

INSPECTION REPORT

**CLAPHAM and PATCHING
CHURCH of ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Nr Worthing

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125977

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Mead

Reporting inspector: Mr George Crowther
18814

Dates of inspection: 6th – 7th November 2002

Inspection number: 248731

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Street
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs Lyn Picton
Date of previous inspection: December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Clapham and Patching is a small, voluntary controlled primary school for boys and girls who are 4-11 years old. It has 47 pupils organised in two classes, each covering a wide age and ability range. There are currently five children in the reception year. The school is situated in the village of Clapham about five miles from Worthing. A few pupils live in the villages of Clapham and Patching but most travel from further afield. The school serves families whose social circumstances are average compared with the national picture, but very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is about average, though there is a very wide range of ability within each small age group that varies from year to year. Across the school, 18 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning and behavioural difficulties, and seven of these pupils have statements that describe their particular needs. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is well above average and has increased significantly since the last inspection. Almost all pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds and none is learning English as an additional language. During the past year, about a quarter of pupils has either left or joined the school at times other than the usual admission dates, which is a high turnover compared with the national picture. There has also been a high turnover of teachers during the past three years, including a number of changes of headteacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Clapham and Patching is an improving school whose current effectiveness is satisfactory. Following the last inspection, many changes of staff reduced the school's effectiveness, and an increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs created extra challenges. The good leadership of the current headteacher has emphasised the need for higher expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and, as a result, pupils' achievements are now satisfactory. The pupils who have special educational needs achieve well. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 fluctuate considerably from year to year, depending on the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Standards in the current Year 6 are well below average overall, owing to the large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. The school provides sound value for the funding it receives. Governors and parents are very supportive of the school and value the recent improvements. However, the school recognises that more needs to be done to improve pupils' achievements still further.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The good leadership of the headteacher has unified the staff team and raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- There are strengths in the quality of teaching that enable pupils to make good progress in some lessons.
- Good provision for pupils' social and moral development is ensuring good relationships and improving standards of behaviour, which both support pupils' learning.
- The close-knit school community provides good care and support for pupils.
- Positive and productive links with parents make an effective contribution to children's learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards of attainment are not high enough, particularly in writing.
- In a few of the lessons seen, the quality of teaching could be improved with an injection of pace and a more consistent approach to dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

- The organisation of the school day does not make the best use of the available time for teaching and learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

When it was last inspected, in December 1997, Clapham and Patching was judged to be a good school with a number of strengths. Since then, staff, parents and governors recognise that the school has been through a very difficult period of instability, including three changes of leadership which, initially, hindered its development. Since the appointment of the current headteacher, however, the rate of progress has been good and has ensured satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour had become a weakness, but both are now much better. Many pupils had not been achieving as much as they could, particularly those with special educational needs, but all are now achieving satisfactorily, and those with special educational needs are achieving well. Suitable progress has also been made on the one issue raised at the last inspection, and the older pupils are now taught as a group for some subjects ensuring that they have appropriately challenging activities. The school is aware of the areas in which further improvement is needed, and has a good capacity to raise standards further.

STANDARDS

(Note – In most inspection reports, a table is included showing the pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 6 compared with schools nationally. In this case, however, the number of pupils taking the tests is too small to make the grades meaningful, so the table is omitted. Each age group has only a small number of pupils, so judgements made about the 'overall attainment' of a group of pupils should be treated with caution. If just one pupil with high or low attainment joins or leaves an age group, the overall attainment can alter significantly.)

When children start school, their overall attainment is normally about average, though some year groups have lower attainment, for example the current Year 6. During the Foundation Stage (reception), children's achievements are satisfactory and, by the time they enter Year 1, almost all of them reach the Early Learning Goals (the standards expected nationally at that age).

Throughout the rest of the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Results of national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 fluctuate considerably. For example, in 2001, results were well below the national average for pupils at the end of Year 2, but well above average for pupils at the end of Year 6. In 2002, this pattern was reversed. Such fluctuations are due to the small number of pupils who take the tests, and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs in each year group, and are not a reflection of the quality of teaching and learning. Data comparing pupils' results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 and their subsequent performance at the end of Year 6 show that the great majority make at least the expected gains in learning. During recent years, the school has admitted a number of pupils who have special educational needs, particularly in the juniors, and this has depressed results in national tests. These pupils achieve well at the school, but they do not reach the nationally expected standard by the end of Year 6. Over recent years, the trend of improvement in the school's results at the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with the national picture. Schools set targets for the proportion of Year 6 pupils expected to reach the national average, Level 4. In 2002, the school did not meet its targets for English and mathematics.

