

INSPECTION REPORT

THURLASTON C E (AIDED) SCHOOL

Thurlaston, Leics

LEA area: Leicestershire]

Unique reference number: 120201

Headteacher: Mrs Felicity Gil

Reporting inspector: Mrs Margaret Riley
3694

Dates of inspection: 5th - 6th March 2001

Inspection number: 189532

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Desford Road Thurlaston Leicester
Postcode:	LE9 7TE
Telephone number:	01455 888243
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Janet Gaten
Date of previous inspection:	24/09/1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thurlaston Church of England (Aided) Primary School is located in the centre of the village of Thurlaston in Leicestershire. The village is about five miles to the south west of the City of Leicester. Pupils come to the school from Thurlaston, from neighbouring villages, and local farms. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school provides full time education for boys and girls aged four to eleven. Children are admitted to the school in September and January each year. Many of the youngest children have pre-school experience at the local Playgroup. The original Victorian school building has undergone a number of changes and additions. The school is about to be involved in a further building programme that will provide it with a purpose built classroom for the youngest children. There are currently 114 pupils in the school, seventeen in the reception year of whom eight began full time school in January, 2001. Attainment on entry to the school is above average. Pupils are taught in four mixed year group classes. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are nineteen pupils (17.75%) on the school register of special educational needs. Two pupils (1.87%) have statements of special need. These proportions are broadly in line with the national average. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

The school aims reflect a Christian approach to life and education. The school's own priorities for development include: a commitment to raising standards in English and mathematics; the development of information and communication technology; and continuing development of the role of staff and governors in monitoring the work of the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Thurlaston C.E. Primary is a very good school with many excellent features. The school is very effective in its approaches to the academic and personal development of all pupils. The headteacher, staff and governors are providing very good quality, rounded educational experience for pupils. Teaching and learning are of a consistently high standard that promote a thoughtful and challenging atmosphere in classrooms. This is an approach that is reflected strongly in all aspects of school life. Standards are high and expectations are well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils and individuals. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent, the governing body is very effective and all the adults involved in the school play a significant part in achieving successful outcomes for all pupils. The ethos of the school is one of continuous improvement through academic challenge and personal respect. Sensitive support is given to those pupils who require encouragement and specialist teaching. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and standards in English, mathematics and science are high.
- The quality of teaching is good with significant examples of very good and excellent practice. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. All adults make a positive contribution to standards and progress
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners. Their behaviour is excellent and they develop positive attitudes to their work and strong relationships with each other and with adults
- The curriculum is broad, with strengths in the arts and humanities. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and the range of additional and extra-curricular activities is wide.
- The school is well led and managed by an excellent headteacher, who is supported by a dedicated staff and effective governing body

What could be improved

- The curricular opportunities provided for the youngest children do not fully meet the requirements of the Foundation Stage.
- The practice of setting individual and group targets for learning in English, mathematics and science is developing but is not yet consistently applied.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September, 1996. Since then it has maintained the strengths that were noted in pupils' attitudes and values and in the provision for pupils' personal development. The headteacher had been in post for a few months at the time of the last inspection. Her vision for the school was already clear and since then the school has made very good progress in addressing the issues for action identified in the report. Higher attaining pupils are now identified in each class and the teachers spend regular and structured time with those pupils in order to extend their learning. Schemes of work are now in place to ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met in full. The assessment of pupils' academic progress has developed to include some very good examples of target setting and assessment for learning. All teaching staff are now fully involved as subject leaders. The teachers have developed some very good portfolios of assessed work in all subjects and they give each other very good guidance about teaching, learning and priorities for development in their subjects. The school has given appropriate and good quality attention to the new national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy and is developing the work to establish the place of information and communication technology in all areas of the curriculum. The level of governor involvement in monitoring and evaluation has improved and there is a clearer link between their role and school standards and performance than was evident at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	B	C
mathematics	A	A*	A	A
science	B	A	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils at Thurlaston have consistently attained at well above the national average, reaching very high standards by the age of eleven in each of the last three years. In 2000 in comparison to similar schools, pupils achieved well above average standards in mathematics and science and average standards in English. The school has carefully evaluated the performance of all pupils in English and mathematics in order to focus on improvement. The size of end of key stage groups is small. This means that there are fluctuations in the year on year performance of pupils that make accurate comparisons difficult. The school has a good approach to the identification and support of higher attaining and special needs pupils. Current Year 6 pupils are making good progress in their learning and the school is on target to achieve its challenging targets in this year's tests. Standards in subjects assessed through scrutiny of completed work and a small number of lesson observations in information and communication technology, music, art, history, geography and physical education, are good. The youngest children are

