

## INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MARY'S, PRITTLEWELL, C of E (VA)  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Southend on Sea, Essex

LEA area: Southend on Sea

Unique reference number: 115145

Headteacher: Mrs Frances Neil

Reporting inspector: Jan Allcorn  
1068

Dates of inspection: 1 - 2 July 2002

Inspection number: 194772

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Boston Avenue Southend on Sea Essex
Postcode:	SS2 6JH
Telephone number:	01702 354012
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Canon R. Mason
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's Prittlewell is a Voluntary Aided Church of England School with 412 pupils on roll. In spring 1999 it moved to a new site. The school is now much larger than at the time of the last inspection and bigger than most primary schools nationally. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds with the proportion eligible for free school meals broadly in line with that nationally. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average overall although it covers the full ability range. It depends on their pre-school experiences, which range from none to playgroups and full-time nursery. Fourteen per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Sixteen pupils do not have English as their first language, and although relatively a small number represents a larger proportion than found in most schools nationally. Only one pupil is at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils with special educational needs and those with a statement of need is below that nationally. However, the change in catchment area has resulted in more pupils in the younger year groups with specific learning needs.

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

St Mary's Prittlewell is an effective, successful, and popular school. It provides a secure, orderly and happy learning environment, in which the pupils make good progress. This is due to the very good leadership of the headteacher and the high commitment of all staff. Governors are interested and involved in the work of the school and support it well. Teaching is particularly good for older junior pupils and significantly contributes to the good results eleven-year-olds gain in national tests. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and most pupils behave and respond well in lessons. The value for money provided by the school is good.

#### **What the school does well**

- Given their attainment on entry to the school, pupils achieve well by the time they leave at the age of eleven years.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and both she and the deputy headteacher manage well the work of the school. This creates an orderly and caring learning environment in which pupils flourish.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress.
- Teaching and learning are particularly good for the junior pupils.
- By the time they leave the school pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and a well-developed sense of responsibility towards others.

#### **What could be improved**

- Provision for children in the reception classes does not support fully the best possible progress.
- Strategies to support the small minority of pupils who find it difficult to settle in lessons and to concentrate on their work are not yet consistent and effective enough 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 has changed significantly since the last inspection in June 1997 and this has led to many improvements in its work. Results in National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds have shown a steady upward trend. In summer 2000 and 2001 the school gained the DfEE Achievement Award because of these results. For seven-year-olds results in National Curriculum tests have been more variable, although never below national averages. The additional special needs of pupils attending the school, following the move, affected the school's test results earlier for this age group. At the time of the last inspection the quality of teaching was identified as an area for development. This issue has been tackled well and inspectors judge teaching and learning now to be good overall. Mixed age classes no longer exist; curriculum time for 7-11 year olds has improved and high quality information and communication

technology facilities are in place. Given the enthusiasm and commitment of the headteacher and staff and its improved facilities and resources the school is well placed to continue to develop its work and to raise standards further.

## 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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	B	A	A
Mathematics	C	B	A	A
Science	D	B	A	A

**Key**

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

*Similar schools are those schools with an equivalent number of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

In summer 2001 results in National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds were well above national averages and those for similar schools. Progress since the age of seven years was good and the trend of improvement was above that nationally. Standards achieved by current eleven-year-olds are overall not as high but still represent good progress for these pupils. Because of the increase in the size of the school this year group has pupils with a wider range of learning needs than in previous years. A quarter of the pupils joined the school in their junior years, some following interrupted schooling, some with gaps in their learning. Standards are at least in line with those expected nationally in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science with the most able pupils achieving above average standards. Provisional results in National Curriculum tests this summer support these judgements and compare favourably with national averages from last year. The school reached its targets.

Although results in national tests for seven-year-olds in summer 2001 were in line with national averages, pupils did not achieve as well as expected. Provisional test results for current seven-year-olds show improved performance and good progress since joining the school. This is because the school has monitored closely the quality of teaching and tracked carefully the pupils' progress in the last year. All pupils achieved the nationally expected level in mathematics, but in all three subjects too few pupils gained the higher levels. Standards of work seen by inspectors were overall in line with those expected nationally in reading and mathematics – but just below in writing.

