

INSPECTION REPORT

BOWDON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bowdon, Altrincham

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106338

Headteacher: Mr N Hoskinson

Reporting inspector: Mrs O M Cooper
10859

Dates of inspection: 14th – 15th January 2002

Inspection number: 196022

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:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grange Road Bowdon Altrincham Cheshire
Postcode:	WA14 3EX
Telephone number:	(0161) 928 8907
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Keith Hine
Date of previous inspection:	14 th – 17 th July 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bowdon Primary is a popular, large, Voluntary Aided, Church of England primary school serving the relatively prosperous area of Bowdon on the outskirts of Altrincham. There are currently 415 full-time pupils on roll, 189 boys and 226 girls. There are more girls than boys because there is a preparatory school for boys in the locality which some choose to attend. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than in most schools, the principal non-English first languages spoken being Urdu, Hindi, Cantonese and Italian. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals and the proportion with special educational needs is below the national average, dyslexia being the most common learning difficulty. Overall attainment on entry is above average, although a wide ability range is represented. Since the previous inspection the school has increased significantly in size and been awarded 'Investors in People' status.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, which has some very good features and provides a good education for its pupils. Overall standards are well above average by the time pupils transfer to secondary school. This is because the school is well led and managed, the teaching is good; pupils are happy and have very good attitudes to school and work. The school is efficient and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently well above average by the end of Year 6.
- The good teaching and learning throughout the school enable most pupils to achieve well.
- The school is well led and managed, with a focus on sustaining standards.
- The very good attitudes, good behaviour and excellent attendance of the pupils help them to maintain good progress.
- The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress are very good.
- The school's close partnership with parents contributes well to the standards pupils achieve.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing by the end of Year 6 to match those in reading.
- A lack of coherence in whole school curriculum planning is holding back development in some subjects.
- The role of curriculum leaders in monitoring the teaching in their subjects is not fully developed.
- The provision for the most able pupils, to enable them to reach their full potential.

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 improvement since the previous inspection in July 1997. Standards and the quality of teaching have been maintained under the new headteacher and the action plan has been successful in remedying the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology has risen from below average at the end of Year 6 to above average, as the computer suite is used effectively for teaching specific skills. The provision for children in the reception classes has improved, with a secure outdoor area created and additional resources provided, although more are needed. No pupils are regularly withdrawn from acts of worship and where they are withdrawn from lessons this is to meet their specific learning needs. The roles of staff and governors are clearly defined in relation to monitoring standards and expenditure. The appraisal of teachers now forms part of the effective performance management procedures within the

school. The school has the capacity to make 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	A	A	B
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

Overall standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are well above average. Children in the reception classes make good progress and, by the end of the year, most achieve and a significant number exceed the Early Learning Goals in language and number, their understanding of the world, and in their physical and personal development. In creative development, standards are lower, but remain above average.

The school's 2001 results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 were very high in reading, writing and mathematics and were in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. They compared well with those of similar schools. Teachers' assessments in science showed standards were well above the national average. Current standards of work in Year 2 are similar, although there is a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs which may affect the results this year.

Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The school had identified standards in writing as an area for further improvement, as pupils' attainment is not as high as in reading. There is evidence of improvement, although some pupils still lack confidence in understanding the purpose of their writing and organising their ideas into interesting stories. Standards of work among the current Year 6 pupils are well above average in English, mathematics and science and are above average in information and communication technology. Standards in music are above average and in singing are well above and a particular strength of the school.

The trend in the results at the end of Year 6 between 1997 and 2001 is broadly in line with the national trend. Standards are high enough, but for the most able pupils could be higher. Whilst the large majority of pupils achieve well, the most able could achieve more if they were sufficiently challenged in all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and most of those with English as an additional language make good progress.

