

# INSPECTION REPORT

**The Hills Lower School**

Bedford

LEA: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109510

Headteacher: Christine Taylor

Reporting inspector: Paul Canham  
1353

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> October 2001

Inspection number: 194892

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stancliffe Road Bedford Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK41 9AT
Telephone number:	01234 266498
Fax number:	01234 400228
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Johnston-Wilder
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Hills Lower School is a popular lower school, which is larger in size than most other schools of the same type. The number on roll increases during the year as children are admitted to the foundation stage. Currently, there are 295 pupils on roll, with similar proportions of boys and girls, aged from four to nine years. A small but significant proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and five per cent have a language other than English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils (27 per cent) with some form of special educational need, including those with statements, is above the national average. When the children enter reception their attainment levels are average.

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

The school is very effective, because it meets the needs of its pupils. By the age of seven, pupils achieve high levels of attainment in reading and writing and very high attainment in mathematics, when compared with similar schools. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to make good levels of progress and reach standards above those expected for their age in all subjects. The headteacher and staff, effectively supported by the governors, have vision and commitment to high levels of achievement and standards, and this helps to provide pupils with a well-structured and rich learning environment. High expectations and teaching of consistently good quality contribute to pupils' good progress and to the very effective provision for pupils' pastoral care. In recognition of its success, the school has been awarded a national quality mark for excellence. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well, and standards at the age of seven are high in reading and writing and very high in mathematics when compared to those attained by pupils in similar schools. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to achieve well in English, mathematics and science, and in all foundation subjects.
- Outstanding leadership and management very effectively promote the aims of the school, set a clear direction for its work, and focus on raising achievement in a well-balanced and high quality curriculum, which adds a richness to pupils' learning.
- Provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is very good. It reflects the school's strong values and high expectations. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to their work, behave well and want to do well. They enjoy very good relationships with one another, and develop into mature individuals by the time they leave school in Year 4.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

This school has no significant areas for improvement, although an issue regarding school policy on handwriting **is recommended for inclusion in the school's action plan.**



## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made considerable progress since its last inspection in May 1997. The standards in national tests for pupils aged seven have improved substantially, and they are high in reading, writing, and mathematics when compared with those nationally. Good standards have been maintained in other subjects, such as art, geography, religious education, and information and communication technology. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4 and achieve standards above those expected for their age in all subjects by the time they leave school aged nine. The allocation of curriculum time has been increased and the good levels of teaching have been maintained. All pupils, including the higher attainers and those with special educational needs, now benefit significantly from the school's effective planning and strong focus on mathematics. Parents benefit significantly from the very good range of information, which helps them to support their children's learning. The school has a strong commitment to high standards, and the capacity for improvement is very good.

## STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	B	A*	A	A	<i>Very high</i> A*
Writing	A	A	A	A	<i>well above average</i> A
Mathematics	B	A	A*	A*	<i>above average</i> B
					<i>average</i> C
					<i>below average</i> D
					<i>well below average</i> E

These are very good results. The performance in mathematics places the school in the highest five per cent nationally. In all three subjects, a high proportion of pupils in Year 2 gained the level (level 3) above that expected for their age.

The most recent results (2001) show a substantial increase in the proportion of pupils gaining this higher level, particularly in spelling and mathematics. These results represent good progress overall when judged against the school's Key Stage 1 results at the time of the previous inspection. Over time, there has been an improving trend in the three core subjects, which is above the national trend. Evidence from this inspection shows that pupils continue to rise to the challenges set by the school, and pupils achieve well in all years. The school's outstanding assessment procedures ensure that the higher attainers, pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is as an additional language, benefit from well-focused support. By the time pupils leave school in Year 4, they are working at levels above those expected for their age. Examples of good work were seen in all subjects

