

INSPECTION REPORT

FRESHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Formby

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104883

Headteacher: Mrs C Symonds

Reporting inspector: Mr D Clegg
4341

Dates of inspection: 10th – 11th July 2001

Inspection number: 194072

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Watchyard Lane
Formby
Liverpool
Merseyside

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Bennett

Date of previous inspection: 14th April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average size primary school with 246 pupils aged between four and eleven years. The school also has a nursery class for children aged between three and four years. Sixty children in total attend the nursery on a part time basis and the majority of children who attend the main school have nursery experience. When children start school their attainment is above average.

The great majority of pupils are white. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language, one of whom is in the early stages of learning English.

About 6.5 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, well below the national average.

There is a designated unit for ten pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), all of whom have statements of special educational needs. There are also 48 other pupils in the mainstream classes on the special educational needs register, 16 of whom have significant difficulties including specific learning difficulties (9), moderate learning problems (6) and speech and language difficulties (1). Two of these pupils also have statements of special educational needs. The school has a larger than average number of pupils with statements.

The school was awarded Investors in People status in October 2000 in recognition of its commitment to staff training.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with some very good features. The standards achieved by the oldest pupils are consistently higher than the national average and above or well above, those of similar schools. The youngest children get off to a very good start and make good progress. The overall quality of teaching is good and this enables the majority of pupils to make good progress, although higher attaining pupils could make quicker progress in some year groups. The leadership and management are good; the head teacher provides a clear and purposeful sense of direction and the governing body is very effective. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Eleven year olds attain consistently high standards in English and mathematics
- The under fives achieve well as a result of a very good start to their learning
- The head teacher provides a clear sense of direction and purpose
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well
- A very effective partnership with parents is developed and sustained
- Pupils with significant special needs achieve well

What could be improved

- The rate of progress for some higher attaining seven and eight year olds
- The consistency of the quality of spelling and presentation across the school

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 April 1997 and since then has made satisfactory progress. The high levels of performance for seven and eleven year olds have been generally sustained and the youngest children continue to do well. Pupils with special educational needs also do well as a result of the good support the school provides. The quality of teaching is more variable, but overall it is good.

The school has addressed all the issues identified in the last report. The Investors in People award indicates its commitment to ensuring that all staff are given opportunities to benefit from training. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching is developing through the work of the head teacher but more needs to be done to involve key members of staff on a regular basis. The curriculum is well organised with clear programmes for each subject

There has been some good improvement in assessment procedures for the seven to eleven year olds but more needs to be done to ensure that information from the assessment of the five to seven year olds is used equally effectively.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven 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 | A | A |
| mathematics | A | A | B | B |
| science | A | A* | B | B |

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

Results in national tests for seven and eleven year olds have been consistently high over the past three years. The school's performance is particularly impressive given that the table above includes the results of children in the MLD unit who take the tests at the age of eleven. In English, standards are well above the national average and well above those of similar schools; occasionally they are in the top five per cent of all schools for eleven year olds. Standards in mathematics and science are also above average for both seven and eleven year olds and again in science, occasionally in the top five per cent of schools for eleven year olds. Overall the inspection confirms the high standards; the majority of pupils achieve well and reach the standards of which they are capable, although some seven and eight year olds could achieve more. The most recent results of National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds indicate that the good standards have been maintained. There has been a marked improvement in the writing standards for seven year olds, but too few of them have achieved higher levels in reading and mathematics.

The youngest children get a good start in the nursery and reception classes and they make good progress. Pupils who attend the MLD unit also achieve well and contribute to the school's success.

