

INSPECTION REPORT

LITTLE HALLINGBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bishop's Stortford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115182

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Coates

Reporting inspector: John Messer
15477

Dates of inspection: 29 -30 April 2002

Inspection number: 194880

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: | Church of England Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 5 –11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Wrights Green Lane Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire |
| Postcode: | CM22 7RE |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Alan Row |
| Date of previous inspection: | June 1997 |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This Church of England primary school has 137 pupils on roll and is smaller than most other primary schools. There is an almost equal mix of boys and girls. Nearly all pupils are from English speaking backgrounds, though a very small number of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. Around six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Just under a quarter of pupils are entered on the register of special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average, and three of these pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs as they require substantial extra support in their learning. The attainment of children on admission to the reception class varies considerably from year to year but is generally above average. There have been significant changes to the teaching staff in recent years, and all the teachers, including the headteacher and deputy head, are new to the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is developing rapidly and has been successful in improving the quality of education provided, which is now good. There are many strengths as well as significant areas for further development, which the school has itself identified clearly. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and much of it is very good. The improved quality of teaching has not been sustained over a long enough period to have had a substantial impact on standards and the group of pupils at present in Year 6, and to a lesser extent in Year 2, have an unusually high proportion who need extra support in their learning. Therefore, standards this year in English, mathematics and science are likely to be broadly average by the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6. The standards pupils attain in Year 1 and Year 5 indicate that standards next year will be above average in English, mathematics and science. The leadership of the headteacher and the management by governors and senior staff are good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- As a result of the good and often very good teaching, pupils are beginning to achieve well in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Teaching for the children in the reception year is very good; children achieve very well as they rapidly develop advanced communication, language and literacy skills and make rapid progress in their mathematical development.
- The headteacher and her deputy provide strong, energetic leadership and are rapidly making improvements in many areas of the school.
- The school has established a systematic approach to raising standards, which is described well in its detailed school improvement plan.
- The school carefully analyses the performance of each pupil and sets appropriate targets for improvement.

What could be improved

- Teachers' understanding of the standards expected within the National Curriculum for pupils of different ages, particularly in the non-core subjects.
- Pupils, especially lower-attaining pupils, are not always given enough time and support to complete units of work and tasks remain unfinished.
- Pupils do not always set out their assignments neatly and tidily and this limits the quality of the final pieces of work produced.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in June 1997 there have been many improvements, particularly over the past eighteen months. The school's performance as measured by national tests for pupils in Year 6 has improved significantly and in 2001 it was well above national averages in English and mathematics and very high in science. In recognition of these improved standards the school has just received a School Achievement Award from the Department of Education and Skills. The quality of teaching has

improved significantly; in 1997 well over a quarter of teaching was unsatisfactory whereas now there is no unsatisfactory teaching and there is a much higher proportion of very good teaching. The school has responded well to the last inspection. Effective plans have been introduced that are leading to improved standards and the school's cost-effectiveness. Good planning frameworks have been introduced for all subjects. The key issue raised at the time of the last inspection has been tackled with a measure of success but pupils' attainments in the non-core subjects of the National Curriculum are still not as high as they should be. There have been substantial advances in the quality of teaching and the provision of resources for information and communication technology, where standards are rising rapidly. Resources to support teaching and learning in other non-core subjects, such as art and design, design and technology, history and geography, are still being developed. The grounds are being used more effectively as a learning resource, with a well-used field and an attractive environmental area, and the accommodation has improved. Overall, the degree of improvement since the last inspection has been good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| English | D | D | A | C |
| Mathematics | D | C | A | A |
| Science | A | C | A* | A* |

Key

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

*The * symbol indicates that the school's performance in science was among the top five per cent of schools in the country.*

Children's attainment on entry to the school is generally above average but it does vary widely from year to year. The relatively small size of each group taking the national tests contributes to considerable swings in the school's performance from one year to the next. Children's achievement in the reception class is very good and most are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals, specified in national guidance, by the end of reception year; many are already working at levels normally expected of older children. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is mostly good but standards are not as high as the school would normally expect in Year 2 because there is a high proportion of pupils in this year group who need extra support in their learning. Inspection findings indicate that most are on course to attain nationally expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2. These findings are different from last year's national test results for pupils in Year 2, when standards in reading were above average, well above average in writing and very high in mathematics when compared with all schools. Nevertheless, achievement in the current Year 2 is satisfactory and standards are set to rise again next year.

