

INSPECTION REPORT

DUNMOW CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Great Dunmow

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115299

Headteacher: Valerie White

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jane Wotherspoon
OIN: 22199

Dates of inspection: 25 - 26 June 2002

Inspection number: 196316

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Stile Great Dunmow Essex
Postcode:	CM6 1EB
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	George Tosh
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Dunmow Church of England Junior School is larger than average, with 373 boys and girls aged between seven and eleven on roll. Few pupils come from ethnic minority groups; most pupils are white and English speaking. Pupils come from mainly favourable backgrounds where there are high aspirations for them to achieve well at school and a commitment to helping them do so. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average at seven per cent. A higher than average number of pupils has been identified as having special educational needs. The range of learning needs is wide and includes pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils begin school with broadly average standards, although slightly better than average reading skills. The school is due to change its status to a primary school from September 2002. This will be a gradual process over the next few years, beginning in September with the admission of pupils aged 4. Few pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual times, but the school has had several staff changes in the last two years. The school has close links with the University of Cambridge and receives a grant from the Department for Education and Skills as a training school for trainee teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has many strengths and is very effective. Standards are high and pupils achieve very well during their four years in the school. A strong ethos of care is balanced with high academic expectations and an emphasis on developing pupils' self-assurance. Teaching is good and sets challenging demands for pupils of all abilities. Leadership and management are very good, with all members of the school community sharing a common purpose. The school gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and very good support from governors and staff set high expectations.
- Standards are high in English, mathematics and science, and pupils make very good progress during their time in the school.
- Teaching is good; exciting and stimulating learning opportunities generate high levels of interest and enthusiasm among the pupils.
- The very good provision for pupils' personal development, with opportunities to take responsibility and exercise self-discipline, fosters strong relationships and promotes very good behaviour.
- The well-considered curriculum incorporates a wide range of creative activities and benefits from strong links between subjects.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The level of consistency in the quality of teaching could be raised further.
- Stronger links could be forged with some parents with regard to the level of information about their children's progress.

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 1997, when it was judged to be a very good school. Since then it has made a good level of improvement. All issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed well and the school has retained, and built upon, its strengths.

Weaknesses in curriculum planning have been addressed, and this has led to marked improvements in provision for information and communication technology and for design and technology. Daily and weekly planning is more consistent across year groups as teachers plan well together. The role of subject co-ordinators has developed well.

STANDARDS

The table below 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	B	C	B	C
science	B	C	A	B

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Standards reflected in the results of tests are consistently high in English. The school expects to sustain, or extend, the improvement in results in science and mathematics in 2001, and targets have been set accordingly. Evidence from pupils' work and from lessons confirms this prediction. The upward trend in the school's results matches the national trend. Standards are good in comparison with similar schools. In Year 6, a good proportion of pupils work at levels above those expected for their age. They achieve very well from their starting point. Throughout the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills are good and contribute much to the quality of learning in all subjects. By Year 6, pupils are articulate and have an extensive vocabulary on which to draw when explaining what they know and understand. Pupils' neat handwriting and good presentation of work exemplifies the pride they take in what they do. Standards in art and design are good throughout the school and high by Year 6. The quality of artwork contributes much to the strong visual environment within the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of activities they are offered. They have very good attitudes to school and respond positively to the high expectations of them to work hard and do well. There are high levels of participation in clubs, which contribute much to pupils' social development.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. A minority of pupils struggle to conform to the school's expectations, but the impact is kept to a minimum because the majority are very well behaved and mature. Pupils move around the school sensibly, even when not closely supervised. Pupils in Year 6 exercise a very good level of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils enjoy very good relationships with each other and work well together in pairs and groups. Pupils accept responsibilities, such as serving on the school council, with a high degree of commitment. Pupils say that bullying is rare.
Attendance	Very good. Figures are consistently well above the national average.

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.