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes and they are keen to learn. Good attitudes contribute considerably to the progress made in lessons. Pupils show their maturity by being responsive and responsible.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils clearly understand what is expected of them. Four pupils have been excluded for limited periods during the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Exceptionally good. From an early age, pupils are given a wide range of opportunities for them to take responsibility. Very good relationships are a distinctive feature of the school community.
Attendance	Attendance levels are above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The good teaching is the main reason why pupils are achieving so well in all subjects, including English, mathematics, and science. Teachers manage classroom activities well and create a positive learning atmosphere, using time particularly well, giving encouragement, and recognising pupils' achievements. Pupils benefit significantly from a committed team of adults who are sensitive to their needs and have a thorough understanding of the stages at which they are learning. Exceptionally good assessment procedures ensure that the progress made by pupils during lessons, including by those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is carefully monitored and the information used to help with planning. The very good relationships are used effectively to underpin teachers' consistently high expectations of behaviour and standards. Examples of very good teaching were seen in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics, and during drama sessions. The strengths of very good teaching are in the detail of the planning and the stimulating range of teaching methods, which capture pupils' attention. Throughout the school, teaching is underpinned by very high quality explanations, well-focused tasks, and the systematic teaching of basic skills from an early age. Pupils benefit substantially from being taught in groups of similar attainment.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The exceptionally well planned curriculum is broad and balanced. It ensures that pupils benefit substantially from very strong curricular links, which add depth and a richness to their learning. Very good emphasis is placed on the teaching of English and mathematics in groups made up of pupils of similar attainment. This balances the high quality provision for other subjects, including the creative arts, which encourage pupils to express themselves and develop their confidence. Literacy and numeracy skills are used particularly well to support pupils' learning throughout the school. The very good range of extra-curricular activities gives pupils more opportunities to develop their skills and interests.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is very good because pupils' needs are identified at an early stage. Pupils in all years are given work closely matched to their learning. They benefit from effective support when working individually or in small groups away from the main class. The detailed individual education plans are used well to help with assessments.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision is very good and pupils are given work closely matched to their stages of learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal and social development, teaching them to tell right from wrong. It helps pupils to develop personal responsibility, trust and mutual respect. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for cultural development, particularly through English, religious education, art, and music.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures to ensure that pupils are well cared for. Staff know the pupils well and take great care of them in a safe and supportive environment. Very effective Child Protection procedures ensure that staff are sensitive to the needs of the pupils. There are very good systems for monitoring and promoting attendance.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives outstanding leadership and management. Well-established systems are used particularly well to provide her colleagues with structured support. The headteacher has a clear vision for the work of the school, focusing on high levels of achievement. She is effectively supported by a committed team of staff with clear roles and responsibilities. Subjects are well managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is highly effective in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities. Members are very supportive, reflective, and exceptionally well informed about the work of the school. The school benefits significantly from the professional expertise and knowledge of the governing body.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has established highly effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating its performance. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching have been particularly well developed and have been instrumental in helping the staff to develop and improve professionally. Detailed information from assessment and test data is analysed for trends of achievement. The school has put in place highly effective strategies to identify the value added to its work.
The strategic use of resources	The school's budget is very well managed, spending decisions are carefully considered, and the school effectively applies the principles of best value. Exceptionally good financial planning focuses funding upon the school's priorities. Very good financial systems also ensure that the school makes very effective use of its limited resources.

The school is very clean and well maintained, and the learning areas are enhanced with high quality displays, which are very informative and reflect the range and depth of the curriculum.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• Children are encouraged to work hard, and they make good progress</li> <li>• The good behaviour</li> <li>• The school is well managed</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible, and they behave well</li> <li>• The good teaching</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems,</li> <li>• Homework is consistently set and marked</li> </ul>	

Inspection evidence endorses the positive views expressed by parents in response to the questionnaire and at the meeting before the inspection.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

1. The good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and standards at the age of seven are high in reading and writing, and very high in mathematics when compared to those attained by pupils in similar schools. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to achieve well in English, mathematics and science, and in all foundation subjects. Pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, are achieving so well in school because they benefit from consistently good teaching from an early age, and respond positively to it. Children enter reception with average levels of attainment and they achieve high or very high standards by Year 2. Pupils continue to achieve well and level up standards at a rapid pace through Years 3 and 4.

