

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ENGLISH MARTYRS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Litherland, Liverpool

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104931

Headteacher: Mrs P O'Brien

Reporting inspector: Mrs Marina Gough  
22361

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2001

Inspection number: 195643

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 and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Litherland Merseyside
Postcode:	L21 7LX
Telephone number:	0151 928 5601
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Dempster
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
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	
 <b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>11</b>
 <b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>19</b>
 <b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in Litherland, Merseyside, and is a voluntary aided primary school that caters for four hundred and seventy-six pupils, including sixty part-time Nursery pupils. It is larger than average. The school has had Beacon status for the past three years, and two years ago it was awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark in recognition of its commitment to raising the basic skills of the children and their families. There is a high percentage of unemployment, single parent families, and crowded housing in the local area, although the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is decreasing. Currently sixty pupils have free school meals. This represents 13% of the school population and is below the national average. Almost all pupils are of white ethnicity, and no pupil receives additional support for English as an additional language. There are seventy-six pupils on the school's special educational needs register. This represents 17% of the school population and is just below the national average. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs. This represents 0.7% of the school population and is below average. The pupils' attainment when they start school is below average.

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

This is an excellent school that has many significant strengths. By the time they leave school at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average. The quality of teaching is outstanding, and is of a very high standard throughout the school. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those who have special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented, make very good progress from a below average starting point. The pupils' attitudes to work and to school are excellent, and contribute significantly to the quality of life in the school, and to the quality of their learning. The leadership and management of the school are excellent, and there is a shared commitment to school improvement which leads to consistency of approach and a tremendous team spirit amongst the staff. There is no sense of complacency in the school, and the headteacher constantly seeks out ways of improving the quality of education the school provides. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Pupils of all abilities achieve their potential and, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are consistently well above the national average in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Relationships are excellent.
- The school provides a very good curriculum for all pupils. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented is very good.
- The school's partnership with parents is excellent.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent and she enjoys the full support of the staff, Governing Body and parents.

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

- There are no significant weaknesses in any aspect of the school's work and therefore no areas identified for improvement.

*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 four years ago, and received an extremely favourable report. It had no significant areas of weakness, and has fully addressed the three minor areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. The school has made very good progress since that time, and was awarded 'Beacon Status' two years ago. Since the last inspection, the school has implemented a rigorous programme for the monitoring of teaching and learning, and this has been effective in improving the overall quality of education the school provides. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science are generally higher than they were at the time of the last inspection, and the school has successfully maintained high standards in these subjects at the end of Key Stage 2. Good progress has been made in setting up a new computer suite and in purchasing software to support pupils' learning. Teaching, which was good overall at the time of the last inspection, has improved and is now of a consistently very good standard throughout the school. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved and are now excellent, and have a very positive impact on their learning. The school has continued to develop its partnership with parents, and this aspect of its work is now one of the school's strengths. The commitment and energy of the staff, headteacher and Governing Body, together with effective self-evaluation procedures, ensure that the school is very well placed for future development.

## 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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A*	A	B	A
Mathematics	A*	A*	A	A*
Science	A*	A	A	A*

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that on the basis of the end of Key Stage 2 national test results, pupils' attainment in English is above the national average, and pupils' attainment in mathematics and science is well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the pupils' performance is outstanding in mathematics and science, and their results place the school in the top 5% of schools in the comparative sample. In English, the pupils' performance in comparison with similar schools is well above average. Pupils achieve very well in relation to their ability in English, mathematics and science, and the test results over the past four years present a consistent picture of high and often outstanding attainment in relation to the national average. The school's 2001 results paint a very similar picture of the pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science, and reflect the school's commitment to maintaining high standards. The school's targets for both 2000 and 2001 were exceeded in English and mathematics, and are a little conservative. The inspection findings closely reflect the end of key stage test results and indicate that pupils' attainment is well above national expectations in English, mathematics and science.

