

INSPECTION REPORT

ST DUNSTAN'S R C PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103455

Headteacher: Mrs A L Bell

Reporting inspector: Mrs A M Grainger
20782

Dates of inspection: 29th April – 1st May 2002

Inspection number: 195375

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Drayton Road
King's Heath
Birmingham

Postcode: B14 7LP

Telephone number: 0121 444 1457

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend C Fitzpatrick

Date of previous inspection: 9th – 13th June 1997

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Dunstan's is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school. With 295 boys and girls who are full-time pupils, and a further 41 children who attend the nursery part-time, the school is bigger than many other primary schools. It is situated in King's Heath on the south side of Birmingham, where it serves the Catholic community of St Dunstan's church. Not all pupils live in the immediate area. Some travel from further afield to attend the school. The school welcomes pupils from a variety of backgrounds. Ninety per cent of pupils are Catholic. Twenty per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Nine per cent have English as an additional language, which is higher than in most schools. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

Twelve per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is below the national average. Just less than one per cent have statements of special educational need. Most pupils on the school's special needs register have learning difficulties, although there is a wide range of other special educational needs. Twenty-four per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above average. There is some movement of pupils in and out of the school other than at the usual time of joining or leaving. Last school year this amounted to a turnover of 12 per cent of the school's population, with more pupils joining than leaving. Children normally enter the nursery in the September of the school year in which they will be age four. About 75 per cent of the children who attend the nursery move on to the reception year in the following September. Attainment on entry to the school differs from one year to another reflecting natural variations in year groups. Taking the intake as a whole, this year children's attainment on entry to the nursery was average in relation to the expectations for their age.

The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities programme organised by the local education authority. It has won an achievement award as a result of improvement in standards between 1999 and 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has many significant strengths, particularly in the provision for pupils' personal development and in the quality of pastoral care. Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave very well. Relationships are very good. The pupils now in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science. The standards now in these key subjects are average. Nevertheless, the school has achieved high standards in the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in recent years. There are also signs now of better English and mathematics standards in Year 5. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with many instances of good and better teaching in individual lessons. The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children have a good start in the nursery. They are taught well and are provided with an imaginative and stimulating range of learning opportunities.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they behave very well. They work and play very amicably together and get on very well with the adults in school.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. This increases their confidence and boosts their self-esteem.
- There is good care for pupils' personal wellbeing. As a result, they feel safe and secure at school.
- The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the work of the school and is committed to the pursuit of high standards. She is supported well by the staff team.

What could be improved

- Not enough attention is given to increasing pupils' skills in story writing as they move up through the school. Handwriting is not well enough developed by the end of Year 2.
- While pupils' overall progress in science is satisfactory, work is not carefully enough matched to the full range of pupils' needs particularly those of the higher attaining pupils.
- Teachers do not have enough knowledge and understanding of strategies to meet the specific learning needs of pupils with English as an additional language.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in June 1997. At that time it was found that pupils with potential for higher attainment were not achieving well enough and that better use could be made of assessment data. The standards achieved by pupils with potential for higher attainment are better now in English and mathematics, and the use of assessment data is more effective. Some further work is needed on this in science. The procedures for school development planning have been refined and priorities for improvement are clearer. The procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning are better, and are now good. A good development since the last inspection has been the new library. The quality of both fiction and non-fiction books has improved.

The very good standards of behaviour and relationships found at the last inspection have been maintained. Science standards in Year 6 are better now and are average overall, having been below average in the most recent National Curriculum tests at the last inspection. The standard of pupils' school work in English and mathematics is not as high as that shown by the National Curriculum test results at the last inspection. However, all groups of pupils are making satisfactory progress in these important subjects as they move up through the school. The unsatisfactory teaching found at the last inspection in more than a tenth of lessons has been eradicated. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has been strengthened, and it is now good. All the strengths in the provision for pupils' personal development and in the pastoral care have been maintained and built on further. With the present good teamwork of staff, the school is well placed to achieve further improvement.