The school sets itself challenging targets in English and mathematics by benchmarking itself against the top five per cent of schools. The school is on course to meet its 2002 targets for the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 4 or higher in English (96 per cent) and in mathematics (95 per cent). The school met its targets for English and mathematics in 2001.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Both in lessons and at playtimes and lunchtimes behaviour is good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils' personal qualities are very well developed. They take initiative and accept responsibility for themselves and others. Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are very good.
Attendance	Very high in comparison with other schools nationally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good overall. The teaching throughout the school meets the learning needs of most pupils well, the exception being the most able pupils who are not sufficiently challenged. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, with the school still working to improve the teaching of skills in writing and to further reduce the use of worksheets. These are hindering the development of pupils' writing skills in many subjects and lead to some lessons not being as interesting as they could be. The teaching of skills in numeracy is good and in reading is a particular strength. Other strengths in the teaching are in the planning, management of pupils, deployment of teaching assistants and the ongoing assessment of pupils' work. Teachers use the assessment information effectively to plan activities to help pupils to deepen their understanding, increase their knowledge and reach their targets. The school's policy of not working towards level 6 is preventing the most able from learning as much as they could. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good; they are well supported in most lessons. In response to the teaching, pupils work hard and at a good pace to complete tasks. They have a good knowledge of their learning and what they need to do to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and the provision includes all required elements. Some French is taught, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances the provision. There is no overview of curricular provision to show the coverage of subjects in each year group and the cross-curricular links. The updating of some schemes of work is unfinished and needs to be completed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good for all pupils, whatever the difficulty. The provision is well managed by the co-ordinator. Pupils' individual education plans are detailed, maintained well and provide challenging targets. Clear records show the good progress made.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are supported well by their class teachers, who check they understand the vocabulary being used in specific lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Christian values are central to the school and there are good opportunities to develop personal and social skills. Pupils are effectively taught right from wrong, and they have a satisfactory range of opportunities to learn about different cultures and traditions. The multi-cultural nature of society is insufficiently promoted through resources and displays.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Child protection procedures are securely in place and there is a satisfactory regard for pupils' health and safety. Several concerns were reported during the inspection. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment are very good and those to monitor their attendance and promote good behaviour are effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides clear direction for the work of the school and is well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior management team and special educational needs co-ordinator. The management roles of curriculum leaders have developed since the previous inspection, but further development is required so they can make a more effective contribution to the school's self-evaluation and review procedures.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors carry out their roles well. There is an effective committee structure, which enables them to carry out their work efficiently. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher and staff monitor the effectiveness of the school very well through thorough analysis of data about individual pupils' progress and comparative information about the performance of schools nationally and locally.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The governors have good systems to oversee the budget and obtain best value for money. Specific grants are used well and in the best interests of the pupils and the standards achieved. Staff are deployed effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The school is well led and managed. • The school expects pupils to work hard. 	<p>A small, but significant, number of parents feel the following could be improved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements for setting homework; and • the information they receive about their child's progress.

The inspection team generally agrees with parents' positive views, but does not support the negative views. The arrangements for setting homework are satisfactory, follow national guidelines and are similar to those found in most schools. Parents are adequately informed about their child's progress through consultation meetings and annual reports. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the reviews of their child's progress and those concerns about the progress of these children, expressed in letters, are not justified. However, concerns expressed about aspects of health and safety, such as the surface of the school playground and play areas are justified. The unsatisfactory playground surface was noted in the local authority's health and safety report of July 2001, but has not yet been remedied.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently well above average by the end of Year 6.

