

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **VALLEY INFANT SCHOOL**

Solihull, West Midlands

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104052

Headteacher: Mrs H Chapman

Reporting inspector: Mrs EMD Mackie  
OIN: 23482

Dates of inspection: 24 - 26 September 2001

Inspection number: 194930

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fallowfield Road Solihull West Midlands
Postcode:	B92 9HQ
Telephone number:	0121 743 3175
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pamela Page
Date of previous inspection:	7 May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Valley Infant School is located in a well established residential area of Solihull which includes owner-occupied, privately rented and public housing. There is a high level of employment because of the close proximity of the airport, a car factory and shopping centres, and most parents are employed in skilled or unskilled work. About one sixth of the pupils come from outside the immediate locality of the school, mostly from Birmingham. There are 233 pupils on roll, 120 of whom are in the Foundation Stage for children under six. Of these, 60 attend the nursery part-time. There is a broad range of attainment when children enter the nursery but overall, attainment is average. Nearly six per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority groups. A very small percentage of pupils speak English as an additional language. Nineteen per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is below the national average and includes the designated provision for two pupils who have statements of special educational need.

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

This is a very good school where pupils achieve very well. Most pupils attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2. This is because teaching is of a high quality, the curriculum is broad, relevant and stimulating and the management is very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and she is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other key staff. Everyone in the school, both pupils and staff, is valued and a high level of social inclusion is evident in all aspects of school life. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve very well and most pupils attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Teaching and learning are of high quality. Pupils set targets for their own improvement and are guided sensitively and skilfully by the teachers and other classroom staff.
- Provision for the children in the nursery and reception classes is of high quality. They get a very good start to school life.
- The curriculum is relevant and stimulating. It takes into account the age and developmental needs of the pupils and is organised very effectively.
- The headteacher gives excellent educational direction for the school and the governors manage the school and serve the pupils very well.

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

- No significant weaknesses were identified.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in May 1997, when no key issues were identified. Within the report, a few areas were identified for the school to consider for improvement:

- the further development of teachers' confidence in teaching music and religious education;
- the development of more investigative work in mathematics; and
- increasing opportunities for pupils to choose the materials with which they work.

The school has responded well to these suggestions and improvement has been good. Strengths have been maintained or improved and relative weaknesses have been dealt with effectively. Specialist support has been established for religious education, so that pupils are taught by a specialist teacher and class teachers work alongside to extend and enrich their expertise. In music, the school has used local authority advice. There has been effective staff training and the establishment of clear guidelines for teachers. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that pupils' attainment has risen in both subjects. The school's emphasis on personal and social education has ensured that pupils have ample opportunities to make decisions about organising their work and choosing appropriate materials to work with.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
reading	A*	A	A*	A*	very high A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	A	A	A*	A*	
mathematics	A	B	A*	A*	

In 2000, Valley Infant School's performance was in the highest five per cent of schools nationally. Results for 2001 were not as high as 2000, but pupils did very well based on predictions from regular assessments during their time in school. Comparative figures for 2001 are not yet available. From pupils' work seen and lessons observed during the inspection, it is clear that the consistently high standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above those expected of Year 2 pupils at this early stage of the school year. Thorough teaching of the basic skills and the development of pupils' awareness of their progress are at the heart of the school's success. High achievement in reading and writing is based on the early emphasis on speaking and listening, so that children become competent in expressing their ideas and sharing their thoughts. Children are encouraged to enjoy books and soon think of themselves as authors. This is supported by the rigorous teaching of letter sounds. In mathematics, the school provides relevant experiences for pupils to practise the numerical skills which are developed very effectively in sharp sessions of mental arithmetic. In the pupils' work seen in English, particular strengths are in the high quality of the handwriting, the good levels of spelling and the well-organised pieces of writing. In mathematics, pupils record their work very well and show very good levels of understanding of numbers, shapes and measurement. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are used and practised effectively in other subjects. They use information and communication technology (ICT) increasingly as a tool for learning and achieve good standards for their age. In other subjects, including religious education, scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that they achieve well.

Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well because of the very high quality of the teaching. In the nursery, children make good progress in all six recommended areas of learning and most achieve standards appropriate for their age by the time they join the reception class. Here, children make further good progress and exceed the nationally agreed early learning goals by the time they join Year 1.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. This is because teachers manage the pupils very well and encourage them to reflect on their behaviour and take responsibility for it. There are a few younger pupils who find it difficult to keep the classroom rules without sensitive support from adults. As they grow older, all pupils gradually learn to make appropriate decisions and account for what they do.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. From the earliest days in the nursery, children learn to plan their time and organise their activities. They show consideration for other people and are becoming good young citizens. Relationships are very good throughout the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school's statistics are adversely affected by some parents' decision to take their children on holiday in school time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The high quality of the teaching is a strength of the school. During the inspection, almost all of the teaching was judged to be good or better. Six of the twenty-three lessons observed were judged to be excellent and ten were very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. All of the teaching in the nursery and reception classes was either excellent or very good. Throughout the school, teachers have very good levels of subject knowledge, plan their lessons meticulously and take into account what pupils already know and can do. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from teachers' detailed planning to address their particular needs. Those who speak English as an additional language are supported well. Teachers' management of pupils is very good and they are enthusiastic, encouraging and rewarding so that the pupils want to please them. Teachers show respect for pupils' ideas, listen to them and engage with them thoughtfully in order to draw out their thoughts and guide their understanding. Thorough teaching of reading, writing and mathematics ensures that pupils regularly reach high standards. The staff have introduced the literacy and daily mathematics lessons very effectively. Most lessons move at a brisk pace, so that pupils maintain their interest. They work productively, enjoy what they do and build systematically on their earlier learning. All teaching and non-teaching staff adopt the school's aims with enthusiasm and commitment.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum fulfils statutory requirements. It is broad, balanced and stimulating so that pupils want to learn. The school uses a rich variety of experiences, including visits and visitors, to bring life to pupils' learning. At the same time, it ensures that the basic skills are taught and practised very effectively. Extra-curricular activities are appropriate for the age group and educational visits bring relevance to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good because of the high level of expertise in the school. When necessary, the advice of outside agencies is sought and closely followed. Parents value the high level of support given to their children.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The few pupils who need support make good progress because of the school's inclusive approach and sensitive management.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school provides regular, challenging opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative. Pupils evaluate their own performance, set targets and strive hard to reach them. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and provision is good for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The governors ensure that there are very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED



<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The head teacher is an outstanding role model who sets challenging goals for herself, the staff and the pupils. The deputy headteacher and other key staff fulfil their roles in a highly effective and supportive way.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and manage the school very effectively and efficiently. They work closely in partnership with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. All areas of school life are reviewed and evaluated so that appropriate priorities can be identified for development. This clear-thinking approach helps the school to keep focused on what really benefits the pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funding for specific purposes, such as special educational needs, is used appropriately. Governors ensure that the school gets 'best value' for the money it spends and that expenditure is evaluated against the benefits it brings to the pupils' achievement and welfare.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed and works closely with parents.</li> <li>• Their children like school, are making good progress and are expected to work hard and achieve of their best.</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• Their children behave well and the school helps the children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About a fifth of the 75 parents who responded to the questionnaire do not consider that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors fully agree with the positive comments of the parents, whose high expectations of the school impact well on the high standards achieved by their children. However, inspectors consider that the provision of extra-curricular activities is suitable for the age of the children and similar to that seen in other infant schools. Furthermore, the school day is already longer than that recommended nationally and the school provides a wide variety of rich experiences, outside visitors and visits to extend the curriculum.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

**Pupils achieve very well and most pupils attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.**

- The high standards achieved by pupils reflect the school's clear educational direction and commitment to constantly raising standards. Pupils achieve very well because of the very good quality of the teaching and the interesting and relevant curriculum. The school's robust analysis of results in national tests enables the staff to identify areas of relative weakness and deal with them appropriately. By the end of Year 2, evidence of past work and results in national tests show that pupils achieve well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and current pupils are well set to continue this trend. The school has been particularly successful in raising the standard of pupils' writing. Wide-ranging and interesting steps were taken to address the issue. These included:

  - commitment by all staff to high achievement and effective teaching for all pupils;
  - a curriculum for the Foundation Stage which is play-based and which encourages all children to give of their best in all areas of the curriculum without the pressure of writing formally until they are ready to do so;
  - the teaching of writing in small steps, with tight monitoring and setting of targets with pupils;
  - regular opportunities for pupils to read individually and regularly to adults, including parents, so that action can be taken if a problem arises;
  - guided writing sessions during the literacy hour and extended weekly sessions to increase the speed and quantity of pupils' writing;
  - a greater variety of books on a wide range of topics to stimulate pupils' interest in the written word;
  - the introduction of cursive writing in the reception classes and
  - the teaching of spelling in a visual way, linked well to phonics and handwriting.
- A significant number of children enter the nursery with below average language skills. They develop appropriate skills in speaking and listening to contribute confidently in lessons and express their ideas very well by the time they are in Year 2. A love of books is fostered from the earliest days in the nursery and reception classes and pupils are keen to read. Pupils in Year 2 read with very good levels of fluency, understanding and expression for their age. They use their reading skills very effectively to find information in reference books and on CD-ROMs. Parents make a valuable contribution to the school's reading programme by listening to their children read. They are given relevant advice on how to help their children at home. Pupils write very well for a range of purposes. They write interesting stories, with a clear sense of narrative and exciting vocabulary. Teachers bring relevance to pupils' writing by getting them to write and illustrate books for younger children. Pupils show an awareness of the conventions of letter writing and make lists of materials needed for experiments, model-making and cookery. They label diagrams and record their learning very well in other subjects, such as science, geography and history. Their writing is well organised and handwriting is of very good quality. The school introduces joined handwriting in the reception classes, and by the end of Year 2, pupils write legibly and fluently.
- In mathematics, pupils achieve very well. Teachers include relevant practical situations in which pupils can practise the numerical skills learnt in sharp mental arithmetic sessions. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when there was insufficient investigative work. By the end of Year 2, most pupils know the multiplication tables for twos, fives and tens. They use a variety of strategies for adding numbers with two digits. Pupils measure using standard and non-standard units and know the names of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Higher attaining pupils order numbers to one thousand. In the lessons observed, teachers' explanations were clear so that pupils knew what they were expected to do and learn. Throughout the school, pupils work hard and enjoy mathematics and like solving problems and doing puzzles.
- Examination of pupils' recorded work from the end of the previous year shows that teachers provide ample opportunities for pupils to set up investigations and explore their own ideas in science. Pupils have good levels of knowledge about life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Their recorded work is well presented. In other

subjects, including ICT and religious education, pupils' work demonstrates that they achieve levels at least in line with expectations by the end of Year 2. Standards in music and religious education have improved since the last inspection because of the specialist teaching which has been developed, together with training for all teachers.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve well because of the school's strong commitment to inclusion. There is a high level of expertise in the school. The school's co-ordinator for special educational needs provides helpful advice for teachers and makes regular checks on pupils' progress as they work through their well-written individual education plans. These are well written and include targets in mathematics as well as in speaking and listening, reading, writing and personal development. Pupils are very well supported during lessons by nursery nurses and classroom assistants, who are well aware of the individual targets for each pupil. Links with parents are strong and parents appreciate the way the school encourages and challenges their children to do well.

**Teaching and learning are of high quality. Pupils set targets for their own improvement and are guided sensitively and skilfully by the teachers and other classroom staff.**