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	A	B	A	A
mathematics	C	C	A	A*
science	C	B	C	A

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The above table shows that pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were well above the national average in English and mathematics, and close to the national average in science. Compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was in the top five per cent in mathematics, and well above average in English and science. The trend in the school's results since the last inspection, for all three subjects together, has been much the same as that found nationally. The school is setting appropriate targets for improvement in English and mathematics results and is making satisfactory progress towards them. In Year 6, the evidence of pupils' school work shows that standards now are average in all three of these key subjects. Science standards in Year 6 now, as seen in pupils' school work, are better than the most recent test results at the last inspection. English and mathematics standards, as seen in

pupils' work, are not as high now as the test results at the last inspection. The lower standard of school work now reflects a variation in year groups of pupils resulting, for example, from a significant turnover of pupils in the present Year 6, rather than a change in the quality of the school's provision. All groups of pupils have made satisfactory progress from Year 3 to Year 6. This includes the higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

In Year 2, pupils' school work shows that standards are average in English, mathematics and science. All groups of pupils now in Years 1 and 2 are making satisfactory progress. Not enough evidence was gathered to make judgements on the standards in other subjects in Years 2 and 6. Children in the nursery make good progress and this is built on satisfactorily in the reception year. Most children in the reception year are on course to achieve the standards expected for their age in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical, personal, social and emotional development. A few are likely to exceed the expected standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are well motivated and interested in lessons. They respond particularly well to work that is exciting and challenging. They want to do their best and to achieve well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations of their behaviour in lessons when moving around the school, in the dining hall and at play. They have a very clear understanding of how their actions affect others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. All groups of pupils get on very well together and the school is a well-integrated and harmonious community. Pupils play well together and willingly help each other with their work. They get on well with adults and are very courteous and polite.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is close to the national average.

Pupils' good attitudes and their very good behaviour and relationships all contribute to an environment helpful to learning. The school is an orderly and calm community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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.

Judgements on teaching and learning are made on the evidence of teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books, as well as on lessons seen. Although on this basis the overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory, there is nevertheless a significant amount of good and better teaching in individual lessons. During the inspection, 32 lessons were observed. In more than two-fifths of lessons teaching and learning were good. In a further fifth of lessons seen, teaching and learning were very good and occasionally excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Instances of very good teaching were seen in the nursery, in mathematics in Year 4, in geography in Year 3 and in personal, social and health education in Year 5. An excellent mathematics lesson was observed in Year 5. There are considerably more instances of good and better teaching in individual lessons in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2.

The overall quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics, including the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, is satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6. Teaching and learning in science are

also satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. There are occasions, however, when there is not enough challenge in the work set in science for pupils with potential for higher attainment.

Teachers meet pupils' individual needs satisfactorily in lessons. The small group focused teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, and during these sessions pupils learn well. The learning of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. However, teachers do not have enough understanding of the specific teaching strategies that would enhance their learning. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils well in lessons. This contributes to pupils' positive attitudes and very good behaviour.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All the areas of learning for children in the nursery and reception classes are covered. Particularly imaginative and stimulating activities are provided in the nursery. In addition to the National Curriculum subjects being taught in lessons in Years 1 to 6, there are many activities such as clubs and visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and effective action is taken to help these pupils to make progress. There is good provision for pupils taken out of lessons for teaching in small groups.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. There is appropriate general support for these pupils in lessons. However, there are missed opportunities to enhance their learning. This is because teachers do not have enough knowledge and understanding of the strategies that can give specific help to these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school gives a high priority to pupils' personal development. There is a particularly strong emphasis on the moral and social development of pupils. The values of the Catholic church underpin all that the school does.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. The pastoral care is very good. Good attention is given to ensuring that the school is a safe environment.

The partnership with parents is good. The school works well with parents and provides them with good information. Parents support their children's learning well at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives clear and purposeful leadership. She is committed to giving the best to pupils, academically and personally. The staff team share her vision and purpose.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors are supportive of the school. They have a satisfactory awareness of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, they are largely reliant on the headteacher for gaining information and have only a few means of their own for this.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. A range of strategies is used well, particularly the analysis of data, to check how well pupils are doing and to look at the factors that contribute to this.

The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. All resources are used to support educational priorities. Specific grant money is spent on the purposes for which it is intended. There is good consideration of whether the school is providing the best for pupils and their parents.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of teaching and the progress their children make. • Their children are expected to work hard and are helped to become more mature. • The pastoral care and the attitudes and values the school promotes. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How closely the school works with them and how approachable it is. • The range of activities additional to lessons. • The amount of homework.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. The inspection evidence does not support their negative views. The partnership with parents is good, as is the range of activities additional to lessons. The amount of homework is much the same as in most primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Children have a good start in the nursery. They are taught well and are provided with an imaginative and stimulating range of learning opportunities.

