

INSPECTION REPORT

PITSEA INFANT SCHOOL

Basildon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114808

Headteacher: Miss L Higgins

Reporting inspector: Mrs A M Grainger
20782

Dates of inspection: 28th – 30th January 2002

Inspection number: 197104

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Road Pitsea Basildon Essex
Postcode:	SS13 3AB
Telephone number:	01268 553547
Fax number:	01268 556906
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Hannocks
Date of previous inspection:	6 th – 9 th May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
20782	Mrs A M Grainger	Registered inspector
9537	Mrs C Marden	Lay inspector
10611	Mr M James	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Ltd
National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Pitsea Infant School is situated on the eastern edge of Basildon. With 111 boys and girls attending full-time, and a further 29 children who are part-time in the reception year, the school is smaller than many other primary schools. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (14%) is below the national average. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. Most of the pupils on the school's special educational needs register have learning difficulties. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and no pupil has English as an additional language. A few traveller pupils attend the school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (33%) is above the national average. There is significant movement of pupils in and out of the school other than at the usual time of starting or joining. Last school year this amounted to a 25 per cent turnover of the school's population. Children begin in the reception year in the September of the school year in which they will be five. They attend part-time until the start of the term in which their fifth birthday falls. Most children have had some form of pre-school education before starting at the school. Taking the intake as a whole, children's attainment on entry is below that expected for their age.

The school is involved in a number of initiatives. It is one of 32 primary schools that make up the East Basildon Education Action Zone. The school has the Investors in People Award and a basic skills award. It is participating in the healthy schools initiative.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. It is by no means complacent and is striving to be even better. With its many significant strengths, it is well placed to achieve further improvement. The pupils now in Year 2 are achieving above average standards in reading and mathematics, and average standards in writing. This represents very good progress in reading and mathematics in relation to their attainment on entry, and good progress in writing. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and they behave very well. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make very good progress in reading and mathematics, and good progress in writing as they move up through the school. Pupils now in Year 2 are achieving above average standards in reading and mathematics, and average standards in writing.
- Teachers have high expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of achieving. They plan lessons with a clear focus on what they want pupils to learn, and they meet all pupils' needs well.
- Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour. They have very good relationships with each other and with the adults in school.
- The school gives a very high priority to the all-round development and pastoral care of each of its pupils. It provides a very secure and caring environment in which pupils grow in confidence.
- The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the school and is supported well by a staff team who are very committed to the further development of the school.
- The partnership with parents is excellent. The school reaches out to parents to involve them fully and to work closely with them.

What could be improved

- Not all children in the reception year have enough opportunities to learn through focused and purposeful play. Provision for children to learn through planned outdoor experiences is too narrow and infrequent.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in May 1997. The headteacher, staff

and governors have worked with determination to rectify the weaknesses found at that time and to bring about all-round improvement in the work of the school. The overall quality of teaching is very much better. Teachers have much higher expectations of what all pupils are capable of achieving. They accurately identify in lesson plans what pupils are to learn. They are much better at closely matching activities to the specific needs and interests of each pupil, particularly those with potential for higher attainment and those who have special educational needs. Information from assessment is used very well now to support teaching and learning, and teachers are better at checking each pupil's work and progress. As a result, standards have improved and pupils now achieve well.

A key issue arising from the last inspection was that the school should improve the standard of pupils' writing. Very good progress has been made in this and in raising standards more widely. Information and communication technology standards are better now. They are as expected nationally in Year 2, having been below the expected standards at the last inspection. The school ensures that all the aspects of information and communication technology required by the National Curriculum are taught. There have also been improvements in music, so that all aspects of this subject are covered well enough. The information provided for parents has improved and it is now very good.

The strengths in pupils' attitudes and behaviour have been built on so that they are now very good. This has been achieved by giving even more attention to the personal and social development of pupils. There is also increased emphasis on the development of independence and self-esteem. The general care for pupils' personal well-being is also better now. All these improvements are the result of better and well-focused leadership and management of the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	D	D	A	A*
writing	C	D	B	A*
mathematics	B	C	A	A*

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

very low E*

The above table shows a significant improvement in 2001 in the National Curriculum test results of pupils at the end of Year 2. This built on steady improvement within the school over the period since 1997. When compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was in the highest five per cent of schools. Inspection of pupils' school work shows that standards, at this point in the present Year 2, are above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. These pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are the most able, have made very good progress in reading and mathematics since entering the school. Their progress has been good in writing. The difference between the standard of pupils' school work now and the test results of 2001 reflects the natural variation of year groups. Girls tend to do better than boys in the tests in reading. The school is taking effective action to improve boys' reading standards.

