

Ifracombe CofE Junior School
URN: 113381
Inspection Number: 196152
Date of Inspection: 9th – 11th July 2002
Registered Inspector: Mr D. Collard OIN - 11122

Erratum:

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Page 7

Paragraph below Standards Table

First sentence “Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with test results that are below average” should be **replaced** with the following:

Although the situation is different now, when the present Year 6 children entered the school their test results were below average.

INSPECTION REPORT

Ilfracombe C of E Junior School

Ilfracombe, Devon

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113381

Headteacher: Mrs Catherine Cox

Reporting inspector: David G Collard
OFSTED Inspector Number: 11122

Dates of inspection: 9th - 11th July 2002

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Princess Avenue Ilfracombe Devon
Postcode:	EX34 9LW
Telephone number:	01271 863463
Fax number:	01271 863997
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Neil Bradley
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd July 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ilfracombe Church of England Junior School is situated in Ilfracombe, Devon. It serves a diverse population from the whole town, as it is the only junior school in the area. The buildings were designed as a grammar school and it became a junior school 27 years ago. There are 531 pupils on roll. Pupils are mainly white and two pupils have English as an additional language. These European pupils have good command of language. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals (20%) is above the national average (18.6%). There are 111 pupils with special educational needs and seven pupils with statements. Both these figures are above the national average. When pupils enter in Year 3, they have levels of attainment that are below average but, over the last four years, this has fluctuated to as low as well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is now an effective school that has been through some difficult times since receiving a positive report in 1997. By the end of Year 6, standards have consistently been at good levels over a number of years, especially when compared to similar schools. During their time at the school pupils have achieved well. Teaching has remained good overall because of the strong systems in place to support the planning in each year group and this is reason why pupils make good progress. The leadership of the school and senior management team is very good. The governors have a thorough understanding of their role and the decision-making processes are based on good information. The school now provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain average standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science. They make good progress in their time at the school.
- Teaching and learning is good in all year groups because of the strong methods of planning, subject knowledge and the consistently high quality of marking.
- The school is led very well by the headteacher, there is good support provided by the senior management team and the governors have a good grasp of what needs to be done to improve further.
- The varied curriculum provided by the school is based upon the thorough use of assessment information.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to work and behave well.

What could be improved

- The standards in information and communication technology are below those expected nationally and the progress that pupils make is unsatisfactory.
- Access to the school site has potential hazards and the buildings still do not provide the best environment for pupils to learn in.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997. The report detailed many strengths and only a few weaknesses. After the action plan was put in place to deal with the key issues, improvement began slowly. Very little was achieved against the key issues identified before the new headteacher took up her post two years ago. However, standards remained good throughout this time. Improvement overall is satisfactory but only because the school has moved forward so rapidly in the last eighteen months. There are some noticeable improvements in standards particularly in writing. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) was initially improved by the introduction of a computer suite although this has now had to be replaced and two new suites will be operational from the autumn term. The initial impetus has not been maintained so standards are again below that expected nationally. The assessment of pupils has much improved and is central to the planning of work. It also provides good information that is being analysed to find out whole school strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan indicates training to address any problems. Parents are now happier about their involvement in the school and are kept up to date with information. The most recent development plan from 2000 - 2003 is a very detailed and thorough working document. The governors are fully involved as are all other members of staff. The issue in the last inspection report relating to identifying spending was not dealt with

sufficiently well. An effect of this was deficit funding during the interim period and a lack of resources for teaching. The situation has been fully remedied and there is now a surplus that is allowing essential work to be carried out. The health and safety issue regarding access to the school has not been dealt with sufficiently well.

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	E	C	D	B
mathematics	C	B	C	A
science	B	A	B	A

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

Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with test results that are below average. They make good progress through the four years and achieve well. The results in English fluctuate year on year because of the general overall ability of pupils but those in the present Year 6 are achieving standards at the national average. There is better progress in writing from a low starting point. Pupils are able to write in a variety of styles such as reports, letters and poems. The average standards in mathematics have been maintained since last year. Pupils have good basic skills in numeracy and can use this to help them with problem solving. Standards in science are above average. Pupils perform better in this subject because of the good methods that are used by teachers to reinforce knowledge each year and because a lot of time is spent on experiments and investigation.