Pupils' work shows that overall attainment in the current Year 2 is close to national expectations in most aspects of English, and in mathematics and science. It is below average in writing. In the current Year 6, overall attainment is well below expectations in all three subjects because there is a very high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Nonetheless, these pupils' achievements have been satisfactory compared with their initial attainment. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy vary considerably throughout the school, but are average overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils like coming to school and they enjoy their lessons. Many concentrate well on their work, but a significant minority of the older pupils find this difficult. In general, pupils do not convert their positive attitudes into good work habits.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Behaviour is good around the school, but a significant minority of the older pupils, particularly boys, do not behave well all the time in lessons. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Positive relationships between pupils and with adults are a strength of the school. Pupils work well together. When given responsibilities, pupils carry them out sensibly.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. It is not as good as described at the last inspection, but staff changes have meant that the current team has only recently been put in place. All teachers plan lessons carefully, and pupils who have special educational needs are catered for particularly well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good so that, in most lessons, pupils happily do what is asked of them. Teachers use a good range of methods and strategies, from whole-class work to individual and group work. Teachers are particularly effective when working alongside individuals. As a result, in most of the lessons observed, pupils enjoyed the activities, worked well and made satisfactory gains in learning. Where teaching was very good, the teacher injected pace and challenge into the activities, which ensured that the pupils made rapid progress. The pupils responded very well to the high expectations of what they were capable of achieving. In a few lessons, however, the pace of learning was slower and tasks did not fully challenge the pupils, particularly the more able. In lessons for the older pupils, misbehaviour was not always managed well enough, so the learning of individuals, and on occasions the class, was reduced. The good skills of teaching assistants were not always best used in the whole-class parts of lessons. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Teaching generally meets the needs of all pupils successfully.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
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The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a broad curriculum, with appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Provision for physical education is good because the school makes very good use of facilities at a local secondary school. In mathematics and science, however, there is too little emphasis on pupils extending their knowledge and understanding through investigation and experiment. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The organisation of the school day does not make the best use of the time available for teaching and learning.
Aspect	Comment
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The needs of these pupils are identified clearly and they all have targets for improvement. They are given work that is well matched to their needs and have effective support in lessons so they make good progress. Provision is organised effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Staff know individual pupils very well, so strong support for their personal development is part and parcel of everything that happens in the school. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Provision for their moral development is good, and there is satisfactory provision for spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good care and support for its pupils, through a range of effective procedures.
Assessment	Satisfactory. A good amount of information is gathered about pupils' attainment and achievements in English, mathematics and science, and the school is using this data to monitor pupils' progress. In other subjects, pupils' attainment is currently assessed informally, but the school is planning improve its procedures.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school has close and positive links with parents. It encourages them to be involved in school activities, to take an active interest in their children's work and to support learning at home. Parents think that the school is doing a good job.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides good leadership, which has brought the school through a very challenging time of change, and secured important improvements in aspects of its work. The one other full-time teacher has a range of management responsibilities, which she carries out effectively. The school improvement plan sets out priorities clearly, and the action to be taken to achieve them. However, there are still weaknesses in the management of the school because the approach to teaching and learning is not consistent enough, and procedures for monitoring their quality are not systematic enough.
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive and recognise the school's strengths. They fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities appropriately. However, they do not monitor the work of the school closely enough or

	play a full part in deciding plans for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is putting systems in place for monitoring pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching and learning. As yet, the gathering of information is not systematic enough to ensure that weaknesses are identified precisely or that planned action for improvement is monitored rigorously.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and management are good. The school makes good use of its funding, and plans ahead methodically. It has appropriate procedures for checking that it is providing the best value in all aspects of its work.
Aspect	Comment
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed, including a specialist teacher for pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers, classroom assistants and other staff are a committed, hard working team. The building provides adequate facilities inside, but the grounds are very cramped and inhibit physical activities. Resources for learning are satisfactory for most subjects.

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 enjoy going to school and make good progress. ▪ Teaching is good. ▪ Staff are very approachable if parents have concerns. ▪ The school expects children to work hard, achieve their best, and helps them to become mature and responsible. ▪ There is a good range of activities outside lessons. ▪ The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some parents feel that they do not get enough information about how their child is progressing.

