupils confidently handle basic calculations involving addition, subtraction and multiplication. They understand the relationship between multiplication and addition and they can think of different ways of setting out their sums. They can apply their number knowledge effectively when adding coins to make another value. The more able pupils know number bonds to 100, know about numbers over 1,000 and can divide accurately by 2 and 10. For their age, they have good understanding of fractions of numbers, knowing, for example, what a half and a quarter of 100 or 11 is. The pupils successfully use their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects. In a science lesson, for example, some Year 2 pupils accurately measured the distances their wheeled toys had travelled using metre sticks and tape measures.

The children's skills in investigative science and in using computers are good and they produce high quality art and design work.

5. From the reception classes onwards, the pupils successfully develop their good scientific skills of observation, prediction, hypothesis and recording. The youngest children have made observational drawings of caterpillars and their eggs. They have enjoyed handling real animals on a visit to a farm and have observed chicks in their classrooms. Year 1 pupils have made good drawings of animals, plants and seeds. They did a delightful experiment to test how waterproof materials were in the context of "Teddy needs a rain hat." They recorded what happened, following a useful structure provided by their teacher. These Year 1 pupils have also begun to record their observations in words when testing and observing the changes to materials such as candles or ice, when heated or melted. By Year 2, the pupils produce more developed accounts of their experiments, with some good diagrams, such as the very practical work on forces using bicycles or scooters. They make predictions about what they think will happen and draw simple conclusions. In the Year 2 science lesson seen during the inspection, the pupils were successfully developing their understanding of fair testing, explaining their findings and beginning to think how to improve their experiments to make the results more reliable.
6. The pupils are making regular use of ICT to support their learning in lessons and their skills are good. This reflects an improvement from the last inspection, which found that not enough opportunities were being given to pupils to extend their ICT skills and that computers in classrooms, although on, were not in use. Basic keyboard and mouse skills are very secure and the pupils are developing more sophisticated skills such as e-mailing. The youngest children confidently use the computer for activities such as a program for building bridges with blocks in the context of their work on "The Three Billy Goats Gruff." They are learning to give instructions to "Roamer", a simple programmable toy. Year 2 pupils use the word processing facility for writing in English lessons or for doing English exercises, such as some work on compound words or phonemes, and for recording their findings on a table in science lessons. They use a graphics program to design posters, competently changing font sizes. Appropriate software is also effectively used in subjects such as art and geography. The pupils benefit from opportunities to work with an ICT technician on activities such as e-mailing and Internet searching.
7. There is a good range of high quality art and design work on display in the school, and two successful design and technology sessions were seen during the inspection, where pupils demonstrated good skills.
8. The reception children have learned about colour mixing and have made some well executed simple weaving linked to this work. Their painted self-portraits are confident and they have made lively pictures of trolls using purple paint, in the context of their work on "The Three Billy Goats Gruff." Their paintings of Cinderella are delightful. Their

observational drawings of shoes are of a very good standard for children of this age. Their pictures in the style of Kandinsky are excellent. Year 1 pupils have made detailed, attractive patterns linked to their studies of Australian Aboriginal art. They have made beautifully painted pictures of “fantasy fish”. They too have produced very good quality observational drawings. Year 2 pupils have made bold and well controlled paintings and collages on the theme of “Fire”. There is good use of pastels to make fireworks pictures and good drawings looking at line, shape and colour. The collage work shows imaginative use of scraps of material, tissue paper, stitching and buttons. The Year 2 pupils have extended their knowledge of colour mixing and have made press-print tiles for pattern printing.

9. In a reception class lesson, the children worked very successfully with a range of materials, including an ICT program, waste materials, construction kits and building blocks to design and build a bridge for the Three Billy Goats Gruff. In the skilful introduction to this session, the children, with the help of their teacher, considered the need for ramps so that as one child put it, “now he can get to the sweet grass.” In a very successful Year 1 lesson, the pupils learned how a “pop-up” book works and then set to designing and making simple moving models, trying out their ideas, explaining what they were doing and working very creatively. The older pupils have made high quality models of Incy Wincy Spider with winding mechanisms, based on careful planning drawings. The pupils evaluate their work successfully. One girl wrote of her Incy Wincy Spider work that she thought her model was “superb”, that she had enjoyed making it, but that she found it hard to cut out the box and keep the paint off her clothes. The Year 2 pupils understand what wheels and axles are and know how to test their vehicles. In the context of designing and making wheeled toys, a pupil wrote, “it was too tight and bumped.” Other successful design and making work includes neatly sewn simple puppets showing individuality in their design, Christmas cards with a moving part on a wheel to change the picture, and the making of vegetable soup and fruit salad.