From the limited evidence seen, it is clear that standards are at expected levels in all other subjects except ICT. Here, there has been a lack of opportunity to develop all areas that are required within the subject and consequently progress is unsatisfactory. Pupils are not able to talk confidently about the use of ICT in other subjects such as through research on the Internet in history or in using spreadsheets in mathematics. This is despite the good background knowledge that they have in computing.

The school set reasonable targets that have generally been achieved. The higher attaining pupils are stretched by the activities they are given and this is one reason why overall results have been better when compared to similar schools. Those with special educational needs make equally good progress against their own targets set down in individual education plans.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen and eager to work. They relish exciting activities and are proud of their school. Work in books is well presented and comments by teachers are often acted upon.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. No instances of poor behaviour were noted during the inspection although there are a number of pupils who would readily challenge the authority of the teacher if they were given the opportunity.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Teachers work hard to help pupils develop a healthy respect for each other.
Attendance	Average. The attendance rate has been maintained since the last inspection. There are no difficulties with absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall the quality of teaching is good in all years and the needs of all pupils are met well. There has been an improvement since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The quality of planning is a particular strength and is the main reason why standards have been maintained. The strong dependence between teachers on support within each year group ensures that pupils receive similar opportunities. There are now better systems of ensuring this also works well between year groups. Teachers use a wide and varied range of different methods to excite and motivate their pupils. Many of these include the use of first-hand experience. So, for instance, science lessons concentrate on learning through the use of experiments and investigation. Visits are undertaken to start a theme and introduce pupils to the work. The quality of marking is very high. This has been a recent focus for improvement and has proved very successful. Teachers use comments to challenge pupils' thinking and to help reinforce what has been learnt in the lessons. In addition, pupils are expected to take note of what is asked and respond appropriately.

The quality of English and mathematics teaching is equally good. The new initiatives for literacy and numeracy have been implemented and refined well. The teaching of writing has had a high profile. The success of the methods can be seen in the better quality of writing in all year groups. The overall quality of teaching in ICT could not be judged because too few lessons took place during the inspection. Homework is presently being reviewed and new practices will be in place during the autumn term.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All levels of planning are comprehensive and supported by a wide range of visits and visitors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers plan well to enable pupils with difficulties to participate at their own level.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound. There are only a small number of pupils who are supported as and when it is necessary. They are able to communicate well in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The spiritual element is highlighted through religious education and through a range of assemblies. Cultural traditions are highlighted through specific themes such as an African day. These are very successful. Moral and social development has a very high priority. There are regular discussion times so that problems can be shared.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Sound. There are good procedures for personal and academic development. Pupils are looked after well and concerns quickly addressed. There are still some areas of health and safety which need resolving.

The planning of the curriculum is well established and of good quality. There is an overall long-term plan with a medium-term plan that shows what will be learnt in each half term. These provide a good basis to ensure that all areas are covered in sufficient depth and that teachers can plan confidently. The curriculum is supported well by a very wide range of visits, visitors and themed days. All these help provide good first-hand experience. Assessment of pupils has improved greatly. It is used well to support individual pupils and to clarify the strengths and weaknesses in different year groups. Since the last inspection these systems have become much more cohesive. There are still some health and safety issues with regard to access of the school site that have not been dealt with since the last inspection.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Substantial improvements have been made in the methods and organisation of the school since the appointment of the new headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have become very aware of the way in which their role has changed and have a good awareness of what needs to be done to improve. They are kept well informed and can make judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. All issues raised by the inspection have been identified within the school development plan. All share a very clear view about what needs to be done to improve the school further.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All funding is used appropriately and a deficit budget has been turned around to provide a small surplus that can be used for further improvement. Governors apply the principles of best value when deciding on purchases.