2. Parents value the school's commitment to high expectations and consider that the school provides very good opportunities for their children to achieve well, including those with special educational needs and the highest attainers. Throughout the school, pupils' needs are identified with the help of outstanding assessment procedures, which give teachers a thorough understanding of the pupils' stages of learning. Pupils make successful small steps in their learning because the tasks are closely matched to their attainment levels.

3. Pupils rise to the challenging tasks and to the consistently high expectation that pupils of all attainment levels will achieve well. In consequence, standards in the national tests for pupils aged seven have reached high or very high levels in reading, writing, and mathematics in recent years. These results also show that a high proportion of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, gained the level above that expected for their age. The most recent results (2001) show a substantial increase in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level, particularly in spelling and mathematics. For example, the proportion of girls gaining the higher level 3 increased by almost a quarter in spelling and by nearly a fifth in mathematics. The results for boys also showed substantial improvement in mathematics and, to a lesser degree, in writing. Information from the school's rigorous assessment procedures is used particularly well by teachers to finely tune their planning and give pupils well-focused additional support. By the time pupils leave school in Year 4, they are working at levels above those expected for their age in all subjects.

4. The quality of teaching was judged to be good or very good in all but three lessons, which were satisfactory. Teaching was good in almost two thirds of lessons, and very good in just over one fifth. Teachers are particularly effective at sharing learning intentions with pupils. Examples of good teaching were seen throughout the school, and pupils benefit significantly from a committed team of adults with whom they have very good relationships.

5. Throughout the school, teaching is underpinned by well-focused tasks and the systematic teaching of basic skills from an early age. Examples of very good teaching were seen in lessons in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics, and during drama sessions. The strengths of very good teaching are in the detail of the planning and the stimulating range of teaching methods, which capture pupils' attention. For example, during a mathematics lesson, pupils in Year 2 were given a range of challenging mental calculations, which involved all pupils, but the preciseness of the questioning gradually built upon the stages of learning of individual pupils. Pupils responded well to the brisk pace of the lesson and high expectations. They showed enthusiasm and willingness to explain the reasons for their answers, which they did with confidence and the effective use of

appropriate vocabulary. In another very good lesson, pupils in Year 2 made rapid gains in their learning because the detailed planning in literacy was closely linked to pupils' understanding of sounds and knowledge of spelling patterns. The planning included very specific targets for the different attainment levels. The pupils benefited significantly from the teacher's positive and supportive approach and the high expectations for accuracy in writing. Pupils' interests were held by the pace of the tasks and the wide range of teaching methods based on established routines.

6. Teachers make effective use of very good relationships to raise expectations and achievement levels. For example, during a lesson which focused on bullying, the sensitive interaction between the teacher and pupils in Year 3 helped them to discuss and explore their feelings, using drama techniques. During a briskly paced literacy lesson, higher attaining pupils in Year 4 collaborated well in a harmonious atmosphere and made good gains in their understanding of verbs. As a result, pupils developed a good understanding of conventions for instructions. In several mathematics lessons, pupils responded well to the challenging tasks by applying known facts and strategies, and by confidently explaining their methods with the use of mathematical vocabulary. During a shared reading session, pupils in Year 3 were captured by the teacher's dramatic story-telling technique and the emphasis placed upon suspense. Pupils, including the lower attainers, contributed with confidence because their views were valued and the range of tasks matched their stage of learning.

7. One of the main strengths of teaching is in the detail of the planning, which meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the small number for whom English is an additional language. The thorough planning enables teachers to provide pupils with pacy and well-structured lessons, which capture the pupils' attention and develop their thirst for knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 1 responded particularly well to a dynamic and stimulating introduction during a lesson in mathematics. Pupils became fully involved in a series of tasks, which reinforced their understanding of the process of addition. The brisk pace of learning continued through the lesson, and this led to good levels of progress. This was particularly true of those pupils with special educational needs, largely because of the quality of the additional adult support they received in their differentiated activities.