The most able reception children have reached nationally expected levels this summer. However the progress made by children in the reception classes is not as good overall as elsewhere in the school and has not been for the last few years. This is due to a number of factors: a small number of children who find it difficult to settle to work; lack of appropriate accommodation for this age group; and planning that does not always meet the needs of the children.

Throughout the school pupils make better progress in developing their reading, and speaking and listening skills than their writing skills. However the most able pupils in Year 6 produce mature structured writing and make good choices of vocabulary. By the time they are eleven years old pupils have sound numeracy skills and higher attaining pupils confidently work with fractions, decimals and percentages at a level above that expected for their age. Pupils gain good information and communication technology skills. From Reception to Year 6 the quality of artwork seen, especially the pottery, was of a high standard.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy school. They like their teachers and want to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall, although better for older pupils in the junior years. A small but significant number of pupils in Reception to Year 2 and in Year 3 sometimes find it difficult to settle and concentrate in lessons. Around the school behaviour is good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on well with each other and their teachers. Older pupils are responsible and show care and consideration for others.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Due to high expectations and rigorous monitoring attendance has improved from well below average last year to be in line with that nationally at the present time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Foundation	Years 1-2	Years 3-6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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.*

Teaching is good overall, although better for junior pupils than for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and pupils in Years 1-2. Nevertheless examples of very good and excellent teaching were seen with these pupils.

Planning is good and teachers use good questioning to encourage pupils to explain their views or results. This consolidates and deepens the pupils' knowledge and understanding. The best lessons are lively and interest pupils and, as a result, the pupils listen carefully and respond and behave well. This leads to good progress. Where teachers do not have the strategies to manage the behaviour of a small minority of pupils the learning, although satisfactory, slows. This is more noticeable with younger pupils, who enter the school with a wide range of learning needs. Some find it difficult to settle and concentrate. Where the teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour these pupils settle and work well.

Teaching assistants are attached to each class and provide valuable support. Although the school spends a greater proportion of its budget on teaching assistants than most schools nationally, this represents very good value for money. Class teachers plan well with their teaching assistants and deploy them effectively. This particularly supports pupils with learning difficulties to make good progress.

Teachers follow and adapt well the national programmes for literacy and numeracy to meet the learning needs of pupils. Setting and additional small groups in Years 4-6 help all pupils to work at an appropriate level and make good progress in these subjects. Opportunities for pupils to use computers are well planned and provide good support for the pupils' learning in a range of subjects. Teachers' records and files have good information on pupils' progress and what they achieve. The teachers use this information to plan appropriate work for pupils. This is particularly good for older junior pupils where the information recorded is very detailed and helpful.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Rigorous planning based on the National Curriculum programmes of study ensures pupils get a well-balanced and appropriate range of learning experiences. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been well implemented. For reception children facilities and planning do not support fully the best possible progress.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. It is managed well and the close working relationship between class teachers and the teaching assistants effectively supports these pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The school has good strategies in place to support the very few pupils it has at the early stages of English. They make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school has a clear Christian ethos and high expectations of work and behaviour. Teachers and other adults are good role models for pupils. Opportunities to participate in art, music and drama activities are good and the school is developing its work in helping pupils to understand the multi-faith and multi-ethnic society in which they will live. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are particularly good and charities and local events are well supported.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Health and safety and child protection procedures are very good. Teachers know pupils well, both academically and personally.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership, being enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed. She and the deputy manage the work of the school well. Co-ordination of work in English and mathematics and for pupils with special educational needs is also good. The school development plan is a detailed and useful document and covers appropriately both school and national priorities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The chair of governors is very knowledgeable about current educational developments and regularly visits the school, both to keep himself informed and to lead an act of worship. Governors visit classes and spend time with subject co-ordinators. They have supported the school well during the move and subsequent site developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is clear monitoring of teaching and learning and tracking of pupil progress. Strengths and areas for development in the school's work are clearly identified and acted upon.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Finances and resources are well managed and used effectively to support pupils' learning. A good range of strategies is in place to ensure the best value is obtained. The school is very active in bidding for additional grants and funds. The current library area is inadequate for the size of the school.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The schools high expectations of work and behaviour.</li> <li>• The good values it promotes.</li> <li>• The good behaviour of pupils.</li> <li>• Leadership and management of the school's work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality and amount of homework set in some classes.</li> <li>• More information on how well their children are doing and the work of the school.</li> <li>• More opportunities for parents to be involved in the work of the school.</li> </ul>