Just over half of the parents returned the questionnaire, and seven attended the meeting. The great majority of these parents are pleased with all aspects of the school's work, and inspectors' judgements largely support parents' positive views. However, inspectors judge that teaching is satisfactory rather than good, and that most pupils are making satisfactory rather than good progress. The school has recently reinstated a system for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers each term. Most parents are now happy with these arrangements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The good leadership of the headteacher has unified the staff team and raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve

1. The headteacher is leading the school well because he has a clear view of its existing strengths and weaknesses, he knows what sort of school he wants it to be, and he has high expectations for future improvement. The last inspection report painted a picture of a successful school that had many strengths. Shortly after that inspection, the then headteacher left the school and there followed a period of uncertain leadership, with three changes of headteacher, and a number of other staff changes. Staff, parents and governors who were associated with the school through this period say that it lost direction, developed significant weaknesses in aspects of its work and, as a result, standards declined. An additional challenge was that the proportion of pupils having special educational needs increased from average for the size of the school to well above average. Currently seven of these pupils have a statement outlining their special needs, which is a very high proportion. It is the view of all members of the school community that the current headteacher, since his fairly recent appointment, has reversed the decline in the school's fortunes and has enabled the staff to achieve significant improvements in standards. As yet, however, pupils' achievements are satisfactory rather than good because the change to a sharper focus on learning and higher standards has not been as smooth and productive as the headteacher expected.

2. The headteacher is realistic about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. He knows that pupils' attitudes to their work, even though they are satisfactory overall, are not strong enough to ensure improvements in standards. For example, the presentation of the older pupils' work is not as good as it should be because they do not take enough pride in completing it. He has put measures in place, such as the celebration assembly held each Friday, to boost pupils' self esteem and to encourage them to enjoy and value academic success. The increase in extra-curricular activities is motivating many pupils. Parents said that the behaviour of pupils has improved during the last year, but the headteacher knows that there is still too much time spent on getting pupils to listen carefully and work hard on the tasks they are set. The situation is exacerbated because there are a number of individuals amongst the oldest boys who have specific emotional and behavioural difficulties, which can disrupt their learning and that of others. By and large, staff manage these pupils well, and the overall push for better behaviour, set out clearly in the school improvement plan, is beginning to support higher standards. It is clear that the headteacher has got to the roots of what needs to be done to raise standards and is leading the school firmly in the right direction.

3. Following many changes since the last inspection, it is only very recently that a settled team of teachers has been in place. Owing to the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, there are nine teaching assistants who work with individuals or groups of pupils. The headteacher has the confidence and support of what is now a large staff in a small school. Partly, this is because he leads by example, through his good teaching and his very good relationships with the children. Equally, he has placed a high priority on enabling staff to improve their skills through performance management and training opportunities. The staff team is well motivated to respond to the headteacher's leadership, not least because he involves them fully in planning for and working towards improvement.

4. The headteacher has also gained the confidence and support of the wider school community. Parents speak very highly of his leadership and management, and a number of parents, particularly those whose children have special educational needs, commented on the rapid progress their children have made during the past year. Governors say they are confident that the school will continue to improve, and they support the plans for development that the headteacher has put in place. The trust of the whole school community has been gained because the headteacher has very good relationships with parents and governors, he is very approachable, and he takes time to discuss issues with them.

5. Some elements of efficient management are not yet in place. For example, a policy specifying exactly what is expected in high quality teaching and learning is still under development. This makes it difficult for the headteacher to monitor teaching and learning systematically and to highlight particular strengths and weaknesses that affect achievement and standards. The headteacher is, however, providing good management on a day-to-day basis, and the clear educational direction set out in the school improvement plan, evident daily in the headteacher's dealings with adults and children, is moving the school forward. As a result, expectations of what pupils can and should achieve have already been raised. As yet, this is not fully reflected in the standards of work seen, but the school has a good capacity to build on the start that has been made.

There are strengths in the quality of teaching that enable pupils to make good progress in some lessons

6. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but there were particular strengths in some lessons that enabled pupils to make good progress, and strong features in some of the lessons where teaching and learning were satisfactory overall. Of the seven lessons observed, teaching was very good in one, good in two and satisfactory in four. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In most of the lessons seen, careful planning, teachers' good relationships with pupils, the good organisation of activities, and the use of a good range of teaching methods were strong features.

7. Four lessons were observed in the class that included the five pupils in the Foundation Stage (reception). The quality of teaching for these pupils was satisfactory. A range of well-planned activities interests the children and provides many opportunities to enrich their experience. For example, children enjoyed planting geraniums in a container on the playground, and they were fascinated when the teaching assistant unearthed the shoots of bulbs that were beginning to grow. This was linked to work drawing natural objects, such as flowers, leaves and shells. The quality of the children's drawing was good, showing that most have keen observational skills for their age and good physical control of a pencil. Basic skills are taught well, for example early literacy work linked to the book 'Owl Babies'. These five children are very well supported within the class because an adult usually works with them on activities, which helps their progress. In some lessons, the whole-class session lasts too long for these youngest children, and they become restless.