Most pupils are now achieving well in Years 3 to 5, but achievement in Year 6 is impeded by significant gaps in pupils' prior learning. Most of this year's group of Year 6 pupils are on course to attain the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of the school year. These findings are not reflected in national test results, which indicated that standards last year were well above average in English and mathematics, and in science were very high. The trend in the school's performance over the past five years has generally been above the improving trend nationally. In the national tests in 2001, the school exceeded its statutory targets in English and mathematics. This year's targets have been set at an appropriately lower level because the group taking the tests this year has a larger than usual proportion of pupils who need extra help with their learning. The school is on course to meet its targets. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by classroom

assistants and make good progress towards the targets described in their Individual Education Plans. However, when lower-attaining pupils do not receive extra support they often fail to finish the tasks that have been set and this impedes their achievement. Those very few pupils with English as an additional language are making good progress. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with national expectations but are improving rapidly as a result of particularly skilled teaching for the older pupils. The school is poised to make further advances in this area of the curriculum. The school has concentrated on improving standards in the core subjects of the National Curriculum - English, mathematics and science - but, as at the time of the last inspection, this has resulted in less attention being given to the non-core subjects. Here attainment does not exceed a broadly average standard and is not yet as high as it should be. The school is acutely aware of this and a good programme designed to focus on improving standards in each subject in turn has been devised. There are no significant variations in achievement between boys and girls.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils have positive attitudes to work; they enjoy attending school and are keen to learn. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils are very well behaved in and around the school. This contributes to an orderly and productive learning environment. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good relationships that help to promote personal development well are developed among pupils and between pupils and adults. There are high levels of racial and social harmony. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. The rate of attendance is close to the national average. |

Pupils are generally polite and sensitive to the feelings of others. Although attendance levels are average, a significant amount of schooling is lost when parents take their children out of school for family holidays. This amount of time exceeds that caused by absence through illness.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | very good | good | 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.

Overall, teaching is good; it is very good in well over a third of lessons. Teaching for the youngest children in the mixed reception and Year 1 class is very good. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. A particular strength of the teaching is the precise, detailed planning and the thorough preparation of lessons because this allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to gain new knowledge and understanding in a step by step way. However, slower workers do not always receive enough support to complete the tasks that are set. Relationships are good and help pupils to learn effectively in a supportive and friendly environment. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well, although opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in the non-core subjects of the curriculum are underdeveloped and teachers' understanding of national expectations of performance in these subjects is not always secure.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|--------|---------|
|--------|---------|

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>The quality and range of the curriculum</p> | <p>The curriculum covers all the areas of learning specified in national guidance for pupils in the reception year and all subjects of the National Curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 but there is scope for improving the depth of pupils' studies by giving greater emphasis to the non-core subjects.</p> |
|--|--|

| | |
|---|---|
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Sound provision helps these pupils to learn effectively in most lessons. Classroom assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | The very few pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers. Their learning needs are assessed rapidly and teachers' planning promotes good support. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for pupils' personal development is good and pupils have a clear understanding of their targets for improvement. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Good procedures ensure the health and safety of pupils. Very good procedures are in place to assess pupils' progress and pinpoint areas for further improvement. |

The school has developed good links with parents, who support their children's learning well. The school makes satisfactory provision to prepare pupils for life in our diverse multi-ethnic society.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher gives vigorous leadership and works determinedly to improve standards across the school. All staff give good support but subject leaders are new to their roles, which have yet to be developed fully. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governing body offers good support and fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors are closely associated with the school and, with the help of the headteacher's good analysis of provision, have developed a good understanding of the school's strengths as well as areas for development. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school analyses its performance systematically and creates highly effective plans that lead to good improvements. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school had a large financial surplus last year but this was appropriate planning in relation to a falling roll this year. The school is in a good financial position to fund all its planned developments over the next few years. |

The development of the roles of senior managers and subject leaders is being addressed but there is room for further improvement in monitoring and evaluating standards in teaching and learning. Spending decisions are considered carefully to ensure that the principles of best value are maintained and that spending is directed towards improving the standards that pupils attain.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards achieved by their children and the progress they make. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The quality of teaching. They would feel comfortable about approaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consistency and quantity of homework. Information about how their children are getting on. The range of activities outside lessons. |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>the school with questions or a problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best.• Pupils are helped to become mature, responsible individuals. | |
|--|--|

Inspection findings confirm parents' positive views. The inspection team found that there is a good range of activities outside lessons, information provided for parents about pupils' learning is satisfactory though school reports do not always indicate what pupils know and can do. Inspectors found that an appropriate amount of homework is set regularly.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

As a result of the good and often very good teaching, pupils are beginning to achieve well in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.