1. Most children receive pre-school education either in nurseries or playgroups and make a good start to their school life in the reception classes, building on their pre-school experiences. The curriculum in the reception classes has been improved in line with recent national guidelines, links well with the early stages of the National Curriculum and enables the children to make good progress, particularly in their language and number skills. Through a wide range of experiences and opportunities to explore and investigate, they acquire knowledge of the world around them, develop their independence in making decisions and learn to work with others. The range of resources has improved since the previous inspection but more are required to further improve the provision. By the end of the year in reception classes, most children achieve and a significant number exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development. A language activity observed showed the children could recognise all letter sounds and were using this knowledge to build words. The most able children could identify the sound of the last letter in given words.
2. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to build systematically on their previous learning experiences, make good progress and achieve well. Consequently, the proportion of pupils exceeding the nationally expected level increases by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's 2001 results of National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 showed the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 in reading, writing, mathematics and science was well above the national average. In reading and mathematics it was in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Current standards of work are similar and remain well above average, when the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is taken into account. The focus on improving standards in writing has been successful and standards at this stage match those in reading at the expected level 2.
3. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001, about 87 per cent of pupils either attained or exceeded the expected national level in English and mathematics and 98 per cent in science. Almost 75 per cent of the pupils exceeded the expected level in English and mathematics, with the proportion in science rising to 87 per cent. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was well above the national average and the average for similar schools in all three subjects. Pupils' performance in English in 2001 was lower than in mathematics and science because standards in writing are not as high as in reading and this is affecting the overall results in the subject. Overall results in reading compensated for the lower results in writing. The higher than usual proportion of pupils with specific learning difficulties in the year group had a slight effect on overall standards in English, but standards in writing could be higher with more interesting lessons. Between Years 2 and 6, the test results for pupils who remained in the school show approximately half the pupils made good progress and achieved well in all three subjects as a result of good teaching and their very positive attitudes to work.
4. By the end of Year 6, pupils have very good speaking and listening skills. Many are articulate in class discussions, use a wide range of vocabulary and display good levels of maturity in their responses. They usually listen attentively to the ideas and opinions of others and to their teachers. Most are fluent, confident readers and they use these skills well to support their work in all other subjects. For example in a Year 6 literacy lesson, when reading the text about capital punishment in America, pupils followed the punctuation and read accurately and fluently. Their responses to questions showed good understanding of what they had read. Pupils write for different purposes, for example when writing letters of complaint about the proposal to build houses on the school playing field, they show their ability to present an argument in text, having developed a bank of useful phrases such as 'on the one hand' or 'one opinion is---'. When writing newspaper articles about a tragedy at sea, most are able to sustain writing as the reporter and produce detailed

reports. Spelling and punctuation are usually accurate and their work is well presented. The weakness is in developing pupils' skills in creative story writing, which is reported on elsewhere in this report.

5. Pupils have very good numeracy skills and by the end of Year 6 are confident when using the four rules of number and applying them to decimals. They can change fractions to decimals, calculate percentages and use their skills well in solving problems. Their mental recall of multiplication facts is very good and they have strategies for solving mental arithmetic problems. Pupils have a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary, such as multiples and factors. They have secure understanding of metric measures and a sound understanding of imperial measures such as pints and gallons. Pupils' abilities to collate data and present it in a range of graphs and tables is a particular strength, for example, they made a conversion graph for exchanging English pounds for South African rands. They can show the progress of a train journey in the form of a line graph and the proportion of boys who walk to school as part of a pie chart. They have a good knowledge of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes, and measure and calculate angles accurately. Good use is made of introductory sessions in lessons to complete mental arithmetic questions, with pupils writing down the answers, to encourage speed and accuracy. The pupils respond well, settling to work quickly, with silence falling across the room as pupils do their best to complete the questions within the time given.
6. In science, pupils have good subject knowledge for their age and are confident in carrying out investigations. For example in Year 5, pupils carried out experiments in small groups to show air has weight. They wrote their hypotheses for what might happen and after checking, could explain clearly what happens when, for example, an empty bottle, or a sponge, is put into a tank of water. They use correct vocabulary in their explanations. The National Curriculum programme of study is covered in depth and pupils acquire a good body of knowledge about life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. However, discussions with Year 6 pupils revealed they have few opportunities to devise their own experiments.
7. Pupils' use their improved skills in information and communication technology well to support their learning and attainment in English, mathematics and science. For instance, Year 6 pupils are currently learning how to use spreadsheets to record financial information and calculate the total cost of a holiday. Final drafts of poems or accounts, or science experiments are typed up on computers to improve the presentation. Pupils search for information to increase their knowledge of science topics, such as the human skeleton.

The good teaching and learning throughout the school enable most pupils to achieve well.