The school has set targets for the year 2002. These targets are well founded and represent a continued determination to sustain the high standards. The school aims for 79 per cent of eleven year olds to achieve average levels or above in English and 85 per cent in mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | A very strong feature of the school. Pupils like coming to school; they work very hard and enjoy their lessons. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils are very well behaved and the oldest pupils are mature and sensible and well prepared for the next stage of learning. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Pupils are responsible and confident; they co-operate well and form constructive relationships. |
| Attendance | Attendance is above the national average and pupils arrive at school on time. |

The youngest children in the nursery and reception quickly adapt to school routines and they are fully involved in their activities. The pupils with special needs work very hard and appreciate the success that they enjoy. Those pupils involved in the school council also take their work seriously.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-11 years |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Very good | Satisfactory | 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 overall quality of teaching is good, although there is some variation. About 63 per cent of teaching is good or very good; there is no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of the youngest children is consistently good and often very good. The quality of teaching for five to seven year olds is always satisfactory and occasionally good. For seven to eleven year olds the teaching overall is good; it is particularly strong for the nine and ten year olds. English and mathematics are well taught, especially to the youngest children and the oldest pupils.

The good quality of teaching is a key element in the school's success. Teachers successfully plan well-focused activities that ensure that children get off to a flying start in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers' high expectations and well-matched work generally maintains pupils' good level of achievement as they move through the school, although expectations of what higher attaining seven and eight year olds might achieve are not high enough. Teachers make good use of the school's resources, including the learning assistants who make a positive contribution to what pupils achieve. The use of careful assessments by some teachers also helps pupils to improve but the quality of marking is too variable.

The pupils in the MLD unit are consistently well taught and benefit from the good level of knowledgeable and skilful support, both in the unit and when integrated into mainstream classes

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | A broad and balanced curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good. Pupils benefit from the effective support provided in the unit and in mainstream lessons. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Pupils achieve well; they benefit from the support the school provides and successfully acquire a good level of competence in English. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | A strong feature of the school. There is very good provision for social, moral and cultural development and spiritual development is good. The programme for personal, social and health education makes a strong very positive impact in this aspect. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school provides a good level of care for pupils. Older pupils' progress is effectively monitored, but there is insufficient attention given to monitoring how younger pupils are doing. There are good systems for maintaining and promoting very good behaviour |

The curriculum for the youngest children is very good; it is well planned and meets the needs of all pupils. The curriculum for pupils with special needs is also well planned to help them to meet the targets outlined on their individual education plans.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The head teacher provides very strong and determined leadership and is very committed to raising standards and improving the quality of provision. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governing body is hard working and knowledgeable. Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities. Budget planning and monitoring are satisfactory. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Some good use is made of performance data but key members of staff are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluation activities. |
| The strategic use of resources | Resources are generally well managed. |

The head teacher provides a clear lead in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work but key members of staff do not make a sufficient impact across the school. The governing body takes appropriate steps to ensure that the school achieves best value. There is currently a significant contingency fund, much of which is earmarked for a building programme, but the governing body should be bolder in allocating these funds to improve some aspects of the provision. In particular the supply of fiction for the older pupils is barely adequate and some of the nursery furniture and equipment is dated.

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 • Children work hard and make good progress • Children enjoy coming to school • Children are well behaved • Parents are involved in the school | There were no areas of concern expressed by parents |

Over 95 per cent of parents are very positive about all aspects of the school. The parents are fully justified in the confidence they show in the school, as the inspection findings largely confirm their positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Eleven year olds attain consistently high standards in English and mathematics