8. In the lessons seen, teachers usually had a confident knowledge of the subject. For example, in a science lesson for Years R – 2, the teacher’s good grasp of ideas about forces enabled her to provide a series of interesting activities pulling, bending, squashing and stretching a range of materials. The teacher asked a range of open-ended questions, which encouraged the pupils to experiment and investigate the forces. The pupils were particularly fascinated by the way in which a lump of foam rubber kept regaining its shape, no matter what they did to it. As a result, the pupils made good gains in their understanding.

9. Some aspects of pupils’ basic skills are taught well. Standards in reading are close to national expectations, even though there is a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils read regularly to an adult both in school and at home. In mathematics, counting and calculating skills are generally taught effectively. For example, a group of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils learnt how to count on and back in 10s and 100s, using their knowledge of the value of digits in three-digit numbers. Writing, handwriting and spelling are not taught well enough because the school is only just adopting consistent approaches to these skills across the school. For example, too little attention is given to teaching the words that pupils commonly misspell in their own writing.

10. Teachers plan lessons carefully. They identify clear learning intentions and, in the best lessons, these are shared with pupils, so that they know exactly what they are trying to achieve. Plans are particularly detailed for literacy and numeracy, and outline separate, matched tasks for groups of pupils of varying prior attainment. Whilst this planning shows how much teachers have thought about the content of their lessons, the amount of planning is sometimes more than the teacher needs.

11. Lessons are well organised and teachers use a good range of methods and strategies to promote learning. For example, in an English lesson for Year 5 and Year 6, the teacher reviewed work on poetry from the previous day, and then asked the pupils to write an initial draft of their ideas about an emotion, such as fear. These ideas were used to begin to draft poems, which were shared at the end of the lesson.

12. In most lessons, teachers manage pupils’ learning and behaviour effectively, but there are individual pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 who misbehave and are difficult to manage. All adults have positive, productive relationships with the children. They praise good work and behaviour. Because teachers are positive, in most lessons pupils respond by listening attentively, trying their best with work and behaving well. A strong feature of the very good teaching seen was the rapid pace of learning. In a mathematics lesson for Year 3 and Year 4, the teacher rattled through a series of activities to strengthen pupils’ mental skills, which really motivated them and resulted in all of them improving their understanding. During the individual tasks, the teacher kept reminding the pupils how much time they had left, which helped them to keep working hard. Classroom assistants make a good contribution to most lessons when they are working with a group of pupils or an individual.

(Note – This section is about the strengths of teaching and learning, but some relative weaknesses are explained later.)

Good provision for pupils’ social and moral development is ensuring good relationships and improving standards of behaviour, which both support pupils’ learning

13. The school places particular emphasis on pupils’ social development and all the parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Before children join the school in the reception year, there are opportunities to visit, so that both parents and children feel comfortable in the new setting. Observation of the children who had recently started school confirmed the success of the school’s procedures because they were all happy,

settled and working well. The organisation of the school creates many opportunities for pupils of different ages to work and play together. In the infant class, the older pupils take great interest in what the younger pupils are doing. For example, when a reception child had produced some outstanding sketches of leaves and shells, the older children agreed that she had done really well. This interaction between older and younger pupils is used well to teach children about care and respect for others. Parents said that one of the core values and strengths of the school is the mutual respect between children and between adults and children.

14. The school provides a number of experiences that strengthen pupils' social skills as they get older. The very good range of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to interact in a range of settings. For example, the dance club brings together a group of pupils of all ages for an enjoyable session taught by an older ex pupil. Sporting teams take part in a variety of competitions with other schools, including cross-country running, football and netball. Special events such as the school camp bring together children, parents and staff for a stimulating, enjoyable, social experience with the ability of the older pupils to care for the younger ones shining through. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school all add to the range of experiences provided for the pupils, which foster their personal development well. There are some opportunities for older pupils to take on responsibility and show initiative, but not as many as expected, given the priority the school now places on the development of mature, social behaviour.

15. The impact of all these experiences on pupils' learning is three fold. Firstly, they learn the social skills to relate well to a range of adults and children. For example, in the juniors there are a number of pupils who have special educational needs and, whilst these pupils are 'different' in their rate of learning and behaviour, all the children generally get on well together. Secondly, the good relationships that are built between adults and children support learning well. A good example of this is the strong relationship between teaching assistants and pupils, which helps individuals to learn more effectively. For example, in a literacy lesson with older pupils, the skilled use of coaxing questions and prompts by a trusted teaching assistant enabled a pupil to write a poem about 'feelings' of such good quality that it was entered in the 'Gold Book' for achievement. Thirdly, and more generally, the wide range of social experiences motivates pupils to enjoy school and take an interest in different subjects. For example, one boy noted that, although his main passion was football, he had learnt to enjoy mathematics too. Older pupils say that they enjoy coming to school, and one of the main reasons they give is the social opportunities the school provides, including those to be a member of sports teams.