8. The well above average standards attained by the pupils reflect the good overall quality of the teaching. The teaching is never less than satisfactory. Three out of every four lessons are good or better; this includes one that is very good. One out of four lessons is satisfactory. There is good teaching throughout the school and examples of very good teaching in one class in reception, Year 2, Year 3 and in both Year 6 classes. The teaching in literacy and numeracy is good overall and meets the learning needs of all pupils, except the most able. The needs of the most able pupils, some from minority ethnic groups are not always effectively met in lessons, especially in writing and mathematics and this is commented on in detail later in the report.
9. There is little variation in the pace of learning between the year groups. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, with an example of very good teaching and nearly all pupils enter Year 1 working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. The improved planning in the reception classes is supporting the good teaching and the children's learning. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching is good in two out of three lessons, with one example of very good teaching in English. This good teaching enables pupils to maintain the good pace of learning and achieve well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in writing have improved significantly from the below average standards in 1997 as a consequence of the good teaching and the full implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

10. The pace of learning in literacy and numeracy is good overall between Years 3 and 6, but accelerates in Year 6 as pupils prepare for the 11 plus and common entrance examinations for independent schools. A significant number of pupils reported having private tutors at this stage. The overall teaching is good in Years 3 to 6; out of every five lessons, one is very good, three are good and one is satisfactory. The proportion of pupils exceeding the national level expected at the end of Year 6 increases significantly from the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science, with approximately half the pupils making more than expected progress.
11. The key factors in the good teaching are in the lesson planning, management of pupils, the assessment of pupils' work and the use of the information to meet the learning needs of most pupils. There are clear learning objectives identified in the lesson plans, which are written up and shared with pupils at the beginning. These help pupils to focus on what they are expected to learn during the lesson. Teachers use time towards the end of lessons well to check pupils' understanding. Teachers make notes on their lesson plans to show where changes need to be made in order to meet pupils' learning needs. There was evidence of further teaching to reinforce new learning where pupils were not secure in their understanding. Year 6 pupils interviewed said a strength of the school was that their teachers helped them overcome difficulties. Teachers have worked hard to improve their computer skills, some attending additional courses in their own time and the teaching in the subject has improved significantly since the previous inspection when it had shortcomings. Teachers use their computer skills well to produce lesson plans, which can easily be amended when necessary.
12. All of the teachers have good explanation and questioning skills. Shared work, whether in literacy or numeracy, is managed well by all teachers and is leading to most pupils acquiring a broad, basic knowledge of language and number at a good overall pace. The teachers expect pupils to learn and understand relatively advanced knowledge for their age and this is another reason why well above average standards are maintained. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and contribute to the rapid pace of progress.
13. In a very good literacy lesson in Year 6, the knowledge and understanding of all pupils, including those with special educational needs were very well extended by carefully phrased and targeted questions. In addition, a clear explanation and discussion of how to present an argumentative text and the choice of an emotive topic, capital punishment, made the lesson more interesting. The teacher's secure subject knowledge and clear focus on what pupils were expected to learn in the lesson helped in maintaining a brisk pace throughout. Pupils were challenged to draw on their general knowledge of capital punishment in The United States of America and apply this in their writing. The teacher's sensitive but firm manner and high expectations led to a good work ethic where pupils wanted to succeed.
14. The very good management of pupils and the effective use of assessment were evident in a Year 6 numeracy lesson. The teacher used a very calm, quiet approach to which pupils respond well. Pupils were quickly into the introductory mental test, eager to complete the questions on multiplication of decimals within the time set. The teacher has adopted this method because pupils need to quicken the pace of their learning, evident in the marking of their work and in targets set. Pupils were confident to show the class how they arrived at their answers using the calculator projected onto the screen. This introductory session was followed effectively with further teaching on division and recording answers in fractions and decimals before completing questions to check their understanding. Through the assessment of pupils' work, the teacher knew which pupils required additional help before moving on and those needing to progress to the next stage. Tasks were planned at three different starting points so they were sufficiently challenging for all pupils, whilst allowing the teacher to support all those needing help.
15. A very good lesson in information and communication technology resulted from the teacher's secure subject knowledge and thorough preparation. It was the first lesson on using spreadsheets and the initial discussion on the use of spreadsheets and good demonstration using the whiteboard enabled pupils to get started on the task quickly. A clear instruction sheet had been prepared to help pupils through each stage of the process and encourage independent learning.

Additional extension work was available which challenged the most able pupils well. By the end of the lesson all pupils had made very good progress in their understanding and use of spreadsheets and were encouraged to follow up this work at home.