The headteacher is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and year group leaders who, together, form the senior management team. They have been instrumental in ensuring standards have been maintained. There are now good lines of communication between all staff and views are valued. Financial difficulties arose through the deficit budget in the past but through very prudent management these have been overcome and the situation is now stable.

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 school and do their best. • The leadership of the school is strong and teaching provides the best opportunities for learning. • The communication systems in place and the care that is taken of their children. • The behaviour in and around the school is good and that pupils behave well on trips. • The range of interesting things that children are given to do, the visits and visitors that are involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The procedures for homework

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents. Inspectors feel that the new procedures for homework are well thought out and will prove beneficial to learning when they are implemented next term.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve at least average standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and make good progress in their time at the school.

1. Pupils enter the school with overall results in tests that are generally below the national average. They make good progress and achieve well during the four junior years. Consequently, pupils in Year 6 have average standards in English and mathematics and good standards in science. The reason for this good progress is because teachers plan well together, provide opportunities that build up knowledge and understanding sequentially through each year and have high expectations about what each level of ability can achieve. In all other subjects, standards are at least at that expected nationally except in ICT, which is below. This is because pupils have not been able to use the computers for some time and the software programs that were used did not cover all the various strands of the subject for the junior years.
2. In English over the last three years, pupils test results at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated between well below average in 1999, average in 2000 and below average in 2001. The 2001 figures also showed that when compared to similar schools the pupils were doing much better. Here, the results were above average. Progress in English is good. When the present group in Year 6 were in Year 2, they gained results that were below average.
3. The assessment of pupils has been strengthened over the last year and this has helped teachers to cater for individual needs much better. They are able to give specialist help, more closely guided work and check how well pupils are doing. As a consequence, the evidence from lessons and from the scrutiny of work this year shows that progress in English is particularly good in the structure of sentences and the way that writing can be adapted for different styles. For instance, in Year 6, the newsletters that were produced distinguished well between fact and opinion. Persuasive letters concerning the need for a cycle track were clear, well-presented and used bullet points to emphasise the argument. This contrasts with the work in Year 3 where the writing showed a limited vocabulary and narrative, despite the efforts of the teacher to improve the range. In Year 4, the average ability pupils use punctuation but not always accurately and the well thought through teacher's comments highlight this as an area that needs improvement. By Year 5, pupils are beginning to put together well-constructed arguments placed in a context such as in leaflets about a healthy lifestyle. Reports about mythical creatures show that pupils are gaining an understanding about how to write complex sentences and how writing may be adapted for younger readers. Throughout the school, work is well presented and in most cases handwriting is neat. Spelling improves as pupils move through each year.
4. Speaking, listening and reading standards are slightly higher than those for writing although still average. Pupils enjoy books and those in Year 6 are able to talk about the authors that they like and the reasons why. When describing their preferences they use words such as *humorous* and *adventurous* to describe their opinion. The higher ability pupils are fluent, read accurately with expression and understand some of the intricacies of a story plot. They are less secure in relating these to other authors nor can they relate the characters in one story to those that they have read about elsewhere. Average ability pupils speak clearly and fluently, listen to questions and respond appropriately. They can develop an argument but this sometimes lacks a depth of understanding. Lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs are given good

support but despite this have some difficulties making comparisons about different types of books and stating their preferences. All listen carefully but speak more hesitantly.