8. The school has introduced a systematic approach to the teaching of reading, writing, and numeracy, which begins at the Foundation Stage. The school gives pupils a wide range of opportunities to write at length in topic work and apply their skills in all aspects of the curriculum. As a result, examples of high quality writing were seen not only in English, but also in science, history, geography, and information and communication technology. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Teachers encourage pupils to speak clearly, and they emphasise the importance of using the appropriate vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils benefit significantly from additional support in their reading, and all pupils gain from being taught in groups of similar attainment. Well-focused tasks matched pupils' learning well in almost all lessons. Teachers manage classroom activities well and create a positive and stimulating learning atmosphere, using time particularly well, giving encouragement, and recognising pupils' achievements. Resources are used imaginatively to support teaching. Little time is lost between lessons, and lunchtimes and after-school activities add a further richness to pupils' learning opportunities. Assessment procedures are used effectively in lessons to help judge the pace and give pupils well-focused tasks. For example, in a lesson seen in reception, the children made good progress because the teacher and learning support assistant pitched the lesson well in response to the children's

contributions. In consequence, the lesson was lively and full of interest for the children, who became fully involved in the development of their language activities.

9. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the close attention of committed adults, which include specialist and support staff. These members of staff are experienced and well deployed, and they have a measurable impact on pupils' learning. Shared planning and good levels of communication between adults provide a cohesive and well-structured approach. This is reflected in the detailed individual education plans and the good progress made by pupils in lessons and over time.

10. Weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory teaching include: overlong explanations rather than the prompting of explanations from the pupils; the lack of dictionaries or word lists during drafting in English; and marking which is not followed routinely by corrections or remedial tasks.

11. Children at the Foundation Stage settle quickly to the school's routines and they make good progress. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. They are integrated well into all classroom activities, and careful assessment procedures enable tasks to be planned to meet their identified needs. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of pupils presently in Year 2 is well above average in reading, speaking, listening and writing. Pupils are developing confidence in a range of forms, with strengths in accuracy of spelling and punctuation, although handwriting is a weaker element. In year 3, pupils' handwriting is not joined, and their slow writing speed is leading to brief pieces of written work. However, by Year 4, standards are well above the level expected because spelling and punctuation are at high level of accuracy. Higher attaining pupils use joined up writing with a good standard of accuracy and few spelling errors. Lower attainers do not use joined up writing but their spelling is sound on frequent words, though pupils do not make use of a dictionary to check for accuracy. Meaning is clearly expressed, with a good range of vocabulary and sentence structures. The broad curriculum prompts a wide range of writing, and frequent practice leads to confident performances. Stories are well presented with techniques to impress the reader. The creative element is enhanced further through the study of a range of poetry, including rhyming and alliterative lists.

12. From an early age, pupils learn to listen closely to their teacher and follow instructions. They readily join in discussions of the shared text, not only in English but in other subjects, and teachers in all classes give good encouragement by listening carefully and appreciating the quality of pupils' answers. As a result, pupils become progressively more confident in speaking to a range of audiences in a variety of contexts. By Year 4, pupils take part confidently in formal class discussions, using technical terms to good effect in analysing study texts. Most pupils are confident in speaking to larger audiences, and they show a willingness to contribute to assemblies by answering questions and sharing their ideas. Other subjects make a good contribution to developing speaking and listening skills. For example, good levels of discussion were seen in mathematics, and pupils were encouraged to talk about their feelings during a personal, social and health education lesson which focused on bullying. The enthusiasm that pupils show for reading is a significant strength. Pupils' reading skills are developed by progressively graded reading materials and careful monitoring of their progress. By Year 4, most pupils read long texts silently with good concentration. They read aloud fluently and accurately, with good understanding. Many have an impressive range and depth of reading experience, naming favourite authors with enthusiasm and explaining their preferences in full. Library knowledge and research skills are good. Pupils have good opportunities to develop research skills by using information books for independent study and from field trips arranged for geography.