6. The quality of teaching was good or better in almost all of the 23 lessons seen. It was excellent in six lessons and very good in ten lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This represents very good teaching indeed and is a strength of the school. Examination of teachers' planning and evidence from pupils' previous work show that the high quality of the teaching is the major reason for the high standards achieved by the school. Professional support from nursery nurses and classroom assistants is of a high quality. They plan and work as a team with the teachers and are involved in the teaching of groups of pupils. Their contribution to pupils' learning has positive, beneficial effects.
7. In the nursery and reception classes, teaching was judged to be excellent in three lessons and very good in seven lessons. Throughout the school, teachers work hard and show enthusiasm for their work. They have high expectations, prepare challenging tasks and monitor how pupils are getting on during practical and written activities. Teachers listen well to pupils and respect their ideas. They engage very well with pupils, expect them to account for what they are doing and ask probing questions to elicit pupils' understanding and extend their learning. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils are expected to work hard and complete tasks. Occasionally, when the teacher's explanations are too long, pupils fidget because they want to get on with practical activities. In literacy lessons, teachers expect pupils to produce their best work at all times, and most do. In mathematics, the good pace of the mental arithmetic section of lessons keeps pupils involved and 'on their toes'. At the beginning of lessons, teachers use very effective direct teaching to give clear explanations so that pupils know what they are to do and learn. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good in all classes and this provides an encouraging and stable environment where pupils are prepared to accept challenge and learn from their mistakes.
8. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children are significant features in the high quality of the teaching in the nursery and reception classes. Teaching and non-teaching staff work as a team to plan and implement the interesting curriculum. At the beginning of each session in the nursery, children plan what they will do during the imaginatively organised periods of activity. They choose from a given range of activities and staff record their choices. During the session, the teacher and nursery nurses check and record the children's progress. Even though some children had only been at the nursery for two weeks at the time of the inspection, they already recognised the requirement to account for what they were doing. In small groups, they told each other about experiences in painting, building with blocks, completing puzzles or playing in the home corner. The quality of teaching in these sessions was excellent. This planning and review continues in the reception classes, where children become increasingly responsible and independent because of skilful teaching. Reception children sometimes plan to go to the nursery to use equipment there, and staff follow this up meticulously to ensure that they are benefiting from their choice of activities.
9. In all classes, the teachers' high expectations of good behaviour are reflected in the pupils' positive attitudes to getting on with independent tasks quietly and responsibly. Pupils are managed very well. Teachers ask questions which make pupils think hard. For example, in a history lesson in Year 1, the teacher asked why there were no pictures of bathrooms in a book about Victorian houses. Pupils gave interesting and thoughtful answers, including 'They didn't have any taps upstairs'. Pupils are expected to be reflective, consider alternatives and remember facts so that they build consistently upon previous learning. For example, in a literacy

lesson in Year 2, the teacher challenged the pupils to predict how a story about a lazy farmer might end. A pupil wrote, 'I think the animals will get together and make the farmer work!' The review periods at the end of lessons are used very effectively to help pupils to consolidate what they have learned and extend their understanding. These are significant features which promote pupils' good progress in literacy and numeracy. There are high but realistic expectations of pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are followed well so that pupils build step by step on what they already know and can do. Teachers support pupils who speak English as an additional language very sensitively. They follow the helpful advice given by specialist staff from the local education authority.

10. Because of the very good quality of the teaching in Years 1 and 2, pupils develop an increasingly evaluative approach to their work. The literacy hour has been introduced thoughtfully, bearing in mind the school's successful record in the teaching of reading. Shared reading usually takes place at the beginning of each lesson, when the teachers use enlarged texts very effectively to work with the whole class. The pupils make good gains in their learning as they search for rhyming words or specific punctuation such as question marks or marks to denote speech. The school has retained its practice of hearing pupils read individually two or three times a week, and more for less able readers. Teachers focus on the teaching of writing during activities in the literacy hour, and this leads to work of very good quality from the pupils. Handwriting is taught systematically and meticulously to ensure that pupils form letters correctly and acquire a fluent, cursive style by the end of Year 2. Simple punctuation and grammar are practised regularly and the pupils are told clearly what they should be doing and learning in each lesson. As a result, pupils review their own work and try to improve as a matter of habit.
11. Teachers plan carefully for different groups of pupils and note opportunities for making assessments of pupils' progress. Higher attaining pupils are challenged by suitably demanding tasks. Work is carefully matched to the needs of pupils with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language. Plans set out clearly what pupils are to learn and know. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when objectives for lessons were not always clear. Teachers encourage pupils to use their imagination and to choose materials and explore techniques; for example, when they created autumnal pictures from a range of natural objects. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when pupils were not encouraged to make choices. Literacy and numeracy are developed well throughout the school day.
12. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is of a very good quality. It is very effective in helping pupils to improve the standard of their work. All pupils are encouraged to improve against their previous best and, throughout the school, they become increasingly aware of what they are learning. They evaluate their work and correct mistakes. A pupil was heard to exclaim, 'Oops, I've forgotten a capital letter!' In Year 2, pupils are responsible and mature for their age as they set targets for their own improvement and consider the teachers' marking of their work. Have they achieved the objectives of written exercises, and if so, how well? They discuss their progress openly and sensibly and want to do better and learn more. The school's active approach to involving pupils in their own learning results in confident learners who take their education seriously, within a happy and achieving atmosphere. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils, who have high expectations of themselves; for example, when a pupil wrote, 'I want to read more advanced books.' Appropriate homework is set regularly to reinforce and extend pupils' learning and this has a positive effect on their progress.