1. A great deal of work has been done over the past eighteen months to realign the school and set it on a new course in the pursuit of higher standards. The entire teaching force is new to the school, the latest appointment having been made just five months ago. A number of the new teachers lack experience. A good teaching and learning policy has been agreed that provides teachers with clear guidance about how to teach effectively. The quality of teaching is monitored systematically by the headteacher and her deputy in order to support teachers in the development of their teaching skills. Good planning frameworks have been introduced for each subject that help teachers to know what sections of the National Curriculum to teach each year group. The use of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies has been reviewed to determine how best to teach literacy and numeracy. The increasingly effective teaching is geared to meeting the learning needs of all pupils.
2. In realigning the school's course and assessing pupils' attainment it became apparent that there were many gaps in pupils' prior learning. A significant number of pupils, for example, did not have a thorough grasp of the correspondence between the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make when placed in different combinations. The school introduced a rigorous course of 'phonological awareness training' to fill in such gaps. Although several pupils still have difficulty, as when in Year 4 'hour' was spelt 'ower' and 'once' as 'ones', it is clear that pupils are beginning to read, spell and write more effectively. Most pupils in Year 1, for example, spelt 'once' with confidence and showed a good understanding of phonics. These younger pupils generally have a more acute awareness of words and literature. Last week pupils in Year 1 were studying a collection of the work of Eric Carle and this week the works of Judith Kerr. They are encouraged to compare texts and are developing a good critical appreciation of literature. In this class the teacher maintains high expectations of pupils' ability to become profoundly interested in language. Her expectations are justified because pupils show an eagerness when reading stories together to point out the punctuation and explain the complexities of speech marks. They even have an elementary understanding of the use of the apostrophe to indicate what has been missed out when 'two words are pushed together'.
3. Pupils who require extra help with their learning are given good support. There were good examples in the mixed Year 1/Year 2 class where the teacher's thorough lesson planning included such details as reminding one pupil to use a triangular pencil grip for better pencil control and more even pressure and ensuring that a pupil with English as an additional language had a complete understanding of the learning intention and how to complete the set task.
4. Very good energetic teaching was seen in a lesson in mathematics for pupils in Year 6. Here pupils were studying the relationships between vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages. They developed a good understanding of the strategies to use to calculate 121% of £800, for example, and most were quick and accurate. When the teacher asked searching questions to assess their levels of understanding, however, very few felt confident enough to offer answers and few hands were raised. It was clear that many found difficulty in explaining their thought processes. Strangely, though most could complete relatively complex calculations, they were not confident in their knowledge of basic multiplication tables. Such gaps in the skills normally expected of pupils in Year 6 impeded the rate of their learning.
5. Very good teaching of skills in information and communication technology was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 5. Here the graduate trainee teacher demonstrated exceptionally advanced knowledge of the subject. This knowledge enabled the teacher to guide pupils confidently as they learned to search the Internet efficiently for specific information, in this case for endangered species. The good equipment in the computer suite also supported teaching and learning well.

Computers and associated equipment are also used well to present lessons in literacy where carefully prepared visual displays help to capture pupils' interest. Pupils' skills are developing well and standards are beginning to rise rapidly but such high quality teaching has not been sustained over a long enough period to have had substantial impact on raising standards across the school.

6. Very good teaching was seen in a science lesson for pupils in Year 6. Here pupils were studying air resistance by testing and comparing the performance of parachutes made from net, plastic and silk. The teacher asked good questions that challenged pupils' thinking. It was evident that a large proportion of the pupils found difficulty in expressing their ideas and were not sure how to explain which parachute was the best. Initially many were prepared to say that the one that fell the fastest was the best. They co-operated well with each other in the practical experiment but it was evident that they are not confident in conducting investigations without adult help and guidance. This impeded their rate of learning, which was not commensurate with the quality of the teaching.