13. Pupils develop a confident understanding of the number system and become increasingly proficient in mental computation as they move through the school. This is a strength which underpins the good levels of achievement and the high attainment levels in Year 2, and the rapid rate of progress in Years 3 and 4. Pupils persevere in finding solutions to problems, and they benefit from regular practice and from opportunities to discuss different strategies. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 2 were able to discuss with some confidence their work with addition. In Year 4, higher attaining pupils were able to work with confidence and most have a good grasp of times tables. Pupils have a good breadth of understanding of science. They benefit from the emphasis on practical investigations and have a good understanding of the concept of a fair test. Most pupils make predictions based on good scientific knowledge and understanding, as for example when they predict which materials can be used as conductors or insulators of electricity. They apply their scientific knowledge well in their work. Evidence from pupils' work shows that pupils have a good understanding of information and communication technology, and in Years 2 and 4 they are working at levels above those expected for their age. For example, pupils in Year 2 worked with confidence and made good use of a graphic program when working on the 'Fire of London' during topic work. Other work on display shows that pupils benefit from a broad and rich curriculum, which gives them good opportunities to develop performing and creative skills.

14. Outstanding leadership and management very effectively promote the aims of the school, set a clear direction for its work, and focus on raising achievement in a well-balanced and high quality curriculum, which adds a richness to pupils' learning.

15. Through highly effective leadership and an outstanding systematic approach to all the school's procedures, the headteacher successfully promotes the aims of the school, which focus on high standards, rapid levels of progress, and good levels of achievement. Pupils' needs are identified early through rigorous and highly effective assessment procedures. The information from the school's whole-school approach underpins much of the good quality teaching, the high-quality and very specific support, and the sensitive individual care given to all pupils. Through such careful consideration of the pupils' stages of learning, pupils benefit significantly from the teachers' well-informed planning, including lower and higher attainers, gifted and talented pupils, and those with special educational needs. Information from excellent monitoring procedures and close analysis helps the school to provide regular and meaningful training for the learning support assistants. Similarly, subject co-ordinators are well informed because pupils' work is monitored and evaluated in all subjects. Such strength in assessment procedures enables the school to become a highly effective self-evaluating school, which knows its strengths and areas for development. The headteacher has established a rolling programme of classroom observations, and the school has successfully implemented the Performance Management cycle, a recent Government initiative.

16. The headteacher delegates well, and staff value the levels of responsibilities given to them. Subject co-ordinators have clear roles and responsibilities and they are allocated time away from the classroom to monitor their subject by observing lessons or by working with staff on planning. They are responsible for their own resources, and help in shaping the direction of the school through their own action plans. These are closely linked to priorities in the school development plan, which reflects the headteacher's clear vision. In consequence, subjects are very effectively managed by enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinators who are fully aware of the standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their own subjects. Co-ordinators are committed to improving their own skills and knowledge and willingly engage in professional development. The provision for special educational needs is very good, and it is managed very well. In recognition of its

effectiveness in identifying pupils' needs and enabling them to make very good gains in their learning, the school has been awarded a nationally recognised 'Quality Mark'.

17. The school development plan is a comprehensive, working document, which closely reflects the school's work. It includes measurable targets for improvement, and criteria for judging the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

18. The school successfully gives pupils a broad and rich learning experience through a well-balanced curriculum matched to their needs. For example, pupils learn to read with understanding, and they find pleasure in books. Pupils' learning is regularly reinforced through cross-curricular links and underpinned with effective literacy and numeracy strategies. Information and communication technology is used well to add a further dimension to pupils' learning. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to use language, and they deal with mathematical and scientific concepts with understanding. The school's aims are reflected in its daily work. It is a friendly, supportive and purposeful community; pupils are confident and respectful of one another, and expectations are high. The quality of pupils' work has reached high standards, which the school continues to maintain. Parents value the school's high expectations with regard to academic standards and behaviour, and the strong focus on their children's personal development. Staff work cohesively as a caring team, committed to the welfare of the pupils. This gives the school a clear sense of purpose, and as a result relationships are very good throughout the school.