The end of Key Stage 1 test results in reading, writing and mathematics indicate that pupils' attainment is in line with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the pupils' performance is above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in

writing. The school's 2001 results suggest that pupils' attainment in reading is similar to that of the previous year, whilst standards in writing and mathematics have improved. The inspection findings indicate that pupils' overall attainment in English, mathematics and science is above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. The inspection findings paint a better picture than the 2000 end of key stage test results because of the impact of recent initiatives, and the ongoing improvement in teaching and learning.

The children's attainment when they join the Nursery class is well below the expected level. Although the children make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, most children do not achieve the Early Learning Goals in the mathematical and communication, language and literacy areas of learning, or in terms of their knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Most children achieve the Early Learning Goals in the physical and creative areas of learning and in terms of their personal and social development.

Pupils of all ages achieve their full potential, and the school is very effective in the way in which it identifies and meets the needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils across the full range of ability.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils of all ages have a real thirst for learning, and have very positive attitudes to school and to work. They always try to give of their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Without exception, pupils are polite, kind and helpful. In class, they work very well together and demonstrate very high levels of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Relationships amongst pupils are excellent, and have a very positive impact on their learning and on the quality of life in the school. Pupils have very good independent learning skills, and tackle new learning with high levels of enthusiasm and confidence.
Attendance	Very good. Well above the national average.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Nursery and Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	very good	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 quality of teaching is outstanding, and is of a very high standard throughout the school. During the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was excellent in a high proportion of lessons seen. Teaching is often characterised by a brisk pace which holds the pupils' attention. Teachers have extremely high expectations of what the pupils can and should achieve, and pupils respond positively and try hard to give of their best. Where the teaching is excellent, teachers make exceptionally good use of learning resources to enhance the pupils' learning, and to effectively draw out the main teaching points. Throughout the school, the teaching of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills is very good, and pupils are encouraged to use and practise these skills in their work in other subjects. A good amount of time is given to the teaching of English and mathematics, and



the practice of teaching most Key Stage 2 pupils in ability groups is proving to be most successful. Teachers provide many excellent opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills, and this gives pupils the confidence to tackle new learning, and to approach problem solving tasks with enthusiasm. Pupils throughout the school enjoy learning, and show a very good capacity to absorb and process new information. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented is very good, and the needs of these pupils are fully met.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a broad and well balanced curriculum for pupils of all ages, which successfully promotes their academic, physical, creative and personal development. The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is very good. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities which are popular and well attended.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school makes very good provision for the pupils who have special educational needs, and this enables them to make very good progress and to achieve their full potential.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is successfully promoted through lessons, and through incidental opportunities that arise during the course of the day. The school promotes very positive values and attitudes.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils of all ages receive very good levels of support and guidance enabling them to achieve their very best.

The school's partnership with parents is excellent, and is a significant strength of the school. It has a very good impact on the pupils' learning.

#### **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 headteacher has an excellent overview of the work of the school. She has a very clear vision for the school's continued development which is shared by the staff and governors.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The Governing Body is well informed, knowledgeable and supportive. Statutory requirements are fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The headteacher and Governing Body have an excellent appreciation of the school's strengths and weaknesses through a well established programme of monitoring and evaluation. Very good use is made of the results of standardised tests to measure the extent of pupils' progress and to ensure that high standards are maintained.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school makes excellent use of its resources, and achieves best value for money in terms of its expenditure. Excellent use is made of additional funding to raise standards and to improve the quality of education the school provides. The school gives very good value for money.

**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>• Parents are very pleased with the positive values and attitudes promoted by the school.</li> <li>• Parents appreciate the warm welcome they receive when they visit school.</li> <li>• Those parents who are involved in the 'Parents as Educators' courses speak very highly of the school's commitment to helping them to have a better understanding of their children's learning.</li> <li>• Parents agree that they receive very good levels of information from the school, and that end of year pupil progress reports are of very good quality.</li> <li>• Parents appreciate the way in which the school works with them if their children are experiencing any problems with their behaviour or learning.</li> <li>• Parents are very pleased with the way in which the school enables all children to achieve their full potential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst the vast majority of parents are satisfied with the amount and frequency of homework, some would like more guidance about its completion.</li> </ul>