*Nine parents attended the meeting for parents and 71 questionnaires were returned.*

The inspection team supports the positive views held by parents. With regard to concerns, inspectors found the information parents receive on how well their children do and the number of meetings for parents to be equivalent to those found in most schools. However in reports seen information on pupils' progress in subjects other than the core was insufficient and comments not always in clear everyday language. A few parents would like to know the topics to be studied each term so they could help their children better. The school informs parents of each class's homework timetable at the beginning of the school year. Parents of older pupils expressed no concerns, but parents of younger pupils had a range of views from 'too much', 'not hard enough' and 'too little'. In the short time inspectors were in school it was difficult to make an overall assessment of the quality and quantity set for these pupils because of staff changes and absence. A small number of reception parents are concerned about the regrouping of pupils as they move from Reception to Year 1. Whilst understanding their concerns, inspectors judge the school's reasons to be educationally sound. A few parents expressed doubts about job shares, but inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns. The school is working hard to develop closer links with parents and the newly formed parent-teacher association supports this aim.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Given their attainment on entry to the school, pupils achieve well by the time they leave at eleven years.**

1. For all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science performance in National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in summer 2001 was well above that nationally and that for similar schools. Pupils had made good progress since the age of seven years overall, although it was better in English and science than in mathematics. Results in English had considerably improved on those in summer 2000. Pupils did particularly well at the higher levels in all three subjects. The trend of improvement for the period 1999–2001 was above that nationally. These results represent a considerable improvement since the last inspection.
2. The standards achieved by current eleven-year-olds in the three core subjects are not as high as those for pupils in summer 2001, but nevertheless represent good progress for this group of pupils. Current Year 6 pupils have a wider range of learning needs than pupils in previous years. This is because of the increase in size of the school following the move to new accommodation in 1999. Year groups took in extra pupils, who had found difficulties in getting placements in other schools that resulted in gaps in previous learning.
3. Standards are at least in line with those expected nationally in English and mathematics, with higher attaining pupils demonstrating above average attainment. Preliminary National Curriculum test results for these two subjects compare very favourably with national results last year and the school's targets have been achieved. In science, the work seen indicated above average knowledge and understanding particularly in practical work. However this standard is not reflected fully in the preliminary national test results for science, where the test consists of a written paper only. From evidence of previous attainment, the scrutiny of pupils' work and classroom observation inspectors judged pupils throughout Years 3-6 to be making good progress overall in the three core subjects. Progress is best in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is particularly strong, and pupils' attitudes towards learning are more mature and they settle quickly to work in lessons.
4. Over the last three years results in National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds have been variable. They have ranged from well above average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics in summer 2000 to average in reading, writing and mathematics in summer 2001. The drop in summer 2001 is partly explained by more pupils in the school with learning difficulties and inconsistent teaching due to staff changes in Years 1 and 2. Issues arising have been tackled well in the current school year. This is the result of the clear oversight of planning, good tracking of pupils' progress and monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and other experienced staff, both within the school and from the local education authority. Consequently results in National Curriculum tests for summer 2002 have improved and compare favourably with national averages for the previous year. All pupils achieved the nationally expected level or above in mathematics. Overall results are better than predicted from testing at five years of age.