1. The range of learning opportunities for children in the nursery is carefully planned to give them good experience across all the recommended areas of learning for children of this age. There are many exciting and imaginative activities which, together with good teaching, help children to make good progress at this important early stage of their education. Adults in the nursery have high expectations of children and a very clear understanding of how such young children learn. The nursery environment is very pleasant, stimulating and colourful. It is a welcoming place in which children feel comfortable and at ease. Relationships are very good and contribute to children feeling secure and well cared for. Children respond very positively to all that is offered to them and they are keen and confident. As a result, children learn effectively. They develop independence and initiative through choosing activities for themselves from the range provided. The careful records kept by adults ensure that activities are well matched to the full range of children's needs. There is good checking of what activities children do to ensure that they cover all areas of learning at the right level.
2. A high priority is given to the development of children's speaking and listening skills. This year, speaking and listening was a relative area of strength when children entered the nursery. Staff recognise the importance of building these skills further to increase children's confidence as communicators. Discussion among children and talk with adults is also seen as a key means of developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Many interesting opportunities are provided for listening; for instance, to tape-recorded stories. Children respond well to these opportunities, listening attentively and fidgeting very little because they are interested in hearing the story unfold. On one occasion during the inspection, it rained heavily and time was taken for children to listen carefully to the sound of the rain on the flat roof. Instructions are clear and precise and children are able to follow them carefully. As well as opportunities for children to speak to adults on a one-to-one basis or as part of a larger group, interesting 'make believe' situations are provided for children to engage in purposeful talk with each other. This is seen, for example, as children eagerly act out situations in the role-play 'garden'. Such activities really catch their imagination and are helping children to speak in sentences, some of which are complex.
3. There is good attention to the development of children's early reading and writing skills. Care is taken to develop children's skills in using small tools, including pencils. This helps them to gain control in writing their names and simple words such as 'dad' and 'mum'. Quite a few children successfully copy an adult's writing. A few higher attaining children are forming some letters correctly. Pencil control is increased through activities such as following lines carefully with a pencil. Lower attaining children and those with special educational needs, who have less pencil control than others, are helped to develop basic skills in this area through writing over the top of an adult's writing. Activities such as painting circles also help hand-eye co-ordination and develop control of tools. By pegging out clothes on the small rotary clothesline in the role-play garden, children also develop control with their fingers. The small library area in the nursery provides children with many opportunities to enjoy books. Children quickly learn to handle books correctly and understand that the print and pictures communicate meaning. They also do well in learning letter sounds as these are taught carefully and

precisely through focused activities. There are good opportunities for children to practise their early writing.

4. Children are frequently able to work with numbers and gain confidence in counting. They make effective progress in learning to count up to ten and in naming numerals up to ten. Many average and higher attaining children are already writing numbers, although those who are lower attaining or who have special educational needs are unable to do so. Children enjoy activities such as counting the numbers of dots on dominoes and matching them with another domino with the same number of dots. They also match colours. They learn to sequence items. Early awareness of volume and capacity is developed through play in the sand and water trays. Through such activities, they are also introduced to simple mathematical language such as 'full', 'empty', 'little' and 'big'.
5. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developed well. They study plants and animals and taste fruits. Linked to the garden theme, children have planted seeds in jam jars to see if they will grow. Through role-playing in the 'garden', children 'water' the 'plants' to make them grow, so gaining awareness of some of the conditions necessary for plant growth. Children are beginning to understand that some plants will grow into flowers. Through a printing activity, children have learned to name parts of flowers. Good opportunities are provided for children to build and balance with construction bricks. Children use computers well to support their learning. They use and name the mouse. They are developing understanding of Christianity and are starting to gain awareness of the Catholic faith, for instance through stories about Jesus.
6. Children have opportunities to express themselves and to develop creativity through painting and colouring. They have produced pictures of themselves and of flowers, although the lower attaining children and those with special educational needs tend to have less control with these activities and make simple marks only. Activities in the 'garden' also develop imagination as children are helped by adults to sustain 'make believe' situations. In addition to the many activities that develop pencil control, children's wider physical development is well supported through outdoor play. Children often use scissors and stick materials, for example to make worms and frogs. They thread shapes together on a string and use construction toys with increasing control.
7. Adults observe children carefully and give well-timed and effective support. The teacher has good skills, for example, in pointing things out to children and discussing with them what they observe. This was seen as children used magnifying glasses to develop their understanding of flowers. Support staff gave good demonstrations of lines and circles and basic letter formation to help children with pencil control and early writing. All adults are well focused on helping each child to make good progress and they are keenly aware of their individual needs. The last inspection found that the higher attaining children were not challenged enough and this is no longer the case. All the positive features found in the nursery provision at the last inspection have been maintained and built on further. The nursery provides a strong start for teachers to build on when children enter in the reception year and as pupils move up through the school.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they behave very well. They work and play very amicably together and get on well with the adults in the school.