There are justifiably very high levels of parental satisfaction, and the inspection findings confirm all of the parents' very positive views of the school. The school is keen to provide more guidance about how parents can support their children with homework tasks, and already has plans to address this.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve their potential and, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are consistently well above the national average in English, mathematics and science.**

1. When they start school in the Nursery class, the children's attainment is well below the expected level across all areas of learning. The children make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, despite not attaining the Early Learning Goals in some areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. They benefit from very good teaching, and many very good opportunities to learn through practical and first-hand experiences which bring their learning to life, and capture their interest and attention. The very early identification of children who have special educational needs enables the school to give additional support at an early stage of the children's education, and to start to address problems swiftly.
2. As they move through Key Stage 1, the pupils continue to make very good progress. On the basis of the end of Key Stage 1 national tests and teacher assessments, and the inspection findings, pupils' attainment is above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are very well taught, and from an early age show a real interest in their learning. They have a thirst for knowledge and quickly develop a good memory for what they have learned. In reading and writing especially, many Key Stage 1 pupils benefit from very good support from their parents, many of whom have been involved in 'Parents as Educators' courses which have given them a good understanding of how their children learn.
3. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 show high levels of interest in reading, and quickly become proficient and confident readers. Most pupils make very good use of pictorial cues to help them to gain a real sense of meaning from the text, and almost all pupils use letter sounds to help them to decode unknown words. During literacy sessions, pupils show great enthusiasm for the 'big books' that are shared by the whole class. Pupils respond with excitement to parts of the books they know really well, such as in a Year 2 lesson seen during the inspection where pupils spontaneously joined in with the refrain of 'I want my mummy', in the 'Owl Babies' book. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to read with expression, and to pace their reading in such a way that the atmosphere is heightened.
4. Pupils' writing is often of a very good standard by the end of Key Stage 1, and this is an activity that pupils find pleasurable. Teachers provide many very good opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces, and these are often well structured, imaginative and interesting for the reader. The school has been focusing in recent years on the development of boys' writing, and the most recent end of key stage tests show a distinct improvement in the boys' performance. Teachers put a lot of effort into the marking of pupils' written work, and effectively link their comments to ongoing targets that have been agreed with the pupils. This practice helps pupils to see how they can improve their work further, and contributes to the very good progress pupils of all abilities make in this aspect of their English work.
5. Standards in mathematics are above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and reflect the pupils' confident approach to problem solving. Pupils have good skills of mental agility which they use effectively when carrying out written tasks. Coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study is very good, and pupils have many very good opportunities to carry out practical activities which help them to understand new

mathematical concepts. Basic skills are taught very well, ensuring that pupils have a good grounding which provides a firm basis on which to build in Key Stage 2. Pupils benefit from frequent praise and encouragement from their teachers which helps them to believe in themselves as mathematicians and gives them the confidence to tackle new learning with enthusiasm.

6. In science, pupils' attainment is enhanced by the many very good opportunities for them to carry out practical investigations and experiments which help them to understand such concepts as 'fair-testing' and prediction. Pupils are careful observers who record their findings carefully. Pupils use a variety of recording methods to organise and record their findings. By the end of the key stage, many pupils are working at the higher Level 3 in terms of their investigative skills. Pupils have a secure scientific knowledge which they explain using appropriate scientific vocabulary, and the ability to find things out for themselves using different approaches.
7. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is frequently well above the national average on the basis of the end of Key Stage 2 national tests in English, mathematics and science, and in mathematics, standards are often especially high in relation to the national average. The inspection findings confirm that standards are well above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Slight discrepancies between the inspection findings and the 2000 test results are because the work considered during the inspection was from a different group of pupils.
8. In English, many Key Stage 2 pupils are very skilled in expressing their thoughts on paper, and this enables them to achieve very high standards in writing. Pupils organise their work very well, and make very good use of a wide and rich vocabulary to express their ideas clearly and concisely. Pupils appreciate the need to match their writing to the intended audience, and are equally skilled in writing persuasive accounts as they are in creating an atmosphere of mystery and suspense when writing an adventure story. Pupils present their work neatly, and show a good awareness of the conventions of grammar and spelling. Many pupils enjoy sharing their work with their classmates, and are confident performers when reading aloud or making presentations. Pupils listen well to the contributions of others, and learn how to improve their own work by sharing in the successes of those who find writing particularly easy. By the end of the key stage, the vast majority of pupils are independent readers who have a wide breadth of experience and a real love of reading.
9. In mathematics many pupils have particularly good mental agility skills. This enables them to work at a fast rate when making written calculations, and helps them when they are working under test conditions. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to approach problems from different angles, and this helps them to develop confidence in their ability to solve even the most complex problems. Coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study is very good, and pupils have many very good opportunities to use their mathematical skills in real-life contexts. For example, in a Year 5 lesson seen during the inspection, pupils considered when and where it might be useful to be able to calculate the perimeter of a shape. Pupils quickly suggested that farmers and builders would frequently need this information during the course of their daily work. One of the strengths in mathematics, is the pupils' ability to estimate and to use this information to check whether the answer they have calculated is reasonable. This skill prevents pupils from making careless errors, especially when they are using calculators and may accidentally press the wrong key.
10. In science, Key Stage 2 pupils effectively extend and refine the investigative skills they acquire in Key Stage 1. They have many very good opportunities to carry out