16. The school has been through a period when, by the staff's own admission, the behaviour of some pupils, and the impact of this on the learning of others, was unacceptable. On his appointment, the headteacher perceived this as the key area in need of improvement. The provision for pupils' moral development is now good. Adults are very clear about the difference between right and wrong. This has yet to have a full impact on the behaviour of all the pupils, particularly as a few older boys, some with specific emotional and behavioural difficulties, cannot yet meet consistently the high expectations set by the school. Nonetheless, parents and staff say that the overall behaviour of the children has improved during the past year.

17. The school is currently agreeing a clearly defined behaviour policy, so staff can give clear, strong messages about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. For example, in a number of lessons observed, teachers praised pupils who were doing exactly as they had been asked, which motivated them and reminded others what is required. In the final assembly of the week, the headteacher praised the pupils whose names had been put in the 'Gold Book' because they had worked hard, been particularly helpful or displayed a quality valued by the school. Equally, when pupils' behaviour does not meet the high standard expected, staff are quick to say so. For example, the headteacher took aside a group of older boys who had misbehaved in a lesson and made it very clear why their actions were unacceptable, giving them the opportunity to explain their behaviour. Whilst messages about good

attitudes and behaviour are conveyed by all staff, the approach is not yet consistent enough. Some staff emphasise the positive, but others give too much attention to those pupils not behaving well.

18. On a broader front, pupils' moral development is encouraged by themes in assembly, such as 'We are all different, but we are all equal', and by the children thinking about those in other parts of the world who are less fortunate. During the inspection, pupils were collecting books, paper and pencils to send to children in Sierra Leone who do not have the basic equipment for their education. Sensitive reminders and comparisons were given in assembly so that pupils could think about why they were doing this.

The close-knit school community provides good care and support for pupils

19. The school's stated first aim is to provide a safe and secure environment for children's learning, and it is successful in achieving this aim. The staff know each child very well, which enables them to monitor pupils' personal development very closely. Adults are very well aware of the range of pupils' needs and difficulties, and take particular care to support the high proportion who have special educational needs. Their detailed individual education plans identify specifically the next steps in their learning, and this helps all the adults who work with them to ensure that teaching is targeted. Adults are equally aware of medical needs, and of any effect these may have on pupils' work or play. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in lessons and as they move through the school. At their meeting before the inspection, a number of parents praised the school's approach to the care and learning of their children with special needs. They said that this aspect of the school's work had improved immeasurably since the appointment of the new headteacher.

20. Policies and procedures to ensure the care and welfare of all the pupils are good. When the current headteacher was appointed, arrangements for child protection were inadequate. Now procedures are fully in place and all staff are aware of requirements. If there are concerns about a child's welfare, these are recorded appropriately. Health and safety matters are monitored by the headteacher and governing body, and no issues were detected during the inspection.

21. After a period of change and uncertainty, the new headteacher recognised that the school needed an urgent review of policy and procedures for managing behaviour. He has a very clear vision of what is required and of the importance of rewarding what pupils do well, while setting clear boundaries to mark the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are now in place, but are not yet as effective as the school would wish because they are not followed consistently or rigorously enough. Changes of staff and the challenging behaviour exhibited by some of the older boys mean that achieving consistency is a high priority for the school, and figures prominently in the school improvement plan. The current policy, however, is not specific enough about the use of rewards and sanctions, neither are there clear rules displayed in classrooms so that pupils are constantly aware of the school's expectations. Pupils, staff and parents say that there are very few instances of bullying and that, if they do occur, teachers deal with them quickly and effectively. Attendance is satisfactory, better than at the last inspection, and the school reminds parents regularly of the importance of good attendance to ensure consistent progress in school.

22. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory and improving. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the school carries out assessments regularly and gathers a good deal of information. Increasingly, this is being used well to track individual pupils' progress and identify general weaknesses in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. In the lessons seen in these subjects, work was generally well matched to pupils' needs. As yet, however, the

information is not used to identify specifically the next step pupils need to take to improve their skills, and to set targets, for example in writing. In all other subjects, assessment information is gathered by teachers informally, but there are plans to standardise this process across the school. The assessment co-ordinator has a clear view of how this aspect of the school's work should develop.