5. The average standards in mathematics have been maintained since the last report. They are better when measured against schools of a similar type as standards were well above average in 2001. Progress is above average for pupils in all years. Pupils in the present Year 6 gained below average results at the end of Year 2 and are now achieving standards that are close to the national average. At least a quarter of pupils in each age group are gaining standards that are higher than might be expected for their age. This good progress can be attributed to the good match of work to the ability of an individual, the constructive and developmental marking by teachers and the pupils' strength in basic numeracy. Pupils in Year 3 show good mental agility as was seen in the problems related to shopping. Year 4 pupils are beginning to make swifter progress because of the groundwork that was done in the previous year. As a result, many are solving whole number problems, use efficient written methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and are beginning to understand how to estimate using standard units of measure. In Year 5, progress improves again. There are some elements of higher than average standards in the use of fractions, percentages and in basic data handling. Unfortunately, computers are not used to provide another method of calculation. In Year 6, there are some examples of very high levels of work such as the self-confidence shown when measuring the circumference and area of a circle and using a formula to find the area of a trapezium or parallelogram. Approximately, three-quarters of pupils have understanding that indicates they have gained the nationally expected Level 4 in mathematics. There are only a few pupils who are working at well below average levels but they are supported well through the special educational needs programme. The setting arrangements have made a very positive impact on the learning that is taking place.
6. Standards in science are above average. Results in national tests have been at this higher level for the last four years. When compared to the results for similar schools this represents well above average standards. Progress through the school for pupils in the present Year 6 has been very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is used to good effect in the exciting learning that take place. Pupils build up a range of scientific vocabulary because it is used regularly to reinforce and help them remember difficult words. In Year 3, there is a good understanding of liquids and solids even by pupils who are of lower overall ability. The above average pupils are beginning to understand the need to make evaluation and conclusions although at this stage these are very elementary and contain too much factual information. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 continue to make positive progress. The planning of science means that many areas and strands are returned to each year but at a higher level. In this way pupils build up their knowledge but also greater understanding about the world around them, the physical properties of materials and about circuits, plants and the body. All teachers use experimentation and investigation as an intrinsic part of the lesson. Pupils learn first hand about how to make a fair test and in later years what variables can be added to secure their conclusions about a hypothesis they have made.
7. From the limited inspection evidence within other subjects it is clear that standards are at least in line with those nationally in all subjects except ICT. There is little evidence that computers are used regularly or that work is linked well enough to other subjects such as word-processing in English or spreadsheets in mathematics. Teachers provide particularly good opportunities in physical education, art and design, geography and history. The use of visits, visitors and the specialisms within the staff all ensure that pupils receive a rounded education.

Teaching and learning is good in all year groups because of the strong methods of planning, subject knowledge and the consistently high quality of marking.

8. During the inspection all the lessons seen were at least satisfactory, often good and in some cases very good. Whilst the overall judgement remains the same, this represents an improvement since the last inspection when eight per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. Since then the systems have been improved to ensure that teachers are better supported. There are now regular, weekly staff meetings that enable best practice and new innovations to be shared. This did not happen before. Equally, monitoring of lessons now takes place as part of a structured programme of improvement. Teachers' views are valued, they feel more aware of any national initiatives and are able to use the information they gain to provide better learning opportunities for their class. A major strength of the school has been the development of work within each year group. This has ensured pupils still continued to make good progress through a period of turbulence in the recent past.
9. Teachers have good subject knowledge particularly in science, art and design, literacy and numeracy. In lessons, the quality of this can be seen in the confidence that teachers have in answering searching questions. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher talked about phylum (the larger groupings of the plant and animal kingdom). She encouraged pupils to discuss what these were and to question whether some that they suggested were correct. In a literacy lesson in Year 6, the teacher showed a good understanding of persuasive writing by talking about the impact of punctuation and vocabulary and how it can be used to attract the attention of the reader. Where subject knowledge is not so good, the year leaders and other colleagues provide good support and ideas for planning a lesson so that pupils are not disadvantaged in particular classes. Planning overall is of very good quality. The medium term plans for each term lay out in detail what will be learnt. Good account is taken of balancing new knowledge with consolidating what is already known. Investigation, experimentation and time for reflection are consistently used to help build better understanding. In this way learning is progressively built upon each year and is the reason why all pupils make good progress.
10. In all the lessons seen, and from the scrutiny of work, it is clear that teachers have high expectations about what all levels of ability can achieve. This is best demonstrated by the high quality of marking. In one science lesson the teacher had written 'very true but why?' This was because the pupil had not evaluated the conclusion but only given factual answers. In another case the teacher wrote '...use appropriate words to the question you are investigating.' This was to try and draw out specific vocabulary linked to the subject. Marking is also used to help build up a picture of what each pupil has learnt. Again, comments are used such as '...you have understood that the body needs oxygen and nutrients for energy.' This was an area that had weaknesses at the last inspection and has improved well particularly with the advent of better in-service training opportunities in the last two years.
11. Pupils behave and respond well because the teaching is exciting, stimulating and encourages them to put in their best efforts. Classroom rules are prominently displayed and all pupils know what is expected of them. They support each other well especially in small group work or when they are in sets for English and mathematics. In a Year 4 physical education lesson the pupils were well behaved throughout despite the inclement weather.
12. A wide range of teaching methods is used to help enliven learning. In a Year 5 art and design lesson, the teacher had taken the class to the beach to collect materials for a collage. The planning here was strong. In a previous lesson the teacher had used simple gluing techniques to build up pictures. In this final lesson the pupils were now learning how to develop this through