**Provision for the children in the nursery and reception classes is of high quality. They get a very good start to school life.**

13. The inspection took place at the beginning of the school year, when most children in the nursery were three-year-olds and the reception children were four years old. Evidence of the quality of the schools' provision for the Foundation Stage of education was gained from current provision in the nursery and from the attainment and personal development of children who had just started the reception and Year 1 classes. Children make good progress throughout this early stage.
14. The school plans very well for this good rate of development. Before children start in the nursery, members of staff visit their homes and create a positive working relationship between home and school. Parents are informed about nursery routines and expectations and are able to give information about their children's needs. Their views are welcomed and valued. During visits to the nursery, parents and carers become more aware of what their children are doing and learning. This has a positive impact on their children's attainment and progress. A significant number of pupils attain at levels below those expected in language. However, they

communicate their wishes, feelings and understanding in their own way, in an open and friendly atmosphere, and move around the space indoors and outdoors without anxiety. They settle into school quickly and are able to share their experiences with adults at home who know what is going on at school. Regular information is given to parents on how their children are getting on, and they are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning.

15. In the reception classes, children adapt quickly to the faster pace of the school day and demonstrate increasing independence. They make choices and give reasons for their decisions and actions. Children observe, explore and discover for themselves, and have a greater span of involvement and perseverance. Staff expect high standards of work and personal behaviour in a challenging environment which fosters confidence, independence, co-operation, tolerance, pride and, above all, the desire to learn. Teachers adopt appropriate methods, groupings and resources to promote the learning of all the children, including those who have special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language.
16. Very good teaching includes the systematic and gradual introduction of letter sounds and skills in numeracy. Staff plan games and activities which include a sense of fun so that children enjoy learning. In literacy lessons in the reception classes, teachers tease out children's thoughts and ideas and encourage them to expand their answers and explain clearly what they mean. For example, during a conversation about autumn, a teacher encouraged the children to talk about shades of colour, texture and the sense of touch. Throughout the day, in both the nursery and reception classes, staff use every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary and to practise counting and ordering. Children follow the stories in books by looking at the illustrations, and by the time they leave the reception class, most read simple books with confidence. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world begins in the nursery with a sense of wonder as they play with water and sand and explore the school grounds. Their early learning in subjects such as science, geography and history develops as they hear stories and look at books about animals, places far away and things that happened before they were born. In the reception classes, this sense of wonder continues as children move towards learning in subjects such as science, geography and history. Children gain confidence in ICT as they work with simple programs on the computer.
17. Teaching and non-teaching staff are committed to the school's practice of providing plenty of physical exercise for the children. The 'Fit to Learn' approach is well demonstrated as staff find times throughout the day for children to bend and stretch in games in order to keep fit and bright. All children in the Foundation Stage have opportunities to use the very good outdoor facilities. As a result, children move confidently and with good levels of control by the time they join Year 1. The imaginative approach to creative development includes art, music, dance and drama. The school has been involved in a project which stresses the importance of allowing children to explore the arts with enthusiasm and free from pressure. After listening to the story, 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', children from both the nursery and the reception classes drew leaves, created a collage, made fruit shapes from dough, and created three-dimensional models of caterpillars emerging from eggs. They made headdresses and created 'butterfly' dances. As a result, the children increased their skills, knowledge and understanding in all the required areas of learning and did so in an enjoyable way. This project is typical of the way the school makes learning fun for the children, whilst ensuring their entitlement to the nationally required curriculum.
18. The Foundation Stage is managed by an excellent leader who inspires staff throughout the school with her enthusiasm, secure knowledge of the needs of young children and ability to organise the curriculum in stimulating ways. All staff in the nursery and reception classes are involved in the planning, so that there is a great degree of consistency. The high level of staff commitment to the school's philosophy for early years' education is the principal reason for the school's success in this aspect of its work.