The school is well led and managed with a focus on sustaining standards.

16. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good and a key factor in the standards the school achieves. The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the work of the school and is well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior management team and special educational needs co-ordinator. The well above average standards have been maintained as the new headteacher has continued to develop aspects of the school, for example in the monitoring and assessment procedures and the closer links with parents. The records for pupils with special educational needs are very well maintained, individual education plans are detailed and this enables the small majority of these pupils to reach the nationally expected level by the end of Year 6.
17. The senior management team has established and maintained a positive climate for learning which is characterised by the high expectations of the teachers' work and pupils' efforts, behaviour and achievement. Consequently staff feel valued, pupils respond well to their teachers and parents are very satisfied with the work of the school.
18. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and statutory requirements are met. They have an efficient committee structure for feeding decisions and concerns into full governing body meetings and into the budget setting process. They monitor the work of the school closely and are actively involved in budget setting and school improvement planning. There are good procedures for taking the views of staff and parents into account when drawing up school improvement plans. Questionnaires are issued to seek their views on many aspects of the school. The progress and outcomes of action taken to secure school improvements are also checked frequently to ensure time deadlines are met and the impact of the action in terms of pupils' attainment. The governors receive clear data on assessment and detailed information from the headteacher, which they scrutinise thoroughly in order to monitor the work of the school efficiently. The information from the termly monitoring reports from the local education authority is used well to help them fulfil their responsibilities in holding the headteacher to account for standards in the school.
19. The school has a very good programme for monitoring the teaching and pupils' learning and progress. Assessment information is used to set targets for pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and so predict overall standards. Progress towards the targets is monitored and reviewed each year and action taken where there is any indication of a decline in standards. The school's link advisor provided good support in training the headteacher and senior managers in school self-evaluation and review and this is being used to good effect through a rigorous programme for monitoring the teaching. Some subject co-ordinators observe lessons when subjects are priority areas for review and they have been trained to do so. For example the information and communication technology co-ordinator has monitored all teachers when using the computer suite and has given feedback and advice, which have helped to improve the quality of teaching and overcome the weakness identified in the previous report. The monitoring of standards at the end of each year, particularly in Years 3 to 6, also enables the headteacher to check that pupils are making sufficient progress from year to year.
20. The school improvement plan is a good, clear, useful document covering a three-year period, which is reviewed termly. It is colour coded to show the ongoing areas of development, the priorities for the current term and areas where action has not yet started. The colour coding makes it easy for governors to check the progress of the plan and follow up the success of the action taken. These aspects are strengths, but there is a lack of detail in the action for some aspects when they become the priority for improvement and the expected outcomes are not always specific. For example, the target for literacy is to review the school's literacy strategy. This review is expected to lead to improved standards for all pupils, particularly in writing, but does not inform the staff what action is to be taken, or by how much standards are expected to rise. However, the detail is included in the English action plan but this does not form part of the school improvement plan.
21. The school makes good strategic uses of its financial and other resources to provide the best possible education for most of its pupils. The financial plan links closely to the priorities for development in the school improvement plan. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed where

the need is greatest. For example, the test results showed a dip in standards for pupils currently in Year 5 and additional resources have been put into the year group to help pupils to improve their rate of progress. Specific grants for the training of teachers and for pupils with special educational needs are used well. Teachers receive relevant training to help in developing aspects of the school and for their professional development. The school sees the professional development of staff as being of great importance if the school is to continue to move forward and looks beyond those courses provided by the local education authority when necessary to ensure good quality training. The funding for pupils with special educational needs is used efficiently to provide some time for the co-ordinator to monitor the implementation and success of individual education plans and to liaise with external agencies and parents and so maintain the good provision.

22. All financial decisions are taken in the best interests of the pupils and the principles of best value are applied well. The school benchmarks the performance of its pupils against the top five per cent of all schools and similar schools, and compares the cost of educating them. The governors consider the value for money of expenditure in terms of the benefit for the pupils. Very good use is made of management information systems to aid the efficiency of the school, for example, attendance, assessment, pupil, finance, reports to parents and special educational needs records are all stored on computers for ease of access to up to date information. Teachers also use computers for their lesson planning and any adjustments are easy to make. The bursar administers the school's budget very efficiently on a daily basis, allowing staff to concentrate unhindered on educating the pupils.