7. In order to help pupils who have fallen behind in literacy the school uses the 'Additional Literacy Scheme' and 'Early Literacy Support' and, for pupils in Year 5, is trialling a new national initiative, 'Further Literacy Support', which is designed to help borderline pupils to attain the nationally expected standard in reading and writing by the end of Year 6. 'Booster classes' have also been introduced for pupils in Year 6 to help them to attain the national standard in literacy, numeracy and science. Coupled with this the school has introduced the 'Springboard' initiative to help selected pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 to attain the nationally expected standard in mathematics. Nevertheless, intensive work with last year's groups of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 ensured that the school's performance, as measured by the national tests, was generally well above national averages when compared with all schools. The school's performance this year is likely to decline because in both Year 2 and to a greater extent in Year 6 there are higher proportions than usual of pupils who experience difficulties with learning and are unlikely to attain the standards that pupils in these year groups have attained in previous years. This is confirmed by national test results, which show that when they were in Year 2 the performance of pupils now in Year 6 was well below national averages in reading and mathematics. This contrasts strongly with the prior performance of pupils in Year 5 which, when they were in Year 2 was well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The achievement of pupils now in Year 2 is satisfactory but, coupled with the high proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties, there is evidence that they did not achieve as well as they should have done in the reception class and in Year 1. As a direct result of significant improvements in the quality of teaching, standards are beginning to rise across the school.

Teaching for the children in the reception year is very good; children achieve very well as they rapidly develop advanced communication, language and literacy skills and make rapid progress in their mathematical development.

8. Teaching for children in the reception year is very good. Lessons are planned carefully and in accordance with national guidance on teaching children of this age. The progress of each child is thoroughly assessed and these assessments are used well to guide the next steps in learning. High expectations of children's performance are maintained and children rise enthusiastically to the challenges set. In one lesson, for example, the class were reading 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea' by Judith Kerr. They had a clear understanding that this story could not really happen in everyday life and could therefore be described as a fantasy. Here they demonstrated a well-developed understanding that literature can be classified in different genres. In this well-prepared lesson the teacher had covered selected words in the text, such as the last word in the sentence, 'There was a knock on the...'. The children demonstrated that they could predict the most likely word the author had used and were also able to suggest a range of possible alternatives. They squealed with delight when the word was revealed and their guess was proved correct. They are learning to scan ahead in the text to search for punctuation that might affect the way words are read and one child explained clearly that text in bold capitals meant that it should be spoken in a loud voice. Such strategies are helping the children to develop a keen interest in reading.

9. Role-play is used well in the reception and Year 1 class to develop pupils' writing skills. In one lesson a classroom assistant sat at the well laid 'tea table' with a group of children who started school in January as they played at having tea together and discussed alternative beginnings for the story about a tiger coming to tea. The assistant wrote down all their suggestions, which they shared eagerly with the others during the review session towards the end of the lesson. Many of the children who have been in school since September are able to write their own alternative beginnings such as, 'One foggy day...' . Their writing shows a well developed understanding of punctuation and of the link between letters and the sounds they represent. When writing many mouth the sounds that the letters make as they build words letter by letter with increasingly accurate spelling. The children talk confidently about their work, explaining for example, how they had soaked broad bean seeds, which had 'drunked up the water'. They explained clearly that the seeds first sent down roots before sending up shoots. The children have also made rapid progress in developing early numeracy skills and are already able to count well beyond twenty accurately. They take a great interest in the date and knew that 30th April was the last day in the month, though many were unsure of the name of the next month. They compare the number of children who are having packed lunches with the number who are having school dinners and calculate the difference. They confidently use computer programs designed to consolidate counting skills. Children learn rapidly and achieve very well. They develop very good foundations on which to build future learning. Many have already met the Early Learning Goals specified in national guidance and most are well on course to do so before the end of the reception year.

The headteacher and her deputy provide strong, energetic leadership and are rapidly making improvements in many areas of the school.