making good progress and by the end of reception all, or nearly all, will have achieved the early learning goals in the important areas of literacy, language and communication and in mathematical development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are keen, interested in their work and enthusiastic about learning. They show maturity and have very positive attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils are keen, interested in their work and enthusiastic about learning. They show maturity and have very positive attitudes to school.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils build strong friendships with classmates and positive relationships with the adults who work in the school. They are aware of the impact of their actions and words on others and participate fully in the opportunities provided by the school.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils like coming to school. They are punctual at the start of the day and for the beginning of lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching throughout the school is always good, with a third of the lessons observed being very good or excellent. Three quarters of lessons were judged to demonstrate good or better teaching methods and classroom organisation. The teaching in English, mathematics and science is very good. Teachers strongly emphasise the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. In many lessons, teachers and the adults who support them, set very high expectations. They are often skilled at posing challenging questions that extend pupils' understanding. Not a moment is wasted in lessons; resources are well prepared according to the differing needs of groups and individual pupils. Teachers have particular strengths in their work in information and communication technology, drama, art and music. The teaching of the youngest pupils is good, and is well supported by a full time classroom assistant. Pupils make good progress in their learning. They participate well in class discussions and are becoming aware of their own strengths and areas for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and learning support staff.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and rich curriculum. In addition to the teaching of the essential skills of literacy and numeracy, there is a good provision for the arts, drama, information and communication technology and personal and social education. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The use of in-class support for pupils and withdrawal for intensive support is very good. Policy and practice is very effective.
Provision for pupils'	Very good opportunities are provided to promote pupils' spiritual, moral,

personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	social and cultural development. Through planned programmes for personal, social and health education and through assemblies and acts of worship, pupils are given opportunities to learn about and understand other faiths and cultures, practise their social skills and learn how to make moral choices in everyday life.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Standards of care are very high. Everyone involved in the school presents positive role models for pupils. There is a strong and appropriate emphasis on pupils' educational and personal welfare. The friendly environment of the school contributes to pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

The school has a strong partnership with parents. Parents make a significant contribution to their children's learning through their support with homework and individual research projects. The information provided by the school is of good quality. Parents have regular formal and informal opportunities to meet with teachers. The parents and carers of pupils with special needs are regularly involved in reviews of progress. Good opportunities are provided for the involvement of parents and other members of the community in classrooms, on school visits and as helpers at school events.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership to the school. She leads by example and is supported through the strong teamwork of all staff. Subject co-ordinators are taking an active lead in curriculum development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are supportive of the school. Through their committees, close monitoring, and regular visits to the school, they are developing their roles and responsibilities very well. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties fully.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is developing a very rigorous approach to the evaluation of teaching and learning. There are strengths in the analysis and interpretation of information on pupils' performance. The very effective systems for evaluating work in subjects and the introduction of Performance Management objectives for teachers are good features of the school's work.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Teaching and classroom support staff are deployed very effectively. The school makes good use of staff expertise. The governing body appropriately applies the principles of best value in making decisions.

The vision and perseverance of the headteacher have created a strong and effective team of teachers and supporting adults. There is strong evidence to show that the level of dedication is high. A shared set of values underpins the work of the school. The accommodation in the school is attractive, though somewhat cramped. The teachers make very good use of every available space to motivate pupils. The school secretary and site supervisor carry out their work with efficiency and care. All members of staff are highly valued by the school. Decisions are made in consultation with all staff and governors. There is a strong steer towards continual improvement in standards and quality. The principles of best value are applied well in setting school priorities for development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children enjoy school • That the behaviour of children is very good • That the school has high expectations of their children and the teaching is good • That the school is approachable and works closely with them • That there is strong and purposeful leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like to see a wider range of activities available to pupils • Some parents feel that the homework projects are too demanding • Some parents are concerned about the school's ability to deliver ICT without a computer suite

The inspection team fully endorses the positive views expressed by parents. The quality and range of school and after school clubs and additional activities are of very good quality and the school is open to parental and pupils' suggestions about the provision of further activities. The quality of homework projects is very good and prepares older pupils well for work at their next school. The provision for ICT is good and there will be opportunities for the development of the use of computers when the new building is completed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

