

INSPECTION REPORT

EVELYN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Prescot

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104446

Headteacher: Mrs C Arnold

Reporting inspector: Mr P B McAlpine
21552

Dates of inspection: 7-9 February 2000

Inspection number: 186922

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Evelyn Avenue Prescot Merseyside
Postcode:	L34 2SP
Telephone number:	0151 426 6377
Fax number:	As above
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Rowe
Date of previous inspection:	22-26 January 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a large community primary school for boys and girls aged 3-11 years old. It is located close to the centre of Prescot. The immediate locality, from which the vast majority of pupils come, is mainly residential, with a mix of older terraced and new semi-detached and detached homes. The school has 232 full-time pupils arranged in eight classes. All but one of the classes contains a single year group. The average class size is 29. The mixed age class contains equal numbers of reception year and Year 1 pupils. A further 43 pupils, about two thirds of whom are full-time and one third part-time, attend a nursery class with a capacity of 32 full-time equivalent places. Attainment on entry to the nursery covers a wide range but is average overall and is relatively consistent from one year to the next. About one pupil in nine is eligible for a free school meal, which is below the average. Less than one per cent of the pupils are from a minority ethnic background, which is broadly average. One pupil speaks English as an additional language and is receiving additional language support. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register, nine per cent, is well below average. However, the proportion with statements of special educational needs is average.

The school is oversubscribed and has grown in size by about 18 per cent since the last inspection, compared to an average reduction of three per cent nationally. An extra class has been created from January 2000 for pupils in the five to seven age group. More pupils join the school after the age of five than leave but pupil turnover overall is low. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, and more than half the staff have been appointed to their posts since the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school that provides effectively for its pupils. Standards are well above average and have been fully sustained since the last inspection. This is because the teaching is good, the work is challenging, and the headteacher has good systems for identifying strengths and weakness and for remedying shortcomings. The pupils are highly motivated and well behaved. The achievements of the pupils in English and mathematics are very good. The school provides very good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- There are high standards in English, mathematics, and science at the ages of eleven and seven, which have been fully sustained since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching for pupils aged five to seven, including pupils in the reception year, is good overall. The quality of teaching for those pupils aged eight to eleven is very good overall.
- The headteacher uses very rigorous systems for monitoring and supporting the teaching and curricular developments and this is why the quality of teaching is so high.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to the school, attend regularly, and behave well because the teachers use good systems for rewarding achievement, maintaining discipline, and promoting good attendance.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, and subject coordinators provide strong and effective leadership and efficient management. There is good teamwork and a shared commitment to continual improvement.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Although the provision in the nursery has improved since the last inspection, and is now just satisfactory overall, it nevertheless lags behind that which is to be found for the rest of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When previously inspected, in January 1996, the school was found to be a very good school with some outstanding features. Since then, improvement has been satisfactory. The extent to which the school has improved is as much as could reasonably be expected given the already high standards.

In the period between inspections, the senior management of the school has changed and it has increased in size by the equivalent of one and one half classes. About half the teachers left for promotion and other natural reasons, and there has been the challenge of implementing the major national initiatives of the Literacy Hour and Daily Mathematics Lesson. These far reaching changes have been managed well. High standards have been appropriately sustained. To maintain this position, when standards are rising nationally, it is necessary to increase each year the proportion of pupils who reach or exceed the national expectations, and the teachers have successfully managed to do this. The school is meeting the targets it has set for improvement. The rate of exclusion has fallen. The rate of attendance has risen. The quality of teaching is at least comparable to that found during the last inspection. The amount of very good and excellent teaching is high.

