

INSPECTION REPORT

LANCASTER ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Morecambe

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119137

Headteacher: Duncan Brown

Reporting inspector: Peter Kerr
23583

Dates of inspection: 5 - 6 March 2001

Inspection number: 191629

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lancaster Road Morecambe Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	John Caston
Date of previous inspection:	3 - 6 February 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is much bigger than an average sized primary school, with 446 pupils on roll, catering for children from four to eleven. An independently run nursery is integrated into the building, but not all of its children transfer to the reception class. Most of the pupils live in the immediate area, which contains a mixture of rented and owner-occupied housing and an above average degree of social and economic deprivation. Twenty percent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. All but a very few children are of white, United Kingdom ethnic origin and all but one of them speak English as their first language. Eighteen percent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, and five of these have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. These figures are broadly average. The children entering the reception class have below average attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an excellent school with some outstanding features. All the pupils make very good progress throughout the school. They reach above average standards in English and mathematics from a below average start. This is due to teaching, leadership and management of exceptional quality. Teaching in the reception classes is outstanding. The quality of teaching in the rest of the school is consistently very good. The headteacher provides exceptionally skilful leadership. The senior managers within the school form a very effective team and the governing body is very supportive. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English and mathematics are above average and all pupils achieve very well in these subjects.
- The pupils have excellent computer skills and make very effective use of them throughout the school.
- Teaching is of the highest order and is outstanding in the reception classes.
- Pupils with special educational needs are exceptionally well supported.
- The leadership and management of the school are excellent.

What could be improved

The inspection team did not identify any significant areas for improvement.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been many substantial improvements since the school was last inspected in February 1997. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen steadily and kept above the national average. Great strides have been made in provision for information and communication technology and the pupils' computer skills are now very impressive. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now very good and they learn at a much quicker rate throughout the school. The quality of teaching has improved and is now consistently very good. The key issues have been successfully addressed. Assessment is now very strong and the school uses test results very successfully to identify pupils who need extra teaching. The management role of the senior staff has been greatly improved and subject co-ordinators are more effective. The pupils have much better independent learning skills and an improved understanding of cultural diversity. The rate of attendance has improved and is now above the national average. The commitment, dedication and skill of the entire staff put the school in a very strong position to continue improving.

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	C	A	B	A
Mathematics	A	B	A	A
Science	B	A	B	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The school's excellent performance in the tests reflects the high standards that were seen during the inspection. The results have improved at a similar rate to the national trend, maintaining the advantage that the school secured for its pupils in 1997. Even more ambitious targets have been set for 2001, which the school is on course to achieve. An outstanding feature of the test results is the school's success in enabling boys to reach high standards. The pupils have very good speaking and listening skills by the age of 11. They express their ideas clearly and engage in reasoned discussion and debate. They read enthusiastically for pleasure and information and write effectively for different purposes in different subjects. In mathematics and science, the pupils learn through investigation, extending their understanding and improving their skills at a quicker rate than is usually seen. In the national tests for seven year olds, the school's results were above average in reading and mathematics in 2000, and average in writing. The results were well above average in all three subjects compared to similar schools. The inspection found that pupils achieve very well at this stage and reach above average standards. Pupils with higher than average attainment achieve well. The high proportion of pupils attaining above average levels in the national tests for seven and 11 year olds reflects very good use of investigation and independent research throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and attain the best test results they can because of the excellent support they receive. A notable feature of the pupils' work is the extent and quality of their use of information and communication technology. They are very confident with computers. They use the Internet and CD ROM independently for research and use a variety of computer programmes to extend and illustrate their work in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and art and design.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils respond very positively to the school's clear routines and high expectations for good behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils get on with each other very well. They accept responsibility willingly and are very mature and independent in their approach to learning.
Attendance	Good. The school has worked hard to increase attendance rates, which are now above the national average.