Standards in science and information and communication technology are as expected nationally in Year 2 and pupils make steady progress in these subjects. Not enough evidence was gathered to make a firm judgement on the standard of work in other subjects.

Children in the reception year, including those with special educational needs and the most able, make

good progress in all areas of learning. Most are on course to achieve the standards expected at the end of the reception year. A few are likely to exceed the expected standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are well motivated and keen to do well. They work hard and are proud of their successes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school, including when at play. Lunch times are pleasant social occasions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work and play very amicably together and show concern for each other. They get on very well with the adults in school. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is well below the national average.

Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour, relationships and positive response to the opportunities for their personal development all help them to learn well. The poor attendance of a few pupils is a concern to the school because it restricts their progress and the standards they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection, 17 lessons were observed. Teaching and learning were at least good in three-quarters of them, including instances of very good and even excellent teaching. Very good lessons were seen in the reception year and in Year 2 in mathematics. An excellent lesson in the area of personal, social and emotional development was seen in the reception year. There were no unsatisfactory lessons.

Teaching and learning in English are good overall. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy is very good. Teachers are particularly effective in developing pupils' basic skills in reading and spelling. Teaching and learning in mathematics, including the basic skills of numeracy, are very good. In science and information and communication technology, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Not enough information was gathered to make a firm judgement on teaching and learning in other subjects. In the reception year, teaching is effective across all the areas of learning for children of this age. There is scope, however, for teachers to make more use of the outdoor environment to support children's learning. Throughout the school, teachers meet the individual needs of all pupils well, including those with special educational needs and the most able.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the	Good overall. Learning opportunities in lessons for pupils in Years 1 and

curriculum	2 are good. The range of activities additional to lessons is excellent, and there is good enrichment through visits to places of interest and the use of visitors to school. The learning opportunities in the reception year are satisfactory overall. Many good indoor activities are provided but not all children have enough opportunities to learn out of doors or through purposeful play.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified very quickly. The school responds sensitively to pupils with special educational needs. It ensures that they get the support they need to achieve as well as they can.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Emphasis is given to pupils' all-round development. Much is done to boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem, for example they have many opportunities for taking responsibility. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. All the procedures for ensuring pupils' well-being and health and safety at school are very good. A high priority is given to the pastoral care of pupils. The school is doing all that it can to improve the attendance rate.

The partnership with parents is excellent. The school makes tremendous efforts to involve parents and work closely with them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the work of the school. Her leadership has been instrumental in building a staff team committed to school improvement and providing the best for pupils. This results in the effective promotion of good standards for all pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work closely with the headteacher and staff to determine the priorities for further improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher, staff and governors look critically at how well the school is doing. Thorough evaluation of the school's performance leads to effective identification of action needed to develop the school's provision.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All financial and other resources are well targeted on meeting pupils' needs. Careful consideration is given to whether the school is providing the best value for pupils and parents.

The school is very well staffed. All teachers and support staff are well deployed to meet pupils' needs. There is enough accommodation and sufficient resources to support teachers in delivering the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few parents would like more activities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are expected to work hard. • Their children make good progress. • The school is approachable and works well with them. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children like school. 	outside lessons.
---	------------------

Parents have very positive views of the school, and inspectors agree with them. Inspectors find that the range of activities outside lessons, such as clubs, is far greater than in most infant schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make very good progress in reading and mathematics, and good progress in writing as they move up through the school. Pupils now in Year 2 are achieving above average standards in reading and mathematics, and average standards in writing.

1. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were well above the national average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. Compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance in 2001 was in the highest five per cent of schools in all three areas. Since the school's last inspection in 1997 there has been a steady improvement in the standards pupils achieve. In 1997, pupils' results were well below the national average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work shows that standards at this point in the present Year 2 are above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. The pupils now in Year 2 have made very good progress in reading and mathematics and good progress in writing in relation to their attainment when they started at the school. The difference between the present standards and those achieved in the tests last year simply reflects variations between year groups of pupils. Girls tend to do better than boys in the tests in reading, but girls and boys do equally well in writing and mathematics.
2. Pupils in Year 2 read accurately. They make particularly effective use of strategies such as sounding out letters, or breaking down an unfamiliar word into small sections to work out what it might be. Many average pupils readily work out words such as 'curtains' and 'musical'. Many pupils read with good expression. They understand, for example, the implications of exclamation marks or large bold text for how a particular part should be read. Pupils appreciate the language in the text, such as repetition of phrases like 'dark, dark' in a 'Dark, Dark Tale'. Higher attaining pupils read particularly fluently for their age and appreciate humour in the text. While lower attaining pupils read much more falteringly, they persevere in using sound basic strategies. They look carefully at the pictures to get clues as to what an unfamiliar word might be. Most pupils confidently use non-fiction books to find information. They know, for example, how to use the contents and index pages. A particular strength in pupils' writing is their spelling. Most Year 2 pupils write at the length expected for their age and a few higher attaining pupils write at good length. Pupils are successfully increasing their awareness of story structure, and higher attaining pupils develop their ideas well. Most pupils form letters well and a few higher attaining pupils are starting to join them.
3. In mathematics, Year 2 pupils successfully undertake a range of practical investigations and problem-solving activities. They use diagrams and correct mathematical language to explain their work, for example in measuring and weighing. Higher attaining pupils organise their own work. They have a good level of independence in trying out different approaches when solving a problem. Most pupils work competently with addition and subtraction to 20 and understand higher numbers. The higher attaining pupils work with place value to 100 and beyond, and make suitable use of approximates. They are confident in using multiplication and division involving two, three, five and ten. Most pupils recognise fractions such as halves and quarters. In their work on shape, space and measure, pupils identify a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and describe their properties. They use standard and non-standard units of measurement, especially for length. They tell the time on the hour and half hour, with higher attaining

pupils also telling it on the quarter hour. Pupils collect information on favourite things, such as colours or flavours of ice cream, and accurately represent it as bar charts. A few lower attaining pupils are less confident in the use of standard units of measurement, and are unsure about quarters although they understand halves. They tell the time on the hour only and lack confidence in using multiplication. They work with smaller numbers than other pupils.

4. Pupils' strong progress and the standards achieved are the result of the school's determined efforts to ensure that each pupil achieves as well as he or she is capable of doing. Intrinsic to this is the school's willingness to take on new ideas, engage in initiatives, and continually review the way it teaches pupils. The school is participating in the University of Warwick Early Reading Research Project (ERR). This involves the intensive teaching of basic literacy skills. It focuses specifically on developing pupils' knowledge of letter sounds, their skills in blending sounds and building words, and their sight recognition of an increasing number of frequently used words. Each day all classes, from reception to Year 2, have two sessions of 10 to 15 minutes ERR work. Teachers and pupils know the routines of these sessions well and pupils make rapid progress during them. The programme increases in difficulty as pupils move up through the school, and each session builds very effectively on what pupils have already learned. Often, the words and sounds learned are varied for groups of pupils of differing prior attainment. Pupils respond with high levels of concentration because the activities are very focused and teachers ensure that the pace of the sessions is brisk. Pupils are fully aware of the purpose of these sessions. Those in Year 2 speak confidently about how the sessions are helping them with their reading and spelling. They are proud of how many words they know.
5. There is good development of early writing skills; for instance, reception children have tracing books in which they practise writing their names. Teachers use these tracing activities very well to identify each child's stage of development in pencil control and letter formation. Diagnostic comments are written alongside children's efforts in their books. Children take pride in seeing how their writing is improving as they fold back the pages to compare their most recent writing with their early attempts when they started at school. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 build well on the good start made in the reception year. Pupils steadily increase the amount they write and develop their understanding of story structure well. Lessons seen during the inspection showed teachers giving effective help to pupils in planning stories. Teachers support pupils in carefully considering the setting of their stories and learning how to develop them with a clear beginning, middle and end. Good attention is also given to how to use lively and interesting language, for example to describe the setting of the story and the key events. There is additional challenge for higher attaining pupils through extra story writing or other longer pieces of writing. Each pupil has a book with examples of their writing, called 'A Celebration of Infant Progress'. Pupils are able to see the clear evidence of their progress in these books, which they take home when they leave the school at the end of Year 2.
6. The school gives very good attention to developing pupils' basic numeracy skills and to covering all the required aspects of mathematics for pupils of this age. In the reception year, and in Years 1 and 2, there is a strong and effective emphasis on learning through practical activities and exploration. During well-selected practical activities in the reception year, teachers and other adults talk to children, successfully developing their understanding and use of mathematical language. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs were helped in a Year 2 lesson to increase their understanding of block graphs through building one with cubes. Quick paced mental activities at the start of numeracy lessons in Years 1 and 2 successfully develop pupils'