The response of the headteacher, her staff, and the governing body to the issues for action raised by the previous inspection has been very positive. The shortcomings found in the nursery, which were the most serious of the issues, have been partly remedied by raising the quality of teaching, purchasing new furniture and resources and improving the curriculum but more needs to be done. Acquiring new resources and training the teachers to use direct teaching methods has raised standards in information technology; they are now satisfactory. Assessment procedures are now good overall. Time has been provided for subject coordinators to monitor the curriculum and this has contributed successfully to the quality of teaching. The provision for cultural development has been adequately extended, mainly through the involvement of external groups such as an internationally recognised regional philharmonic orchestra.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	A	A	A	well above average A above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	
Science	B	A	A	A*	

The table shows that the 1999 test results at age eleven were well above average compared to all schools and to similar schools. In science, the results fall within the top five per cent of similar schools nationally. Standards have risen annually, keeping pace with the national trend.

The inspection findings are that standards in the core subjects are well above average at age eleven and at age seven. Attainment in the nursery is average overall. Standards are good in the reception year. The achievement of pupils is very good in the junior year groups; good in the infants; and satisfactory in the nursery. There are no significant differences in attainment or progress between pupils of different gender or background. The one pupil with English as an additional language is receiving appropriate support. A small number of pupils with special educational needs have considerable difficulties with literacy and numeracy and their attainment is significantly below expectations but the majority of pupils with special educational needs are only a few months behind their peers. The very good standards found at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained and the school is meeting its targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils generally are very keen to come to school and interested in school life. They work hard and generally remain on-task until their work is completed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are well behaved in the classroom and on the playground. They are polite and well mannered. There have been no exclusions in the past two years. No bullying or racist behaviour were seen and both are reported to occur only very rarely.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are constructive throughout the school. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to take responsibility, show initiative, and extend their confidence and self-esteem.
Attendance	Good. The rate of attendance is above average and has improved since the last inspection. The improvement reflects the effective systems used by the headteacher to promote good attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is good overall. The teaching for pupils aged eight to eleven years is very good. None of the teaching in these junior year groups is unsatisfactory, almost all of it is good or better, including about four in every ten lessons where the teaching is either very good or excellent. The teaching for pupils aged five to seven years, and for pupils in the reception year, is satisfactory. About one third of the teaching in these infant and reception age groups is good or better. Overall, one lesson in twenty is unsatisfactory, which is less than is typical nationally and reflects the work of a temporary teacher who was at the school for one day only. The teaching of nursery pupils is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching is at least comparable with that found during the previous inspection and, in several respects, it is better. None of the teaching among permanent staff is unsatisfactory, compared with a small amount last inspection, the amount of good or better teaching is similar but the amount of very good or better teaching is higher. The teaching of the early years pupils has improved.

The teaching of English is very good overall. The teaching in mathematics is good overall. Both the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are being very effectively implemented and this is one of the reasons for the quality of teaching in both subjects being better than typically found. Key skills, including phonics, are very well taught. All teachers manage shared text work in English and shared mental calculations in mathematics to a good standard and successfully meet the needs of high, average and low attaining pupils in these sessions through well selected and targeted questions, clear explanations, and good use of demonstrations.