The improved rate of attendance has meant that the pupils can take full advantage of all that the school has to offer. The pupils are confident, friendly and courteous. Their good behaviour and enthusiasm make the school a pleasant and stimulating place to visit.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Excellent	Very 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 high quality of teaching in the school is a major factor in its success. Teaching was judged good or better in 93 per cent of the 30 lessons seen. In 57 per cent of these lessons, the teaching was very good or better, and in 13 per cent of them it was excellent. A key feature in the teaching is the use the teachers make of good quality assessment information to provide suitable work for all the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with higher than average attainment. Most of the lessons that were observed were in English and mathematics. Both of these subjects are taught particularly well. The work in the pupils' books shows that all the teachers provide challenging activities that build on the pupils' existing skills. The lessons have a clear structure and the teachers set high expectations for the pupils, explaining to them exactly what is to be learned. The pupils respond with interest, enthusiasm and concentration. They work hard and learn at a rapid rate, with a good awareness of how well they are doing. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very effectively throughout the school and the pupils use them extensively in other subjects. The teaching of information and communication technology skills is also very good. An outstanding strength of the school is the extent to which the pupils use computers as a tool for learning, from reception children drawing shapes on screen to Year 6 pupils accessing biographies on the Internet. The teachers encourage independence in the pupils and enable them to learn through investigation and experimentation. The reception classes provide an excellent standard of education for the children. The teachers and nursery nurses create a rich, lively environment. They strike exactly the right balance between direct teaching and enjoyable, purposeful play activities for the children to choose from.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school has managed to raise the pupils' achievements in literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology without sacrificing their entitlement to a broad and balanced education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. The planning, co-ordination and implementation of individual education programmes is of exceptional quality. The pupils achieve very well because of this very effective support for them. Pupils with high attainment are also very well provided for. Parents are fully involved and the school works very closely with outside agencies to provide good quality advice and support for the full range of needs.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school encourages the pupils to value themselves and others and provides plenty of opportunities for reflection. There are clear rules to guide behaviour and high expectations are set for personal and social responsibility. The pupils' cultural awareness is fostered very effectively.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good policies and procedures in place for child protection, which all members of staff are fully aware of. The school has taken very effective steps to improve attendance. The very effective use of assessments to target groups of pupils for extra teaching has contributed to very good achievement across the school.

The very good overall quality of the curriculum reflects the school's determination to provide the best education it can for all the children in its care.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and ensures excellent management of the school. The senior management team is an excellent unit for driving forward school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very Good. The governors are kept well informed and are very supportive of the school. They ensure that all legal requirements are met, and oversee the budget very effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The headteacher leads the staff in continuous self-evaluation and improvement. The assessment co-ordinator provides very high quality information on the pupils' performance and guides the teachers very effectively in using it to target their teaching more effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school has very clear priorities for development to guide spending. Exceptionally good use is made of all available funds, within and beyond the set budget. The school ensures that it gets the best value it can from all purchases of goods and services.

A key feature of the school is the sense of teamwork that prevails. Everyone is included, from the children to the headteacher and governors. It is this sense of community that enables the school to work so well and gives it the capability of continuing to improve.

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 teaching is good. • The school expects the children to work hard, do their best and become mature and responsible. • The children like school, behave well and are making good progress. • The school is well led and managed and is approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents did not agree that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. • A few parents did not agree that they are well informed about how their children were getting on or that the school works closely with parents.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' overwhelmingly positive views of the school. It considers that the range of activities provided outside lessons is good and that the information provided to parents about their children's progress is at least adequate. It also judged that the school works very closely with parents, many of whom were helping in school during the inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English and mathematics are above average and all pupils achieve very well in these subjects.