1. Eight to eleven year olds achieve well. Good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress as they move through the school so that eleven year olds attain standards that are well above the national average and above those of similar schools. By the time they leave the school pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of education.
2. Pupils are confident and articulate. They talk sensibly about the books they have read, discussing the characters they like and giving clear reasons for their preferences. They enjoy modern fiction by authors such as Dick King-Smith, Jacqueline Wilson and JK Rowlings, but they also read history and biographies. Two pupils were particularly interested in the Diary of Anne Frank, a book they had discovered through their topic on World War II. They spoke particularly about how interested they were in reading 'about what she went through'. Pupils clearly enjoy reading both for pleasure and to research information. Most pupils use the libraries at school and in the locality and regularly find things out from books, researching, scanning and skimming for information. They are also equally at home researching information on computers, including using the Internet.
3. Pupils write well for a range of audiences and understand many of the strategies needed to make their written work interesting; bold beginnings, good use of words and dialogue, all figure in their written work. Many pupils write with a good feel for characterisation that lifts the quality of their stories or accounts, 'Boys gather in now', 'It's only ten o'clock coach, we've got fifteen minutes yet'. The school has had a big push on raising the quality of writing and much of the teaching is sharply focused on looking at ways of improving what pupils write. For instance they have explored all the alternatives to using 'said' so that characters now for instance, 'yell' 'scream' or 'cry out'. Some of the best written work is that of the nine and ten year olds. Here the range of writing is wide and varied. Pupils write letters, reviews, story openings, instructions and writing that is persuasive and specifically designed to appeal to people. Good marking gives pupils a clear indication of what needs to be done to improve and pupils respond with some high quality work as in stories that use Dickens' Christmas Carol as a starting point, 'It was Christmas eve and Christmas was creeping closer'.
4. Literacy skills are well taught and pupils are given good opportunities to use their skills in other subjects. This results in some good research in subjects such as history and geography including, for instance, the creation of questionnaires in the latter subject and the successful making of 'pop-up' books by nine year olds in design and technology. These designs were also used by pupils as the basis for some very well written and honest evaluations of their own work.
5. Pupils also attain well in mathematics and are given good opportunities to use and extend their skills in subjects such as science. Investigative work in science involves pupils in measuring carefully and recording data that is then used to create graphs to illustrate their findings. Graphs were used, for instance, to present the results of an investigation into pupils' different pulse rates following various activities, and the distribution of dandelions in different pieces of land. Pupils have a good grasp of

how numbers work and are very confident about working with five-figure numbers and using the four operations. They apply their knowledge well in solving problems that often require more than one operation, for instance calculating the reduction in several items and finding the change required from various amounts. Pupils understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and again use this understanding to solve problems, calculating the fractions and percentages of different amounts. Some good, challenging teaching of the eleven year olds really made them think hard about finding percentages of numbers above 100. This involved a high level of understanding, together with good application of skills. Many nine and ten year olds are also working at levels well above the average for their age group. They are gaining a very firm grasp of place value and being successfully introduced to decimals, often calculating using two places. This is a very strong base on which to build when pupils reach their final year.

The under fives achieve well as a result of a very good start to their learning

6. The majority of children who enter the main school attend the attached nursery for a year before transferring to the reception class. A well-planned curriculum, access to a wide range of stimulating activities and very good teaching ensures that the children make good progress in all areas of their learning and are well prepared for full time education.
7. The curriculum is carefully planned to cover all areas of learning. Many of the activities are linked through themes such as 'growth' or 'robots' and developed through stories. Learning objectives for all aspects of the curriculum are clearly identified so that adults working with the children are clear about what they should be gaining from the activities that they support. Key vocabulary is also often identified; as a result the quality of talk is very good and one of the strengths of the nursery provision is the very good promotion of children's skills in speaking and listening.
8. The range of activities is designed to engage children's interest and to encourage them to explore, investigate and express their ideas and observations. The growth of beans has promoted close observation and learning about the functions of different parts of a plant. Children demonstrate good understanding of the process of germination and conditions for growth. One child, for example, dictated a caption for a drawing that showed good understanding "the bean cracked open and the roots are sucking up the goodness". Role play in the 'garden centre' has further promoted children's knowledge and understanding of the world as they water the flowers, buy garden equipment and act as customers, sometimes using fantastic amounts of money to make their purchases! Play with dry and wet sand and water and the opportunity to closely observe a range of natural objects such as shells and bark further promote children's early understanding of the world around and ensure a good foundation for later learning in science. However, some of the equipment currently used is in need of replacement and updating. The water and sand trays are of an obsolete design, there is limited equipment for the home corner, some building blocks are old and worn and some tables and all the chairs are in a poor state of repair.
9. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that children get a good base of skills in literacy and numeracy. Books are used well to talk about the structure of stories, rhyming words in poems and the characters and events in stories. The teacher's animated reading of 'Commotion in the Ocean' together with the introduction of actions to

represent the movement of different types of sea creature, engaged children's interest and ensured a good level of involvement. Good incidental discussion of, for example, the first sounds of the creatures' names, reinforced some early reading skills. Some of the older children showed a good level of knowledge, recognising, for example, rhyming words, using their knowledge to predict the final words in the lines and in some instances hypothesising about why creatures acted in the way that they did. Children have good opportunities to draw and write; many write their names independently and learn to write captions and stories using marks or a 'string of letters'. Some higher attaining children write sentences independently using initial sounds to represent each word; they begin to be aware of different forms of writing as they make labels, lists and write letters. Knowledge of numbers is promoted through incidental counting activities, sorting and grouping objects and encouraging children to recognise 'more' and 'less'. Planned activities such as rolling big dice, counting the spots and finding the corresponding digit ensures that many children are competent in recognising the values of numbers up to ten; some of the older higher attainers begin to add groups of numbers together.