The very good and excellent teaching is characterised by teachers' high levels of subject knowledge and expertise, enabling the learning to be tailored very precisely to the pupils' needs from beginning to end. Good lessons are generally well managed, with key skills and basic knowledge being taught effectively and efficiently to nearly all pupils. In satisfactory lessons, the planning is thorough but the plans are not always implemented effectively, so that minorities of pupils within the class sometimes gain less new knowledge than the majority. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, a temporary teacher managed the pupils effectively but did not have enough background knowledge of the learning objectives to stretch pupils fully during group work. Throughout the school, high standards of behaviour are maintained. The use of information and communications technology is satisfactory. Homework is provided in all age groups to support learning in lessons, with good use being made in the juniors.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. The curriculum for pupils of compulsory school age is well planned at all levels and promotes continuity and progression in learning very effectively. Interesting and motivating activities feature regularly in the provision for five to eleven year olds. The effectiveness of the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is very good; and that of the National Numeracy Strategy is good. Extra curricular provision is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. There is well targeted provision for pupils on the special educational needs register. Parents are involved appropriately at all stages of the assessment process. Records are maintained appropriately. However, the systems used for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs lack rigour and this is something where the school could improve.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Additional language needs are assessed and extra support is provided to the extent required by local and national policy.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The provision for moral development is good and teachers effectively promote pupils' understanding of the principles that govern conduct and behaviour in school and the wider world. There is a satisfactory spiritual dimension to school life and collective worship and religious education meet statutory requirements. The pupils are taught about different cultures and religions and they have the opportunity to extend their social awareness through a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The child protection procedures and the health and safety arrangements meet statutory requirements. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and for using this information when planning new work are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction to the work of the school. Good delegation leads to all teachers sharing responsibilities and working strongly as a team. Key staff are thoroughly aware of their roles and responsibilities and fully active in them.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The business of the governing body is appropriately conducted and all relevant statutory requirements are met. Governors shape the direction of the school through their involvement in school development planning and the approval of key policies. They have a detailed understanding of the significant strengths and weaknesses of the school and effectively hold the senior management to account for the standards achieved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher's systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and curricular effectiveness are extensive and rigorous. A committee of the governors reviews standards and progress regularly and their findings are routinely fed into the policy making process.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Educational priorities are paramount and well supported through careful financial planning.

The management of the school is very good overall. Teamwork is excellent and all those with management responsibility have a detailed and comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Aims and

values are well reflected in the policies and day-to-day actions of teachers and other staff. Financial planning is of good quality and the governors understand and apply best value principles.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The high standards in English and mathematics.• The extent to which high attaining and gifted pupils are stretched.• The hardworking teachers and their good team spirit.• The “fantastic” behaviour of the pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A minority of parents thought that the younger pupils were put under too much stress to succeed.

The inspectors agree with all of the parents' positive views. Detailed commentary is provided elsewhere on the positive features identified by parents as these have proved to be significant strengths of the school. No evidence was found to justify the concern that the younger pupils are put under too much stress to succeed. However, a few instances were found where a small number of low attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 had been given work that was too hard and then struggled to finish the task in the time available.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

There are high standards in English, mathematics, and science at the ages of eleven and seven, which have been fully sustained since the last inspection.

1. The pupils' present work and their performance in lessons shows that standards are well above average at age eleven, and at age seven, in each of the core subjects. These high standards reflect the good quality of the teaching, the well-organised and vibrant curriculum, and the very effective management of the school. The current standards are consistent with the 1999 test results for pupils at the end of the previous school year, a broad overview of which is given in a table above. Attainment among children in the nursery covers a wide range but is average overall. Standards are good in the reception year. Throughout the school, differences in attainment between boys and girls are less than is usually found.

2. In the 1999 national tests, the proportion of pupils who either reached or exceeded the expected national level for their age was 13 percentage points or more above the average in each subject tested. At age seven, the proportions were 13 percentage points higher in writing but slightly below the average in reading and mathematics. In all subjects, at both age eleven and age seven, the proportions of pupils with attainment that exceeded the expected national level was well above that of most schools. When this higher than expected attainment is fully taken into account, the overall results are well above average in all subjects tested at both age eleven and age seven and well above average when compared with similar schools. This has been the case for the past three years. The 1999 test results in writing at age seven lie within the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. The results in science fall within the top 5 per cent of similar schools at age eleven.

3. Improvements in standards since the last inspection have been consistently satisfactory in the juniors. The test results show that standards for the eleven-year-old pupils have risen each year since 1996, with the school trend being broadly in line with the national trend. Standards at age seven, whilst remaining well above the national average, have nevertheless been relatively volatile over the past few years and do not show the same overall trend of improvement as those for the older pupils. The teachers, accommodation, and organisation of the pupils in the infants have changed considerably between 1996 and 1998 and are only now settling down. This largely accounts for the variations in the standards of this age group during those years. Results at age seven rose significantly between 1998 and 1999 and the pupils presently in Year 2 are on target to exceed the 1999 results.