investigations and experiments, and tasks are always very challenging, enabling the highest attainers to achieve beyond the expected outcomes. Pupils enjoy science lessons, and are keen to find things out for themselves and to test their predictions and hypotheses. Pupils have a very secure scientific knowledge which they express using a wide scientific vocabulary. They are keen to follow their own lines of enquiry, and where the best teaching occurs, teachers build this element of discovery into their lessons. Pupils have a very good understanding of the need for 'fair-testing' and for having a control specimen when altering variables.

11. Pupils' attainment across the curriculum is enhanced by the way in which pupils use literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills to support their learning. There are many very good opportunities for pupils to use these basic cross-curricular skills in a wide variety of contexts. For example, computers are frequently used throughout the school as a tool for learning, and some very good examples were seen during the inspection of pupils using computers to support their work in mathematics, science, history and art and design. In science, pupils often use measures and read scales, and use and apply their mathematical skills when recording information in the form of graphs. In a Year 3 science lesson seen during the inspection, pupils used bar charts to represent data they had collected. There are many very good opportunities for pupils to use literacy skills to enhance their learning in other subjects, and teachers are very skilled in the way in which they develop these skills. For example, during the inspection, Year 5 pupils used note-taking skills to record historical information they were collecting from reference materials.
12. Pupils make very good progress from a very low starting point, and achieve commendably high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school at the age of eleven. Pupils' progress and attainment are the result of very good teaching and learning, very good curriculum provision, very good leadership and management, very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented, and very high expectations of what the pupils can and should achieve.

**The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school.**

13. During the inspection the teaching was outstanding. It was excellent in 32% of lessons seen, very good in 43% lessons and good in 25% of lessons.
14. Teaching is often exciting and stimulating, and promotes high levels of interest and motivation from the pupils. Teachers have a very secure subject knowledge which enables them to present information in an extremely confident and enthusiastic manner. Teachers' planning is without exception of a very high standard. It is very detailed and thorough and shows exactly what pupils are expected to learn from week to week and from lesson to lesson. Lessons are planned within year groups to ensure that pupils in different classes cover the same work, although teachers plan their lessons individually. Learning objectives are identified for all lessons, and in many classes these are shared with the pupils so that they know what is expected of them.
15. In the best lessons seen during the inspection, teachers were very effective in the way in which they used learning resources to add interest and excitement to their lessons, and to capture the interest of the pupils. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson where the 'big book' was about owls, the teacher had brought in a selection of photographs charting the first seven weeks of the life of a baby owl. These photographs provided a very stimulating start to the lesson, and provoked many very good questions from the pupils.