Positive and productive links with parents make an effective contribution to children's learning

23. The school makes good use of its strength as a small school, with a community of families it knows well, to ensure that links with parents are both positive and productive. At the beginning and end of each school day, parents and staff often meet as children arrive or leave, and this creates the ideal opportunity to share a few words, either socially or concerning children's successes. This daily routine is the basis for good relationships. The school says that it aims to, "develop a sharing, working partnership with parents"; it is successful in fulfilling this aim. It has begun to consult parents more formally about its work, for example by using a questionnaire recently to check on parents' views, which were very positive.

24. Through regular newsletters, the school keeps parents well informed about events. At their meeting, parents said that they felt well informed about developments in school, and that the daily contact many of them have with staff is very helpful. However, several said that they receive little information about what their child is learning in lessons, which they would find helpful to support their child's learning at home. Some parents had been unhappy that no regular, formal opportunities to discuss their child's progress with teachers were offered. These have been re-instated recently and the school now holds termly meetings. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs said that, throughout these changes, they have had very helpful, regular meetings with staff about their children's progress. The school also provides a good-quality report at the end of the year. As a result, most parents now feel that they are well informed about how their children are doing at school.

25. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning at home. From the time children start school, parents are asked to read with them, and most do. Pupils' reading diaries show that most parents try to help their children with their reading. As pupils progress through the school, they are expected to complete other tasks at home, largely in English and mathematics. For example, the oldest pupils tallied information and drew block graphs in a lesson. They were then asked to complete a similar task at home. At their meeting, parents said that there is a clear pattern of homework, and they are happy with the type and amount. As a result, parents are willing to help or encourage their children to do some work at home, which makes a significant contribution to learning at school.

26. Parents are also involved in the work of the school in a range of other activities. Although only one or two parents help in school regularly, owing to other commitments, some take an interest in the out of school activities. Parents accompany children on trips and visits, whether local or further a field. The parent-teacher association (PTA) is active and, for a small school, raises significant amounts of money to improve resources. Parents attend a range of special occasions in school, from Harvest Festival to musical productions. At their meeting, parents said that there are plenty of opportunities for them to be involved in school. As a result of the good and improving links forged with them, parents express strong satisfaction with the work of the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards of attainment are not high enough, particularly in writing

(Pupils' attainment is what they know, understand and can do at a particular point in time e.g. at the end of Year 2. Pupils' achievements are the progress they make in relation to their initial attainment. Therefore, a child starting school with low attainment may achieve well but still not reach the nationally expected standard of attainment.)

27. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. When pupils' results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 are compared with their subsequent performance at the end of Year 6, it shows that those pupils who have spent all four junior years at the school make at least the expected gains in learning. There are, however, weaker aspects of pupils' attainment, particularly in writing.

28. In schools where only a few pupils are tested, it is not sensible to compare the results of national tests with those gained by other schools, because each pupils' score is a large proportion, so results tend to fluctuate. Nonetheless, the school has been concerned about the number of pupils who do not reach the nationally expected standard in writing at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. As a result, raising pupils' attainment in writing is an important element of the school improvement plan. Inspection evidence also showed that standards in writing are currently below national expectations in Year 2, even though standards in reading and mathematics are close to national expectations. In Year 6, standards in writing are low, but this age group has a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, so most aspects of attainment are well below expectations.

29. Although the school has identified a number of appropriate actions to improve standards in writing, the inspection revealed a number of other weaknesses that need to be tackled.

- Across the school, when pupils are writing, there are too few strategies to support them in structuring their work, finding the words they need, and spelling the words correctly. For example, pupils in Year 5 and 6 were writing ideas for a poem about emotions, but there were no collections of words or dictionaries readily available for them to use. When they started to write their poem, the teacher did not provide a framework so that the pupils could see how to structure the writing. Similarly, in the infants, there are too few supports, such as word banks, to help pupils with their writing.
- When pupils write, they have to think about the content as well as the 'secretarial' skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Balancing all these elements is very difficult for a young writer. At present, teachers do not identify specific targets or priorities to improve pupils' writing, based on an assessment of their existing skills, so that they can concentrate on improving a particular aspect of their work. As a result, where there are several weaknesses, it is not possible for the child or the teacher to know what it is that needs to improve. Teachers' marking of pupils' work showed little consistency in identifying what pupils had done well and what needed to improve. However, the marking of writing for older pupils who have special educational needs is of good quality.
- Pupils write for a range of purposes. For example, Year 6 pupils had written instructions, poems, an autobiography and a horror story. However, across the school, pupils' complete many English exercises or shorter pieces of work that do not develop the skills of extended writing. In the juniors, there was little evidence that pupils draft a piece of writing and then, after some input from the teacher, re-draft the writing to improve its quality. As a result, opportunities are lost to identify particular writing skills that should be improved, so that pupils can learn from their initial attempts.