4. The pupils' achievements in the core subjects are very good overall. Progress in the nursery is satisfactory. Progress is good overall for pupils in the reception year and in Years 1 and 2, although a small number of low attaining pupils sometimes struggle with independent work that is too hard. Progress is very good overall in the juniors. The pupils' work shows that learning is especially fast in Years 5 and 6. Straight forward comparisons of the proportions of pupils in high, average, and low attaining groups, based on pupils' work, test results, and teachers' records, shows that the size of the high attaining group increases from 15-20 per cent at age five to 30-50 per cent by age eleven. At the same time, the proportions in low attaining groups diminish. Analysis of data involving the same pupils shows that almost all pupils raise their attainment by at least the nationally expected amount between the ages of seven and eleven, and that a significant number raise their attainment by more than this. This very good achievement is a result of the emphasis placed by the headteacher on high quality teaching. Perceptive monitoring systems are used by teachers to identify accurately the pupils in each year group with different levels of attainment and, even more valuably, those who are not making as much progress as they should. The provision of booster and enrichment classes in the junior years, which are in direct response to the information gained from monitoring, and is targeted on specific groups of pupils, very effectively leads to good support for upper junior pupils at all levels of attainment.

The quality of teaching for pupils aged five to seven, including pupils in the reception year, is good overall. The quality of teaching for pupils aged eight to eleven is very good overall.

5. The teaching is good overall. The teaching for pupils aged eight to eleven years is very good. None of the teaching in these junior year groups is unsatisfactory, almost all of it is good or better, including about four in every ten lessons where the teaching is either very good or excellent. The teaching for pupils aged five to seven years, and for pupils in the reception year, is satisfactory. About one third of the teaching in these infant and reception age groups is good or better. A very small amount of the teaching is unsatisfactory, much less than is typical nationally, and is the work of a temporary teacher.

6. The very good and excellent teaching reflects the work of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, English coordinator, and Year 2 teacher. Teaching of such high quality is characterised by extensive subject knowledge. In an excellent English lesson, for example, the teacher efficiently and effectively explored with the pupils the use of a prologue in plays and novels to set the mood and to create an atmosphere of suspense. This led to a detailed and challenging examination of key words and phrases in the chosen text. The discussion raised issues about the use of parenthesis and embedded clauses, for example, and a misconception by one of the pupils was cleverly used by the teacher to reinforce all pupils' knowledge of similes and metaphors without undermining the confidence of the pupil who had made the error. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject inspired the pupils. The teacher's high expectations meant that all pupils in the class were operating competently and successfully at a level that was two years ahead of that which is typical for their age. In a very good mathematics lesson, a quick-fire oral and mental warm up to the main lesson skilfully involved all pupils in consolidating their knowledge of multiplication and division facts and in using these facts quickly to solve a wide range of mental calculations in everyday situations. The questions had been well prepared by the teacher and were targeted in turn at pupils with different levels of knowledge. All pupils were eager to answer the questions, prepared to tackle the very demanding questions, and very willing to learn from their mistakes.

7. Good teaching is found throughout the five to eleven age groups, including the reception year. The teaching of basic skills and subject content is efficient, purposeful and effective. In a mathematics lesson in the mixed reception and Year 1 class, the teacher shared the purpose of the lesson with the pupils; this led to all of the pupils having a clear understanding of the teacher's expectations of them. Organisation of the learning throughout the lesson was good. Tasks were appropriate and demanding. Resources, and particularly the class assistant, were efficiently and effectively used to support the pupils. In a good science lesson in Year 6, extensive and correct use of key subject vocabulary helped all pupils to organise their newly acquired knowledge and use it independently when carrying out experiments. In a good English lesson in Year 3, nearly every pupil was fully and enthusiastically involved throughout, reflecting the teacher's intelligent use of feedback to the pupils, which helped them extend their knowledge and complete the tasks. He used praise regularly, giving reasons why the praise was appropriate, and used a good range of other methods, including humour, to keep the pupils well behaved and working hard.