1. The last inspection found that the pupils reached broadly average standards in English and mathematics. There were differences in standards achieved by pupils of different abilities in reading and writing and standards in handwriting were below average. Speaking and listening skills were good throughout the school. Since then, standards have risen to above average in all aspects of the subject from the age of seven onwards and the school has enabled pupils of all attainment levels to achieve very well. Compared to schools in similar areas, the test results in the national tests for 11 year olds are well above average. This reflects the school's success in motivating the pupils to learn and compensating for any disadvantages they may have.
2. The pupils' speaking and listening skills continue to be a strength of the school. Pupils of all ages and attainment levels are encouraged to express themselves fully and to listen to each other's points of view. For example, in the final part of an English lesson in Year 4, the pupils discussed different authors and wanted to say why they liked "cliff-hangers" at the end of a chapter. They were able to find just the words they were looking for to say what they meant because the teacher gave them plenty of time to do this. The other pupils listened attentively and offered suggestions. In the reception classes, the children are taught to attend carefully in whole-class and group discussions, and given lots of support and encouragement to make their own contributions. Excellent teaching ensures that all the children, including those with delayed or poor speech, are given plenty of time to say what they want to say. They are listened to carefully and responded to thoughtfully. The teachers in all classes ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to contribute to discussions. This fosters their self-confidence as well as their speaking ability. By Year 6, the pupils are able to engage in sensible debates on controversial issues from school uniforms to foxhunting. They argue their cases sensibly and listen to opposing arguments. The teachers inject extra challenge by asking them to put forward a point of view they do not personally agree with. This helps them to focus on the strengths of the different arguments and gives them an insight into the real world of political debate. The school council provides excellent opportunities for older pupils to use these skills in a real-life setting. They put forward and debate suggestions for improvements on behalf of the whole school community. The extension of the council to include Year 4 and Year 5 pupils further strengthens this provision.
3. A love of books and good reading habits are fostered throughout the school, enabling the pupils to reach above average standards in reading. By Year 6, the pupils have an extensive knowledge of a range of different types of fiction and the work of many authors. Their positive attitudes to reading were illustrated in a lesson in the library. The pupils were engrossed in books they were browsing through while they waited to change their library books. All the pupils have their favourite authors and explain why they like their work. In Year 4, pupils were observed searching the Internet for details of authors in preparation for writing their own biographies of their favourite author. They could explain exactly why they preferred a particular author and compare their choice to other authors in the same field. Lower down the school, there are good systems in place to ensure that the pupils read regularly. In the reception classes, the nursery nurses make a very valuable contribution by spending extra time reading with those children who do not get enough support at home. In the infants, classroom assistants and volunteer parents help to supervise the regular changing of reading books to keep the pupils motivated and learning. The evidence from the inspection suggests that the school is on track to maintain momentum and continue improving standards in reading. The library is well organised, and the pupils in Year 6 know how to use it independently. However, it is timetabled for lessons. This limits the opportunities that the pupils have to practise their library skills independently.
4. The standards of handwriting have greatly improved. They were below average at the last inspection, but are now above average at both key stages. By the age of 11, the pupils' writing is fluent and joined, and they are beginning to develop individual styles. Progress is good from the reception class onwards. The pupils learn how to form letters correctly, and join them up, from an

early stage. They practise these skills regularly, so that, at each stage, they develop a good style and write to an above average standard. The content of the pupils' writing is also above average at both key stages. By the age of eleven, the pupils write in different styles for different audiences. They use correct punctuation, including speech marks and apostrophes within sentences and arrange their writing into paragraphs. Higher attaining pupils use a wide range of vocabulary and use interesting words to enliven their writing. The school predicts further gains in the proportion of pupils attaining the average and above in the national tests for eleven year olds in 2002. The inspection team agrees that this is likely. Furthermore, in view of the very good progress being made by pupils of all attainment levels, the average points score is also likely to increase. This means that the school's results could be even further above the national average. An excellent feature of the work of the school is the wide range of writing the pupils do in different subjects. Their work-folders and books contain notes, labels, letters, diaries and stories, for example, reflecting the efforts made by teachers to ensure that the pupils take every opportunity to practise and apply their skills.

5. Pupils reach above average standards in mathematics at both key stages. The basic skills of numeracy are very effectively taught throughout the school, with an emphasis on learning through investigations and practical work. High expectations are set from an early age. In reception, for example, the children learn to count and order numbers up to one hundred. In Year 1, the pupils are already counting in twos, fives and tens and adding numbers together mentally by counting on. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have very good number skills. They also have a very open-minded approach to investigative work, thanks to excellent, lively teaching. The pupils sustain a very good work rate throughout the juniors, learning to use their growing knowledge of number, shape and measure to solve a wide range of practical problems and puzzles. They are very enthusiastic, and enjoy their successes in solving problems. For example, in Year 6, the pupils expressed great interest in finding answers to mathematics challenges they had located on the Internet. All the strands of mathematics are covered well. The pupils develop a good understanding of shapes, angular measure and the metric system of measurement. There are also many excellent examples on display and in the pupils' books that reflect good use and interpretation of graphs and charts. The teachers predict that about one third of the pupils will attain above average results in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2002, which would indicate a continuation of the school's upward trend in standards.
6. Pupils of all attainment levels achieve very well because of the excellent use the school makes of assessment information. The pupils are grouped according to their attainment and support is targeted at specific groups. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Pupils with low attainment receive excellent support from an early age with their English and mathematics learning targets. Those with especially high attainment are identified separately and provided with individual challenges. Pupils with above average attainment make very good progress because of the degree of independence they are given to follow their own lines of enquiry and learn through investigations and research. Another outstanding feature of the school's work is its success in raising the attainment of boys. It has done this by motivating them firstly to attend school, secondly to behave well and have positive attitudes to learning and thirdly by raising their expectations and rate of learning. As a consequence, the boys in this school perform very much better in the national tests for seven and 11 year olds than boys do nationally.