- Pupils' handwriting, punctuation and spelling skills are usually weaker than the content of their writing. It is not clear how the separate work being done to improve these skills is being transferred to pupils' longer pieces of writing, where many of the weaknesses remain.

30. In some subjects, there are too few opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment so that they can extend their knowledge and understanding. A scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 2 and Year 6 showed that:

- In mathematics, there are too few activities where pupils use and apply their skills. The National Curriculum calls this Attainment Target 1 and it involves pupils in problem solving, looking for patterns in shapes and numbers, using their mathematical skills in real situations, and organising their work logically. In pupils' current work, there are too few activities that are posed in an open-ended way that would require them to use and develop these skills. More often, the work concentrates on developing the skills themselves. For example, in number work, pupils know how to multiply and divide to find specific answers, but Attainment Target 1 requires them to develop the ability to use these skills in a range of situations, such as finding patterns of square numbers.
- In science, there is too little emphasis on experiment and investigation. The school teaches the content of science soundly. However, the skills of planning and carrying out a scientific experiment are not taught methodically. Pupils' past work in Year 6 shows that they are not being introduced systematically to: posing a scientific question precisely; predicting the answer; planning and carrying out an experiment; collecting and analysing the results; and drawing conclusions.

31. The school is quite clear that standards of attainment in most subjects are not as high as teachers would like them to be. There are high expectations for improvement. Staff have also recognised that there needs to be an improvement in pupils' attitudes to work so that they develop the confidence, perseverance and effort that is needed to strive for higher standards. In the lessons seen for the older pupils, many showed a casual approach to activities that is not supportive of high quality work. Inspectors agree with the school that continuing to improve pupils' attitudes to learning is a high priority.

In a few of the lessons seen, there were weaknesses in the quality of teaching

32. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, there were some weaker aspects in a few of the lessons observed, and some weaker practice revealed through the scrutiny of pupils' work. Improvement in the following areas would further strengthen the quality of pupils' learning:

- The pace of some lessons and some parts of lessons is too slow. In some cases this is because the amount of time allowed for a particular activity is too long, so the pace slows to fill the time available. (This is related to the third area for improvement explained below) In a few lessons seen, the introduction lasted too long, pupils began to lose concentration, and behaviour deteriorated. When pupils are working independently or on small group activities, teachers rarely set targets for the time pupils have to complete a task so, in a few lessons, pupils worked at their own pace rather than making a real effort. When a teaching assistant works alongside an individual pupil, however, the rate of work is usually good.
- Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is not always consistent. In the best practice seen, teachers were very positive, spotting the child who was doing exactly what they wanted and using praise to set an example for others. However, in some lessons for the older pupils, it was the children who were misbehaving who received the attention. Expectations of good

behaviour were not always made clear enough. For example, when pupils were moving from a whole-class session to work individually, the teacher did not explain what sort of working behaviour she expected to see, and then praise the pupils who met the standard. As a result, where expectations were not set clearly enough, some pupils misbehaved or wasted time when they should have been working. On occasion, this slowed the learning of others.

- In a few lessons, the work provided for pupils was not challenging enough, particularly for the higher attainers. The work for middle and higher attaining pupils was the same, and the higher attainers completed the work well, but did not really have to make a great effort. In other cases, also seen in pupils' recorded work, it was the type of activity that limited the challenge. Instead of being given some freedom to explore and investigate, pupils were asked to complete a worksheet in English, or a list of calculations in mathematics. In these activities, pupils had no opportunity to show what they were capable of achieving because the task was too closed. (This is related to the first area for improvement explained above)
- In most lessons, classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress, often working with individuals or groups of pupils. In some whole-class sessions, however, they tend to watch the teacher and not enough use is made of their time and skills.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work varies considerably in quality. In the best practice seen, teachers take the opportunity to comment on the quality of the work, to assess the standard, and to suggest how pupils might improve further. Whilst it is not reasonable to expect this for every piece of work, in some books marking consists only of ticks and occasional praise. The marking of pupils' extended writing, in particular, suggested no whole-school approach to improving content and correcting spelling and punctuation. The school is currently developing a marking policy in its aim for more consistent practice.