All pupils make good progress and standards are high

- 1 The youngest children in the reception class are achieving well. By the time they are five years old most have attained, and many exceeded, the level expected for children of their age in important areas of their learning. Skills in literacy, language and communication are developed well. Children make very good progress in acquiring a strong foundation in reading, writing and understanding number. Children are assessed when they first start school and, although many children enter the school with above average skills in some aspects of their development, the school is ensuring that children continue to improve and make clear progress in all areas of their learning. Children have good opportunities to gain experience of the world around them and to learn through experience of creative and physical activities.
- 2 Results from the national tests in 2000 show that, by the time they are seven, pupils are achieving levels well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Importantly, a high proportion of pupils attain the higher levels in the tests. The pattern of higher than average attainment in the key skills of literacy and numeracy has been maintained consistently for the last four years. The school places a strong emphasis on maintaining and improving standards for all pupils.
- 3 At the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils are eleven, standards remain high. In the 2000 tests, all pupils attained the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. The results place the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. This position is maintained when the school's results are compared to others with similar characteristics. A good proportion of pupils also attained at the higher test levels in all three core National Curriculum subjects, with particular strengths in mathematics and science.
- 4 Pupils throughout the school have very good speaking and listening skills. In English lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other, responding to questions with clarity. In a Year 5 /6 drama lesson where they were encouraged to put themselves into the position of a child or parent during the 1940 evacuation programme, the pupils listened with sympathy and understanding and responded to each other, using language sensitively. When describing their research findings from work on reptiles, younger pupils in Year 1 /2 spoke confidently and clearly.
- 5 Reading skills are very good. Pupils read with confidence, accuracy and fluency. From their earliest time in school they are encouraged to read for pleasure and to gain information. Pupils have benefited from additional time and resources devoted to the development of their reading and writing skills. They can talk about favourite authors and have a good understanding of the way in which writers build stories through characters, plot and language. This knowledge is reflected in the pupils' completed fiction and non-fiction writing. Pupils throughout the school read regularly and gain fluency through their opportunities to read with their teachers and other adults.
- 6 Standards in literacy and numeracy are very good. Pupils are acquiring basic skills through the designated daily lessons. The impact of the national strategies on pupils' standards has been significant throughout the school. Pupils are developing practical approaches to reading, writing and mathematics that are providing a strong grounding in the basic skills, enabling all pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding.

- 7 In mathematics, pupils talk logically, with good reasoning, about how they have arrived at their answers to mental arithmetic problems. They have good skills in working with numbers, data and shapes. Year 3 /4 pupils demonstrated a thorough understanding of symmetry in a mathematics lesson and were able to apply their knowledge to the world around them. After the lesson, pupils were observed looking at and talking about lines of symmetry found in natural and man made objects.
- 8 Skills in science are developed well as pupils engage in experiments and classroom discussions. The completed work in science shows that pupils throughout the school make good gains in their understanding of asking appropriate questions, building up a hypothesis and subjecting it to a fair test before writing up the results of their experiments and findings. Older pupils coped well with challenging work related to electricity and circuits, showing understanding of the scientific principles involved and the practical applications in everyday life. Working in pairs and small groups, they were able to construct simple and more complex lighting circuits and to discuss the need for stronger power sources.
- 9 Pupils also make very good use of information and communication technology (ICT). The use of computers as sources of information, for the presentation of completed work, and as a means of collecting and recording data is part of each pupils' daily experience. The skills in this subject are developing well because pupils are encouraged to use and apply their skills across a good range of subjects.
- 10 Pupils achieve well in music, art, design and technology, history, geography and physical education.
- 11 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards meeting the targets set for them in their individual education plans (IEP's). One indicator of this progress is demonstrated in the 2000 national test results when all Year 6 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs reached Level 4.
- 12 Higher attaining pupils are identified in each class and the school makes careful, planned and regular provision for class teachers to work with these pupils as a separate group. This contributes to the high achievement of these pupils.

The quality of teaching is good, with significant examples of very good and excellent practice in classrooms. All adults make a positive contribution to standards and progress.