16. Throughout the school, one of the main strengths of teaching is the way in which activities are matched to pupils' levels of ability and interest. Introductory discussions are very well balanced and paced, and very good use of open-ended questions enables teachers to extend the highest attaining pupils in their thinking and to support those who need a little more help. Where pupils regularly work together in pairs, in the computer suite, for example, teachers sometimes put lower and higher attaining pupils together, and this is effective in raising the self-esteem of both pupils, and enabling the higher attainers to share their knowledge with those who are not as skilled. In many lessons, following a class introduction, pupils are given different levels of work, which reflect their individual needs. Extension activities ensure that the highest attainers are fully stretched, and very good support for pupils who have special educational needs enables them to achieve their very best. The practice of teaching upper Key Stage 2 pupils in ability groups for English and mathematics is proving to be effective and means that teachers can match work extremely closely to the needs to different groups.
17. In all classes, teachers have very high expectations of the pupils, both in terms of their behaviour, and their academic achievement. Teachers often set very challenging tasks for the pupils, and especially where the activities are open-ended, this enables pupils of all abilities to reach their potential, and allows the highest attaining pupils to be fully extended, sometimes beyond the point expected by the teacher. In the best lessons, teachers are keen for pupils to identify and pursue their own lines of enquiry, and this leads pupils to be creative in their thinking.
18. Teachers make very effective use of agreed whole-school strategies for managing pupils' behaviour, and are very successful in the way in which they reinforce good behaviour through the use of rewards. The very good behaviour in lessons enables activities to run smoothly and at a good pace. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent, and create a very positive learning environment. There are high levels of mutual trust and respect, and pupils appreciate the way in which their ideas, work and achievements are valued and celebrated.
19. Teachers keep very comprehensive records of pupils' progress and attainment across all subjects, and these records are especially detailed for English, mathematics and science. Teachers know the pupils very well, and make frequent ongoing assessments which feed into the next stage of their planning, ensuring that new work systematically builds upon pupils' previous learning. Teachers set challenging but achievable targets for pupils, both on an individual basis, and as a class group. These ongoing targets help pupils to see the next stage of their development, and contribute to the very good progress they make in many aspects of their work. The school makes very good use of 'conferencing' for English and mathematics where individual targets for pupils are identified and shared with pupils and their parents.
20. The quality of pupils' learning is very good, and this contributes to the very good progress they make and the high standards they achieve in their work across the curriculum. One of the most significant features of pupils' learning is the way in which they absorb and process information. This means that lessons proceed at a good rate, as once teachers have given the initial instructions about the tasks, pupils are able to carry on with their work, often with little further intervention or guidance.
21. The school is very successful in the way in which it promotes pupils' independent learning skills, and from a very early age, pupils are encouraged and expected to make choices and decisions about their learning. Pupils of all ages select resources themselves, and often make decisions about how to record their findings, in science for example, or how to organise and carry out research tasks. This is very good

preparation for the Year 6 pupils, and enables them to be confident about their transfer to secondary school.

22. Pupils throughout the school take a great deal of pride in the presentation of their written work, and this is especially noticeable in the upper part of Key Stage 2 where their work is often beautifully presented and organised. Pupils' handwriting is well formed in all classes, and by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils consistently use a joined script in all of their written work which enhances the presentation. Pupils are keen to improve the quality of their work, and pay good attention to their teachers' suggestions for improvement.
23. Teaching in the school is very much a team effort, and there is tremendous sense of collegiality amongst the staff which impacts positively on the ethos of the school. Improvements in the quality of teaching over the past few years have been brought about through a very good programme of monitoring and evaluation, and through the shared commitment of staff to continued school improvement. The outstanding quality of teaching is a strength of the school.

**Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent and are a strength of the school. Relationships are excellent.**

24. Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes to work and enjoy coming to school. They respond very well to their teachers' high expectations, and are enthusiastic and keen in all that they do. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning, and as they move through the school, they become increasingly proficient at organising their work, and making choices and decisions. By the time they leave school, the vast majority of pupils are skilled in producing detailed projects which involve them in extensive research, and which develop their note-taking, drafting and editing skills. This capacity for carrying out personal study prepares the older pupils extremely well for their transfer to secondary education.
25. Pupils have very mature attitudes to work, and are very hardworking and conscientious. They are extremely well motivated and enthusiastic, and there are occasions when they can hardly wait to start work because they are so excited by the proposed activities. Pupils of all ages are very co-operative and generously share ideas and resources. During the inspection there were many examples of pupils learning from one another, such as when Year 5 pupils carried out historical research in groups, and in Year 6 when pupils read their 'found poems' aloud to the rest of the class. Such opportunities are also extremely effective in enabling pupils to enjoy and celebrate the achievements of their classmates, and in promoting pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
26. Pupils show very high levels of concentration and perseverance, and produce very good amounts of work in the allocated time. This is particularly so in the upper part of Key Stage 2 where teachers have extremely high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. There is often a spirit of friendly competition amongst pupils, and this has a positive impact on their learning, and adds a further dimension of excitement to some activities.
27. Relationships amongst pupils of all ages, and between pupils and adults, are excellent and contribute significantly to the overall quality of life in the school. Adults are excellent role models for the pupils, and set very high standards in the way in which they relate to others. Pupils are considerate of the needs of their classmates, and show very high levels of respect for the views of others. Pupils are polite and friendly, and

are keen to share and discuss their work. Pupils throughout the school can be relied upon to work productively in small groups, and in these situations, pupils of all ages show remarkable skills of negotiation as they decide who will lead the group, or who will take on the role of 'scribe'.

28. The pupils' excellent behaviour, and their very positive attitudes to work, have a significant impact on their learning, the standards they achieve, and the overall quality of life in the school.

**The school provides a very good curriculum for all pupils. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented is very good.**

29. The school provides a very good curriculum for pupils of all ages and abilities, and this has a very positive impact on pupils' learning and on the standards they achieve. Whilst maintaining a focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the school continues to offer a broad and well balanced curriculum. All of the other subjects receive an appropriate allocation of time, and this enables pupils who have specific talents, such as in music or art for example, to demonstrate their full potential. Art and design is given a particularly high priority in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and attractive displays of the pupils' work do much to enhance the learning environment, and enable pupils to share in the achievements of their classmates. The statutory curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities, targeted at different groups of pupils.
30. The curriculum for the Nursery and Reception pupils is of very good quality, and reflects the school's commitment to children learning through practical and first-hand experience. Teachers are very skilled at creating an excellent balance between activities that are chosen and carried out by the children, and those where an adult takes the lead and directs the children's learning. Currently, one of the most significant features of the Foundation Stage curriculum is the 'writing through role play' initiative, which is the culmination of a great deal of work and research by the headteacher. This involves children in taking on various roles within the role-play areas, and writing from that perspective. Following a trial period of one year when the Reception children were involved in a pilot research project, the school is now gradually introducing the idea in the lower part of Key Stage 1. During the trial period the results proved to be outstanding and to exceed the expectations of the school. Very young children showed a surprising ability to write in a variety of genres, and demonstrated that they had the capacity to solve real-life problems, such as in the hospital role play area where there was an 'outbreak of measles'. The impact of the 'writing through role play' initiative can now be seen in the early part of Key Stage 1, where pupils approach a variety of writing tasks with a high degree of success and confidence.
31. The school makes very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. Currently sixty-one pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, including three pupils who have statements. The decision for the special educational needs co-ordinator to have no formal class teaching commitment is proving to be most beneficial, and is enabling her to work more closely with pupils who need additional support, and to carry out her co-ordinator duties in an efficient manner. The special educational needs co-ordinator is easily accessible to parents and this ensures that any problems are quickly resolved. She regularly visits classrooms to monitor and support individual pupils, and these informal opportunities for observation, help her to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs are being met and that the pupils are given equal opportunities in their learning. The school has very good procedures which enable the early identification of pupils with special educational



needs. Having identified the pupils, the school makes every effort to help them to overcome their difficulties as soon as possible, with the result that very few pupils in the upper part of Key Stage 2 are still in need of additional support. Classroom assistants are very effective in the way in which they support pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to achieve the targets in their individual education plans, and to take a full and active part in class lessons.