10. A good adult-child ratio helps to promote children's learning. In addition to the teacher and a qualified nursery nurse, students on training placements and parents who help regularly ensure a high level of interaction as children are working. The impact of this was evident when the children visited the school's ICT suite. This was a well-organised session; the computers had been set up for the nursery children by the Year 3 class that had just finished work in the suite so that half the group could immediately start work on the program. The teacher, the school's ICT co-ordinator and another adult helped to sort out minor problems and to ensure that all the children were clear about what to do. The nursery nurse and two other adults provided a good range of activities, puzzles, games and story telling for the children who were waiting their turn, to keep them busy and promote learning of a range of skills.
11. Careful track is kept of children's developing skills as they work at various activities in the nursery. This informs the planning of the next stage in their learning and is helpful in ensuring that difficulties are quickly identified and that children are stretched where appropriate. However, there is currently no consistent assessment and record-keeping system that spans the foundation stage to ensure that work in the reception class builds securely on the good base that children acquire in the nursery.

The head teacher provides a clear sense of direction and purpose

12. The school is very well led. The head teacher provides the school with a strong sense of purpose and direction that is ensuring that there is a sharp emphasis on improvement. She instils a great deal of confidence amongst parents.
13. The head teacher leads by example and has a good level of knowledge and understanding about what the school needs to do to sustain the high standards and ensure high quality provision. Information about pupil performance is beginning to be used in a systematic way, and leading to some improvements. The regular monitoring of how well pupils are doing and the careful identification of strengths and weaknesses is having a beneficial effect on standards. For instance, the analysis of National Curriculum test results from 2000 indicated some weaknesses in the quality of pupils' writing. The school recognised the problem and took some very positive

action, including reviewing the teaching of writing, that has resulted in good improvements in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels.

14. Target setting is also being effectively used to ensure that pupils are gaining appropriate standards. This is proving particularly successful for the seven to eleven year olds. Targets for attainment are set for each pupil at the start of each year and the targets are monitored carefully. Those pupils who may not be achieving as much as they should or who may need more support to achieve their targets, are given extra help through good programmes designed to address their needs. These programmes include additional support for literacy and numeracy skills, clubs to assist pupils with homework and 'booster classes' to make sure pupils are adequately prepared for their National Curriculum tests. This process of identifying any potential under-achievement followed by the provision of effective support is ensuring that all seven to eleven year olds are achieving well.
15. Although key members of staff are also beginning to play a more significant part in monitoring and evaluating aspects of the schools' work, some are not yet making a sufficient impact on identifying strengths and weaknesses. This is apparent, for instance, in the variation in the quality of some teaching and the variation in teachers' expectations about how pupils will present their work. Lack of regular scrutiny of pupils' work and the monitoring of teaching by key members of staff result in some of these weaknesses.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well

16. The very good range of opportunities provided to promote pupils' personal development is a strong feature of the school's work and a key factor in promoting good relationships and positive attitudes to learning.
17. There is good provision for personal, social and health education in the taught curriculum. The youngest children learn about taking care of themselves and appreciating the work of others through topics such as 'Safety' and 'People Who Care for Us'. This is built upon as children move through the school, so that for example, six and seven year olds learn about stranger danger, friendship and peoples' needs and similarities and differences. Themes related to personal health and safety are often linked with work in science, physical education and religious education for pupils aged eight to eleven. They also begin to consider issues related to decision-making, bullying and stereotyping.
18. Many opportunities are provided to foster pupils' social skills. In classrooms throughout the school pupils are given a range of responsibilities. Older pupils are encouraged to take care of the younger ones; Year 6 pupils help regularly in the nursery, reading stories and playing with small groups or individuals. Children have been involved in a groundwork committee planning improvements to the school environment; all pupils had the opportunity to put forward plans and suggestions for improvement; these were taken seriously and some ideas have been incorporated into the final designs. The recently established school council is successfully promoting pupils' sense of responsibility and awareness of citizenship. Each class has elected pupil representatives; they bring issues to be discussed at the council meeting and have the responsibility to report back to their classes. A recent area for debate has been the planned improvements to the playground. Pupils at the council meeting take responsibility as secretary and assistant to record the minutes.