- 13 Teachers in all classes have established very good classroom routines so that all pupils are enabled to learn in an atmosphere that promotes quality and high standards. Teachers use questioning very effectively to extend and enhance pupils' ability to understand the content of their lessons. This is a particularly strong feature of the very good and excellent teaching in Year 5 /6, but is also present in lessons in all year groups.
- 14 Lessons are well planned to provide opportunities for pupils to practise and reinforce their knowledge and understanding. Literacy and numeracy activities are planned thoroughly to meet the differing needs of pupils. In practice, this almost always works well. In only one or two instances were the activities not well enough matched to pupils' abilities or needs. The school is not yet in a position to plan fully for the needs of the youngest pupils. In the reception class there is insufficient planning for the youngest pupils to be involved in a wider range of learning experiences, through

structured play. Teaching is, however, of good quality and the presence of a full time classroom assistant makes a very positive contribution to the overall quality of the learning and progress made by children.

- 15 Effective teaching is underpinned by very clear expectations so that all pupils are aware of the likely demands of the lessons. In all classes the objectives for learning are shared at the outset with pupils. Often, teachers also take an appropriate amount of time to evaluate learning and progress with the pupils at the end of the lesson. The next steps in learning are made clear so that all pupils have a clear understanding of where to go next. In all classes teachers are setting targets for individuals to achieve. There is very good practice in Year 1 /2 where pupils have their short term learning targets in literacy out on their tables during lessons. Older pupils in Year 3 /4 have them recorded in their homework diaries, and Year 5 /6 pupils record their own targets in their books. This is a strong and valuable feature of the interaction between teachers and pupils that could usefully be developed with greater consistency across the school.
- 16 Teachers introduce lessons effectively and plan clear structures to each session. This is a good feature that helps pupils to understand how long they have to complete tasks and how quickly they need to work. Pupils are encouraged to select their own resources for learning and to be responsible for classroom organisation.
- 17 In the best lessons, teachers use specialist and technical subject language very well. Pupils are encouraged to think and behave in the manner of authors, writers mathematicians and scientists. In music, art and physical education, there is a strong emphasis placed on the techniques and skills required to, for example, sing in unison, to develop creative techniques, or to understand the effects of physical activity on the body.
- 18 In their planning and practice, teachers take considerable care to include the needs of different groups of pupils. Their detailed knowledge of pupils' progress is used to ensure that all are involved, almost always at appropriate levels during lessons. The contribution to teaching made by other adults is very good. Learning support assistants make a significant and positive contribution to the standards achieved by all pupils. The team of learning and classroom support assistants shows an unusually high level of enthusiasm for and commitment to its role in the school. This is strong in support of pupils with special educational needs, and is also reflected in the support given to all pupils.
- 19 The quality of teaching throughout the school is a real strength that has a positive impact on the standards pupils attain, not only in the national tests, but also in the context of broader educational achievement. The teaching skills used in literacy and numeracy lessons are of high quality. The range of methods used by teachers and the confidence with which they interpret the national strategy requirements are very good. Not a moment is wasted in lessons and teachers demonstrate enormous enthusiasm for their work. This enthusiasm for learning is effectively transferred to their pupils so that the climate in school is one where teaching and learning is valued highly.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners, their behaviour is excellent and they develop positive attitudes to their work and strong relationships with each other and with adults.

- 20 The school is a harmonious community. Values are based on trust, teamwork, loyalty, and respect for adults and pupils. Throughout the school, the emphasis is focused on the positive. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the climate of the school, with affection and a strong sense of involvement in their own learning. In lessons, all pupils are interested in their work and are keen to participate in activities. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning; they are secure and confident and have strong relationships with each other and all the adults in school. As a result, all pupils make good progress. The impact on the standards achieved is positive.
- 21 During classroom and whole school activities, such as assemblies and play times, pupils show pride in their achievements and a level of commitment to their school that is rare in such young children. Pupils make suggestions about improvements in the quality of their environment. The School Council, with representatives from each class, meets regularly to discuss issues of importance to pupils. With the help of the headteacher and senior teacher, this group of pupils takes full responsibility for setting the agendas, recording the meetings and taking further actions. During the inspection, the Council reported on improvements in playground behaviour following discussion with pupils and the display of the rules as a reminder. Obtaining plants for the school garden was discussed and agreement was reached about a letter to be sent to parents, including a volunteer from the group to write the letter. Older pupils have also made suggestions for new school clubs and activities that have been acted on by the staff. A new venture suggested by pupils is a newspaper, "Eco Britain". The editorial and publishing responsibilities are entirely in the hands of the pupils. The registered inspector was interviewed for an article as part of a series devoted to looking at the inspection process from different viewpoints. Proceeds from the sale of the latest edition of the paper are to be donated to the Comic Relief charity.
- 22 In many lessons, pupils show an outstanding level of co-operation. When working in pairs and small groups, they are encouraged to, and demonstrate in practice, the ability to listen to each other, value all contributions and work in collaboration. In drama and science lessons, older pupils showed sensitivity to each other, building on ideas – for example, in constructing electrical circuits – and showing respect for feelings, as they did when re-enacting the parting from loved ones during the Evacuation. Younger pupils in the reception class discussed the recent Foot and Mouth disease outbreak. They talked together in a mature and understanding way about how it might affect their friends and the community.
- 23 The degree of concentration on the tasks in lessons is excellent. This was the case in a Year 3 /4 mathematics lesson about lines of symmetry. Year 1 /2 pupils in their focus on non-fiction texts about reptiles and Year 5 /6 involved in group reading with teachers and volunteer helpers were all so involved in their work that they were reluctant to stop, even for play.
- 24 Behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime is very good. Pupils play well together and enjoy a sociable and relaxing time with their friends. The work of the supervising adults is very good. Care and consideration is shown to every pupil. The school is active in promoting and rewarding positive behaviour. Pupils are kind and caring; they take turns, share games and equipment, and are very concerned about one another.