5. Standards for pupils currently in Year 2 are judged to be in line with those expected nationally in the three core subjects. Progress is at least satisfactory since Reception and for most pupils good. However few pupils achieve above the level expected for their age. This is because in science and mathematics the teaching does not always provide enough harder work for the most able to ensure the highest standards are reached. Attainment in writing is not as good as that for reading and mathematics.
6. Results in national tests indicate girls do better than boys by a slightly bigger gap than found nationally, particularly in English. However inspectors found no significant evidence during the short inspection to account for this. Boys were observed to respond well in lessons. On those occasions where pupils were seen to have difficulties in settling quickly and quietly to their work both boys and girls were involved. Nevertheless the co-ordinator for English is aware of the possibility of an issue and intends to look at this aspect of work in English more closely. Pupils from different ethnic groups were observed to respond and work as well as other pupils. The one pupil at the early stages of learning English is making good progress because of the learning experiences and support she is receiving in Reception. One Year 6 pupil, who joined the school in the junior years with English as an additional language, has achieved above the level expected in the recent National Curriculum tests.
7. The school is developing a good database on the standards reached by pupils. It uses this to monitor pupils' progress and to identify pupils who are underachieving. This informs the targets the school sets itself and where additional support is required. Class teachers also use it to set and update targets for each pupil. Targets are demanding and appropriate. The database is not used as rigorously as it could be to monitor the performance of different groups of pupils, such as those from different ethnic groups and girls and boys.
8. Throughout Years 1-6 the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has had a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve in English and mathematics. This is particularly so for older pupils. The most able Year 6 pupils show a very good understanding of the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages. Their writing is mature and interesting, with examples of lengthy creative writing that uses paragraphs appropriately and includes well-chosen vocabulary. Average and lower attaining pupils also show good progress in developing the vocabulary they use and in their maturity of expression, although the weakest do not reach fully the expected level for their age.
9. Pupils use computers competently and confidently in a wide range of contexts. This includes importing text and pictures into a school newspaper; using a spreadsheet to analyse data and print bar charts and pie charts; controlling machines in design and technology; and making PowerPoint presentations on the Greeks in history. The considerable investment of the school in a computer room with 16 machines as well as classroom based computers and a technician to support staff has considerably improved the pupils' opportunities to gain good information and communication technology skills.
10. The quality of work in art around the school is particularly good with some excellent work in pottery. Year 6 pupils speak enthusiastically of the range of work they do using different media such as paints, crayons and charcoal. They talk confidently about using perspective, landscape work and art appreciation sessions where they study the work of artists such as Andy Warhol. The school takes very good advantage of a teaching assistant who is also 'a potter' and this significantly contributes to the very high level of skill shown in this area.

11. Improvement since the last inspection has been good for the junior pupils, with progress now good rather than satisfactory. This is due to better curriculum planning and better teaching. Progress for infant pupils in Years 1 and 2 remains good overall, although it varies from satisfactory to very good and reflects the quality of teaching pupils receive. The rigorous monitoring of pupil attainment and progress, developing target setting procedures and clear oversight of classroom practice mean the school is well placed to improve standards further. The school works hard to ensure it has good experienced teachers in spite of recruitment difficulties in the local area.

**The leadership of the headteacher is very good and both she and the deputy headteacher manage the work of the school well. This creates an orderly and caring learning environment in which pupils flourish.**

12. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has high expectations of the standards of work pupils should achieve, pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning provided by staff in the classroom. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher and together they manage very effectively the work of the school. Pupils and staff are respected and valued. Staff are committed to provide the best for the pupils in their care. These features and its Christian ethos provide a firm foundation for all the school's work. They ensure an orderly and caring learning environment in which pupils are happy and make good progress. As a consequence the school is oversubscribed. Parents who answered the questionnaire agreed that the school is well led, has high expectations, good teaching and helps their children to become mature and responsible.
13. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed in the last two years and they have achieved a great deal within that time. The consolidation of the move from the old school has been a major task. This has included the induction of new pupils with a range of previous experiences into each year group, the provision of sufficient resources to meet the needs of a larger number of pupils and oversight of the continuing building work on the other half of the site. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have managed this well. The day to day running of the school has continued smoothly and pupils' overall progress has not been adversely affected. Performance management has been successfully introduced, there is better curriculum planning, and teachers are more informed about the progress their pupils make.
14. The management structure and the roles of subject co-ordinators have been strengthened. The senior management team now has two assistant headteachers and these individuals are beginning to develop their roles. Already this has had a good impact on work in Years 1 and 2 and the development of assessment procedures. The absence of one of the assistant headteachers has hindered the school's target to improve provision for the early years pupils in reception. Subject co-ordinators in English, mathematics and science have clear expectations concerning the monitoring of work in their subject areas. In English and mathematics the monitoring of the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has had a good impact on the quality of teaching and learning pupils receive. The special educational needs co-ordinator has reviewed and improved provision for pupils with special educational needs, and supports and manages well the work of the teaching assistants. However, although subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and books on a regular basis, opportunities to observe work in the classroom are more limited.