The pupils have excellent computer skills and make very effective use of them throughout the school in many subjects.

7. Outstanding improvements have been made in the provision for information and communication technology, leading to high standards throughout the school. From the reception class onwards, computers are in use on a day to day basis. The children in the reception classes are making rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding of how the computers work and what they can do. For example, a reception child was observed drawing a house on screen, using the mouse. He had taken the initiative and changed the tool he had been using to enable him to do this. The nursery nurse asked him to change back to the tool he should have been using. He calmly selected the rubber icon, erased his drawing and then selected a shape-drawing icon. With this, he confidently drew a rectangle, and enlarged it. This shows a very high level of competence for this age. A similar picture pertains throughout the infants. Attainment here is well above

expectations. The pupils are constantly using computers for a wide variety of purposes after being taught the required skills. There is an expectation that the pupils will use computers sensibly and independently, which they do, to a far greater extent than is usually seen in most primary schools. Information and communication technology is making an important contribution to the pupils' personal development. This was illustrated in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example in which the pupils showed their initiative in using a computer to help solve number problems. The pupils use computers independently to type, edit and print text, make illustrations and draw graphs. There are many excellent examples of this work in their books and topic folders and on display.

8. The Internet is an integral part of the school. By the age of seven, the pupils know how to send emails and by the age of eleven, they regularly access Internet sites for research purposes. The pupils' attainment is above average by the age of 11, but is well above average in the other year groups in the juniors. The pupils are very confident with the computers. They work unsupervised with very good concentration, sticking to the set task. When they work in pairs, they co-operate very well, showing how valuable this activity is in developing their inter-personal skills. Their logical thinking and angular measure skills are greatly improved by their construction of shapes on screen using repeat commands. Their history and geography topic folders contain a wealth of computer generated material, including digitally generated photographs, downloaded information, graphs, charts and illustrations. All the pupils that were observed working independently showed a very good understanding of the tasks they were working at and how the computer could help them. They have excellent keyboard and mouse skills and a confident, problem-solving approach, indicating how well this experience is preparing them for the world of work in the information and communication technology age.
9. The subject co-ordinators have an excellent overview of what is happening across the school and ensure that the relevant skills are taught in each age group. The full National Curriculum programmes of study are covered and teaching and learning is supported by easily accessible computers throughout the school building. Another significant factor in achieving high standards across the school is the way the teachers successfully encourage the pupils to share their skills once they have been learned.

The quality of teaching is of the highest order.

10. Although this was a short inspection, with fewer lesson observations than a full inspection, there was sufficient evidence to conclude that teaching is very effective throughout the school. The quality of teaching directly observed was very good overall. It was good or better in 93 per cent of the lessons and very good or better in 57 per cent. The teaching was excellent teaching in 13 per cent of the lessons. These figures are very good indeed. Most of the excellent lessons seen were in the reception classes, but excellent teaching was also observed elsewhere in the school. All but one of the parents who responded to the questionnaires either agreed or strongly agreed that teaching is good.
11. The work in the pupils' books indicates that teaching is consistently very good, with many excellent features. The pupils make very good progress in each year group, especially in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. It is also evident that they learn through enquiry in history and geography and through investigation and experimentation in mathematics and science. The standard of presentation of their work is very good, and in all the samples seen, the pupils completed nearly all the work they started. This reflects high expectations on the part of the teachers. It also indicates that the work that was set was at the right level for the pupils. The assessment co-ordinator provides excellent information to all the class teachers based on a thorough analysis of test results in all age groups. This enables planning for each year group to begin with good starting points. These take the pupils on from the level of knowledge, skills and understanding they have already reached. In addition, the teachers adjust their weekly and daily planning in the light of the very good day to day assessments they make of the pupils' progress. It was clear in the lessons seen and in the marking of the pupils' work in their books, that the teachers continually help them to improve and extend themselves. Some of the marking is excellent, with very helpful comments and questions that make the pupils think.