8. Where teaching is satisfactory, the planning is generally thorough but not always implemented as effectively as possible. In an English lesson in the juniors, the shared text and word level work was well managed and led to all pupils increasing their understanding of synonyms. The teacher's questioning skills were good, with questions well targeted at pupils of different attainment. Some of the tasks, however, involved too much copying of text, which reduced the requirement, on those pupils involved, to compose sentences for themselves. A slight overrun of time spent in the first part of the lesson meant that the plenary had to be rushed. Nevertheless, nearly all pupils ended the lesson knowing more than they did at the beginning, and this is satisfactory.

9. In the one lesson that was unsatisfactory, a mathematics lesson, classroom management and the pace of mental mathematics were appropriate but the work was insufficiently challenging for most pupils and their acquisition of new knowledge was limited. Although following the plans of the class teacher, who was absent, the temporary teacher had not benefited from the high level of in-house training provided for permanent teachers and this meant that she was unable to expand upon the lesson plans to the extent that was necessary.

The headteacher uses very rigorous systems for monitoring and supporting the teaching and curricular developments and this is a reason why the quality of teaching is so high.

10. The headteacher took over a school that was already very successful in terms of its teaching. She has managed to sustain and improve upon the high standards found at that time during a period when almost half the teachers who were responsible for the original standards leave and new staff appointed. She has achieved this through constant involvement in the continued professional development and training of teachers at the school. She has a crystal clear vision of what constitutes good teaching, sets high standards through the excellent quality of her own teaching, and has high expectations of her colleagues.

11. The headteacher introduced, soon after she took up her appointment, for the first time at the school, systems for monitoring the teaching and these are now in their second year of development. Other key teachers are deeply involved in the arrangements and this is helping in the process of communicating good practice. The arrangements are well organised and have clear objectives. The school year, for example, is appropriately divided into monitoring phases and each phase has a specific focus, such as the management of the plenary session in English, which was the area concentrated on during autumn term 1999. Each teacher is observed teach during each phase of monitoring. The headteacher's findings are thoroughly discussed with the teacher and satisfactorily documented. Individual targets for improvement are then set; this is very good practice.

12. Curriculum developments, such as the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy, have been well supported through the arrangements to monitor teachers and the effective in-house training provided to raise the levels of subject knowledge of all teachers. The coordinators for these subjects have been able to guide their colleagues in the use of the new methods and have been involved fully in the monitoring.

13. The encompassing nature of the monitoring arrangements enable detailed knowledge of strengths and weaknesses to be gathered, evaluated, and acted upon at whole-school as well as individual level. Observation of plenary sessions, for instance, revealed that there was generally too much simple “showing” of the pupils’ completed work at the expense of using pupils’ knowledge to reinforce the main learning objectives for that lesson or to evaluate progress towards achieving the lesson objectives. This finding was then shared with all the teachers, together with guidance on how to improve, and specific targets set for the staff. During the inspection, all plenary sessions were found to be well managed and effective.

14. At the end of each monitoring phase, the headteacher writes a succinct overview of the findings. This is then shared with staff, discussed at the governors’ curriculum committee, and summarised in the headteacher’s termly report to the governors, thus making it appropriately accessible to parents. Monitoring outcomes also influence the teachers’ job descriptions, which are reviewed annually and changed to incorporate responsibility for tackling specific issues arising from areas identified for development as these arise.

15. The arrangements for staff development are very good and extensively joined to both individual and whole-school development needs. The system for appraisal meets statutory requirements. The outcomes of appraisal, together with those from monitoring, are well linked to the training programme. Teachers and non-teaching staff complete annually a good, comprehensive staff-development evaluation form, which is then used to inform decisions about training priorities. Increased training for non-teaching staff stemmed from a whole-school audit in 1998. Acting upon the range of development needs that emerge from these processes is a key priority in the senior management team’s executive action plan. This was introduced by the headteacher to maintain appropriate momentum and control over the management of change and to check that targets are being met.