The curriculum is broad, provision for pupil's personal development is very good, and the range of additional activities is wide and effective

- 25 The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the interest levels and needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The school places a high value on ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. It has effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. The broader English and mathematics curriculum also features strongly in lessons. Very good use is made of in-class support for pupils with special educational needs, especially for literacy and numeracy but also for the development of ICT skills. The ICT co-ordinator plans for the development of suitable tasks for special needs pupils so that they can gain independence in the use of technology as an aid to their learning. The provision for the most able pupils is developing well. Teachers are planning for their needs through activities that present challenges and complex problem solving.
- 26 The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Through assemblies, acts of collective worship and in lessons, time is provided for pupils to reflect on the nature and wonder of the world around them. The moral and social framework of the school is excellent. Through their discussions in religious education and structured personal, social and health education lessons, pupils are helped to develop as young citizens. They share in special times with the adults. Appropriate opportunities are provided for them to discuss difficult moral choices. During an assembly about facing dilemmas and problems pupils were able to empathise with the headteacher who had broken a school rule by climbing over the gate because the locks were iced. Pupils understood that sometimes difficult choices have to be made for the greater good and that it is not always possible to solve problems alone.
- 27 The school curriculum is enriched by a very good range of additional activities, involving visits out of school and invitations to visitors to share their knowledge and experience with the children. The school also has a very good range of out of school clubs. The school choir contains 42 pupils from Years 3 to 6. They have the opportunity to perform regularly, and are achieving high quality performances with considerable musical skill and understanding of technique. To enhance the quality of this aspect of school life, a pianist is paid to accompany practice and rehearsals as well as actual performances. This attention to detail improves the quality of the choir and shows how excellence is celebrated in the school.
- 28 Homework is well planned and organised throughout the school. The work completed at home is valued and celebrated. Although some parents expressed concern at the amount of work involved, the inspection team is of the view that the quality of many of the individual projects completed by pupils is both evidence of their, and their parents', commitment, to a partnership in learning. It is also very good preparation for work when pupils move to the next stage of education.

The school is well led and managed by an excellent headteacher, supportive and dedicated staff and effective governing body

- 29 The leadership and management of the headteacher is excellent; key staff and governors are also making a very good contribution. The headteacher leads the school through her own example and she guides the staff in a sensitive and caring way. The leadership and direction of the school are purposeful and clear. The headteacher is a strong leader of the team and the team responds very positively to the challenges she presents. Since the last inspection, the roles and responsibilities

for curriculum and subject development have been clarified and organised in a way that allows the staff team to work together very effectively. The individual subject co-ordinators have a good overview of their subjects. They are appropriately involved in building up very good quality subject records, portfolios and action plans that reflect the present position and future needs. The quality of planning for each subject is very good. All teachers have a thorough understanding of their roles, and their work is having an impact on the maintenance and continuing improvement in teaching and learning that is a strength in the school.