The quality of teaching is good and frequently very good. It is particularly strong in English and this accounts for the high standards that pupils achieve. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well through other subjects. The use of computers is integrated well with other activities. Planning is very thorough and builds successfully on pupils' previous learning. Activities are carefully structured and are pitched at different levels of difficulty to match the range of pupils' learning needs. In this way the school is able to meet the needs of all pupils very well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and encourage them to become independent learners. They regularly tell pupils what they are expected to learn and usually, but not always, review their achievement at the end of the lesson. Interesting and practical tasks give a strong sense of purpose to pupils' learning and extend their thinking and problem-solving skills. Frequent opportunities are given for pupils to work together. They are motivated to work hard and have a clear understanding of how to improve their work through the good feedback that teachers give them. Teachers ask well-focused questions to challenge pupils and to extend their knowledge. Explanations and demonstrations are effective and underpinned by teachers' good use of visual resources. Just occasionally, explanations continue for too long, with the result that pupils become restless and the pace of work is slowed. Inconsistencies in managing pupils' behaviour in Year 5 interrupt the flow of some lessons. Support staff are deployed effectively and contribute much to pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is stimulating and presented in an interesting and creative way, with strong links between subjects that make activities meaningful for pupils. Literacy and numeracy are represented well but not at the expense of a good breadth in pupils' learning. Clubs, visits and visitors extend the curriculum and make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. Creative opportunities are promoted strongly.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils make similar progress to that of their peers because of the effective classroom practice which is very well supported by the co-ordinator. Pupils' targets are sharp, carefully monitored and reviewed regularly. The school is implementing the new Code of Practice very effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are fully integrated into lessons. Their level of language acquisition is already at a competent level.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school gives high priority to pupils' personal development. The breadth of the curriculum adds much to pupils' cultural development. Pupils are helped to develop a mature approach to school life through a simple but effective code of conduct and a range of opportunities for taking responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The high standard of care and supervision is not overbearing and this gives pupils space for independence. The school uses assessment information well to make sure it meets the educational, social and emotional needs of individuals and groups of pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher gives outstanding leadership and receives very good support from senior staff in setting high standards for the whole school community. Staff work together effectively and the sense of teamwork is strong.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their regular visits. Their monitoring role is well established and they play an integral part in setting the school's priorities for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school uses all available information to analyse its performance and look for ways to improve. Monitoring systems are well established and rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funding is targeted carefully to the school's priorities, and the governors check that decisions are cost effective by measuring improvement in pupils' performance. Governors are proactive in seeking, and bidding for, additional funding, and they apply best value principles in all matters of finance.

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 are happy at school. • The teaching is good. • The school has high expectations that pupils will work hard. • Pupils are making good progress. • Staff are approachable if parents have concerns. • Pupils' behaviour is good. • Pupils are becoming mature and responsible. • The school offers a wide range of activities outside of lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like more information on the progress their children are making. • The school could work more closely with parents.

The positive views were expressed unanimously by parents attending the pre-inspection meeting, and by 90 per cent or more, of parents responding to the questionnaire. The inspection team agrees with these views. However, 20 per cent or more, of parents indicated a desire for the school to work more closely with them and to improve the quality of information it provides. Inspectors consider that the school gives parents satisfactory information about pupils' progress in the annual reports but there is scope for improvement. For example, the reports do not set out specific targets for improvement. The school does not regularly survey parents on a wide range of matters and so is not always aware of their views on specific matters, such as the level of written or verbal information they receive.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and very good support from governors and staff set high expectations.

1. The headteacher has a very simple but powerful philosophy that has served the school well for many years and has maintained the strengths identified at the last inspection. A strong ethos of care is balanced by high academic expectations of pupils and matched by an emphasis on pupils' personal development. Central to the school's aims is that pupils should develop the skills to become confident learners. They are valued as individuals and their achievements are celebrated in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Developing pupils' self worth and self-discipline are high on the school's agenda.

2. These aims are met very well because the whole school community is committed to them. The headteacher underplays her role and is modest about her own part in the school's success. She has been successful in building a good team and receives very good support from the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, who reinforce her vision for the school. As good practitioners, they are able to translate the school's vision into reality by supporting new staff, by modelling lessons, and through team teaching. All staff accept constructive criticism in a positive way because they are constantly striving to improve their practice.

3. Monitoring is well established and the headteacher and senior staff have a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses in teaching. A comprehensive programme of testing gives the school a wealth of information which staff use to set targets for pupils' achievement. Detailed analyses of pupils' attainment and annual progress have helped the school to identify weaknesses in areas of pupils' understanding. A determined approach to addressing the weaknesses has resulted in improvements in test results in science and mathematics that are secure and sustainable. The use of individual targets for writing is working effectively as a stimulus for raising standards, as pupils know exactly how to improve. Similar targets are due to be introduced in mathematics, which continues to be the school's main focus for development.

4. Since the last inspection, the school's test results have remained, on average, above the national results, with particular strengths in English. The issues from the inspection have been tackled well. Developments to information and communication technology (ICT) and to design and technology have led to improved standards and a broadening of the curriculum.