16. Subject coordinators monitor the teachers’ planning and the pupils’ work. The headteacher also monitors a sample of pupils’ work and, together with the assessment coordinator, has introduced a comprehensive system for tracking the progress of every pupil at the school. This tracking system successfully complements the monitoring of the teaching and enables the headteacher to evaluate satisfactorily the impact of teaching and the curriculum upon the pupils’ rate of learning; this is very valuable indeed. As yet, the full potential of this system for measuring a wide range of improvements has not been fully realised in practice but is being considered by the headteacher as the next development stage for the school.

The pupils have very good attitudes to the school, attend regularly, and behave well because the teachers use good systems for rewarding achievement, maintaining discipline, and promoting good attendance.

17. The pupils respond very positively to the teaching; they are eager, alert, and well motivated. The teachers convey good enthusiasm for their subjects and this inspires the pupils. Relationships are very good and pupils generally have the confidence to answer questions and solve problems, knowing that even if they make mistakes their efforts will be appreciated.

18. The pupils engage intellectually with ideas and are very willing to ask questions to clarify their understanding. In one lesson, a pupil asked if she could use the word “telephone” rather than “receiver” because she did not think that the latter word was used very often in today’s world. In another lesson, a pupil asked which “tense” was to be used in the writing task. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 4, high attaining pupils followed perceptively the logic of the teacher’s exposition. They “deduced” for themselves that they could calculate the area of a rectangle by multiplying length and width, instead of counting the squares, before the teacher reached that point in her explanation.

19. There are very good systems for rewarding achievement and for managing behaviour and this is why the pupils are motivated to succeed and to behave well. A wide range of certificates is awarded to pupils who master specific skills in reading, writing and mathematics. There is both progression and structure to the skills acknowledged by these certificates and this helps pupils see that each stage in learning is an achievable part of a longer journey to higher attainment. All pupils are rewarded for good behaviour, and this is excellent. Sanctions are clear, fair, and consistently applied by all teachers. Expectations are relevant and well shared with the pupils. Attendance records are analysed weekly by the headteacher, which is good practice, and

unauthorised absence is promptly investigated. Awards are provided for those with good attendance.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher, and subject coordinators provide strong and effective leadership and efficient management. There is good teamwork and a shared commitment to continual improvement.

20. The leadership and management of the school are very efficient and effective. This is leading directly to the good overall quality of the teaching, the very good achievements of the pupils and the well above average standards attained.

21. The teachers and governors are committed to achieving high standards. The headteacher has a clear, practical vision of what constitutes high standards in either attainment or teaching and communicates this effectively through school policies and her good quality, high profile, day-to-day involvement with pupils, staff, parents and governors. Communication within the school is good and everybody has a strong sense of common purpose. This has been achieved through the regular use of systems to consult, audit, and evaluate the views of teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils and parents, and through good quality delegation of responsibilities to others.

22. The headteacher has a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, reflecting the high quality procedures she uses for evaluation and self-review. A thorough audit of the school was conducted in 1998 and this led to a number of priorities for action. This was the headteacher's starting point, and the issues raised are being systematically tackled over a two-year period through the school development planning process. The development plan itself is satisfactory and adequately balances national priorities with those identified by the school. It is comprehensive, manageable, and relevant to current needs. Objectives within the plan are precise; action planning is suitably detailed; individual responsibilities and the time scales are clear; and resource implications have been evaluated. However, not all of the objectives are phrased in such a way that progress towards them can be measured, and this relative weakness should be remedied in the next version of the plan.

23. The deputy headteacher has a sharply focused understanding of her role. For instance, she is responsible for coordinating staff development and has introduced rigorous systems for identifying and prioritising individual and school training needs. She is maintaining a detailed record of each person's training requirements and has established clear criteria to use when deciding where training priorities lie. Teachers must complete an application form as part of the decision making process; a noteworthy feature of which is the requirement for an applicant to identify what action is to be taken after the course has ended. This is very good practice. Her management of the staff induction arrangements is very good. She has a well thought out strategy for easing newly appointed staff gradually into the policies and practices of the school, based on their entry profile. She constructs a timetable of meetings for new teachers with subject coordinators and with the governing body, and this is excellent. Staff with recent experience valued the induction arrangements and expressed their appreciation.