The organisation of the school day does not make the best use of the available time for teaching and learning

33. The pattern of the school day at Clapham and Patching has evolved over a number of years, and it is still changing because the school has recently introduced activities each Friday to broaden the curriculum. The school makes good use of facilities for physical education at a local secondary school and, although this ensures the full curriculum is taught, it unavoidably takes time from other subjects. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, with lessons intended to last one hour (45 minutes for numeracy in Key Stage 1), has placed another constraint on the use of time. Nonetheless, inspectors feel that the current pattern of the school day does not make best use of the time available, and noted the following:

- Currently, teaching and learning time in both the infants and the juniors is below the nationally recommended minimum by about 30 minutes a week and, whilst this represents a small proportion in itself, it is about one week's worth of learning over a school year.
- The first session in the morning, following assembly, is 75 minutes and this is largely used for literacy. In most cases, this usually means that the pupils have an overlong lesson. The National Literacy Strategy was designed in hour lessons to inject pace into teaching and learning. Whilst it is entirely possible that a teacher might sustain a good pace over 75 minutes, the planning used is intended to last one hour and does not lend itself to a longer lesson. A further point is that the extra 15 minutes used in this way is lost to other subjects of the curriculum. The second session of the morning is also 75 minutes (70 for the infants), and creates a similar dilemma when used for literacy or numeracy.

- Lessons in the afternoon are timetabled over an even longer period, for example two hours of science for the infants, or 90 minutes of history for the juniors. These long sessions make it more difficult for teachers to hold pupils' interest or to ensure a good pace for teaching and learning. Whilst a longer session for some practical subjects is often desirable, the school timetables long sessions for many subjects on a two-week rota.
- Within the timetable, there are a number of sessions for reading and story. These are important parts of the curriculum, but the junior timetable indicates that about three hours each week are spent on these activities, which is over half the amount of time that most schools spend on English.
- It is unusual for all junior pupils to have a swimming lesson each week. Whilst this is very good provision for an aspect of one subject of the curriculum, the proportion of learning time taken is questionable, particularly as some pupils already swim competently, at the level expected by the National Curriculum by the end of Year 6.

34. The school agrees that the use of curriculum time needs to be reviewed in the light of changing demands. Although, in the opinion of inspectors, there are clear inefficiencies in the current use of time for teaching and learning, it should be borne in mind that this is a school where pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Better use of time should help the school to raise standards still further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

35. In order to further improve the work of the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:

- ◆ Raise standards of attainment, as planned, by:
 - providing pupils with more support for developing their writing skills;
 - identifying specific weaknesses in pupils' writing skills and targeting these for improvement;
 - creating opportunities for pupils, particularly the older ones, to draft and re-draft their writing, focusing on specific improvements;
 - ensuring that teachers' marking indicates how pupils can improve their writing;
 - considering how progress made on practice exercises to improve aspects of pupils' writing will be transferred to their extended writing;
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment, particularly in mathematics and science.

(paragraphs 27-31)

- ◆ Improve consistency in the quality of teaching, by:
 - ensuring that lessons move at a good pace so pupils' learning is maximised;
 - improving the consistency of teachers' management of pupils' behaviour;
 - planning activities that provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able;
 - making best use of the good skills of teaching assistants in whole-class sessions;

- improving the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work.

(paragraph 32)

- ◆ Review the organisation of the school day so that the best use is made of the available time for teaching and learning.

(paragraphs 33-34)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

7

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

8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		1	2	4			
Percentage		14	29	57			

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 14 percentage points.

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)

47

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	4
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils identified as having special educational needs	18

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Note - Most reports include details of the school's national test results. These are not included for this school because the group of pupils taking the tests in 2002 was less than 10, so comparisons with national averages are not meaningful.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
47		
1		

Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

1

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	129

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	226,664
Total expenditure	230,007
Expenditure per pupil	4,423
Balance brought forward from previous year	62,382
Balance carried forward to next year	59,039

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

62%

Number of questionnaires sent out	39
Number of questionnaires returned	24

Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	48	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	54	4	0	4

Behaviour in the school is good.	17	71	13	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	75	8	4	0
The teaching is good.	50	50	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	29	25	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	54	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	33	17	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	33	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	54	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	29	8	0	4

Seven parents attended the meeting and they were largely positive about all aspects of the school's work. They were all happy with the progress their children are making, and one or two parents whose children have special educational needs commented on very rapid progress. Parents said they are kept well informed about events in school, and they welcomed the recently improved arrangements to visit school to discuss their children's progress. However, they said they would like more information about what their children are learning in class. The pattern of homework is appropriate. Staff are friendly and approachable if parents have any concerns, and any difficulties are sorted out quickly. Parents said they are pleased with the values and morals promoted by the school, and particularly mentioned the respect and tolerance promoted between pupils and staff. Parents said that most children behave well, but there are one or two who need particular support, and the school is addressing this. A number of parents help in school, and the parent/teacher association supports the school well. Overall, parents said that they think Clapham and Patching is a good school that has improved since the appointment of the headteacher.