15. The headteacher and her senior team know well the school's strengths and where improvement is still needed. The school development plan reflects clearly those areas requiring further work as well as national priorities. It is a good working document that informs the school's work and monitors progress towards targets. Pupils' performance and progress are recorded regularly and this information is beginning to be used effectively by the headteacher and staff to set targets for pupils and to identify and support those pupils who are not performing as well as they should.
16. The headteacher and staff are supported well by the governing body, which has a strong commitment to the work of the school. The chair of governors is very knowledgeable about current educational developments, regularly visits the school and leads a weekly act of worship. Governors take an active interest in the work of subject areas. For example a governor has joined the working party that is currently developing the PSHE (personal, social and health education) curriculum. Financial spending is monitored carefully and governors have useful expertise that has been particularly helpful to the school during the period of the move and subsequent site difficulties.
17. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The new headteacher has built very well on the good work of the previous headteacher and with the staff continues to seek for improvement in the work of the school for the benefit of the pupils.

**Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress.**

18. The school has a high commitment to meet the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs. This is shown in its staffing and timetable arrangements. The special educational needs co-ordinator does not have a whole class responsibility. This gives her a very effective amount of time to support and improve provision for pupils on the school's special educational needs register and to liaise with outside specialist advisers. Good staffing levels provide additional literacy and numeracy groups in Years 4-6 and each class has a teaching assistant. These arrangements have a positive impact on the learning of all pupils not just those with learning difficulties. Therefore whilst they incur a higher than average cost they represent very good value for money.
19. The special educational need co-ordinator provides very clear leadership for the work of class teachers and the teaching assistants. The individual education plans for pupils on the special educational needs register contain appropriate targets, what the pupil should be able to do to achieve these, strategies to enable them to be achieved and possible resources and techniques. Records seen for pupils with a statement of need are informative and helpful for future planning. Samples of work in files are appropriate and well annotated. Good notes are kept of observations and meetings with outside visitors such as the educational psychologist. Targets are set for pupils and parents. Teaching assistants, working specifically with statemented children, are involved with the writing of individual educational plans and where appropriate their review by the school's special educational needs co-ordinator.
20. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Lesson observations during the inspection confirmed the effectiveness of the planning process. Teachers use information on pupils' performance and their individual education plans to ensure work and learning situations meet pupils' individual needs. A regular time is set aside each week for each class teacher to plan with his/her teaching assistant(s) the support to be provided in lessons. This results in the effective use of the teaching assistants in lessons. One such planning discussion observed involved very good practice. It

covered the words that needed to be reinforced during a literacy session, the work on the computer for a particular child and the need to target three children, especially one boy who was not producing enough work. In another class the planning included specific observations of one child by the teaching assistant that were to be recorded and used to inform future support.

21. In the junior part of the school additional teacher time is used effectively to support smaller groups in English and mathematics. These groups, alongside setting arrangements, enable the school to target those pupils who have particular learning difficulties. During the inspection, a Year 4 target group in English made very good progress in their understanding of the structure of a story through well planned teaching that met their particular learning needs. Work in small target groups such as this has significantly contributed to the school's good results in National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds.
22. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the work and deployment of the teaching assistants well, both for those with a specific role in supporting pupils on the special educational needs register and those with a general role. She meets with them on a weekly basis to pass on relevant information, to plan any timetable changes and to share good practice. She has organised training on the National Literacy Strategy, the use of the epi-pen, and information and communication technology. Teaching assistants have also been trained to support the developing work in PSHE. The school's commitment to provide training for teaching assistants supports their effective classroom practice. For example in sessions in the computer room they provide much needed support when pupils are working in pairs or individually on tasks.
23. The teaching assistants are particularly effective in supporting pupils who have learning difficulties. For example, in one Year 2 literacy lesson the teaching assistant was observed working very well with a group of lower attaining pupils to improve their handwriting. She modelled the writing well, kept the pupils on task whilst maintaining a good relationship with them, and praised them for their efforts.
24. New since September 2001 the special educational needs co-ordinator has clear priorities for implementing the revised Code of Practice and improving individual educational plans for those pupils who need them. Currently targets in individual educational plans mainly focus on literacy and personal and social needs. There is the scope to broaden these to include other aspects of the curriculum and to support whole school strategies for managing the behaviour of the small number of pupils who occasionally disturb the learning of others.