The very good attitudes, good behaviour and excellent attendance of the pupils help them to maintain good progress.

23. The responses to the parents' questionnaire show that 98 per cent think their child likes school, including 78 per cent who hold this view strongly. The pupils' responses to lessons confirm the views of parents. In all lessons, the pupils worked hard and showed enthusiasm, as they want to succeed. They are interested and responsive in oral discussions and usually when they work independently, or in groups, they sustain concentration, discussing the activity sensibly, or checking with others, when unsure of what to move on to. Pupils are keen to participate in the many extra-curricular sporting and musical activities and take the opportunities to use the computers at lunchtimes and become confident in researching information for themselves. All computers were in use by Year 6 pupils on the Monday lunchtime during the inspection, as they searched for information to support their work in history.
24. Behaviour is good in lessons and is very good in the reception classes and Years 1 and 2. That is the general expectation of all teachers and is very much part of the ethos of the school. There were only two lessons in which teachers had cause to speak to pupils about their behaviour. In a very good lesson in religious education in Year 3, the pupils heard the story of Abraham and considered his willingness to obey God and his reaction to a command to go away. The pupils listened attentively to the views of others and waited patiently for their turn to speak.
25. Relationships between pupils are very good. Around the school, pupils are most helpful and show concern for those younger than themselves. There are good levels of mutual respect and courtesy. They take on responsibilities well as school managers, assisting in the daily routines such as collecting registers and distributing cartons of milk. They show initiative in organising school events to raise funds for charities. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting spoke highly of the caring, community ethos and stated that incidents of bullying were rare and usually dealt with swiftly. There have been no exclusions in the latest reporting period.
26. The attendance rate at the school in 2000/01 was very high in comparison with other schools. There was no unauthorised absence. Parents understand the importance of regular attendance and support the school by not taking family holidays in term time. The very positive attitudes, good behaviour and regular attendance make a significant contribution to pupils' progress and attainment.

The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress are very good.

27. There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment starting with baseline assessment soon after they start school. The information from these assessments is used effectively to plan appropriate activities for these children. Ongoing assessments of pupils' attainment in reception classes and Year 1 and collation of the information leads to targets being set for pupils by the end of Year 2. The results of National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 are used well to set targets for the pupils by the time they reach the end of Year 6.
28. Optional National Curriculum and standardised tests are used to assess pupils' progress between Years 3 and 6. The progress of each pupil is tracked from Year 3, to check they are on course to achieve their predicted level. Where there is concern that pupils are falling behind, additional support is provided to help them catch up.
29. The school checks its performance against that of the top five per cent of schools and against similar and other local schools. This gives clear information as to where standards are improving at the same rate as all schools and where there is room for improvement. All class teachers are involved in collating the data for pupils in their class at the beginning and end of each year and so understand their role in maintaining standards in the school. The procedures helped the school to identify particular weaknesses in writing skills in the current Year 5 and to put in additional support and strategies to raise attainment in this year group.
30. The direct comparison of the Year 2 and Year 6 results of National Curriculum tests for individual pupils, show the school is adding good value to pupils' attainment over the four years. The school is beginning to make more use of the baseline assessment information in order to track the progress of pupils from entry to when they leave the school and to set targets for the end of Year 1.

The school's close partnership with parents contributes well to the standards pupils achieve.

31. The school's partnership with parents is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The parents' questionnaires show parents' views of the school are good. There is now more exchange of information and greater involvement of parents in making decisions about the development of the school. For example, parents' views are taken into account when determining priority areas for inclusion in the school improvement plan. Working groups of parents have been set up to comment on and contribute to areas for improvement. This happened when the school was establishing the computer suite.
32. The parents' requests for more information on their child's progress led to the development of the school's assessment procedures and target setting. Parents of pupils from Year 3 onwards now receive an annual graph showing their child's predicted level in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 and their current attainment. Parents can determine whether their child has made sufficient progress over the year and is still on course to achieve their predicted level by the end of Year 6.
33. The parents raise substantial amounts of money for the school which helps to provide additional resources for learning, for example in helping the school to set up the computer suite and to provide adequate resources for the school to implement the Foundation Stage curriculum in the reception classes.
34. The contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school is very good and is a factor in the standards achieved. Parents are very supportive in hearing pupils read and in the completion of homework. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in reviews of their child's progress and encouraged to liaise with the school regularly. Individual education plans have

been amended to take parents' views into account when necessary. The concerns expressed by parents about the progress of some of these pupils are not justified and in fact refer to the local education authority's provision rather than what the school provides.