Agendas and the minutes of the previous meeting are circulated in advance so that pupils become aware of the formal structure of meetings.

19. A very good range of extra-curricular activities provides opportunities for pupils to extend their experiences. The programme changes each term and some clubs are run at lunchtime to enable pupils from the MLD unit to attend. Clubs include a range of sporting activities, drama, chess, gardening, band and recorders. Pupils are also encouraged to participate in sports activities and competitions; this year the football team has experienced good success and two pupils have won significant awards, one in public speaking and another in a competition about the environment. A good range of visits supports work in subjects across the curriculum and extends pupils' horizons. Nursery children have recently visited a local farm and Year 4 and Year 6 pupils have an opportunity to take part in a residential visit. The older pupils visit London and experience a different way of life as they stay in dormitory accommodation and make their way around a large city on public transport. Pupils have the opportunity to use their initiative in suggesting fundraising activities; Year 4 decided to collect stamps for cystic fibrosis and arranged a 'Jeans for Genes' day to raise funds. Year 6 organised a day of fundraising events to support the Blue Peter appeal for a premature baby unit and reported on their activities in the school's newsletter.
20. Many aspects of the taught curriculum raise pupils' awareness of the world around. The study of a range of artists and art forms fosters pupils' appreciation of works of art and encourages them to try out a range of techniques, for example in designing sculptures and working in the style of the Impressionists. Study of localities that contrast with their own, such as St Lucia, encourages pupils to appreciate the impact of climate and tourism on people's lives. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to the ballet and opera and by visiting theatre groups and people with particular expertise or interests such as the local member of Parliament who faced some rigorous questioning on government policy!

A very effective partnership with parents is developed and sustained

21. There is a very good partnership between home and school that encourages parents to become involved in all aspects of the school's work and to support their children's learning. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school; they feel involved and well-informed and are confident in approaching the school if they have any concerns.
22. Systems for informing and involving parents work well at several levels. The parents of children starting school receive home visits from the reception teacher and are invited to visit the school and to information evenings so that they are well prepared to support their child's transition to school. Consultation evenings in the autumn and spring terms keep parents informed about their children's progress; all parents attend. Annual reports are detailed and informative and parents have the opportunity to discuss the report with the teacher if they so wish. The reports give brief details of what has been taught and comment on progress and attainment in each subject; details of pupils' attainment in standardised tests are provided for seven and eleven year olds. However, there is no information for other year groups to indicate whether pupils' performance is in line with that expected. Parents are also given good general information about the curriculum, for example in workshops about the new strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and the standardised tests taken by seven and eleven year olds. Workshops have also been run for parents of pupils in Year 6 to

enable them to help their children at home; as a result all pupils involved reached at least national average levels in tests and a third attained the higher levels. For several years the school has run courses on parents as educators; subjects covered have included English, mathematics and science. These ten-week courses are accredited by the local college for further education and, for some parents, have led to further areas of study at a higher level.

23. Parents are consulted regularly about many aspects of the school's work. Parents have joined working parties to agree the policy for sex education and been consulted on proposals for teaching drugs awareness. An annual questionnaire is sent out with pupils' reports; the results are taken seriously and acted upon. Home-school diaries promote a useful dialogue between teachers and parents, particularly for pupils aged five to seven.
24. The parents, teachers and friends association is very active, organising a range of social and fundraising events. Around £5000 is raised annually for the school. The PTFA is also used as a 'sounding board' to assess informally the quality of parental links and the need for any modifications. Around eighteen parents help regularly in classrooms throughout the school; several give good support in the nursery unit and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning for the youngest children.