10. The school is ably led by the headteacher and her deputy, as well as the co-ordinator responsible for assisting to improve provision in the reception, Year 1 and 2 classes. Together the senior management team strives hard to improve standards across the school. The headteacher and her deputy both monitor teaching systematically by observing lessons. They offer teachers helpful feedback with suggestions about how to improve their teaching and enhance pupils' learning. They have succeeded in creating a good degree of consistency in the quality of teaching. All teachers, for example, begin lessons with clear explanations of what it is planned that pupils will learn during the lesson. Towards the end of each session the pupils are gathered together to discuss whether they feel that they have succeeded in achieving their learning goals. From the reception class onwards pupils are used to assisting with an assessment of their degree of success by giving a thumbs up sign if they are confident that they have grasped a skill or an idea. They hold their thumbs sideways if they are not entirely convinced that they understand and give the thumbs down sign if they are confused and need extra help. Teachers routinely ask searching questions to assess levels of understanding and mark pupils' work according to an agreed system that is commonly understood by pupils. Good teamwork has been developed between teachers and support staff. Teachers and classroom assistants receive good support in improving their skills and the quality of teaching has improved significantly.
11. There is an urgency about improving standards but the headteacher and her deputy complement each other well as they maintain an active approach to school developments. New initiatives are considered carefully and all implications are thought through. The senior management team have developed a wide range of policies for the agreement of staff and the approval of the governing body. These give good guidance and help to maintain clear educational direction. The school is orderly with attractive displays of pupils' work. It has been well decorated with the help of much voluntary assistance. The day-to-day office routines run smoothly and efficiently. Resources are used effectively and a good programme of renewal has been established. School procedures are followed consistently and are commonly understood. There have been significant improvements in pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work. Good relationships have been developed between all associated with the school and there is a shared commitment to improve standards. The school's clear vision is expressed well in its excellent and very helpful prospectus. The head and deputy have managed a period of exceptional change extremely well. The school is now in a very good position to make continued advances.

The school has established a systematic approach to raising standards, is described well in its detailed school improvement plan where appropriate priorities are set.

12. The school has produced a very good improvement plan that promotes a systematic approach to developments. The plan is highly detailed and a clear rationale has been established for each area for improvement. Targets for improvement are clearly described. Each target has a detailed list of the action that must be taken to achieve it. The personnel responsible for leading, monitoring and reporting on the success of the action are identified. A realistic timetable for completing the action has been devised. The required resources and finance have been calculated. The expected outcomes of each initiative are described, as, for example, 'Children will have a better understanding and knowledge of science through a Programme of Study that concentrates more on investigative work'. The success criteria are described with precision: 'In practical science lessons it will be possible to see groups of children working collaboratively on an investigation and reaching an informed conclusion'. The method of assessing the impact of the initiative is equally precise; in this case the evaluation will be made by considering such aspects as the results of national tests and Teachers' Assessments, the quality of work on display, monitoring of planning, discussions with staff and lesson observations. Finally, a report on the success of the initiative will be submitted by the governors' curriculum committee to the full governing body.
13. There are many sections in the plan covering such areas as teaching and learning, the curriculum, special educational needs, financial management, improvements to buildings and grounds, pupils' welfare and links with parents and the wider community. Priorities are appropriate and the timescales are achievable. The governing body has ensured that finances are available to pay for all proposed improvements. The document represents a powerful management tool that provides an excellent framework for improvement.

The school carefully analyses the performance of each pupil and sets appropriate targets for improvement.

14. From their earliest days in school, pupils' stages of development are recorded and progress is analysed. Pupils who join the school at times other than the normal start in the reception class are rapidly and thoroughly assessed on entry to the school to determine their particular learning requirements. Pupils with English as an additional language, for example, were assessed very soon after they had settled in and appropriate levels of support were initiated. Such assessment is a continuous process for all pupils. The results of the analyses are used to inform teachers' planning for the next steps in pupils' learning. They are also used to set targets for individual pupils. These targets are tailored to each pupil's learning needs and are shared with them to ensure that they are well understood. These short-term targets, such as, 'I know how to count in twos', or 'I can read and plot coordinates in all four quadrants', are set out clearly in each pupil's individual target booklet. They are checked regularly by teachers who record the date that the target has been reached. This helps pupils gain a good understanding of the progress they are making. It also gives an impetus to learning and helps to ensure that pupils are achieving as well as they might.
15. The pupils' individual targets are analysed and the data used to determine whether a particular group of pupils or a particular class are meeting the targets that have been set, based on reasonable expectations of achievement. These help to determine whether the school is on course to achieve its targets for each year group. The school has set itself the ambitious target of assisting most pupils to maintain two thirds of a National Curriculum level each year, whereas the national expectation for each year is on average half a level. Most pupils, for example, are expected to reach Level 2 by the end of Year 2 and Level 4 by the end of Year 6. The school is, however, aiming for most pupils to attain Level 5 by the end of Year 6. Given that attainment on entry is generally above average, this target is achievable by most year groups. As from next year the school is on course to achieve its targets in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science as well as in information and communication technology.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Teachers' understanding of the standards expected within the National Curriculum for pupils of different ages, particularly in the non-core subjects.