35. The closer partnership with parents is helping the school to maintain its well above average standards. Parents know the targets set for their children each year and support them in trying to achieve them. Parents feel more involved in the development and improvement of the school and know where it is heading.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in writing by the end of Year 6, to match standards in reading.

36. The development of pupils' skills in writing is a priority in the current school improvement plan. The National Curriculum test results in 2001 show some improvement at the end of Year 2, with results in writing matching those in reading at the nationally expected level 2, but this improvement does not follow through to the end of Year 6. There is also room for improvement in the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level at the end of Year 2.
37. The teachers have undertaken further training in the last year to improve their skills in teaching grammar for writing. The teaching in this aspect and in spelling is good. It is in the teaching of creative writing skills where there is room for further improvement. The pupils are not given enough support in understanding the purpose of their writing and how to organise their ideas into interesting stories. Discussions with Year 6 pupils revealed a lack of interest in English lessons owing to having to complete too many formal exercises. Because of this, when they come to write stories they do not always transfer the skills learned through these exercises. Too many lessons lack sufficient interest to motivate and enthuse pupils to want to write longer stories. The school provides appropriate work sheets to help pupils plan their stories and write their first drafts, but there is little evidence of teachers modelling how to improve the first draft to add more interest for the reader. This is where the school needs to focus its attention through guided writing sessions with whole classes and groups of pupils. In the lessons seen, teachers focused on improving skills in reading for a group of pupils, but not in writing. Teachers display pupils' writing neatly, but not in an eye-catching way. Good examples of longer stories and written work in other subjects need to be displayed attractively to encourage pupils to want to read them and aspire to reach higher standards.

A lack of coherence in whole school curriculum planning is holding back development in some subjects.

38. There are satisfactory policies in use for all subjects and some good schemes of work to support the teaching throughout the school, for instance in information and communication technology. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been fully implemented and are helping the school to sustain standards. However, there is no overview of what is to be taught in each subject in each term throughout the year groups to provide a clear picture of the balance of subject coverage and links between work in the different subjects.
39. The school has adopted national guidelines for teaching most subjects and the units of work for example in history, geography and science are set out to provide this overview, but other subjects such as art and design, music and design and technology are not included to show the cross-curricular links. Without this overview as the starting point for whole-school curricular planning, it is difficult to write more detailed schemes of work for each subject.
40. The school has chosen not to have an agreed format for the schemes of work and this makes it more difficult to find the information required quickly. There is no updated scheme of work for geography to show how the topics are to be developed each year and the physical education document is too brief to support the teaching or progression in the development of pupils' skills. The design and technology scheme of work contains helpful information on using equipment, but little on the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. This lack of coherence and detailed

guidance in some subjects is affecting the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment. For example, satisfactory lessons were seen in music and physical education, where schemes of work are incomplete or lack detail, whereas in information and communication technology all lessons seen were good and one was very good.

Further development of the roles of curriculum co-ordinators to increase their effectiveness in school self-evaluation and review procedures.

41. The roles of curriculum co-ordinators have developed and improved since the previous inspection, but they have not received sufficient training to be able to play a full and effective role in school self-evaluation and review. For example, the mathematics co-ordinator reported that she had not observed any lessons since the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, although she had done so previously. However, the school's link advisor had observed teaching and some feedback had been given to develop teaching. Most classroom observations to date have been carried out by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and some by the ICT co-ordinator as teachers began to use the computer suite. The curriculum co-ordinators' roles in monitoring teaching were a weakness at the time of the previous inspection, which has not been sufficiently overcome.
42. The school acknowledges the need to develop further the roles of the curriculum co-ordinators and has plans to provide training in conjunction with the National College for School Leadership. The school's link advisor has also helped the school to begin to implement procedures for school self-evaluation and review, by working with senior managers. Other staff have not received training in all aspects of school self-review so cannot contribute as effectively as they might in identifying areas for improvement and writing action plans with specific targets in order to maintain or improve standards in all subjects.