5. The role of subject co-ordinators has developed well. They carry out their responsibilities effectively, supporting their colleagues with guidance, training and advice. National initiatives have been embraced fully and successfully but without compromising the breadth of the curriculum.

6. The school development plan is a well focused document that incorporates the priorities identified through careful and systematic monitoring and the views of all staff and governors. Detailed action plans set a clear focus for co-ordinators to develop their subjects. Governors are fully involved in monitoring the school's progress; their regular visits are focused on checking the targets in the development plan, and their findings are recorded against the action plan tasks. Governors give the school strong support and have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are fully aware of the

school's achievements and make comparisons with what other schools achieve. Careful planning and monitoring of the budget ensure that governors are able to direct funding towards the school's priorities, such as the development of the ICT suite, or additional staffing to support group teaching in mathematics. They have well-established systems, including using pupils' assessment results, to evaluate the cost effectiveness of such spending decisions.

Standards are high in English, mathematics and science, and pupils make very good progress during their time in the school.

7. Attainment is broadly average when pupils start school at the age of seven, although standards in reading are frequently higher than in writing and mathematics. Standards in the current Year 3 are higher than in previous years. Pupils make very good progress during their time in the school and achieve consistently high standards in tests in English by the age of 11. Results in mathematics and science have fluctuated slightly over the last three years but are predicted to be high this year. Standards seen during lessons and in pupils' work in Year 6 were high in all three subjects.

8. Pupils' skills in reading are very well developed by Year 6. They skim and scan texts quickly and efficiently to identify key themes and ideas, and to find information in non-fiction texts. They have a well-developed understanding that they should use only the relevant material from the extract, and demonstrate this by picking out key phrases and facts. Teachers use demanding texts, such as Auden's poem 'Wall Soldier', which capitalise on good links with other subjects. Pupils read accurately and infer what the author meant by 'reading between the lines'.

9. One of the reasons for the very good progress pupils make in writing is the regular review of their individual targets for improvement and the good quality of the teachers' marking, which tells them exactly what to do to improve. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of different styles of writing and write for a very good range of purposes. A strength of the school is the way in which writing skills are developed through other curriculum subjects so that pupils learn to adapt their style of writing to its intended purpose. The skills of editing and redrafting are used to good effect in the work of the pupils in Year 6, who are developing good skills in using descriptive language. They write at length and make good choices of imaginative vocabulary to bring characters to life. They use dialogue effectively and punctuate their work correctly. Spelling strategies are developed well with regular practice, and most pupils' work is correctly punctuated and structured into paragraphs. Teachers encourage good handwriting and presentation from an early age.

10. Pupils are articulate. They have a good ability to ask and answer questions, to discuss ideas together and to listen and learn from others. This is a notable feature of many lessons. Teachers frequently use drama to help pupils understand different viewpoints and as a focus for writing. The extensive vocabulary pupils use in their written work stems from the good opportunities they have to explain their thinking.

11. The school's focus on improving standards in mathematics is paying dividends. It is achieved by setting pupils into similar ability groups in Year 6, and by having support groups and extension groups in all years. By Year 6, nearly all pupils are working at the levels expected for their age and a significant proportion, around a half, are attaining levels beyond expectations. Pupils have a good number sense and quickly recall number facts to help them correctly carry out complex calculations, such as long multiplication and long division. They apply what they know to solving problems, work confidently with negative

numbers, and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants. Throughout the school, there is good focus on teaching mental strategies, and pupils are encouraged to devise their own methods. Teachers place great emphasis on pupils explaining how they work things out, and this helps them to clarify their thinking.

12. In science, pupils' skills develop well, particularly their ability to carry out investigations and experiments. For example, pupils in Year 4 understand how to conduct a 'fair test' by changing some variables while keeping others constant. They have been introduced to the notion of a 'control' test to use as a comparison and to give their experimentation validity. By Year 6, pupils make sensible predictions based on their already wide knowledge of scientific processes. They take accurate measurements that are recorded carefully in various formats, including using the computer to print out graphs. Pupils draw justifiable conclusions from their careful observations and give detailed explanations of scientific processes, using the correct terminology.

Teaching is good; exciting and stimulating activities generate high levels of interest and enthusiasm from pupils.