8. Children in the nursery and reception classes settle very quickly into the school routines. They quickly develop good relationships with each other and with the adults

who help them. In the nursery, they make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Through the many opportunities for them to choose activities, they gain confidence and independence, which is an improvement since the last inspection. This is built on well in the reception year, as children take responsibility as monitors; for instance, looking at the activities set out on tables to decide where they need to put out pencils. Children respond well to these early opportunities to take responsibility. In both the nursery and reception classes, children share toys and resources well. They soon move from playing alongside each other on entry to the nursery to working collaboratively, such as when playing with a construction kit in the reception year. They know how to behave when gathered together on the carpet and sustain involvement well. They listen carefully when their teacher or another child is speaking. This was seen as children shared their experiences of travel by different types of transport and responded to the teacher's questions. By the end of the reception year, children are very clear about the significance of collective worship and how to behave at such times. This was seen as children turned to the prayer table and gave their full attention to the prayers led by the teacher at the start of an afternoon session.

9. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have good attitudes to learning. They are well motivated and keen to do their best. Where teaching is very good in lessons, pupils respond with particular enthusiasm and this contributes to their very effective progress in the lessons concerned. Year 3 pupils gave their rapt attention to the teacher during a geography lesson in which they explored different climates throughout the world in a wholeclass session. In this lesson, as in a physical education lesson in the same class, particularly mature attitudes were evident. In the geography lesson, pupils showed a good capacity for independent study. In very good lessons, pupils are confident about asking for clarification of a task to ensure that they get it right. They are also willing to 'have a go' without fear of an answer being wrong, as was seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson. In Year 5, in an excellent mathematics lesson, all pupils worked very hard and responded very well to difficult challenges.
10. Behaviour is very good around the school and in lessons, as it was at the last inspection. Pupils move very sensibly from their classrooms to the hall for physical education or collective worship. They are aware of others as they pass along corridors and up stairs, for instance holding doors open. Although the playground is small and crowded, pupils play together in a good-natured way. They take care not to get in the way of others or to disrupt other play activities. Lunchtime in the dining hall is a very pleasant social occasion. Those children eating sandwiches in classrooms do so very sensibly. In lessons, pupils follow instructions carefully and get on without fuss. In a Year 2 English lesson, pupils were eager to contribute ideas to describe a witch called Mrs Grumpy. They then settled quickly to the task of writing their own descriptions, behaving very well and showing good independence as they looked for words in dictionaries. Pupils take care with the resources and equipment provided to support their learning. In the computer room, for instance, pupils handle the equipment carefully. Pupils feel that positive behaviour is important. They consider that it makes the school a more pleasant place to be and that it creates an environment in which friendship can flourish. No pupil has been excluded from school, either temporarily or permanently, for the last ten years.
11. Pupils get on very well together and share equipment amicably. This was seen in a Year 1 geography lesson as pupils shared books and other resources to help develop understanding of the local environment. Very good relationships ensure that no time is lost, such as when pupils are asked to get into pairs. This was seen in a Year 3 physical education lesson when pupils practised passing and receiving a ball with

hockey sticks. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils worked very well in pairs to prepare a flow chart for instructional writing on getting a breakfast ready. Ideas are shared well when pupils work in pairs on the classroom computers, such as in English lessons. Boys and girls, pupils of all ages and levels of prior attainment mix well. They willingly help each other, especially those with special educational needs. The school is a racially harmonious community. Pupils are friendly, but also very courteous and polite in their relationships with adults. They cheerily greet adults with 'Good morning' as they pass them in the corridor. They appreciate the efforts made on their behalf by teachers and the other adults in school.