Pupils with significant special needs achieve well

25. The school is committed to inclusion and welcomes pupils of all backgrounds, cultures and races. As part of its commitment to inclusion, children with a range of difficulties are welcomed into the school community; these pupils have full access to all aspects of the curriculum and are integrated into all activities.
26. Ten pupils aged from seven to eleven with statements of special need are accommodated in a unit for children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). These pupils make good progress in their learning as a result of good teaching, a carefully planned curriculum and careful assessment and tracking of their progress to promote further achievement. Pupils are taught as a whole group at times, but also work in small groups and individually on specific programmes to meet their learning needs. Wherever possible, they are integrated with mainstream pupils of the same age, joining classes for games, music and, where appropriate, literacy and numeracy lessons. Reverse integration arrangements mean that at times pupils from mainstream classes are taught in a small group in the unit, enabling a good level of support to address their difficulties. This worked well, for example, for some Year 6 pupils who needed reinforcement work on fractions and who benefited from well-organised teaching by the classroom assistant in the unit.
27. The progress of pupils in the unit is assessed carefully against a detailed scale of attainment in all subjects so that their achievements are recognised. This is linked to levels of attainment in National Curriculum subjects. Records show a good emphasis on what pupils have achieved, stressing for example, 'can read a simple text using knowledge of letters, sounds and words'. Pupils' efforts and attitudes to learning are also assessed and targets are set that address the next steps in their learning in social and academic terms; these targets are displayed in the classroom and referred to regularly so that children are frequently reminded of what they are working towards.

28. Children with specific difficulties in mainstream classes also receive a good level of support to enable them to access the curriculum and to make progress in their learning. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) has good expertise and experience in working with children with a wide range of difficulties and she provides good support to colleagues in assessing children's difficulties and suggesting support strategies to address these. Individual education plans (IEPs) include clear targets against which pupils' progress is assessed on a regular basis. The SENCO works with some individual children who need specific support, for example to address behavioural difficulties. Classroom assistants are also assigned to support pupils individually and in small groups; this is particularly successful in enabling integration into class activities and encouraging children to contribute to discussions and group activities.
29. Good liaison with external agencies, such as the educational psychologist and the speech therapist, informs the planning of support programmes for individual children. Parents are also involved in supporting their children; they are invited to reviews and contribute their views at the meeting and in writing if they wish. They receive copies of IEPs and home-school link books give them good information on their children's responses and progress; this is particularly helpful for parents of the pupils attending the unit who often live some distance from the school. The SENCO is readily available to parents to advise them on ways in which they might support their children at home; good informal liaison between home and school promotes opportunities for children's learning.
30. The success of the school's work with children with special needs is demonstrated by the progress that they make; some move down stages on the special needs register as a result of targeted support. All pupils take the National Curriculum standardised tests at the ages of seven and eleven; some reach expected levels at the age of eleven and those with significant long-term difficulties are usually only one level behind their peers.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The rate of progress for some higher attaining seven and eight year olds

31. Children get a good start in the nursery and reception classes and make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1 the majority have a good base of skills in literacy and numeracy. Although this good base is steadily built upon, some higher attaining seven and eight year olds could make more rapid progress in their learning. This is evident in the work that they do and in the most recent results of national tests where too few seven year olds pupils attained the higher levels in reading. There is scope to raise teachers' expectations of what the higher attaining pupils might achieve and the speed at which they could learn
32. In reading, higher attainers read with reasonable expression and understanding and make good use of a range of strategies to decipher text. Some, however, have difficulties in getting beyond the literal, for example in interpreting events and explaining the actions of characters. Eight year old pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply and extend their skills across a range of subjects. Pupils do not do enough independent research that builds on some of the good work earlier in the school. The teaching of literacy is also limited. There is an over-reliance on exercises to extend pupils' understanding about how to improve and develop writing techniques rather than direct teaching about how to make written work more

interesting, such as for instance, how to use words and structure to create effect or develop characters.