12. Another significant strength of the teaching is the use of investigations and individual research to develop the pupils' study skills. On many occasions, pupils were observed working independently. For example, they used computers unsupervised in the corridors. In every case, they knew exactly what the purpose of the exercise was and got on with the task very efficiently. The teachers interact purposefully with the pupils and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. There is excellent teamwork between the teachers and the non-teaching assistants, who contribute enormously to the pupils' learning. The support that they offer to groups and individuals is excellent. Teaching and learning in mathematics and science is greatly enhanced by the regular use of investigations that challenge the pupils to think of strategies for solving problems. This develops their self-confidence and equips them to be flexible in the face of the changing demands that they will face. In a very good science lesson, for example, the pupils were asked to define exactly the difference between liquids and solids. They made very good progress because the teacher provided very good materials for them to handle and investigate, but did not impose any pre-determined answers on them. As a result, they argued very productively among themselves. By the end of the lesson, they had a very clear idea of what the differences were, and one that they would be unlikely to forget. This lesson illustrated the usefulness of this kind of open-ended approach for all abilities. The higher attaining pupils were uncomfortable with the uncertainty whereas some of the lower attaining pupils were more open to possibilities. By the end of the lesson, both groups had made very good gains in their knowledge, understanding and study skills.
13. Lower attaining pupils are supported very well throughout the school. For example, in a very effective Year 1 / Year 2 lesson, the pupils were learning to count on and back in twos and tens. The classroom assistant was used very effectively to check each individual pupil's understanding to ensure that no-one slipped through the net. In Year 3 and Year 4, the lower attaining pupils are supported very effectively within the classroom. In Year 5 and Year 6, the lower attaining pupils are taught as a separate group for some English and mathematics lessons. The teachers have remarked how effective this is in developing the pupils' self-confidence. The teachers' classroom organisation and management of pupils are very good. Discipline is therefore usually very good within lessons. The pupils know the routines and what is expected of them, and respond in an increasingly mature and independent way. Very few examples that were seen of some pupils not responding to these expectations. The teachers show vitality and enthusiasm, and work extremely hard to provide a very high standard of education for all the pupils.

Provision for children in the reception class is of exceptionally high quality.

14. The two reception classes are models of good practice for teaching the new "foundation stage".¹ The two teachers and two nursery nurses plan and work together very closely as a team. They provide a very rich and colourful environment in which the children feel secure, grow in confidence and achieve to their potential. The classroom routines are very clear and all the children become familiar with them very quickly, creating a very orderly and purposeful atmosphere. Constructive play is at the heart of learning in these classrooms. The teachers provide a wealth of opportunities for the children to engage in play that will lead them into enjoyable worthwhile learning. There are sand and water trays, for example, for the children to choose to play in, containing a variety of interesting containers and other equipment. In one excellent lesson with mathematics as a focus, large plastic shapes were left in the sand tray. The children built sandcastles on the shapes and then talked about them, learning to use the correct words such as triangle or square. The teacher took this learning further with those children who were ready for it with a "feely bag" that enabled the children to feel a shape without seeing it and then try to describe it. The teacher made detailed records of the children's responses so that further activities could be planned on the basis of what they had learned. The following day, the nursery nurse demonstrated how effective this day to day assessment is. She modified the activity that she had been doing the previous day in the light of the children's responses. As a result, they consolidated their understanding of basic flat shapes in preparation for looking at solid shapes.

¹ The foundation stage was introduced by the government in September 2000. It is designed to cater for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year, when they will be five or six. It replaces the "under fives" curriculum.

15. The rest of the activities from which the children could choose in this lesson were all very effective in developing their mathematical understanding. The "Garden Centre" contained a variety of tools, plant pots and plants that encouraged the children to talk about colour, size and position, and to practise exchanging money for goods. On another table, a parent supervised the children making "sausage rolls" from "Playdough" and encouraged them to talk about their shapes. The washing line had colourful numbered figures hanging on it for the children to play with and put into correct order. During this lesson, all the children were fully engaged all the time in extremely purposeful activities. They made significant gains in their social and personal development and language and communication skills through their interactions with each other and the adults. Their knowledge and understanding of the world was also developed through the Garden Centre project, which emanated from a visit to a real Garden Centre. The children handled plants, packets of seed and toy garden tools, and explained quite confidently that the seeds needed water and sunshine to grow. Their physical development was improved by their handling of all the various tools and equipment. The models and paintings of plants they had produced also reflected good progress in their creative development. One little boy demonstrated how effective this rich learning environment is by describing his model cactus enthusiastically and telling the inspector how the spikes could stick in your skin and hurt. The teacher demonstrated excellent teaching skills the following day by taking the children's learning on very skilfully towards understanding the properties of solid shapes such as cylinders.