13. Teaching is good and frequently very good. Lessons are planned very thoroughly and build sequentially on pupils' previous learning. Weekly planning for literacy and numeracy is very good, with carefully structured activities that are pitched at different levels of difficulty to match the range of pupils' learning needs. Teachers have high expectations and are successful in their efforts to challenge pupils of all abilities. This has led to large number of pupils working at levels beyond those expected for their age. Pupils are not spoon-fed; they are encouraged to be independent learners and to develop the skills that will stand them in good stead in the future. In many lessons, the successful deployment of additional adults ensures that pupils who need it have a good level of support.

14. All lessons start in the same way; teachers tell pupils what they are expected to learn and how they will know that they have been successful by the end of the lesson. This consistent approach ensures that all pupils know what is expected of them. When this is combined with a review at the end of the lesson, to consider whether or not they have achieved what was expected, pupils have a real sense of achievement.

15. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They know that they are in school to learn and that they are expected to work hard. Most do! The level of participation in lessons is high. Pupils willingly attempt new learning because they have confidence in themselves and in the fact that their contributions will be valued by teachers and by their peers. Strong relationships are founded on mutual respect and trust, and underpinned by well-established routines and expectations. Pupils sustain a good level of concentration, interest and enthusiasm in lessons. These qualities are harnessed well by teachers through interesting and practical tasks which give a powerful sense of purpose to pupils' active learning. As well as providing a strong source of motivation, activities extend pupils' thinking skills and problem solving skills. Examples were seen in design and technology. Pupils in Year 3 had to work out how to assemble a simple pneumatic system, and pupils in Year 4 were planning a paper mechanism for a page in their history folders.

16. Teachers ask well-focused questions to challenge pupils, to extend their knowledge and to encourage them to work things out for themselves. Teachers build on pupils' responses to ask further questions which check and clarify their thinking. Pupils are encouraged to ask and answer sensible questions to make mature observations. Their sense of curiosity is carefully fostered. Teachers' explanations and demonstrations are effective, especially when they use visual resources. Very careful instructions ensure that

pupils have a framework for developing their ideas, and this increases the pace and efficiency of learning. A good balance between whole class teaching, group work and independent tasks helps to vary the organisation of lessons and to maintain a balance between instruction and practical activity. A strong emphasis on giving pupils opportunities to work collaboratively, for example to devise science experiments or make musical compositions, enables them to learn from each other.

17. Teachers create a stimulating environment in classrooms and in corridors by displaying pupils' work to great effect. This serves as a reminder of the standards expected, as well as celebrating pupils' achievements. High quality artwork adorns all areas of the school and makes a significant visual impact on all who work in, or visit, the school. Pupils emulate these high standards of presentation and take pride in their work.

18. Teachers make very good use of visual resources to stimulate pupils' interest and to give them a focus for their learning. For example, in a history lesson in Year 6, pupils were handling fragments of Roman pottery found on the school site during the recent building programme. The teacher's drew pupils' attention to the fact that they were touching pieces of two thousand year old pottery that were last touched by people who once lived on the school field. This had a profound effect on pupils as they tried to comprehend this amazing thought. Their response was excellent as they relished the task and became so absorbed that they did not want the lesson to end. This task was a good example of how pupils are challenged to devise questions for themselves and to use evidence to make deductions.

Very good provision for pupils' personal development, with opportunities to take responsibility and exercise self-discipline, fosters strong relationships and promotes very good behaviour.

19. The school has few rules, and yet pupils know what is expected of them. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong, which is consistently reinforced. By the age of 11, pupils' strong sense of self-discipline can be seen in the way they conduct themselves as they move around the school without close supervision. Before school starts, for example, pupils gather in the playground enjoying conversations with friends. At the signal of a whistle, pupils file into school in an orderly fashion without any regimentation. Behaviour is very good at all times and most pupils conform to the school's expectations of their behaviour. The few who experience difficulty in behaving themselves are helped by their teachers and by the very good example set by their peers.

20. Lunchtime is a social occasion. Noise levels are reasonable, allowing social conversation. Table monitors take responsibility for serving out food and for clearing away. There is little direct intervention from lunch supervisors, because the pupils demonstrate an impressive level of self-discipline.

21. Very good relationships underpin a positive ethos for learning. The level of mutual respect is high, and good working habits are well established. Care and consideration for others is fostered through schemes such as the playground 'buddies' and planned opportunities such as the annual 'Friendship Week'. Circle time gives a good focus for discussion about moral issues and opportunities to talk about how to improve the school. Pupils know who to turn to should they have a problem. They are confident that bullying is rare and that the school deals promptly and effectively with any incidents or disagreements.