12. Pupils' good attitudes and very good behaviour and relationships create a climate helpful to learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and enjoy the opportunities offered to them. They respond very well to the school's high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour. The school is a calm and orderly place. All the strengths found in this area at the last inspection have been maintained.

The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. This increases their confidence and boosts their self-esteem.

13. There is very good provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This area was also a significant strength at the last inspection. The headteacher and staff recognise the importance of helping pupils to grow as individual people. This is at the heart of the school's aims. The school is successful in meeting its stated intentions of preparing pupils for their potential contribution to society and of helping them to live in accordance with their beliefs, while at the same time having respect for the values of others. Pupils' good attitudes and very good behaviour and relationships show that the school's provision is very effective.
14. Strong emphasis is given to the spiritual development of pupils. Much of the school's work in this area is linked to the teachings of the Catholic Church. However, prayers and acts of collective worship are 'open' enough for pupils of all beliefs to play a full part. There are good links with St Dunstan's church and pupils regularly attend Mass and worship with members of the wider community. Both boys and girls have opportunities to be altar servers. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. In 'circle time', when pupils sit together in a circle to discuss and reflect on matters of importance to them, pupils are able to consider their own feelings and attitudes towards others. In a Year 5 'circle time', pupils reflected with great maturity on behaviour and friendship. Pupils take these opportunities to reflect on their feelings seriously, and teachers handle these moments sensitively. Catholic pupils have the opportunity to go on a retreat at the end of Year 6 as they prepare for confirmation.
15. There is a very good emphasis on pupils considering behaviour towards others and how others feel. This is a prominent feature of 'circle time'. Year 5 pupils were seen thinking about how their behaviour affects others, including how sometimes they might make others 'hurt inside'. Pupils are made aware in lessons, and at other times in the school day, of how they need to consider others. All staff are very good role models for behaviour towards others.
16. The very good provision for pupils' social development includes a good range of extra-curricular activities, which allow pupils to work and play together outside lessons. Sporting activities develop team spirit. Residential visits, such as a five day study trip in January in Year 6, result in pupils learning to live, work and play together in an environment very different from school. Pupils take on responsibilities, for instance as

prefects and librarians. In these roles, they help with the smooth running of the school. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 express views and take responsibility through the school council. Pupils know that they are listened to and appreciate this. They say that the responsibilities they are given make them feel important. This was evident recently as the school council successfully put forward a request that girls should be allowed to wear trousers to school. Older pupils have good opportunities to care for younger ones. Pupils feel that they are treated in a 'grown up fashion' and they respond to this well, rising to opportunities to take responsibility.

17. Through activities such as collecting for charities during Lent and sponsoring the education of a pupil in Kenya, pupils gain a wider awareness of the needs of others. Much of the fundraising for good causes is initiated by pupils and is linked to issues that concern them, such as for children in need or animals in distress. Pupils make suggestions for events such as cake sales and colouring competitions and organise these themselves. This contributes very well to pupils' social awareness.
18. Good attention is given to pupils' cultural development. They learn about their own culture in subjects such as geography and history. A significant number of pupils have links with Ireland, including having family members there. The school recognises and celebrates the Irish culture, for instance through activities such as Irish dancing. Some displays, books and musical instruments introduce pupils to other cultures. In religious education lessons, pupils learn about other faiths, including their festivals. This, together with the strong emphasis in the school on living together and respecting the values of others, contributes to the school being a harmonious community.

There is good care for pupils' personal wellbeing. As a result, they feel safe and secure at school.