19. The outstanding governing body are very much involved in shaping the direction of the school. Governors are active, conscientious, reflective, well-informed, and highly supportive of the headteacher and the work of the school. Members liaise successfully with parents and actively promote the school's openness and family ethos. Key members have established strong links with subject co-ordinators. These links are used effectively to monitor subject action plans, review progress and guide development. Governors use their professional expertise and knowledge of the community to promote and improve the school and its work. They readily apply the principles of best value because they are fully informed of the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of teaching and learning, and the school's priorities.

20. Provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is very good. The provision reflects the school's strong values and high expectations. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to their work, behave well and want to do well. They enjoy very good relationships with one another, and develop into mature individuals by the time they leave school in Year 4.

21. A very strong feature of the school is the consistent approach by staff in dealing with social and moral issues. The school successfully gives pupils a secure foundation for their moral and social development. This is reflected in the calm, harmonious, and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. The school is a moral community and parents appreciate the strong lead in teaching pupils the difference between right and wrong. Values such as honesty and respect form an integral part of school life.

22. Teachers use their very good relationships to help pupils understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils benefit from the school's systematic whole-school procedures, including behaviour management. Teachers and other adults, who are supportive and sensitive to pupils' needs, consistently apply the behaviour policy. Its successful practice is

often seen in the classroom, where pupils work collaboratively, often in support of one another. Staff provide very good role models. They value the contribution pupils make, and in their turn the pupils listen to the staff, and reflect their attitudes. The school places a strong emphasis on social skills and a respect for the feelings and values of others.

23. The curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and co-operatively, particularly in subjects such as science, information and communication technology, and physical education.

24. The after-school activities add to these opportunities, enabling pupils to share resources, work in groups, and evaluate each other's successes. Pupils' listening skills are strengthened through encouragement to value and respect one another's contributions.

25. Pupils have good attitudes to school and to their learning. Almost all parents indicated in their response to the questionnaire that their children like coming to school. Pupils are happy to be in school and to play a full part in their lessons, in which they are motivated to achieve well. They are stimulated by challenging and well-focused tasks, which capture their interest and encourage them to think for themselves. As a result, they made good gains in their learning. Pupils are keen to carry out tasks and, when given the opportunity, they take their responsibility seriously. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 relish the opportunities to take initiatives and work independently without adult support. By the time pupils leave school, they work with maturity and are self-assured.

#### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

26. The school has recognised the need to refine its handwriting policy and ensure that pupils are encouraged to use joined up writing by the end of Year 2. Pupils are developing confidence in a range of forms, with strengths in accuracy of spelling and punctuation, although handwriting remains a weaker element. Higher attainers write clearly and at length, although the implementation of the policy will help to reduce the inconsistency in standards, particularly for pupils in Year 3.

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

27. The school should strive to maintain high standards and develop further the quality of teaching. Although the school does not have any significant areas for improvement, there is one area that the governors should consider for inclusion in the school's action plan:

- The introduction of joined up writing at an earlier stage to help pupils write more quickly and produce longer pieces of work.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Number</b>	0	4	12	3	0	0	0
<b>Percentage</b>	0	21	63	16	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		321
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		93

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
	%		%
School data	4.6	School data	0.1
National comparative data	5.2	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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2001	26	34	60

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	<b>Boys</b>	23	25	25
	<b>Girls</b>	34	34	34
	<b>Total</b>	57	59	59
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	<b>School</b>	95 (98)	98 (100)	98 (95)
	<b>National</b>	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	<b>Boys</b>	23	24	24
	<b>Girls</b>	34	34	34
	<b>Total</b>	57	58	58
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	<b>School</b>	95 (98)	97 (93)	97 (98)
	<b>National</b>	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	10
Black – other	19
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	292
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes:**

##### **YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	29.2

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	
Total number of education support staff	
Total aggregate hours worked per week	
Number of pupils per FTE adult	

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	575267.00
Total expenditure	570913.00
Expenditure per pupil	1763.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	4308.00
Balance carried forward to next year	8662.00

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	321
Number of questionnaires returned	117

### Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	78	22	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	28	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	72	28	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	40	4	0	5
The teaching is good.	82	18	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	38	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	16	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	18	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	74	26	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	16	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	22	1	0	1