16. All teachers are new to the school. The headteacher and senior staff have a good understanding of the standards expected within the National Curriculum and strive hard to help pupils to achieve such standards. The headteacher has particular expertise in English and science and co-ordinates developments in these subjects across the school. The deputy headteacher has specialist expertise in mathematics. However, a significant number of teachers lack a depth of knowledge and have limited experience of the quality of work expected when following the Programmes of Study detailed in the statutory primary school curriculum, particularly in the non-core subjects. The school has recognised this and a great deal has been done to develop an understanding of breadth and quality of work expected of pupils in English, mathematics and science. One strategy, for example, involves the headteacher in teaching exemplary lessons in science that are observed by a less experienced colleague. This helps to set an appropriate standard. The school has received a good measure of support from advisers and consultants in literacy and mathematics and this has helped to raise expectations of the standards required in these areas of the curriculum. A good number of teachers have well-developed skills and a good understanding of requirements in information and communication technology. These they share with colleagues, and the graduate trainee, who is highly skilled in this area of the curriculum, teaches skills lessons each week to most classes. As a result standards in information and communication technology are rising rapidly. In most of the other subjects there are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of the standards required and the quality of work that these pupils could and should produce. This is of particular concern as the key issue in the last inspection report charged the school with improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' attainment in the non-core subjects. The school has now addressed the issue but prior to the appointment of the new headteacher the governing body had not succeeded in making much progress on this front. There is still a substantial amount of work to do to develop an understanding among all teachers of the standards that should be expected of pupils, many of whom are capable of attaining high standards in each area of the curriculum.
17. The school has made a degree of progress on the key issue for action described in the last inspection report. Good planning frameworks have recently been introduced to guide teachers' planning and to promote full coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. These are used by all teachers but do not always lead to work that is of a high enough standard. In one lesson in art and design for pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, the detail described in the planning framework was not fully included in the content of the lesson. The teacher's expectations of pupils' performance were not high enough because the quality of work described in the guidance had been diluted. Although this lesson had sufficient strengths that outweighed the weaknesses and was judged to be satisfactory overall, the activity was better suited to younger pupils and the quality of work produced by many pupils was not as high as it should have been. A study of the work produced in art and design across the school confirms that standards are not as high as they should be. The scrutiny of pupils' work also showed that standards attained in design and technology are not as high as they should be. This is partly because teacher's expectations of the quality of work to be produced are not high enough and partly because there are clear gaps in the cumulative development of skills, knowledge and understanding that limit achievement. This is because the planning framework, designed to build skills progressively, has only recently been introduced and has not yet had sufficient impact on improving continuity in learning and the standards that pupils attain. This is of particular concern because art and design and design and technology were specifically referred to in the last inspection report as areas for improvement.
18. Another area for improvement that has not been fully addressed is the need for improving the quality and use of resources to support teaching and learning in the non-core subjects. Resources for developing information and communication technology have improved significantly and the good computer suite is used well. Resources for music are adequate and this is an improving area of the curriculum. The school has a good orchestra and the recorder groups are

developing well. Resources in the other non-core subjects are still limited in quantity and quality. The school has begun to address the aspect of the key issue from the last report concerning the consistent teaching of investigation and research in the non-core subjects. In a history lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils were becoming skilled at deducing aspects of Henry VIII's character based on evidence derived from Holbein's portrait of the monarch. In Years 5 and 6 pupils conduct good research into mountainous areas and use the Internet to get information on the route they could take and the costs of travelling to such areas. The school has identified the improvement of standards and the quality of work produced in the non-core subjects as an area for development but accepts that it is not possible to improve standards on all fronts at the same time. The school improvement plan contains details of how each subject will be tackled in turn in order to raise standards of attainment in a measured way.

Pupils, especially lower-attaining pupils, are not always given enough time and support to complete units of work and tasks remain unfinished.