## **Teaching and learning are particularly good for the junior pupils.**

25. Teaching is good overall. Pupils have good access to the National Curriculum; teachers plan well and good records are kept of the progress pupils make, particularly in the core subjects. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been well implemented. All this has a positive impact on the progress the pupils make. The scrutiny of work, teachers' planning and lesson observations during the inspection identified teaching as more consistently good for junior pupils. For younger pupils it is more variable and overall satisfactory rather than good, although some excellent and very good practice was seen.
26. The best teaching is well planned to meet the individual needs of all pupils in the class, even when pupils are set for English and mathematics. For example, in a Year 6 top set in mathematics working on mixed fractions and decimals, different tasks were set for each group of pupils after the whole class introductory session. This enabled the highest attaining group to work at a more demanding level and to achieve the highest possible standards. The effectiveness of this approach is shown by the good percentage of pupils attaining above the level expected in the National Curriculum tests. Another feature of the best teaching is the way teachers question pupils about what they are doing. They encourage pupils to think and reflect, to explain their answers, and to come to their own judgements. In a Year 5 English lesson, pupils were studying how to write a letter for a real purpose. Good questioning by the teacher helped them to form opinions on the aims, approach and clarity of a sample letter. The pupils then made suggestions as to how the letter could be improved and this subsequently helped them to write their own letters.
27. In the very best lessons, teachers make topics interesting. They deliver the lesson in a lively manner that holds the pupils' attention. Pupils respond and behave well and accomplish a lot of work. Where teaching is sometimes less successful, although still satisfactory, not all pupils listen and settle as well as they should. As a result progress is not as good. In some classes in Years 1 and 2, work is not always demanding enough for the most able. It is not matched closely enough to the needs of these pupils to ensure they reach the higher levels in National Curriculum tests.
28. Teachers' good planning is well supported by information on each pupil's attainment through regular testing. This information is used to monitor pupil progress, and is particularly effective in the junior part of the school in identifying underachievers. Work throughout the school is marked regularly. In the upper juniors, it is annotated well with helpful comments. Elsewhere in the school this practice is less consistent. Comments are 'well done' or 'you can do better' rather than suggestions as to how work can be improved. For younger pupils teachers do not note often enough the context in which work was completed: for example with or without help.
29. At the time of the last inspection, teaching had a significant number of weaknesses in the junior department of the school. Developments since the last inspection have resulted in good improvement. Teaching for younger pupils, whilst satisfactory overall, has had to meet the learning needs of pupils with a wider range of ability since the school's move in spring 1999. Strategies to meet additional needs, particularly behavioural needs, are not yet firmly in place and this hinders the best possible progress.

**By the time they leave the school pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and a well-developed sense of responsibility towards others.**



30. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' personal development. It is noticeable that as pupils progress through the school their behaviour and attitudes towards learning and towards others develop and grow as a result of the school's emphasis on this aspect of its work. Parents indicate that the good atmosphere and relationships in the school are one of the main reasons why they selected the school for their children.
31. Pupils who enter the school, whether in Reception or in older years, learn what is expected of them and work hard to meet the school's high expectations. They form good relationships with teachers and other adults in the school and with other pupils. They play well together in the playground. Older pupils understand the reasons for and respect the space allocated to younger pupils. Pupils from different ethnic groups are well integrated. Pupils are pleasant and friendly to visitors. Year 6 pupils state "the teachers are great". Behaviour in lessons is good overall but improves as pupils get older, because they develop their speaking and listening skills, become interested and involved in their work and more aware of the impact of their actions on others. In some of the younger classes a small minority of pupils occasionally disturb others as they find it difficult to settle and to become involved in their work. Inspectors did not find bullying to be an issue in the school. One or two parents expressed concerns, but other parents commented that any incidents were dealt with well.
32. The school achieves its good atmosphere through a wide range of well-planned activities. The PSHE (personal, social and health education) programme, including citizenship, is currently being developed through a working group. Sessions such as 'circle time' (opportunities for pupils to talk about what is happening in school and to themselves) are timetabled and supported by specialist training for staff. Literacy sessions for older pupils explore the effects and influence of drugs. Assemblies, whether whole school or class, explore attitudes and feelings and provide opportunities for reflection. They encourage the pupils' participation and are set in contexts to which the pupils can relate. For example, the story of David and Goliath was acted out by the headteacher with two pupils. The rest of the school was encouraged to act as a pantomime audience to 'baa' and 'oh no' at appropriate points. This was much enjoyed by pupils. Nevertheless the main message of the story was clearly communicated and understood. The daily act of worship is an important feature of the school's work and is managed well.
33. Displays around the school consistently reinforce good values. A display on the World Cup contains a Fair Play Code. Pupils' posters address the prevention of crime. In one classroom a pupil written display had the slogan 'The harder I try the better I get' with three class targets written underneath. A memorial to a child who died tragically last year is sensitive and well respected. The developing playground area, with training for lunchtime supervisors, encourages pupils to play well together and makes break and lunchtimes positive experiences.
34. The school has a good range of visits, residential opportunities, and extra-curricular activities. These all help to develop pupils not only academically but also socially and culturally. Dance and theatre companies frequently visit the school as do the local police and fire services and charity workers. Residential experiences for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to the Bradwell Outdoor Education Centre and to Flatford Mill are well planned and vetted by the school. They are much enjoyed by pupils. Older pupils have opportunities to go to lunchtime concerts at the civic centre. There is a good range of school clubs, such as chess or cross-country running. Pupils take part in school performances at Christmas and in the summer and sing in local festivals.

35. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of the school's daily work. At 'snack time' reception children help to give out fruit and apple juice, to collect cups and clean the tables. Teachers encourage the children to say 'please' and 'thank you', and praise them when they do, although some do need a lot of reminding. Year 6 pupils have purposeful roles such as monitoring how well classes go to assembly and are responsible for awarding the weekly certificate to the best class. This is clearly well sought after. Other Year 6 pupils help the computer technician to check the computers are turned off at the end of the school day and that printers and other hardware are working properly. The recently formed school council is providing a good forum for pupils to express their views on the work of the school. Currently it is looking to set up a fruit table at break to raise money for charity.
36. The school regularly collects for charities. These include the Jeans for Genes day for Great Ormond Street Hospital, and harvest festival boxes for children in deprived countries. The annual school fun run along the seafront is a high point of the school year. Pupils through work in religious education gain an understanding of other faiths and cultures. In summer 2001 the school held a 'One World Week', which included speakers from different faiths, opportunities to sample different ethnic foods, and the exploration of non-European art. This is a developing area of the school's work and the school continues to work on opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures across the curriculum.
37. Throughout the school staff provide good role models for pupils. This is seen in classrooms, the dining hall and in the playground. Great care is taken to ensure all pupils are safe and secure. Value and respect for each other have a high priority and as such help pupils to understand how to behave towards and support each other.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Provision for children in the reception classes does not support fully the best possible progress.**

38. Information on children's achievements in the reception classes for the last few years indicates that they do not make sufficient progress from the time they enter the school to entering Year 1. Whilst there are strengths in the early years work of the school there are also some important weaknesses. The scrutiny of children's work and teachers' planning, and the observation of lessons during the inspection confirmed that children in the reception classes do not make the same good progress overall as other pupils in the school.
39. Strengths are the good day-to-day planning and the use of the teaching assistants. Home visits and meetings for parents help children to settle well into the school. Art and craftwork are good. However, in the lessons observed, listening skills and the ability to concentrate ranged from satisfactory to unsatisfactory for a significant number of children. Whilst teachers manage the children's behaviour satisfactorily overall, this can take time and slow the learning in some lessons. When the teacher's expectations are high and lessons are lively and interesting, all children show that they can respond and work well.
40. Whilst teachers' plan carefully, insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of children's listening and concentration skills, and personal and social skills. Children enter the school from a wider range of backgrounds than before the move to the new site. Pre-school experiences for some are limited. Many do not have the opportunity to attend a nursery. This gives the overall attainment on entry to the school below average. The new government guidance on the curriculum for this age range is not followed closely enough to ensure children achieve the required skills. Clearer links are needed between the planning and assessment process to ensure more children achieve the national early learning goals before they enter Year 1.
41. The school recognises that work for reception children requires further development. It has formulated an action plan with the early years co-ordinator, but staff absence has somewhat affected progress in this area. The accommodation for reception children has not been appropriate, as there is no purpose built outside play area or classroom toilets. However re-siting and refurbishment work is to take place in summer 2002. This with improved teaching and learning strategies, including the management of some children's behaviour, and matching work more closely to the national Early Years Curriculum will support better progress for the under fives.