The children are lively, interested learners, who behave very well and get on well with each other and with adults.

10. The reception children respond well to activities such as learning their letters and listening to stories. They concentrate well on classroom activities, working and playing well independently. In a mathematics lesson, the children collected the resources they needed and started work on their weighing and balancing activities, co-operating and sharing well. The inviting activities their teachers provide make them want to get working. For example, inviting role-play areas linked to the children’s work on Cinderella and Aladdin encourage involvement and promote language and literacy skills. The children are confident learners, taking a delight in what they achieve. In one session, one child said proudly to another, “can you see my S now?”
11. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, the pupils very much enjoyed the “Full Circle” class spelling game, calling out “full circle!” with delight when it was successfully completed. When, in the same lesson, they finished the re-telling of the story of the Little Red Hen with some pupils using stick puppets, one child announced, “That was good!” In another Year 1 lesson, the pupils could hardly wait to start work on making their models. In a Year 1 gymnastics lesson, the pupils worked sensibly in pairs, one being the “coach” and the other the “gymnast” as they evaluated each other’s efforts.
12. By the time they are in Year 2, the pupils consistently work quietly and sensibly, individually, or in pairs or groups. When composing text at the computer, for example, they share the work successfully. The pupils often work in pairs in their mathematics lessons, and this they do very well, sharing their ideas and discussing their learning with

each other. The science investigations in another Year 2 lesson saw pupils effectively working in groups as they tested their wheeled vehicles, measured the distance they had travelled and then recorded their findings.

13. The pupils handle school equipment such as books well, keeping their desks and classrooms tidy. They understand the simple classroom rules, which they have helped to devise and follow them successfully. For example, in the lessons seen, the pupils settled quickly and sensibly to their individual work. In "Circle Time", the pupils know and understand the conventions of taking turns and listening to each other. They also listen politely to each other when pupils are sharing their work at the ends of lessons. The pupils behave very well as they move around the school in their class lines, following the expected routines. The lunchtimes are particularly busy because of the high numbers of pupils eating their sandwiches and although the noise level is understandably high, the pupils behave sensibly. The Year 2 school monitors take their responsibilities seriously. One boy very carefully explained his duties as lunchtime monitor, showing a very mature outlook.

The many strengths in the teaching are leading to good learning for the children.

14. In the sample of lessons seen in this inspection, the teaching was always good and often very good. The impact of the consistently good quality in the teaching is that pupils in all classes make good progress in their learning.
15. The teachers plan and prepare their lessons thoroughly to a consistent format. Joint year group planning means that ideas and approaches can be shared and pupils in the same Foundation or National Curriculum year groups have similar learning experiences whichever class they are in. The teachers are very clear about what they want their pupils to learn and this helps the children to be aware of their own progress and achievements. Learning intentions for different subjects are noted on class whiteboards as well as in the teachers' written plans. This reflects an improvement from the last inspection, which found that objectives for lessons were not clearly defined. The teachers working with the reception children understand well how these young children learn and have a good understanding of the required curriculum for them. The teachers' very secure understanding of the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies (NLS, NNS) mean that the daily literacy hours and mathematics lessons are lively, well organised and proceed at a good pace. In the samples of lessons seen in science, religious education (RE), design and technology (DT), music and physical education (PE) teachers also demonstrated secure subject knowledge that enabled them to provide interesting and challenging work. They make good use of national subject guidelines to help them plan their lessons. This also supports the consistently good quality of the children's learning experiences.
16. The links between planning and assessment are now very effective leading to work that is well matched to the pupils' current levels of achievement. This ensures good progress for the pupils. This shows that a key issue for action identified in the school's last inspection has been successfully implemented.
17. Notes on the plans or jottings in teachers' mark books help them to know whether they need to re-visit some learning for some children or can move on. The teachers employ useful strategies in lessons to check whether their pupils are making the progress they should. Simple spelling tests, pupils holding up laminated cards or whiteboards with their answers on, questions or tasks for specific pupils, discussion with support assistants, pupils reporting back at the ends of lessons are all examples of these strategies.