22. Pupils get on very well with each other. They respect one another's ideas, and although they listen to each other they are not afraid to express contrary views. They are encouraged in this by their teachers. Pupils know that their ideas will be valued and their

feelings respected, both by the teachers and by other pupils. They work together effectively in pairs and groups, for example in science where pupils in Year 4 showed a mature approach to organising their roles in setting up an experiment. Pupils are kind and helpful, and polite and friendly, with a level of self-confidence that is beyond their years. Year 6 pupils are confident about transferring to secondary school; they say they feel well prepared but will be sorry to leave. Pupils new to the school say they settle quickly because everyone is so friendly.

23. The school recognises and nurtures pupils' interests through the wide range of activities on offer, and encourages pupils to share their talents and hobbies with each other. During inspection for example, the steel band played in assembly and spoke about the instruments to a captivated audience. In another assembly, a group of five girls gave an informative and interesting talk about their hobby of horse riding. Adults use positive approaches to support pupils and to boost their self-esteem. Pupils themselves are encouraged to recognise the achievements of others. Spontaneous applause in appreciation of the efforts of others is not uncommon during lessons.

24. The school council is truly democratic and gives valuable opportunities for pupils to participate in decision-making. It is run by the pupils for the pupils. The presence of a governor at each meeting gives testament to how seriously pupils' views are taken at this school. The pupils even organise their own fundraising activities and manage the resulting funds for projects agreed by council members. Much valuable and mature discussion takes place about the use of these funds. Recent purchases include wet play equipment, space hoppers and golf equipment. The members spoken to during inspection had a sensible and mature approach to their responsibility; they are confident that they 'make a difference' to the life of the school.

The well-considered curriculum incorporates a wide range of creative activities and benefits from strong links between subjects.

25. Central to the school's philosophy is that pupils should have access to a broad curriculum which develops not only a body of knowledge but also a breadth of skills that help them to become good learners. The curriculum has been developed over many years and is constantly reviewed and revised. Annually, slight adjustments are made in response to teachers' evaluation of how well pupils have received the activities on offer and as a result of identifying relative weaknesses in pupils' performance. A good number of visits, both locally and further afield, and a variety of visitors to the school add interest to pupils' learning. One of the school's main aims is to use 'first hand' and practical experiences to broaden the pupils' outlook and to introduce them to a range of cultural experiences. The school has successfully embraced the national strategies for literacy and numeracy but has not allowed these to dominate the curriculum. National guidelines have been used in other subjects where the school considers them applicable, but many have been modified to make them more relevant to the school's needs.

26. The curriculum is organised on a thematic basis in which half-termly units of work incorporate a number of subjects. The skilful way in which these are woven together allows for subjects to be taught in depth over time without detracting from each subject's knowledge and skills. There is nothing superficial or mechanistic about the way the subjects are linked. Each unit of work is carefully matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum and each subject has an adequate amount of time devoted to it. A

strength is the way in which the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and ICT are used across other subjects. Each unit of work is planned in detail and shows how pupils' knowledge and skills will be developed over the half term. Opportunities for assessment are identified, as are ways in which activities can be adapted to meet a range of learning needs.

27. Since the last inspection the breadth of the curriculum has been maintained, but the school has looked for ways to extend higher attaining pupils and to develop writing skills, which were seen as weaker than reading skills. The use of drama to explore ideas for writing has been given a strong focus across the curriculum. For example, a dramatic representation of the Roman invasion of Britain gave pupils a good insight into the actions and reactions of the Romans and the Celts, and gave pupils a stimulus for written work.

28. One of the reasons for their very positive attitudes to school is the wide range of activities available to pupils. The school runs an impressive number of clubs which are popular with pupils and much appreciated by parents. Pupils enjoy these and at the same time extend their learning, for example in reading, French, and chess, and they develop a wide range of skills in cookery, quilting, and gardening. The nature of lunchtime, early morning, and after-school activities is changed frequently to ensure a good level of appeal to suit most tastes and interests. There are opportunities for music through recorders, steel band and guitars, and for sport through netball, football, cricket, tennis, rounders, and athletics. These are balanced with academic clubs such as the homework club and extension mathematics and science clubs for Year 6. Pupils gain from playing together in sports teams and competing against other schools; they enjoy much success locally.