19. The quality of the school's pastoral care is very good. The headteacher and staff know each pupil well, both academically and personally. They work closely with parents so that, as far as possible, they are aware of any worries or concerns that individual pupils might have. Parents appreciate this. Pupils say that they feel comfortable approaching their teachers if they have any personal concerns. They also value the system of putting topics in a box for discussion during 'circle time'.
20. There are good arrangements for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. All adults in school are aware of who the designated person for child protection is. They all recognise the need to be vigilant and know what to do should any concerns arise. Arrangements for areas such as first aid and medicines in school are clear and well organised. There is good attention to the needs of pupils with specific medical conditions. The school's health and safety policy and procedures for ensuring the safety of the site are much improved since the last inspection. Pupils are well looked after throughout the day, including at lunchtimes and when at play.
21. There is careful checking of pupils' academic progress from the moment they enter the school until they leave in Year 6. The school's assessment systems ensure that any pupil who is not doing as well as anticipated is quickly identified and the reasons why are investigated. If necessary, additional support is provided to help the pupil to catch up. If relevant, the pupil is placed on the special needs register and is given a clear and specific individual education plan with targets against which progress can be measured carefully. The school is sensitive to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified quickly and the school provides support, particularly in teaching in small groups withdrawn from class. All pupils have targets and they are aware of what they are aiming to achieve. The school is increasing the involvement of

pupils in setting their own targets. Presently, this takes place for writing, and pupils choose their target from a 'target bank' with guidance from their teacher.

22. There is a good system of rewards for pupils' performance in school work, and for other areas such as improvements in attitudes. These include class-based rewards such as stickers. At a whole-school level, there are merit certificates, congratulations assemblies and pupils are identified as stars of the week. Pupils appreciate such recognition of their efforts. They are also kept motivated by written and oral feedback from teachers on their work. All the strengths in the care for pupils found at the last inspection have been maintained and strengthened.

The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the work of the school and is committed to the pursuit of high standards. She is supported well by the staff team.

23. The headteacher gives a clear educational direction for the school, as at the last inspection. This is firmly rooted in ensuring that the school strives to do its best for its pupils, both academically and personally. She is firmly committed to the pursuit of high standards. The headteacher is a strong presence around the school and is well known by the pupils. She also has a good knowledge of each pupil and his or her individual needs. She does much to ensure that the school functions as a calm and orderly community, setting the tone for how staff work together and interact with pupils and parents. She is the main means through which governors gain information, and has their full confidence. The information provided for them is clear and objective.
24. The staff work effectively as a team, with a shared purpose and commitment to supporting pupils to achieve well. At a whole-school level, this is seen in the thorough procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress. There is good teamwork among the staff in areas led by co-ordinators, such as the development of English and mathematics, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Co-ordinators are clear about their areas of responsibility. They are involved in checking the provision in their areas, particularly in English and mathematics. Where there are two classes in a year group, there is good teamwork in ensuring that all pupils have equal access in the learning opportunities provided. The consistent implementation of policies, such as for behaviour, is also a reflection of effective teamwork. The strength of the teamwork in the school was also noted at the last inspection.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Not enough attention is given to increasing pupils' skills in story writing as they move up through the school. Handwriting is not well enough developed by the end of Year 2.

25. Pupils' overall progress in writing is satisfactory as they move up through the school. However, pupils' skills in writing stories and using language expressively are not well enough developed and this prevents standards from being higher. This is an area that is not as good as when the school was last inspected. By Year 2, most pupils write at the length expected for their age and for an appropriate range of purposes. Pupils write some stories; for instance, based on books they have read together as a class such as 'The Rainbow Fish' and 'Suddenly!' about Preston the piglet. A few higher attaining pupils have some imaginative ideas for story endings. Pupils do not, however, have enough experience of writing complete stories that they plan with a beginning, middle and end. They do not have the expected knowledge and understanding of how to

sustain a narrative. Neither do they use language well enough to set a scene, describe a character or to create atmosphere. At this late stage in Year 2, pupils are only just starting to explore how adjectives can paint a picture of a character such as a 'jolly' or 'grumpy' witch. There is too little attention to developing pupils' awareness of the effect their writing might have on the reader.

26. By Year 6, pupils have a good awareness of how to adapt the style of their writing according to its purpose. They meticulously plan writing for specific purposes such as instructions, letters or reports. As in Year 2, a weakness in pupils' writing is in the production of extended stories and the use of language to paint a picture and engage the reader, including evoking feelings. Even in pupils' 'scary stories' there is not enough attention to this aspect of writing. Pupils do not sufficiently draft and redraft writing for use of language.
27. While a few pupils in Year 2 have neat evenly formed handwriting, many others do not. Only in rare instances are pupils starting to join their writing, and this is seldom done neatly. Handwriting standards in Year 2 are poor. A significant number of pupils do not write clearly enough. Although pupils undertake handwriting exercises, often with success, they do not apply the skills practised in other work.