- 30 The school monitors teaching and learning thoroughly. The quality of information gathered through classroom observation is good and is used to inform curriculum planning. The school is also involved in an innovative programme that uses class teachers as observers, an approach that requires great confidence on the part of all the staff.
- 31 The teaching team is enhanced by the work of learning and classroom support staff. Their contribution is of a high standard. They are integral to the success of the school and are offered good opportunities for training and development in their roles. All the adults who work in the school play an important part in its success.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The range and style of the curriculum opportunities offered to the youngest children

- 32 The youngest children in the reception year benefit from good quality teaching and classroom support and make good progress in the development of early literacy and numeracy skills. At present, however, planning for teaching and learning does not take full account of the requirements of the national “foundation stage” curriculum that began in September 2000. This curriculum has clearly defined early learning goals that provide a secure platform for later learning.
- 33 Currently, there are too few opportunities for the development of exploratory, investigative learning through structured play activities. Also, some areas of learning are planned as very formal lessons. As a result, although children have opportunities for music, physical and creative activities, they tend to be time-tabled in a way that is more appropriate to older pupils. Some of the youngest children lose concentration in long lessons, and some tasks are too difficult for them.
- 34 The development of the new classroom area for the younger pupils will provide the school with opportunities to give careful consideration to the needs of the very youngest children. A planned programme of action to support this is already in draft form and should be used to ensure the full implementation of the appropriate and relevant elements of the foundation stage.

The development of approaches to individual and group targets for learning.

- 35 Teachers are involved in setting targets for learning in aspects of English and mathematics. Very good examples were seen during the inspection in all classes. The practice is evolving as a good means of encouraging both teachers and pupils to evaluate learning and understanding. This also has a beneficial effect on the way in which teachers mark pupils' work and assessment of progress. The practice could usefully be extended to work in science. Development in this aspect of the school's work would benefit both teachers and pupils.

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- 36 The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Nineteen pupils (17.75% of all pupils), eight girls and eleven boys, are identified on the school's register of special educational needs. Two pupils have statements of special need (1.87%). Both these figures are broadly average.
- 37 Pupils with special needs make good progress towards meeting the targets set for them in their individual education plans (IEP's). All pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They are keen to learn and are pleased with their own progress and success. Many make such good progress that they match the attainment of other pupils or the same age.
- 38 Pupils' individual needs and targets are well known to their teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils receive very good quality teaching. They benefit from the expertise of a well qualified and experienced support teacher and a committed, similarly well qualified and experienced team of learning support assistants. Teaching, in class or by withdrawal, makes good provision for the individual needs of each pupil. The school provides additional literacy and numeracy skills support where these are weak. Some sessions are provided before and between school sessions so that learning in other subjects is not disrupted.
- 39 Resources are very good. A Year 6 pupil with a statement of special need has a laptop computer to aid her learning. The school has developed a good policy for the use of information and communication technology with special needs pupils.
- 40 The headteacher is the school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Her active involvement provides the school with a strong lead for planning, teaching, and support work. Information relating to special needs pupils is of good quality; it provides sufficient detail and is up to date. A detailed school policy has been agreed. The governors have a sub-committee devoted to special needs issues and the nominated governor is a regular visitor to the school.
- 41 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about their children. Many are actively involved in their learning. The parents of pupils at Stage 5 of the Special Needs Register are involved in the assessment and annual reviews of their children.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 1) Improve the curriculum experience for the youngest children in the reception year by:
- planning the curriculum in line with the national guidance provided;
 - providing more learning experiences that encourage children's curiosity, exploration and first hand learning through play; and
 - devising and implementing an action plan for the new early years base that will make best use of the accommodation and space.

(Refer to paragraphs 14, 32, 33, 34)

- 2) Extend the good practice in setting targets for learning by:

- agreeing a consistent approach throughout the school;
- developing new ways of extending the work to include science; and
- monitoring and evaluating the progress and impact of this work on the standards achieved by pupils.

(Refer to paragraphs 14, 15, 30, 35)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
14	29	33	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		113
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		19

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	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	3

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	9	9

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	8
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	17	18	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (85)	100 (85)	94 (85)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	8	9
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	18	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (80)	94 (85)	100 (75)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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
		2000	12	5

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	17	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (95)	100 (95)	100 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	10
	Girls	5	4	5
	Total	15	16	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (84)	94 (84)	88 (89)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	114
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	233449
Total expenditure	258682
Expenditure per pupil	1820
Balance brought forward from previous year	38890
Balance carried forward to next year	13657

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	107
Number of questionnaires returned	62

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	37	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	34	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	73	26	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	53	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	69	31	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	52	3	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	16	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	11	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	55	40	0	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	68	32	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	26	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	56	6	0	10