**The curriculum is relevant and stimulating. It takes into account the age and developmental needs of the pupils and is organised very effectively.**

19. The recommended curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception classes is followed in an imaginative way. It takes into account the school's philosophy of enabling children to become 'active participators in their own learning', as stated in its aims. The recently introduced national curriculum for the Foundation Stage is implemented very well, with careful planning to match the 'stepping stones' of development outlined in the document. The curriculum is planned in response to individual needs. Demanding work is planned for and maintained for each child, appropriate to his or her stage of development. The curriculum recognises the need

to plan sensitively for the teaching and learning of the youngest children. Teachers' planning is clearly informed by effective assessments and records of children's attainment and progress. This is especially notable in the provision for children with special educational needs, who are identified early and supported very well indeed. As the year progresses in the reception class, there are appropriate elements of the programmes of study for older pupils, in order to provide challenge for higher attaining children. As a result of this very good provision, children's confidence and self-esteem develop very well.

20. The school is keen to enable children to be active participants in society and responsible contributors to it. The curriculum for personal development includes a strong commitment to teaching pupils about healthy lifestyles. The school is involved in the 'Fit for Learning' initiative, which emphasises the importance of regular exercise. No matter how bad the weather, pupils are given opportunities to exercise. If lessons are of a sedentary nature, teachers ensure that pupils stand up and do some stretching and deep breathing in order to 'blow the cobwebs away'. Citizenship is taught very effectively. This begins in the nursery and reception classes in 'circle time' when children sit in a circle and take turns to talk about issues such as feeling happy or sad. As the children listen to one another, they learn to become increasingly thoughtful for others and considerate of the views of other people.
21. A good number of visitors is invited to the school to bring life and relevance to the curriculum. In conjunction with a neighbouring high school, a dancer has recently worked with the pupils to create dances of their own. Musicians play for the children and children's authors have been invited to add interest to pupils' reading and writing. In addition, local people come to talk to the pupils about life when they were children, and some bring skills such as embroidery and gardening to enrich work in history, art and science. The local environment is used very effectively to support the curriculum. Work in a variety of subjects is enhanced by the use of the school grounds and visits to the local park and shops. Visits further afield, to museums and interesting sites, extend pupils' awareness of how their learning has relevance to the outside world. These opportunities represent very good provision in an infant school.

**The headteacher gives excellent educational direction for the school and the governors manage the school and serve the pupils very well.**

22. The school benefits from the strong leadership and excellent educational direction given by the headteacher. She encourages all staff to work together as a team and enables them to fulfil their roles with a high level of professionalism. The deputy headteacher plays a major role in decision-making and the organisation and implementation of curricular plans. Governors draw on their own talents and expertise to carry out their duties conscientiously. They visit the school regularly in order to monitor the impact of their decisions on the life of the school. Governors with specific responsibilities fulfil them well. The headteacher and the governing body work together effectively, and the school is managed in a systematic way. The governors' careful and systematic monitoring of all aspects of the school's work ensures that the priorities for development are those which will have the greatest impact on pupils' learning. The management's awareness of the power of regular school evaluation to drive the school forward and maintain high standards is a major strength of the school. Strategic decisions and the annual school development plan are based on this evaluation. Financial implications are included and rigorous evaluation of the impact on pupils' attainment and progress reflects the governors' clear view of their management role. Parents value the work of the school highly and feel that it is well led and managed.

**WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

23. There are no significant areas for improvement. Because of the school's regular and very good evaluation system and effective school development plan, constant review and development ensure that appropriate priorities are managed very effectively.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	10	6	1	0	0	0
Percentage	26	44	26	4	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]*

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	60	173
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	40

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	29	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	25	25
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	51	54	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	100 (98)	100 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	23
	Girls	28	29	28
	Total	52	53	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (96)	98 (94)	94 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	109
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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



## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	

### Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	456,531
Total expenditure	438,470
Expenditure per pupil	2,160
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,603
Balance carried forward to next year	30,664

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	233
Number of questionnaires returned	75

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	79	21	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	32	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	36	5	0	3
The teaching is good.	84	16	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	48	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	21	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	21	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	60	33	5	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	81	19	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	27	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	40	21	1	8