18. In English, targets for groups of children based on assessment of progress so far, together with very effective parent-teacher dialogue in the home-school contact books ensure that pupils make good progress in their reading. Similar targets are set based on the teachers' assessment of their pupils' writing within the guided writing sessions in the literacy hours. Group targets are also set for pupils in mathematics. These are supported by assessments of individual pupils noting where children are doing well and where they need more help. In Years 1 and 2, each teacher sets targets for individual children expressed in National Curriculum levels, showing where they hope the children will be in their reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of the year. In Year 2, the pupils have individual targets for improving aspects of their work, and these are very helpful to the children, showing them how well they are doing and where they can do better.
19. In the lessons seen, there was often a high level of challenge in the work, which helped all pupils learn well. In a reception class, the activity of comparing different versions of "Aladdin" was quite hard for these young children but they successfully identified similarities in the stories they heard. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher added challenge to her questions by asking for 10 more than certain numbers. In a Year 1 PE lesson, the teacher had high expectations of the children. She asked them to make a star-shaped shoulder balance and later to evaluate each other's work, being "gymnasts" and "coaches". The children responded well to these high expectations, and achieved high standards in their work, for their age. In Year 2, identifying and spelling correctly words with "ir" and "ur" was demanding for the pupils. In a mathematics lesson in Year 2, the teacher challenged the children by asking them to think of the fewest coins to make 50p. The teachers' questions of their pupils successfully move their learning on. In a Year 2 science lesson the teacher challenged the pupils to say how they could know their investigation had been fair and what they could do to make it completely fair. This strategy of setting high expectations, particularly for the more able pupils is helping all pupils to make good progress.
20. The good range and variety in the methods and activities that teachers use engage the children, keeping them motivated and working productively. One reception class was involved in organising magic carpet rides linked to their work on "Aladdin". Carpets and desks were set up in the hall and the class lined up to have their home-made passports checked by the "airport staff" and off they went on a magical journey with suitable music to accompany the trip. This extended piece of role play widened the children's vocabulary and developed their knowledge of travel as well as stimulating their imagination. In a reception class mathematics lesson, the effective use of the counting stick with children closing their eyes in an exercise to practise counting skills made it fun for them. The balance of whole class, paired and individual working ensured pace and variety in a Year 1 PE lesson. The use of a real bicycle and well written laminated cards for a labelling exercise in a Year 2 literacy lesson was most effective.
21. The Year 2 classes are comparatively small and every class has a good level of classroom support, so that pupils benefit from increased adult attention. The teachers plan well, with written notes, the work that classroom assistants are to do with groups of children. In whole class sessions, assistants sit close to pupils who find being attentive rather difficult and help to keep them focused or they support individual children with special needs. They helpfully model behaviour to the children, thus reinforcing the teachers' expectations. When working with groups, the classroom assistants are skilful and encouraging, showing a clear understanding of what the children are to learn.

The school provides very well for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