### **Strategies to support the small minority of pupils who find it difficult to settle in lessons and to concentrate on their work are not yet consistent and effective enough across the school.**

42. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. Most want to learn and take an active interest in their lessons. However, in some lessons where the teaching was satisfactory the poor behaviour of a few pupils affected the learning of others. This predominately occurred in Years 1,2 and 3 and in the reception classes. The pupils concerned tend to call out answers or for help, do not give their work their full attention, and occasionally behave in a silly fashion. Whilst not disrupting the lesson overall these behaviours do slow the pace of activities and the progress all pupils make. Generally, teachers manage this behaviour well, but it can result in the most effective teaching strategies not being used. In one younger class the pupils' behaviour was managed by the strategy of seating

them at their tables for the introductory activity instead of on the mat with the teacher, the usual practice for this age group. Whilst successful in keeping pupils quiet and attentive and stopping any silly behaviour, it was not the most effective learning situation. Discussion was more inhibited and not all pupils could clearly see the board being used.

43. The school has high expectations of work and behaviour for all its pupils. These are reinforced by the developing PSHE programme, the well-structured teaching and learning policy, and the caring and positive work ethos of the school. The school also recognises that not all children enter the school with the personal and social skills needed to take full advantage of the experiences provided. Individual teachers use good strategies to support pupils who find it difficult at times to concentrate and listen. Other teachers are less successful in managing these pupils' behaviour. The school has still to complete the revision of its behaviour policy into a document that integrates all the good strategies used by staff and provides a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour across the school.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. In order to meet the wider range of learning needs of pupils entering the school and to maintain and improve on the current good progress pupils make, the school now needs to:

- (1) improve the provision in reception classes by:
- putting more emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development and their speaking and listening skills;
  - improving teachers' management of the behaviour of children who find it difficult to settle and concentrate
  - linking the medium and short term planning more closely to the early goals for learning;
  - completing the planned improvements to reception accommodation.

(Paragraphs: 14, 28, 29, 31, 38-41)

- (2) meet the learning and behaviour needs of the small minority of pupils who find it difficult to settle and listen quietly in lessons by:
- completing the review of the behaviour management policy;
  - sharing the good practice that exists within many classrooms;
  - having consistent strategies to support these pupils throughout the school;
  - providing appropriate training for staff;
  - ensuring work is matched to the wider range of learning needs now to be found in classes.

(Paragraphs: 14, 27-29, 31, 42-43)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	Years R - 6	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	7	7	6	1	0	0
Percentage	5	32	32	27	5	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll	412
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	46

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	67

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	16

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.(2000-01)

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001*	34	26	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	30	31
	Girls	25	25	26
	Total	52	55	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (95)	92 (93)	95 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	30	30
	Girls	25	25	26
	Total	54	56	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (78)	89 (83)	96 (89)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

\* National comparative data for 2002 results is not yet available.

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	244
Any other minority ethnic group	13

### 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, 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)	17.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	29

### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	404.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total Income	939227
Total Expenditure	942687
Expenditure per pupil	2266
Balance brought forward from previous year	93289
Balance carried forward to next year	89829

## **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	412
Number of questionnaires returned	71

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	28	8	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	53	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	56	15	3	0
The teaching is good.	49	48	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	40	24	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	37	10	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	47	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	41	17	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	44	46	6	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	54	6	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	38	10	5	3

Most of the negative comments about homework being either too much, too little or not hard enough came from the parents of younger children. These parents also had the highest rate of disagreement about the school providing an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

### Other issues raised by parents

A small number of parents expressed concerns about job shares and the proposed regrouping of the pupils in the two reception classes for Year 1.

A few parents commented that they felt the bullying of their child had not been taken seriously enough.