16. The outstanding preparation the children receive for the National Curriculum in the reception classes was also demonstrated in an excellent literacy lesson. All the children were held spellbound by a story from the "Big Book". The teacher was extremely skilful in keeping their interest and giving all the children, including those with speech difficulties, opportunities to make comments and ask questions. She encouraged the children to interpret the pictures, for example to say how a character was feeling, and to predict what might happen next. The children were clearly making rapid gains in their understanding of how story books work and in recognising words and letters. Expectations are very high, but none of the pleasure of learning through play is sacrificed. When the introduction was over, the children were suddenly engaged in a wealth of enjoyable activities, including painting, cutting and sticking, floor and table puzzles and computer programmes. The "Garden Centre" was also in operation in this room, reflecting the excellent joint planning and preparation. There was also a very useful table set up to encourage the children to experiment with writing, using a variety of colourful felt tip pens. The children were happy, enthusiastic and very well behaved. The higher attaining children were using the computer very confidently to learn how to spell words beginning with "CL", and were very aware of how well they were doing. The nursery nurse was extremely efficient and effective throughout the lesson, first by reading with selected children who did not read very much at home and then by checking how well the children were doing with their spellings. All this was accomplished without preventing the children from choosing play activities and maintaining a relaxed but industrious pace of working. The reception classes are a delight to be in and a great credit and asset to the school. They liaise very closely with the independently managed nursery on the site to provide the children with a lively and highly enjoyable introduction to their school life.

Provision for special educational needs is extremely effective.

17. The school benefits from very efficient and effective organisation of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with high attainment as well as those with low attainment are identified and given special targets to work towards. The needs of pupils with behavioural, physical, health or any other special need are also very carefully considered. The school has excellent relationships with all the outside agencies, such as the health, speech therapy and psychological services, and calls on their support and advice whenever it is needed. Pupils' needs are identified very early so that support can be put in place from the start, avoiding more serious problems later on. There is excellent liaison with the nursery, enabling children as young as two and three years old to be monitored if they show cause for concern. There is also very good liaison with the secondary school to ensure a smooth transfer for all pupils on the register.

18. The school ensures that all the pupils on the special educational needs register have individual targets to work towards. Parents are involved from the start. They are consulted about their

children's needs and fully informed of the contents of the individual educational programmes (IEP). The special educational needs co-ordinator, (SENCO), ensures that all the teachers and classroom assistants are aware of the pupils IEP targets. During the inspection, many examples were seen of classroom assistants supporting individuals or groups of pupils, and it was clear that they had a very good understanding of the learning targets. They are very well trained and share fully in regular discussions with teachers about the pupils' progress and what is the best course of action in each case. This is an extremely fruitful partnership from which the pupils derive great benefit.

19. The school has decided that for some pupils, the best way of supporting them is by special lessons in small groups, for example in Year 6 for English. If they have to miss any activities or lessons because of this there are arrangements in place for them to catch up so that they receive their full curriculum entitlement. Great importance is attached to ensuring equal opportunities for these pupils, and a special group has been set up to monitor these arrangements. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are very well supported. The approach is to try and prevent incidents arising rather than have to deal with them when they do. The school works very closely with parents in this matter and is achieving a high degree of success with some very difficult pupils. The SENCO is very committed and continually looking for ways of improving the level of provision. She has developed a very good bank of resources, including computer programmes, to support learning at both the bottom and the top end of the attainment spectrum. All this is achieved without detriment to average attaining pupils because of the excellent use that is made of assessment information to provide suitable challenges for all the pupils. Some parents expressed their appreciation of the fact that the school manages to cater for children of all abilities in this way.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