22. Opportunities to promote the pupils' personal development are very well provided through the subjects of the curriculum, assemblies and the school's programme for personal, social and health education. Provision for the pupils' personal development is very successfully woven into the curriculum and is underpinned by the school's clear values and aims. The "Golden Rules" are prominently displayed in the hall and are supported by classroom rules which the pupils devise themselves with the help of their teachers.
23. The use of stories to promote personal and cultural response is very effective. The imaginative work on "Aladdin" included the provision of exotic clothes in the role-play area, listening to eastern music and looking at well-illustrated versions of the story. One boy responded when looking at such a picture, that he thought the genie was "funny and beautiful." In a reception RE lesson, the story of "Dogger" was affectingly told. The children were transfixed when they heard the part where Davey's toy dog "Dogger" is sold. In the ensuing discussion, the children were helped to begin to reflect on relationships, think about moral behaviour and empathise with the feelings of others.
24. Lessons in other subjects can promote a sense of wonder or amazement in the pupils. In a Year 1 DT lesson, there was a chorus of "wow" as the teacher opened up a very large "pop-up" castle.
25. The teachers successfully include stories from and about other cultures in their English lessons. Year 2 pupils were working on "Anansi and Mr Dry Bone" and other stories by Fiona French. In the writing lesson linked to these books, the teacher provided pictures and music from Africa. The pupils have also listened to African music played by visiting musicians and have tried African dancing as well as maypole and country dancing. Art is contributing well to the pupils' cultural development. They have studied the works of European artists such as Kandinsky and of artists from beyond Europe such as the Aboriginal art of Australia. Through these experiences, the pupils are gaining a good appreciation of the richness of their own and other cultures.
26. The pupils successfully learn about other faiths and cultures in RE. Year 2 pupils showed competent understanding of aspects of Hindu naming ceremonies. In a science lesson on sources of light, children recalled the Diwali lamps they had learned about in RE. The pupils' work on "Belonging" in their RE programme is thoughtful, as is some of their writing about Remembrance Day. Within RE, the pupils have begun to think about ultimate questions, making lovely paintings of the Creation and doing work on "What I think God looks like."
27. The regular circle time sessions, which include discussion of special people in the class, give good opportunities for reflection on issues such as values, rules, or relationships. Watching a real baby being bathed in their classroom was an exciting experience for the young reception children, which helped them reflect on their own experiences and on the need to care for others. In one session, Year 2 pupils discussed what it means to co-operate. The pupils' social development, their confidence and self-esteem are successfully promoted in these sessions. In one class, the pupils had made a "memories quilt" comprising a personal written memory from each child. Assemblies also contribute very well to the pupils' moral and spiritual development. In an assembly led by the head teacher, the pupils were really involved and totally silent as they thought about filling the hall with love, smiles and friends.

The school works very successfully in partnership with parents

28. It is noteworthy that there was a comparatively high return, just over 41%, of completed questionnaires from parents before the start of this inspection. The analysis of these questionnaires shows a very positive response. The parents find The Gattons to be an outward looking school. They really appreciate the home-school reading scheme that helps them to know about and support their children's progress. They value the termly and weekly opportunities to meet their children's teachers. The great majority judge the homework to be adequate and appropriate. They enjoy the curriculum workshops and find the written information, such as the termly curriculum newsletters provided to them, good.
29. The parents feel that this is an approachable and responsive school. Those parents who have needed to raise an issue with the school say that their concerns have been dealt with in a timely and responsive way. By looking at one or two case studies, the inspectors were able to establish that this is indeed the case. Individual concerns are taken seriously, with discussion and action carefully recorded.
30. The school sends out questionnaires to parents and develops its procedures in the light of responses received. For example, playtime arrangements have been adjusted. The governors have made their annual report to parents more attractive and informative. The deputy head teacher worked with parents to develop the school's home-school agreement. The Friends of Gattons School review the school's needs and successfully raise funds for specific items such as computers. There is a warm welcome from the headteacher, office staff and teachers to the parents and their children at the start of each day. The number of parents helping in classrooms during the inspection was noteworthy; they are undoubtedly giving good support to the children's learning in school.

The headteacher, her senior staff and the governors provide strong, well-focused and supportive leadership.

31. There have been clear developments in the work of the governors and the senior managers in the school since 1996 that show that the issues from the last inspection have been effectively dealt with.
32. The headteacher has successfully maintained the high standards and the caring, positive ethos of the school. She has ensured that the school continues to move forward and has established good team working. Her aspirations and expectations for herself and others are high. She works in a thorough and meticulous way. She reports very clearly to the governing body, giving them good quality information so that they know well the school's strengths and areas for development, and progress with developments. The school improvement plan, which is well focused on raising achievement, is now of better quality than was found in the last inspection, which judged that the school's strategic plan then lacked clear funding allocations. Since the last inspection, the governors have strengthened their understanding of their strategic role and now more confidently act as the school's "critical friends", when discussing the school's behaviour policy for example. They have guidelines for governors' visits and a simple format for reporting constructively on what they see. Each governor "adopts" a class and takes an interest in the activities of that class. The governors receive clear and rigorous reports analysing strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' performance in the national tests and assessments and identifying where and how improvements are to be made. These reports are compiled by the headteacher, the subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science, and the SEN co-ordinator. There is a good senior and middle management team structure in the school now, with clearly defined roles, which is working effectively. The senior management team comprises the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the literacy co-ordinator and the assessment co-ordinator, each of whom acts as a representative of a

year group. All the teachers except the newly qualified carry appropriate subject or aspect responsibilities.