24. Subject coordinators lead effectively by example. The literacy and numeracy coordinators, for instance, have a detailed and extensive knowledge of their respective subjects and capably demonstrate, to a high standard, the methods and strategies to be used when teaching. They are actively involved in classroom observation of their colleagues, monitor teachers' planning and the pupils' work, and lead in-house training where this is necessary. Subject coordinators are very effectively influencing for the better the work of other teachers.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Provision in the nursery lags behind in quality that which is to be found in the rest of the school.

25. Provision in the nursery is just satisfactory, having improved to this level since the last inspection. It nevertheless lacks the rigour and vitality found elsewhere in the school. This partly reflects a delay to developments that stem from long term staffing issues, which are now being tackled appropriately by the present headteacher. One member of staff is currently on long term absence. The shortcomings also reflect planning and teaching that organises tasks effectively but does not display a deep awareness of the underlying learning objectives. The children gain satisfactorily from the activities. However, opportunities to extend their knowledge further are missed.

26. At the time of the last inspection, there were significant shortcomings in the teaching and in the quality and organisation of the learning activities. The teaching is now better. The daily programme has a satisfactory

mix of teacher directed and independent activities. The curricular planning reflects the nationally agreed areas of learning and Desirable Learning Outcomes. More opportunities to use equipment are provided during outdoor play and resources generally within the nursery have been increased.

27. Nearly all pupils have attended parent and toddler groups and playgroups prior to their admission to the nursery and have already made steady progress towards the attainment levels expected on entry to compulsory education. Because of these experiences, the vast majority of the children in the nursery have attainment in speaking, listening, literacy, and numeracy that is consistent with the expectations for their age. Very few have low attainment and about one in seven have attainment that exceeds expectations. Most pupils make steady progress and, by the time they enter the reception year, the proportion attaining appropriately for their age is above average. However, pupils who enter the nursery with relatively high attainment for their age are insufficiently stretched by the learning experiences and are under achieving, especially in literacy and numeracy.

28. Periods are set aside each morning and afternoon for directed activities, and this is appropriate. Each adult works directly with a group of pupils, guiding them through tasks. This is good practice and helps the pupils maintain concentration and complete the tasks, something that was not done sufficiently at the last inspection and was identified as a shortcoming. The adults provide constant verbal instruction and feedback to the pupils, which is good, but rarely ask the type of questions that require a verbal response from the pupils and this leads to missed opportunities for extending language skills. For example, in an activity where the pupils explored the shape of objects that they could touch but not see, they were asked to recreate the shapes that they had found using playdough but were insufficiently challenged to describe the objects in words. Similarly, in a water-play task, the pupils blew bubbles in water mixed with detergent and paint and then took prints of the bubbles. This was an exciting and worthwhile activity. The pupils were eager to talk about their findings but not enough was done to extend the range of words they might use to describe what they saw. In both activities, the planning did not specifically identify the learning objectives or the potential additions to the pupils' vocabularies, and this is one of the reasons why opportunities are missed in practice. While the medium term planning is satisfactory, the daily and weekly planning is too generalised and too focused on task management rather than on what the children might learn from the tasks. This means that the adults who work directly with the children lack the guidance necessary to promote maximum learning from every task.

29. Outdoor play has been improved significantly and a good range of activities is now provided. However, the adults still observe and supervise the pupils at play more than they engage with them to heighten the level of challenge, help them grow in confidence, and promote more talk and understanding. In one session of outdoor play, most pupils chose sit-on-and-ride toys and ignored more challenging activities that might have extended their throwing, climbing, or balancing skills. During this period, children were only spoken to when their play became reckless and few were encouraged to try something new.