29. In a similar vein, lessons encompass knowledge and skills from several subjects and so help pupils to consolidate skills from one subject through another. Activities are presented in interesting ways. A strong emphasis on creative aspects of the curriculum results in the high standards in art and design by the end of Year 6 pupils. Long-term homework activities, given half-termly, frequently combine skills and knowledge from different aspects of the curriculum but have an artistic or design focus. For example, pupils in Year 6 had to create a three dimensional flower from any materials of their choice. This involved using many skills in art and design and technology, built up over several years, as well as reinforcing their scientific knowledge and understanding of plant life. The resulting models are of a high standard.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The level of consistency in the quality of teaching could be raised further.

30. As reported above, the overall quality of teaching is good and much is very good. However, there are slight inconsistencies in practice that need tackling in order to raise the quality still further. Senior staff are well aware, through their monitoring, that practice is not consistent in some classes. New policies and procedures concerning assessment and marking are still in the process of becoming embedded in the practice of all teachers.

31. There is room for improvement in the way that certain members of staff engage pupils in activities. Although the planning is common to all years groups, differences in teachers' interpretation of the plans leads to slight differences in pupils' experiences. The school has a clear framework for managing pupils' behaviour, and an increasing number of pupils joining the school demonstrate emotional difficulties and challenging behaviour. At times, individual teachers are too eager to resort to giving pupils 'time out' and this tends to lead to isolation from the main group of pupils.

32. The pace of lessons is affected when there is minor restlessness among pupils, which occurs when teachers spend too long introducing the lesson. This delays the start of the practical activities and slows the pace of work. At times, the review at the end of lessons is too brief to evaluate fully whether or not pupils have achieved the lesson's intentions. This reduces the chance for pupils to evaluate their own learning.

Stronger links could be forged with some parents with regard to the level of information about their children's progress.

33. Most parents are very positive about many aspects of the school's work. They appreciate how hard teachers work and recognise that the school has high expectations of pupils. More than 90 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the progress their children are making, the quality of teaching, and the quality of activities provided outside lessons. The majority are happy to approach the school with queries, are sure that pupils behave well, and are confident that their children enjoy school.

34. However, more than 20 percent could not endorse positive statements about the information they receive on their child's progress. The school endeavours to give parents information on the curriculum and to provide workshops and guidance on how parents can help their children at home. For example, parents are sent a list of what their children will be learning in each half term, so that they might help them at home. With the mathematics targets come a few ideas of ways to practise number skills and to develop mental strategies. While agreeing that the school sends out plenty of information about events, some parents would like more opportunities to find out how their children are progressing. The annual written reports are satisfactory but do not identify specific targets for improvement in pupils' work. This limits opportunities for parents to be aware of what pupils need to do to improve, and restricts opportunities for those who would want to help their children achieve those improvements. There is scope for the school to improve the usefulness of the information in the school reports. In common with most schools, the comments in reports on subjects other than English, mathematics and science are squeezed into a small amount of space and give a fairly broad view of what pupils have learnt during the year.

35. A similar proportion of parents (20 per cent) do not consider the school works closely with them. Inspectors judge that the school does try hard to involve the parents in school life, and many help in school with lessons, visits and after-school clubs. The parents' association is very active and raises considerable funds to support the school. The school has, in the past, surveyed parents on specific issues such as music tuition and homework but does not seek parents' views on a broad range of issues as a regular part of its evaluation process. The cause of the concern expressed by some parents is unclear and the precise nature of their need for information is uncertain. The school could do more to seek their views and to give parents more opportunities to be consulted on a range of issues.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. The school is very effective at evaluating its own success and in identifying what needs to be improved. It is pursuing the correct priorities to raise standards and meet pupils' needs. It should now:

- Improve the consistency of practice in teaching to raise the quality even further:
This is identified in the school's development plan.
- Strengthen links with parents, in particular by seeking ways to meet the needs of parents who feel they are not well informed about their child's progress.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	10	5	0	0	0
Percentage	7	41	35	17	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	373
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		80

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	50	42	92

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	43	40	47
	Girls	38	34	38
	Total	81	74	85
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	88 (88)	80 (80)	92 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	39	40	44
	Girls	36	34	37
	Total	75	74	81
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	82 (86)	80 (81)	88 (93)
	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	2
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	368
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes:****Y3 - Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	31

Education support staff:**Y3 - Y6**

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	319

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	829764.00
Total expenditure	810369.00
Expenditure per pupil	2173.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	79072.00
Balance carried forward to next year	98467.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
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)	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
Number of questionnaires returned

376
125

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	43	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	56	1	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	54	2	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	54	11	6	1
The teaching is good.	47	44	5	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	46	22	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	41	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	47	4	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	46	19	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	45	44	8	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	55	3	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	32	1	0	0