33. The deputy headteacher, appointed two years ago, ably supports the head. She has an effective pastoral role in the school, working on developing the school's links with the parents, acting as a mentor to newly qualified teachers and to classroom assistants on long-term training. She has done very successful work to develop the school's policy and procedures for gifted and talented pupils, ensuring that such pupils are identified and their progress monitored. She has also been instrumental in developing target setting for individual pupils.
34. The SEN co-ordinator has established good systems for this aspect of the school's work including good liaison with parents of children with special needs, with pre-school settings and the junior school, well-written individual education plans, and effective management of the SEN support staff.
35. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science have well-developed subject expertise. They know clearly about strengths and weaknesses in the standards the pupils are achieving in these subjects and produce succinct action plans showing how further improvement is to be achieved. They report clearly to the governors on these issues. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have visited lessons and have helped their colleagues to improve aspects of their teaching. The science co-ordinator has done some checking of the quality of teaching and learning but will be doing more when the science curriculum is a priority on the school's improvement plan. These co-ordinators are clear thinking, committed and enthusiastic and leading their subjects well.
36. The headteacher also takes a close and rigorous oversight of the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms and successfully brings about improvement. For example, in the autumn term 2000, she focused on the classroom environments, basing her observations on agreed criteria in the school's teaching and learning policy. She wrote clear notes for every teacher, noting the many strengths in what she saw and recommending where she thought improvements could be made. This inspection found the organisation of every classroom to be of very high quality, showing the clear impact of the headteacher's work last term. Outcomes of these classroom visits are helpfully summarised for the governors.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Some children arrive late for school too often.

37. The school has sound procedures for monitoring the pupils' attendance and has made clear to parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Overall attendance rates are satisfactory, and in 1999-2000, the school's attendance rate was better than the national average, with unauthorised absences being below the national average. However, during the week of the inspection it was evident that a very few pupils in each class arrived late each day. A register audit for one week in the autumn term 2000 showed a high number of late arrivals. During this week, 28 children were late for school. Whilst this lateness does not adversely affect the start of lessons, it may be having a detrimental effect on the learning of individual children. Neither is it helping these children to develop good habits of punctuality.

The school has not fully clarified the basis for withdrawing some small teaching groups of children from lessons and has no clear systems for ensuring that these

children do not miss important parts of lessons or of school life when they are withdrawn.

38. During the inspection, it was noticeable that small groups of pupils were regularly withdrawn from lessons to work with a classroom assistant. Sometimes, pupils came out of the ends of lessons when learning was being reviewed. On one occasion, three pupils stayed out of collective worship and this is unacceptable. The timetable for the week showed a total of 44 withdrawal sessions. About half of these were for specific support for speech and language following programmes defined by a therapist and it is likely that these are more effective when they take place somewhere quiet. This was not the case for the remaining half of these sessions, however. The activity seen in one withdrawal session could just as effectively have been provided within the context of the class literacy hour. The school has not fully clarified its criteria for withdrawing pupils from lessons and there are no clear systems for checking what the educational impact is on individual children. Some children could inappropriately be missing valuable parts of lessons.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

39. In order to improve standards and quality even further, the school should:

- (1)
 - i. seek to reduce the numbers of late arrivals at the start of the school day, and
 - ii. work as closely as possible with the families of children who arrive late for school to impress upon them the importance and value of punctuality,

- (2)
 - i. ensure that no pupils are excluded from collective worship
 - ii. agree and document clear reasons for withdrawing pupils with special educational needs from lessons,
 - iii. seek as far as possible to include children in the full lessons in classrooms,
 - iv. and put in place clear systems for checking the withdrawal programme and its impact on individual pupils' learning experiences

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	50%	50%				

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 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	299
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	62

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3%
National comparative data	5.2%

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
		2000	38	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	35	37
	Girls	42	42	46
	Total	78	77	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (91)	92 (91)	99 (93)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	37	36
	Girls	40	43	42
	Total	74	80	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (89)	95 (92)	93 (89)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	176
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	269

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	497423
Total expenditure	478726
Expenditure per pupil	1814
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	18697

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	299
Number of questionnaires returned	129

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	24	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	38	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	48	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	51	5	1	2
The teaching is good.	71	27	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	50	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	23	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	36	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	53	42	3	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	73	26	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	34	1	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	38	19	4	25