19. In exercise books and worksheets there are examples of unfinished work. Often the initial stages of the work have been recorded well but the latter stages, such as recording the results of experiments or completing tables of numerical data and drawing conclusions, remain incomplete. There are instances where the teacher has carefully marked work and has urged pupils by written requests to complete tasks fully. Despite such requests work remains unfinished. The unfinished work is mainly among that of lower-attaining pupils. Most grasp the principles of the aspects of learning that are taught but their recording of the vital conclusions are not recorded. This indicates that the recording of activities is not always used effectively to consolidate learning. It also does little to reinforce the message that once started an activity should be completed and brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Invariably the higher-attaining pupils complete their tasks satisfactorily. This indicates that lower-attaining pupils are not always given sufficient support, or the extra time they may require, to experience the same degree of success as their peers. Support for slower learners has been reorganised and improved so that they are not now taken out of the classroom for extra help. This ensures that they are now included in the same learning as the other pupils in the class and that the pattern of their achievement is less fragmented. When they are supported by classroom assistants they perform well but when they are working independently they are not always able to complete the tasks that have been set. The unfinished work shows that learning for the lower-attaining pupils in particular is not always as effective as it should be.

Pupils do not always set out their assignments neatly and tidily and this limits the quality of the final pieces of work produced.

20. Pupils do not always set out their work neatly. Teachers do not always insist on the production of carefully crafted work or on high standards of presentation. There is an unevenness about the teachers' approaches to the quality of work that pupils produce. On occasions several readily accept work that is not neatly produced whilst others strive hard to develop pupils' ability to present work clearly and carefully. In a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils were painstakingly shown how the neat presentation of work, with one digit placed in each section of the squared paper, helped to promote accurate working. In this class pupils' poems were written out carefully and presented in a well made class anthology. In other classes teachers do not always model good presentation when writing on the board or on signs and notices and so do not set a good example for pupils to follow. Several teachers use published worksheets that, besides presenting little challenge to many pupils, do little to advance the quality of the production of work. Handwriting is taught systematically and most pupils develop a clear, flowing joined style. However, the neat work in handwriting books does not always transfer to other written work, which is often not so neatly formed. A consistent approach to layout, spacing, underlining and other features of clear presentation has not been fully developed. Where assignments are not well presented it detracts from the quality of pupils' work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

1. Improve teachers' depth of understanding of the quality of work that pupils should produce in the non-core subjects of the National Curriculum by:
 - providing teachers with examples that represent high quality work by pupils of different ages;
 - supporting teachers in developing high expectations of pupils' performance;
 - developing a greater understanding of the standards that pupils are expected to attain. * (paragraphs 16,17,18)

2. Ensure that all pupils are given enough time and support to finish their work successfully. (paragraph 19)

3. Teach pupils how to present their work well and promote greater consistency in teachers' expectations of high quality presentation. (paragraph 20)

* The school has already identified these as areas for further improvement and they feature in the current school improvement plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 21 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 17 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 0 | 9 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0 | 43 | 48 | 10 | 0 | 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 these percentages as each lesson represents more than four percentage points.

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) | | 135 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | | 8 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | | 3 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | | 32 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 6 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 4 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 5.5 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|---|
| School data | 0 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.6 |
|---------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 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 (Year 2)

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2001 | 10 | 5 | 15 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|----------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | * | * | * |
| | Total | 13 | 14 | 14 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 87 (82) | 93 (100) | 93 (100) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | * | * | * |
| | Total | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 93 (100) | 93 (100) | 93 (95) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

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

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | 2001 | 12 | 7 | 19 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | * | * | * |
| | Total | 17 | 17 | 18 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 89 (72) | 89 (78) | 95 (100) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | * | * | * |
| | Total | 15 | 17 | 17 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 79 (61) | 89 (67) | 89 (100) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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

* Numbers are not published when the total in the group is fewer than ten pupils.

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 | 0 |
| White | 134 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 6.4 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 21.1 |
| Average class size | 27 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 7 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 135 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|--|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | |
| Total number of education support staff | |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 10 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 11 |
| | |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

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.

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 2000-2001 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 334 888 |
| Total expenditure | 317 169 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2349 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 17 251 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 34 865 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 130 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 80 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 50 | 42 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 46 | 46 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 44 | 45 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 29 | 48 | 19 | 4 | 1 |
| The teaching is good. | 54 | 40 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 41 | 45 | 10 | 4 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 52 | 38 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 62 | 36 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 40 | 48 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 45 | 42 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 42 | 49 | 4 | 0 | 5 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 34 | 51 | 10 | 1 | 4 |

Other issues raised by parents

Parents give the school strong support and feel that there have been great improvements in literacy and numeracy.