While pupils' overall progress in science is satisfactory, work is not carefully enough matched to the full range of pupils' needs, particularly those of the higher attaining pupils.

28. In the National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2001, the science results were not as high as those in English and mathematics. The overall picture was of performance close to the national average in science, while the English and mathematics results were well above the national average. In English, the percentage of pupils reaching a higher level than that expected of most eleven year olds was above the national average. In mathematics, it was well above the national average. In science, in contrast, it was close to the national average.
29. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in science as they move up through the school, not enough pupils are achieving at a higher level than the average for their age. The work set by teachers gives good coverage of all the areas of study required by the National Curriculum for science. However, there is not enough additional challenge for pupils who have the potential to achieve more highly. In a Year 4 lesson on sound, for instance, all pupils were able to cover the work set and the teacher's objectives were achieved. The highest attaining pupils were required to do more work at a similar level to the rest of the class. They were not given different or additional work that would have developed their knowledge and understanding at a deeper level.
30. The evidence of the work seen in pupils' books is that additional support is often provided for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to ensure that they cover all the work that others pupils do. However, the work and support is not well enough varied to meet other pupils' needs. Even in a good Year 5 lesson in which the teacher continually assessed pupils and provided advice to them based on her assessments, the greatest variation in the work set was for the lower attaining pupils.

Teachers do not have enough knowledge and understanding of strategies to meet the specific learning needs of pupils with English as an additional language.

31. The tracking of pupils through the school indicates that pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils. There are occasions, however,

when these pupils may be prevented from achieving more highly. This is evident when teachers' lack of knowledge and understanding of the specific strategies that help these pupils to learn prevent them from providing the focused help they need. This is especially in subjects such as mathematics where there is particular language that the pupils need to understand to do the work. Teachers do not, for instance, prepare pupils for the lesson by going over the key vocabulary that will be used. At other times, when pictures might be needed to aid understanding they are not used.

32. In Year 2, all the Asian pupils are in the lower group for mathematics. The school has not sufficiently investigated how much this might be linked to pupils' difficulty in understanding specific language. Even where pupils are fluent speakers of English, there is a need for more checking of their understanding of specialist language. The difficulty for the school is that staff have not had training in meeting the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Since the last inspection there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils in the school for whom English is an additional language.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

33. In order to rectify the weaknesses, while maintaining the many strengths of the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
 - a) Improve pupils' skills in story writing as they move up through the school so that they gain better awareness of the structure of stories and the use of language to engage the reader and paint a picture. In Years 1 and 2, progress in handwriting should also be improved so that pupils achieve at least the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 2. (Paragraphs 25-27)
 - b) Match work in science more closely to the range of pupils' needs, in particular providing additional challenge for pupils with potential for higher attainment. (Paragraphs 28-30)
 - c) Increase teachers' knowledge and understanding of strategies to meet the specific learning needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Staff should be trained in this area. (Paragraphs 31, 32)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

32

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	14	12	0	0	0
Percentage	3	15	44	38	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 three 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)	22	295
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	71

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	33

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	31

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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
	2001	19	23	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	17
	Girls	19	20	16
	Total	35	37	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83(95)	88(98)	79(98)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	19
	Girls	20	17	22
	Total	36	34	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86(98)	81(98)	98(100)
	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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	26	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	18
	Girls	26	22	26
	Total	43	39	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96(83)	87(68)	98(83)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	18
	Girls	25	21	26
	Total	42	38	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93(78)	84(71)	98(83)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	7
Pakistani	10
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	205
Any other minority ethnic group	20

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.49
Average class size	22.69

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	116.25

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27.75
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	685,148
Total expenditure	701,860
Expenditure per pupil	2,179
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,900
Balance carried forward to next year	-10,812

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	1
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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

32%

Number of questionnaires sent out

336

Number of questionnaires returned

108

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	33	3	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	39	8	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	43	10	2	6
The teaching is good.	69	27	4	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	47	6	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	29	8	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	31	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	41	37	16	6	1
The school is well led and managed.	56	32	6	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	41	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	30	10	10	12