30. Following the last inspection, the teaching space has been reorganised to reflect different areas of learning, and this is appropriate. Advice has been sought from the local authority and adequately acted upon. Resources, such as book and display shelving, have been purchased and used to divide the teaching space and good use has been made of a converted storeroom to create a quiet area. The teaching space is, however, cramped. The current layout of furniture makes it difficult for teachers to find space for stimulating displays at child level that might allow pupils to touch and handle objects, arouse their curiosity, and promote excitement and wonder. Not enough provision of this type is made. There is insufficient use of furniture, screens and floor matting to separate the entrance areas, wet areas, and toilet areas from the general teaching space. These lead to the already limited carpet space becoming dirty and damp in wet weather, reducing the usable space further, and to the uncarpeted areas near to the sinks and toilets becoming wet, unpleasant and slippery on a daily basis, despite the "non-slip" nature of the floor surfaces. Some parts of the nursery are untidy and this sets a poor example for pupils to follow.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

31. The school has already raised the quality of provision to just satisfactory by increasing the range and type of activities provided and by increasing the resources. The substantial majority of pupils now reach expected standards by the time they transfer to the reception year. However, pupils who enter the nursery with high attainment do not increase their knowledge sufficiently and the other pupils catch them up. The school should concentrate next on increasing the quality and rate of learning so that more pupils attain higher than expected standards by the time they enter the reception year.

32. **Key Issue:** To increase the rate at which pupils make progress in the nursery to at least the same as that found elsewhere in the school, the headteacher, early years coordinator, and nursery teacher, with the support of the governing body, should:

- raise the overall quality of teaching in the nursery from satisfactory to good or better;
- improve the questioning and discussion skills of adults who work with pupils in the nursery;
- increase the range, quality and frequency of opportunities where pupils are expected to talk about, describe and explain what they see and experience;
- improve the role-play skills of adults so that they can engage constructively with pupils during outdoor play and promote challenging activities;
- improve the quality of weekly and daily planning by including specific learning objectives for each activity and by explicitly identifying the vocabulary and the language to be promoted;
- improve the quality of child-level displays so that they provide a variety of resources, materials and novelties for pupils to touch and handle, in order to excite their curiosity, awe and wonder and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world;
- improve the management of entrance, toilet and sink areas so that the floors and carpets remain dry and clean, as far as is practicable;
- raise the standard of tidiness.

(Discussed in paragraphs 25-30)

33. In addition to the issue above, the headteacher and governors should consider including the following areas for improvement in their action plan:

- the systems used for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs lack rigour (“Other Aspects of the School” table on page 9);
- a small number of low attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 sometimes struggle with independent work that is too hard (paragraph 4);
- the full potential of the tracking system for measuring a wide range of improvements in teaching and the curriculum has not been fully realised in practice (paragraph 15);
- not all of the objectives in the school development plan are phrased in such a way that progress towards them can be easily measured (paragraph 21).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed:	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils:	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10	15	30	40	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR–Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	232
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR–Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	22	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	12	8
	Girls	18	19	18
	Total	26	31	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81	97	81
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	8	8
	Girls	19	18	18
	Total	30	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94	81	81
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	12	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	18
	Girls	10	10	12
	Total	25	25	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83	83	100
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	17
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	25	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83	80	93
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	199
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. The remaining 31 full-time pupils are not yet of compulsory school age and not included in the table.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.33
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	122

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	390736
Total expenditure	400617
Expenditure per pupil (based on 243 NOR)	1648.63
Balance brought forward from previous year	19700
Balance carried forward to next year	9819

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	294
Number of questionnaires returned	66

Percentage of responses in each category (may not add up to 100 because of rounding)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	23	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	27	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	38	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	31	12	2	2
The teaching is good.	74	24	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	44	6	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	33	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	18	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	32	3	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	64	30	6	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	36	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	49	8	0	9

Other issues raised by parents

Significant issues have been identified on page 10. No other issues were raised.