The provision for the most able pupils to help them achieve their full potential.

43. In several lessons observed during the inspection, the most able pupils were insufficiently challenged and did not learn as much as they could have done. This is because activities are planned with most pupils starting from the same point and the more able and most able pupils then moving on to extension activities. The initial activities do not provide sufficient challenge. For example in a mathematics lesson seen in Year 2, all pupils, except some of those with special educational needs, started on the same page in their workbooks, on tasks involving counting forwards and backwards in ones or tens using one and two digit numbers. There were then two additional worksheets involving larger numbers for above average attaining and the most able pupils, followed by the completion of a 100 square jigsaw. The most able still had time left where additional activities were provided. The most able pupils said they found the initial activity easy and this was evident in the time taken to complete it accurately. The school has implemented a commercial scheme of work for mathematics recently, which is being followed too closely instead of adapting it to meet the learning needs of all pupils. The use of worksheets in many lessons in literacy, and other subjects, also restricts the amount the most able pupils can write in order to show the full extent of their knowledge and understanding.
44. The school has an appropriate policy for the most able pupils and has identified a small number of potentially gifted pupils. The current provision for these pupils is not enabling them to reach their full potential.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. In order to maintain the overall well above average standards in comparison with all schools and with similar schools, the headteacher and staff, supported by the governors should address the following key issues, which have been identified by the school:
 - i. Raise standards in writing at the end of Year 6 to match those in reading by:

- reducing further the use of worksheets and giving pupils more opportunities to write independently in other subjects;
- providing more opportunities for creative story writing;
- placing more emphasis on the purpose and organisation of pupils' written work;
- improving the teaching of writing skills by modelling good story writing.

(Discussed in paragraphs 32, 33)

ii. Improve the coherence in the whole school curriculum planning by:

- providing an overview of the whole school curriculum to show the coverage of subjects in each year group and the links between subjects;
- completing schemes of work not already updated to show how pupils' skills and knowledge will be developed as they progress through the school.

(Discussed in paragraphs 34, 35, 36)

iii. Further develop the roles of curriculum co-ordinators so that they can play a more effective role in school self-evaluation and review procedures by:

- providing training in middle management skills;
- providing opportunities for co-ordinators to observe teaching in their subjects when a priority for development;
- including the subject action plans for priority areas for development as part of the school improvement plan.

(Discussed in paragraphs 37, 38)

iv. Improve the provision for the most able pupils to ensure they achieve their full potential by:

- planning tasks which provide sufficient challenge in all lessons;
- continuing to work towards Level 6 with these pupils and, where appropriate, to enter them for national tests at this level, particularly in English and mathematics.

(Discussed in paragraphs 39, 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	12	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	25	50	25	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	415
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	63

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

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

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	25	35	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	25
	Girls	35	35	35
	Total	59	59	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (91)	98 (89)	100 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	24
	Girls	35	35	35
	Total	59	60	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (98)	100 (96)	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	15	31	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	14
	Girls	29	29	31
	Total	39	40	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (91)	87 (89)	98 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	29	29	31
	Total	42	43	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (98)	93 (98)	98 (98)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	398
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.8
Average class size	29.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	196.25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	652,774
Total expenditure	662,419
Expenditure per pupil	1,644
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,758
Balance carried forward to next year	36,113

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
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

Number of questionnaires sent out	415
Number of questionnaires returned	109

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	20	0	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	73	20	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	28	1	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	39	11	0	3
The teaching is good.	76	19	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	42	9	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	21	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	25	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	55	38	3	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	36	1	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	30	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	37	4	0	10

Other issues raised by parents

Twelve letters were received. Three praised the work of the school and the standards achieved by pupils. There was some concern about the progress made by the most able pupils and some with special educational needs, also about the safety of the school playground. All other issues were raised by individual parents.