32. The school has a policy which defines the provision for gifted and talented pupils, and has appointed two co-ordinators, one for Key Stage 1 and one for Key Stage 2, to lead this aspect of its work. The school has started to identify individual pupils who may have a particular gift or talent, and makes additional provision for these pupils where it is appropriate. For example, in the case of a talented footballer, the school contacted a local national football club to enable the pupils' talents to be fully extended. Currently a pupil in the upper part of Key Stage 2 has mathematics lessons with the year group above his own so that he can be fully stretched. The school funded two teachers to carry out research into provision for gifted and talented pupils which required them to visit schools in Australia. The information they brought back with them is being used across the school to raise teachers' awareness of the need to meet the specific needs of pupils who are gifted and talented.
33. Through its wide and varied curriculum provision, the school aims to promote pupils' spiritual, personal, physical, emotional and intellectual development, and to help them to achieve their full learning potential. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve the curriculum, and to address the changes brought about by the introduction of Curriculum 2000. The school's aim to provide a broad and well-balanced curriculum for pupils of all ages and abilities is fully met.

**The school's partnership with parents is excellent and is a strength of the school.**

34. Over the past few years, the school's partnership with parents has continued to develop, and is now a significant strength of the school's work. The headteacher and staff very much regard parents as partners in the education of their children, and make great efforts to involve parents as much as possible in the life and work of the school.
35. One of the most significant factors in developing the relationship between home and school has been the introduction of 'Parents as Educators' courses, which have been designed with the specific intention of educating parents about the work in which their children are involved. The current headteacher ran the first literacy course five years ago, when she was the deputy, and this proved to be so popular, that the school now offers a range of literacy and mathematics courses each term. The headteacher is often involved in writing the course material and is responsible for training staff in its delivery. Excellent links with local colleges, and with the local FAST (Families and Schools Together) Centre, have resulted in courses being accredited, enabling some parents to enrol on Further Education Courses. The 'Groundswell Course' was particularly targeted at fathers, and was carried out with the support of a local national football club. After some initial difficulties with recruitment, this course proved to be extremely popular with fathers and their children, and served to involve fathers more in the partnership between home and school.
36. During the inspection, parents who had recently completed a literacy course were presented with their certificates, and this was a very happy occasion. Children of parents who were receiving certificates attended the ceremony, enabling them to share in the achievements of their parents. The parents' success in completing the course

was acknowledged and celebrated, and this demonstrated to parents how much their efforts were recognised and valued by the school.

37. In addition to the courses, the school also tries to involve parents in their children's education in other ways. One of the most successful ventures in the past two years has been the introduction of 'story sacks'. Currently these sacks are available for parents and children from the Nursery and Reception classes and Year 1, although the school hopes to extend the initiative into Year 2 and Key Stage 2 in the near future. The 'story sacks' have been designed to promote family literacy, to help parents to gain a better understanding of the range of different texts their children encounter in school, and to improve the partnership between home and school. The 'story sacks' are allocated to families on a rota basis, and contain a wide variety of items to support the story around which they are based. One of the key items is the diary in which parents and children write their comments about the activities they have carried out, and the resources contained within the sack. The 'story sacks' are proving to be very popular with parents, and are serving to improve the pupils' reading and writing skills in a very enjoyable way.
38. Parents are justifiably very pleased with the standard of education provided by the school, and generously praise the commitment and motivation of the headteacher and staff. Those parents who have been involved in 'Parents as Educators' courses speak very highly of the school's commitment and encouragement, and appreciate the way in which the school involves them as partners in the education of their children. The excellent partnership between home and school is having a very positive impact on the progress the pupils make, and the standards they achieve. A significant number of parents are now more skilled at helping their children with homework tasks, for example, and many have a better understanding of the type of work their children are doing at school.