making a picture onto a background of slate. Some of the pieces collected were difficult to stick down so the teacher carefully organised glue guns and stronger adhesives. Health and safety procedures were clearly laid out and learning support assistants were on hand to provide a watchful eye. The quality of the finished products showed real flair and imagination because the structure in a number of lessons had led to the pupils building up their knowledge, skills and understanding. They understood the need for extreme care, what would work and what would spoil their picture.

13. There have been difficulties in providing good resources in the past because of financial restraints. This is no longer the case. The prudent management and centralisation of all resources has meant that there is now a much clearer picture of what needs to be obtained. As a result the use of these resources has substantially improved the methods of teaching.
14. Support assistants are used well in all classes. They are generally assigned to individual children, mainly those with some form of special educational needs. However, their time is not restricted and often they take charge of a small group under the supervision of the teacher. They know what they are expected to build upon and have regular meetings to ensure that targets are met. They provide experienced and valuable assistance.
15. Pupils with special educational needs are closely supported through their individual education plans (IEP). These lay out clear criteria in small steps so that teachers, learning assistants and, more importantly, the pupil know when they have been achieved. These might include such items as 'sit quietly for five minutes without calling out.' Assessment is made to check when any individual needs to move onto another stage. Teachers are responsible for producing these IEPs but the special needs co-ordinator is available to provide the experience that will enable the documents to be as constructive as possible. The success of the system is in the way that pupils with special educational needs make equally as good progress through the school. There are setting arrangements for numeracy in Years 3 to 6 and literacy in Years 5 and 6. These are having a positive effect on standards. The school has decided that teachers need to build up relationships in the younger years and this is why the literacy sets have been restricted to the upper years. However, the literacy lessons in Years 3 and 4 are ensuring that learning is good.

The school is led very well by the headteacher, there is good support provided by the senior management team and the governors have a good grasp of what needs to be done to improve.

16. At the time of the last report the management and efficiency of the school was judged to be very good. In the interim, while standards remained overall at acceptable levels a number of the key issues were not addressed as a matter of priority. The buildings continued to deteriorate, health and safety issues were not fully addressed and there were concerns about the stability of the finances.
17. Since then, two new headteachers, a deputy headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed. There have been substantial changes in the composition of the year group leaders who form the senior management team and in the philosophy and style of leadership. All these have had a very positive impact and have been instrumental in moving the school forward very quickly over the last two years.
18. The new headteacher was appointed in September of 2001 and quickly put in place structures for developing the school. She provides a very clear vision that is understood by all staff and

they have become much more involved in the decision-making process than previously. Substantial improvements have been made in the methods of communication. These include professional assessment of performance, support for teachers in areas that need improvement such as subject knowledge and in the financial administration. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher who has worked hard to put more rigorous planning and assessment systems into operation. Again, these have been very successful. Responsibilities are delegated appropriately and build on the strengths of individuals. Senior staff are confident in the leadership and are able to ask for help and have open discussions in meetings. The year group leaders are very knowledgeable and form an effective and cohesive team. The strength and quality of year group teams has enabled the school to continue to move forward through an unsettling period. The school has a clear set of aims that highlight the need to prepare children for their life ahead. These are reflected through the work that takes place. Grants are used effectively to support these aims such as the development of parenting skills through monies obtained from the 'Children's fund.'