20. All of the foregoing strengths of the school are built on the very firm foundations of excellent leadership and management. The headteacher has set out from the beginning of his tenure to bring about improvements to the school environment at a manageable rate. This started with making the site more secure and more attractive. The headteacher has managed this extremely effectively. With the support of the governors, he has obtained funding from a variety of sources to provide a perimeter fence and an excellent security system, reducing intrusion and vandalism from a serious problem to negligible minor incidents. Following this, attendance and behaviour were tackled. The school now has above average attendance, with a commitment to keep it that way. Behaviour and attitudes have improved in response to very effective systems to promote good behaviour and a sense of responsibility. These early management initiatives provided the necessary orderly atmosphere for teaching and learning to develop to its current high standards.
21. The senior management team is very effective. The deputy headteacher fulfils her role exceptionally well. In addition to being an exemplary teacher, she undertakes key whole-school responsibilities, including the co-ordination of the school development plan. Development planning is very strong, with wide consultation. Everyone associated with the school has the opportunity to voice their views and suggest priorities for improvements. The provision of a cycle rack to encourage pupils to cycle to school, for example, was the result of a suggestion put forward by the parents' focus group. The educational priorities in the plan match the school's needs very well. The rising standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology and the improving attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils are testimony to this.
22. All members of the senior management team fulfil important roles in the school. The assessment co-ordinator, for example, has been instrumental in bringing about the impressive improvements that have been made in the use of test results and other performance data. This has led to teaching support being targeted at specific groups of pupils in order to raise their attainment. The organisation and management of this aspect of the school's work is excellent and has contributed significantly to improving standards in English and mathematics. These two subjects have been the focus of the school's educational priorities, but the systems that have been put in place to support them have the potential to improve standards in all subjects. The SENCO is another key manager whose work has contributed greatly to improving standards. There is also excellent

leadership and management by the subject co-ordinators in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology indicating the broad base of extremely effective management within the school.

23. The clear educational vision and excellent management capability of the headteacher have driven a broad swathe of improvements forward. An outstanding example of this is the raising of boys' attainment by the introduction of policies aimed at improving their behaviour, motivation and attitudes to work. Another example is the vast improvements brought about in the provision for information and communication technology, making the school a model of best practice in this vital area. The headteacher is also very effective at managing areas of spending that have been delegated from the local authority. The excellent arrangements for school meals are an example of very effective use of such funds. Healthy meals are served in a grown-up atmosphere. The pupils have some say in how this is arranged, and respond in a very mature manner so that lunchtimes are very civilised occasions. This has also contributed to improved behaviour. The governors are extremely supportive of the headteacher, and they do what they can to keep informed of developments. Key members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and chair of buildings and finance, keep a close eye on the budget and hold the school to account for its spending. Financial control and administration are very good. There is currently a high budget surplus. A large part of this is earmarked for the provision of a group / pre-school room in the infants. Another substantial amount is committed to maintaining and improving the computer facilities. The school is also committed to keeping a healthy contingency fund to manage falling rolls. Fewer pupils are entering the school because of government measures to limit class sizes. This results in a falling income and may lead to the need to reduce staffing levels. On a previous occasion, similar circumstances had to be managed without the cushion of a budget surplus. This meant that a redundancy had to be implemented very quickly, causing unnecessary stress throughout the school. The governors strongly agree with the headteacher on the wisdom of this contingency planning. These arrangements also reflect the way the headteacher looks after his staff. He has made staff development a priority, which is reflected in the budget allocation to it, and this has contributed to improved teaching and management throughout the school. The expertise, commitment and dedication of the staff and governors give the school a very good capacity to continue improving towards excellence in all areas of its provision.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

24. The inspection team did not identify any significant areas for improvement

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

25. The school has identified a suitable programme for continuing improvement in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13	43	37	7	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)	0	446
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	92

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	79

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	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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	35	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	28	32
	Girls	27	27	28
	Total	57	55	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (88)	87 (81)	95 (95)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	32	32
	Girls	27	28	27
	Total	55	60	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (86)	95 (93)	94 (90)
	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	33	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	29	30
	Girls	24	24	29
	Total	54	53	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (75)	83 (71)	92 (84)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	31	30
	Girls	19	23	18
	Total	45	54	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (77)	84 (88)	75 (94)
	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	1
White	445
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	5	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)	17.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	29.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	266

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	761969
Total expenditure	759197
Expenditure per pupil	1673
Balance brought forward from previous year	113896
Balance carried forward to next year	116668

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	446
Number of questionnaires returned	183

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	36	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	31	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	43	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	47	3	1	1
The teaching is good.	70	30	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	38	6	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	32	1	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	26	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	46	42	7	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	58	38	1	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	46	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	34	10	2	19

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive.

Other issues raised by parents

No significant issues were raised.