**The leadership and management of the headteacher are excellent and she enjoys the full support of the staff, Governing Body and parents.**

39. The headteacher has been in post for two terms, but immediately prior to this she was the deputy headteacher and was therefore involved in introducing many senior management decisions and initiatives, such as the Parents as Educators courses, and the 'writing through role-play' research. Her leadership and management are excellent, and are characterised by a very proactive approach which means that the school is at the forefront of many local and national projects. She has created an excellent team spirit in the school, and has a very good appreciation of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses.
40. The headteacher has put together a strong senior management team that meets regularly to discuss policy and to oversee the day to day running of the school. The school currently does not have a deputy headteacher, although this post has recently been advertised. Co-ordinators are in place for all subjects of the curriculum, and for key areas of the school's work, such as assessment and special educational needs. Co-ordinators have a good overview of their areas, and have a very positive impact on the subjects for which they have responsibility. Co-ordinators work closely with colleagues, carrying out demonstration lessons and giving advice and support.
41. The school was granted Beacon status two years ago, and now works closely with other Beacon schools in the area on joint projects. The school also works closely with schools that do not have Beacon status: for example, an ongoing initiative is the development of 'story-sacks' in partner schools. The school's work with outside

agencies, such as FAST, (Families and Schools Together), the Basic Skills Agency and the Qualification and Curriculum Association, is having a very positive impact on standards, and is enabling the staff and headteacher to become involved in national and local research projects, which are helping to maximise pupils' progress.

42. Because of its Beacon status and its sponsorship from outside agencies, the school receives a great deal of additional funding which is used extremely well to raise standards. The money for pupils with special educational needs is well spent to ensure that their needs are fully met. The school's finances are very well managed and carefully monitored to ensure that spending and income are closely aligned. The school is currently holding a large surplus which is in excess of the recommended five per cent, but which has been earmarked for future developments within the school, and to enable the school to maintain the current generous staffing levels for the foreseeable future.
43. The Governing Body plays an important role in school development planning, and is supportive, knowledgeable and very keen for the school to succeed. Governors monitor the school's work closely and effectively fulfil their role of critical friend to the headteacher. The headteacher, staff and Governing Body accurately and sensibly anticipate new educational developments, enabling them to manage change in a calm and well paced manner. The priorities for future development are clearly stated in the School Development Plan, which is of very good quality, and which provides a clear focus for continued development within the school.
44. The school is very effective in the way in which it monitors the quality of education it provides. Very good use is made of assessment information to highlight strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and to inform future curriculum development. The analysis of end of key stage national test results provides useful information about where the school needs to focus its efforts. For example, as a result of identifying the need to improve standards in writing, the school became involved in the 'writing through role-play' research project.
45. The headteacher, staff and Governing Body are committed to providing the best possible education for the pupils in their care, and to creating a stimulating and caring learning environment where the achievement of individual pupils is recognised and celebrated. There is no sense of complacency in the school, and the headteacher actively seeks ways to maintain, and further improve where possible, the many good, very good and excellent features of the school's current provision.

#### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

46. There are no significant weaknesses in any aspect of the school's work, and therefore no identified areas for improvement.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

47. The school should continue with its own plans for further development. The School Development Plan is a comprehensive document which shows clearly what the next stages are in terms of continuing to develop the many areas of good and very good practice evident throughout the school's work. The school's programme of self-evaluation is very reliable, and the headteacher, staff and Governing Body are fully aware of strengths and relative weaknesses in the school's provision.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

28

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

14

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	9	12	7	-	-	-	-
Percentage	32	43	25	-	-	-	-

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)	30	416
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	60

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	76

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	34	29	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	28
	Girls	27	28	26
	Total	55	56	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (91)	89 (96)	86 (93)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	30	29
	Girls	27	27	27
	Total	56	57	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (91)	90 (94)	89 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	29	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	20	19
	Girls	26	27	28
	Total	43	47	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (89)	96 (98)	96 (95)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	19	20
	Girls	26	27	26
	Total	41	46	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (84)	94 (86)	94 (93)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	350
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*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)	19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	29

#### **Education support staff: YR– Year 6**

Total number of education support staff	7.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	235

#### **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	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	893469
Total expenditure	852731
Expenditure per pupil	1961
Balance brought forward from previous year	113869
Balance carried forward to next year	154607

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	476
Number of questionnaires returned	64

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	17	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	22	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	37	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	47	9	0	5
The teaching is good.	83	15	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	39	2	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	24	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	17	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	64	32	2	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	86	12	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	83	15	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	36	8	0	6