19. The governing body has become more aware of their role because they are now provided with comprehensive, well-structured information. Decisions are based upon careful discussion, an awareness of the overall school improvement plan and an understanding of the need to shape the direction that the school moves in. They have had to make some difficult decisions over the past three years and this has helped to strengthen their experience and confidence. They have a very good understanding of the strengths as well as the weaknesses that still exist and are working on the correct priorities for improvement. These include renovating the fabric of the building, improving opportunities in ICT and in improving the opportunities that are offered within the curriculum. There is now a purpose to the work that takes place and a capacity to improve that was not the case until recently. Good account is now taken for ensuring that best value is obtained when making financial decisions.
20. The previous key issues concerned attainment in ICT, the quality of writing, assessment of standards and parental involvement. In addition, the governors needed to look at the financial implications of their school development plan and attend to health and safety issues. The subsequent action plan laid out methods for improvement but, initially, very little progress was made. To date, standards in writing have improved although they are still slightly lower than those in reading. The quality of assessment is much improved and is now the backbone of all work that takes place, especially in planning. The new headteacher has worked hard to improve relations with parents and this was reflected in the responses to the questionnaire and from those who attended the parents' meeting. Over the past five years the school has suffered from deficit funding which culminated in a letter of reassurance being sent to parents. The situation has now been resolved and the school is financially much healthier. However, until recently, pupils have suffered from a lack of resources in subjects and from buildings that have not provided an effective learning environment. Financial procedures have been considerably strengthened following a thorough audit. Another review is due to take place in the autumn term to check that all new systems are sufficiently robust. A good start has been made on refurbishment including some classrooms being reduced in size so that new learning areas could be created. There still remains a major concern about access to the school site but advice is now being sought to remedy this.

The varied curriculum provided by the school based upon the thorough use of assessment information.

21. The wide range of the curriculum offered at the school is good. All subjects are covered in depth although recently the development of ICT has been spasmodic because the school is waiting to put two new computer suites into operation. In all other areas there are comprehensive opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and understanding.
22. There is a good long-term plan in place that details the coverage of each subject. English and mathematics are based around the national strategies and the majority of other subjects have been organised using the nationally agreed guidelines. This ensures that learning progresses in a continuous way each year, building upon what has been learnt previously. The school has enhanced these plans and made them suitable for use in the local area. Hence, themes and topics include walks to local places of interest, the seashore, residential and visits further afield. Religious education now follows the newly agreed local syllabus.
23. The curriculum is enhanced by a very wide range of after school activities. These include various sports and music clubs, environment and dance clubs. Commercial organisations are invited into the school to provide even more opportunities after school including a ballet/tap/jazz instructor. A homework club is organised at specific times of the year to help pupils in Year 6. Homework was raised as an area of concern by parents. The systems in place follow the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidelines and are presently being reviewed. A letter that was sent earlier this year probably did not make clear to all parents what was happening. From September, new more worthwhile systems will be in place. Even so, pupils are still expected to support their learning in school with reading, writing, spelling and some mathematical exercises.
24. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in many subjects. Chiefly, the more structured support is in literacy lessons and for those pupils with behavioural difficulties. However, during the inspection assistants were seen providing help for a number of small groups in art and design, science and physical education. In all cases the support was of high quality.
25. Assessment, an area of concern at the last inspection, has strengthened considerably. At year group level, comprehensive records are kept of attainment and these are used to provide information about the next lesson. The staff have been very involved in refining these systems to ensure that the transition between each year is smooth. The information has also been used to build up a profile of individual standards over a period of time. As a result, teachers have a good knowledge about the performance of their own class and whether their progress is high enough. Marking shows that the process is having a good effect. Teachers refer to what has been learnt and how it can be improved and targets are set in the front of books for further improvement.