33. In mathematics, higher attaining seven year olds are reasonably competent in using the four operations and begin to apply practical multiplication and division. However, they rarely work with numbers beyond 100. Pupils explore the relationship between numbers, but work is often at the same level for a lengthy period and progress is steady rather than good. Again, limited expectations are impeding the rate of progress for some pupils. Too much of the work done by eight year olds does not build upon the work of Year 2 and tasks given are at times at a similar level.
34. Children's progress in the reception class is regularly assessed but there is a lack of specific information on their level of attainment in the National Curriculum even though many are achieving well in the early stages.
35. The information on attainment at the end of the reception year is passed on to Year 1 but because it does not include detail referring to National Curriculum it is more difficult to use the information to set appropriate targets for attainment. In Years 1 and 2, although some targets are set and discussed between the head teacher and class teachers these are not used rigorously enough to inform teaching or to assess progress as children move through the year. Consequently it is not easy to identify pupils who may be under-achieving and who may need a greater degree of challenge to enable them to achieve higher levels at the age of seven.

The consistency of the quality of spelling and presentation across the school

36. Some five year olds who are confident and competent writers make errors in spelling commonly used words; these are not picked up and tackled consistently at a sufficiently early stage. Consequently children continue to write for example 'cume' in their stories and accounts. This continues through Years 1 and 2; pupils are competent in reading and writing but written work shows some persistent errors for instance, 'won' for one, 'ther' for there and 'gowing' for going. This also persists to some extent into Year 3 where marking does not always give enough attention to correcting simple mistakes. Marking in some classes is often superficial and sometimes inaccurate – errors are not pointed out and marking does not focus on the targets set for individual pupils
37. The presentation of work for seven and eight year olds is often careless, pupils move from using joined writing back to print; some work is frequently 'crossed out' and untidy and again marking rarely focuses on points for improvement. In some classes, pupils practice their handwriting using pens but only ever work in pencil in their workbooks, so they do not have an opportunity to apply the skills they have learned. Work across the school indicates that there is too much variation in the expectations that teachers have about how pupils will present their work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Improve the rate of progress for higher attaining seven and eight year olds by:

- raising expectations about what higher attaining pupils might achieve;
- using information gained in the foundation stage to set National Curriculum targets for attainment for seven year olds;

- ensuring that targets are monitored.

Improve the consistency of the quality of spelling and presentation across the school by:

- ensuring that all teachers have appropriate expectations about how pupils will present their work;
- putting in place clear strategies for improving the spelling of the five to seven year olds.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 19 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 10 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 26 | 37 | 37 | 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) | 30 | 246 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | - | 16 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 1 | 48 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 4 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 1 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 2 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.5 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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 | 13 | 15 | 28 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|----------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 9 | 9 | 10 |
| | Girls | 14 | 14 | 15 |
| | Total | 23 | 23 | 25 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 82 (100) | 82 (91) | 89 (91) |
| | National | 83 (82) | 84 (83) | 90 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 9 | 9 | 13 |
| | Girls | 14 | 15 | 15 |
| | Total | 23 | 24 | 28 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 82 (88) | 86 (88) | 100 (91) |
| | 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 | 16 | 15 | 31 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| | Girls | 13 | 12 | 14 |
| | Total | 26 | 25 | 27 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 84 (94) | 81 (90) | 87 (100) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| | Girls | 13 | 12 | 14 |
| | Total | 26 | 25 | 27 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 87 (94) | 83 (90) | 90 (100) |
| | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69) | 79 (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 | 1 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 3 |
| White | 181 |
| 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 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 10.8 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 26 |
| Average class size | 30 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 8 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 169.5 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 30 |

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 2 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 44.5 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 10 |
|--------------------------------|----|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2000/2001 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 626,703 |
| Total expenditure | 620,439 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,512 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 97,826 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 104,090 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 246 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 90 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 61 | 36 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 64 | 34 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 63 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 47 | 34 | 11 | 2 | 6 |
| The teaching is good. | 71 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 43 | 44 | 10 | 1 | 1 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 78 | 19 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 64 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 58 | 38 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 70 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 62 | 32 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 66 | 22 | 2 | 0 | 10 |