Pupils have very good attitudes to work and behave well

26. In all the lessons seen pupils behaved well. They were attentive to the teacher and took good account of the needs of others in the class. Levels of concentration are high and, as in a literacy lesson, this helped to develop well the speaking and listening skills during a discussion. When asked to work in groups, pupils are happy to do this both with their friends and in groups assigned by the teacher. In an art lesson, this meant sharing different tools and materials. Throughout the session there were no disagreements and everybody got on well. Here, concentration was very high.

27. Pupils are proud of their school and want to do their best. They are keen to arrive and eager to start work. Levels of attendance have remained similar to those nationally and there are few instances of lateness. Pupils will happily talk about the many opportunities they are offered and how relationships within the school are good. This is because teachers have worked hard to build up a positive atmosphere despite the restrictions of the classrooms which in some cases still have the old grammar school influences such as high ceilings and uninviting corridors. School rules are known by all and the school council have helped introduce a code of conduct for behaviour. There are a small number of children capable of challenging the authority of the teacher but they are dealt with well. Learning assistants and midday supervisors are quick to spot potential incidents and diffuse these without resorting to confrontation.
28. The procedures for personal development are good. The moral and social elements of this development are catered for well through discussion periods known as 'Circle Time' and by formal and informal periods of reflection. Great store is put upon valuing each other and those from other cultures and beliefs. This includes developing understanding of other traditions such as through an African day.
29. The procedures for child protection are undertaken conscientiously by a trained member of staff. Any concerns are logged carefully and teachers are aware of the necessary procedures. Parents are kept fully informed of noteworthy behaviour as well as negative instances through an established home school diary. Its usefulness has been highlighted in newsletters so that parents understand its importance. This forms an immediate method of communication so both teachers and parents can react quickly to any potential problems.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below those expected nationally and the progress that pupils make is unsatisfactory

30. At the time of the last inspection ICT was a key issue because the attainment of pupils was too low. The subsequent action plan addressed this by installing a computer suite in 1998. All indications are that standards began to rise. Pupils were able to access computers on a regular basis and were given opportunities to work within most areas of the subject curriculum. There were still some deficiencies, mainly in the strands dealing with control work, sensoring and modelling. However, the funding used for the suite did not produce the results that the school hoped for and the subject development plan for 2000 reviewed the provision for ICT. It was realised that the computers were too slow and did not have the appropriate software. This year, the room has been completely refurbished and new computers ordered. In addition, a second computer suite will be installed. The machines have a higher specification and by December will have all the necessary software to provide for the full curriculum through the junior years.
31. The problems outlined above have led to pupils not having had full access to all strands of the subject for some time. The result is that pupils have not made continuous progress over their time at the school. In discussion with Year 6 pupils, they talk about having undertaken some word-processing, developed simple programming to move a pointer around a screen and have done some minor research. During the inspection, one good lesson in Year 5 was seen that linked ICT with science. Pupils were able to open, close and use the software appropriately. They knew how the data processing was helping them categorise different organisms. Both their scientific skill and their skill in ICT were at appropriate levels. However, the gains were

only over the short term. The lesson had started the previous week and pupils had quickly picked up a new skill. The laptop computers were on a temporary loan from another school.

32. In the work in all subjects this year there is very little evidence of ICT being incorporated to support pupils' learning. In English there are limited examples of word-processing, drafting or refining of stories, poems or letters. In mathematics, good data handling work takes place manually but there is little evidence of this being developed through the use of spreadsheets or databases. There is some evidence of research work using the Internet but it is unclear whether this was completed on home computers. On display are examples of graphing, data collection and the learning of new skills that took place during 2001.
33. During last year, teachers started a training programme funded by the New Opportunities Fund (NOF). This has helped build a better level of expertise and confidence. However, it has been difficult to put many of these new initiatives into place because of the lack of good facilities which would enable them to practise their skills.
34. The school is rapidly addressing the major problems in provision. They have begun the process of installing new computers, obtaining the correct software and ensuring that all teachers are fully equipped to start in the autumn term. When this is in place, the ratio of computers to pupils will be close to the required allocation and pupils will have sufficient time each week to develop better skills. Teachers will also be able to use the second suite to develop work in other subjects. Planning for the subject will follow the nationally agreed schemes of work. This will start to ensure that all areas are covered in sufficient depth.
35. The slow progress can be attributed to poor decisions about the previous computer suite and to a lack of funding over the last two years to enable the school to remedy the situation. By clever budgeting and thorough planning, the school is now in a position to move forward. Partial funding has come from the National Grid for learning (NGfL) provided on a yearly basis. The good development plan has ensured that the school is already aware that a planned programme of replacement must be met to ensure that previous problems do not reoccur.

Access to the school site has potential hazards and the buildings are not providing the best learning environment

36. At the time of the last report, access for both pupils and vehicles was through a similar entrance. The action plan did not place enough emphasis on ensuring this health and safety issue was resolved. The situation is still difficult. Pupils now enter and leave the school through a separate gate that is away from traffic. However, the access to some classrooms is across a busy thoroughfare used by vehicles. On many occasions, pupils are not supervised and the situation is likely to become worse when the new library comes into operation. Pupils will be using this area on a regular basis and in small groups. There are no methods in place to ensure that all pedestrian use is checked and monitored even when some lorries are backing up the drive. This creates a potential hazard.
37. The school is sited within an old grammar school and has not been sufficiently well refurbished to meet the needs of a modern day junior school. Plans have been in place for the last two years but, because the school has had to overcome a spending deficit, it has taken longer than expected to complete. The benefits of such a building include a number of specialist areas such as a gymnasium, design and technology room and many extra rooms for groupwork. However, the classrooms are large with high ceilings and poor acoustics, and much is in a poor state of repair. In some lessons seen, the teacher had to ensure that the pupils were gathered around

closely so they could hear what was being said before setting about any tasks. Teachers use innovative techniques to build a closer relationship with their class. These include moving desks into a smaller area but this then leaves large parts of rooms unused. As a result, it is difficult to make high quality and useful displays, set out resources and develop a cohesive learning environment.

38. An extensive programme of renovation has already begun. This includes a complete refurbishment of the entrance area to provide a small library and separate offices. More particularly, some classrooms have had extra walls added to make them more conducive to learning. All these initiatives are having a positive effect on the ethos of the school and to the general atmosphere amongst the staff. There is still much to be done as only one part of the school is in the process of completion.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

39. In order to improve the standards and quality of education the headteacher, governors and staff should:

Raise the attainment of pupils in ICT by:

- Ensuring that pupils have access to the full range of hardware and software as required within the subject recommendations
- Plan work so that it links new skills to work within other subjects
- Ensure that pupils receive sufficient time studying the subject
- Reviewing the effectiveness of new arrangements by thorough assessment procedures and adapting the practices in light of the findings

(see particularly paragraphs: 30-35)

Continue to develop the school site and deal with the matters of health and safety as a matter of urgency by:

- Undertaking a review of access arrangements, ascertaining potential problems and acting on the recommendations immediately
- Developing the accommodation to ensure that it meets the needs of junior age pupils

(see particularly paragraphs: 36 – 38)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
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	0	5	6	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	31	38	31	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 six percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	531
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	111

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	119

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	64	62	126

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	42	42	63
	Girls	52	46	60
	Total	94	88	123
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (77)	75 (78)	99 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	45	46	64
	Girls	52	49	61
	Total	97	95	125
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (76)	75 (78)	99 (92)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	529
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.5
Average class size	31.2

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	300

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	985324
Total expenditure	943061
Expenditure per pupil	1783
Balance brought forward from previous year	(28678)
Balance carried forward to next year	13585

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	531
Number of questionnaires returned	78

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	45	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	50	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	55	9	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	33	28	6	10
The teaching is good.	44	53	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	47	9	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	31	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	54	9	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	38	53	1	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	53	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	40	5	0	10