mathematical thinking and skills in activities such as estimating, counting and explaining their reasoning. In all mathematical activities in Years 1 and 2, there is good attention to meeting the full range of pupils' needs. Those in need of extra challenge get it, and there is additional support for those who require help to understand a mathematical concept in a more step-by-step way.

7. The school is using the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very effectively to raise standards. Good attention is given to how literacy and numeracy can be promoted through other subjects. The setting of challenging targets for individual pupils, and the termly review of these, is also raising standards. There is very close checking of each pupil's progress. The very strong partnership with parents is yet another aspect of what the school does to support pupils in making effective progress.

Teachers have high expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of achieving. They plan lessons with a clear focus on what they want pupils to learn, and they meet all pupils' needs well.

8. The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection. Although teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory overall at that time, there was a high proportion of less than satisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2. Now, the overall quality of teaching and learning is good and there are instances of very good and even excellent lessons. The improved quality of teaching has been a key factor in raising standards. In particular, teachers have high expectations for all pupils. They plan lessons with a clear awareness of what they want pupils to learn, and take good account of the range of pupils' needs in the mixed ability classes. Teachers are very effective in developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
9. In the reception year, a good emphasis on developing children's independence as learners provides a strong foundation for their work in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have high expectations of even the youngest children's capacity to organise themselves and settle quickly to work. In an excellent lesson seen at the start of one morning during the inspection, the teacher of the youngest reception children had organised a stimulating and imaginative range of activities. Children were expected to settle themselves quickly on arrival in the classroom and to choose an activity, such as writing a postcard. In this class, the teacher communicates high expectations of children's level of understanding and pushes them on to higher achievement through focused questioning. She also makes full use of every moment to promote children's learning. Pupils are carefully steered towards expressing ideas clearly. When a group of children using a remote controlled car found that it fell from the sides of the road they had built with construction bricks, they knew that some adaptation of the road was necessary. As the children tried to say what was wrong with the road, the teacher asked, "Do you mean it should be wider?". This required the children to think mathematically and to express their ideas clearly. There are high expectations in this class of children's capacity for imaginative play and their ability to sustain ideas in 'make believe' situations. This was seen, for instance, in an excellent role-play activity in which the teacher took the children on a pretend journey to Africa in a boat, with a storm during the journey.
10. In a very good mathematics lesson in the Year 2 class, the brisk pace of the lesson, together with activities that appealed to the pupils, reflected the teacher's high expectations. The result was that pupils found the lesson fun, were well motivated and achieved very well. Pupils quickly developed their understanding of bar graphs as the teacher worked with the whole class to gather data and make an example chart. Pupils' interest was captivated by the activity of finding out what is the most popular number of letters in the first names of each of the class and then recording this information as a

bar graph. As a result of this, and the following group activities, pupils rapidly developed their understanding of how data can be gathered and interpreted. Not only was the teacher very clear about what she wanted pupils to learn in this lesson, but she also used the other two available adults fully. In this way, all groups of pupils made very good progress. Those with special educational needs had a practical activity with intensive adult support that developed their understanding very effectively. Higher attaining pupils had a more challenging task. This task required them to be independent as learners, but there was also frequent checking of how they were getting on. The use of questions such as "How do you know?" made pupils think more deeply and explain how they arrived at answers.

11. Throughout the school, teachers explain carefully what they want pupils to learn in each lesson. This means that pupils are clear about what is expected of them and what they are aiming to achieve. Activities are also explained clearly so that pupils settle quickly to tasks and make full use of the time available. Pupils' own ideas are valued and this boosts their confidence. In a Year 1 and 2 English lesson, this valuing of their ideas made pupils feel it was safe to 'have a go' when making suggestions for a story setting. In English lessons, when the teacher models writing for the class to give them an example, expectations of standards of work are clearly communicated.
12. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' capacity to express opinions both on matters that are of significance to them personally and on those that are of wider relevance. In a Year 2 personal and social education lesson, pupils were supported well to give their own ideas about how to care for our world. Good questioning by the teacher maintained a clear focus and helped pupils to develop an understanding of the moral dimension of a story. Teachers plan carefully for effective use of all adults to support pupils' learning. In a Year 1 geography lesson, pupils made good progress in considering how safety for pedestrians in the area near the school might be improved. While all pupils were writing to the local council about a cycle path, the difficulty of the task was varied to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. All were able to achieve well because the adult support was carefully matched to the needs of each group. This was also seen in an art and design lesson in the same class.

Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour. They have very good relationships with each other and with the adults in the school.

13. The last inspection found many positive features to pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships. All these strengths have been maintained and developed further. Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and relationships are all very good. Many children's personal, social and emotional development is below that expected for their age when they start in the reception year. They make good progress in this area. Almost all children are firmly on course to achieve the standards expected in this area at the end of the reception year. A few are likely to exceed them. Children settle quickly when they arrive at school in the morning. Through the clear routines established by teachers, they know what is expected of them and get on with it, for example choosing a writing activity. When gathered on the carpet for work on letter sounds and word recognition, children pay careful attention to the teacher. They know when it is their turn to say a sound and respond quickly. When it is the teacher's turn, they listen carefully. Children play well together and willingly help each other, for example one child was heard asking another how to make a programmable toy work. They take turns, for instance when working in pairs on the computer. They co-operate well, as when building a tower for a programmable toy to knock down or when making a road for a remote controlled car. When it is time to tidy away toys and resources, children happily work together on this.

14. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning. They want to learn and are keen to do their best because the teaching is imaginative and activities are well matched to their individual needs. When gathered together on the carpet for a lesson introduction or discussion, pupils pay good attention to their teachers. They listen carefully to instructions and follow them well. This was seen in a Years 1 and 2 music lesson when pupils selected instruments from a trolley and then sat sensibly with them, playing them only when told to do so. As a result of teachers' careful explanations of activities, pupils maintain good involvement when working at tasks at their tables, even when the teacher and teaching assistants are working with other groups. Pupils are proud of their achievements, such as when they increase the number of words they know. They take pleasure in getting the right answer in mathematics and respond well to the teacher's praise, for instance as they estimate the number of cubes in a pile in Year 2.
15. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils clearly understand what is expected of them because all adults consistently reward good behaviour and make clear what is not acceptable. Pupils move about their classrooms sensibly. At assembly time, pupils enter the hall quietly and sit sensibly and still on the floor. They pay good attention throughout. They are aware of other people when moving about the school, and move in a neat orderly line when going to the hall for physical education or moving to the computer room. Behaviour on the playground is very good, where they are well supervised. Pupils appreciate the games and activities that are organised for them at lunch times and they play very amicably together. They use the equipment such as beanbags safely. Lunch in the dining hall is a pleasant social occasion. Pupils are well mannered and eat sensibly together. No pupil has been excluded from school since the last inspection.
16. Pupils get on very well with the adults in the school. They know that the adults do much to help them and they readily turn to them if they need help. Pupils are friendly but respectful, and are courteous and polite. They work well together in lessons. All groups of pupils mix well and readily help each other, especially those with special educational needs. Pupils new to the school are welcomed by the other pupils and quickly make friends. There is no sign of bullying. Pupils take care of their school. They respect the school's property and that of other pupils. They respond positively to the many opportunities for their personal development, which result in them taking responsibility and showing initiative.

The school gives a very high priority to the all-round development and pastoral care of each of its pupils. It provides a very secure and caring environment in which pupils grow in confidence.

17. The last inspection found many strengths in the provision for pupils' personal development and in the care provided for their well being. All of these strengths have been maintained and built on further. The provision in this area is now very good. The headteacher and staff recognise that, if pupils are to achieve well, they need to feel valued, to have good self-esteem and to be confident. The school gives this a very high priority.
18. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. A school council has been established since the last inspection. Children as young as those in the reception year have the opportunity to be school councillors. They respond well to the responsibility this brings and recognise that they have a duty to care for all their class. In 'circle time', when pupils sit together in a circle to discuss matters of importance to them, pupils'

opinions and ideas are valued. The school successfully encourages them to respect the views of others and to be confident in saying what they think and feel. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on what they have learned in such sessions, for example through closing their eyes and thinking quietly for themselves. Moments of reflection in assemblies also encourage pupils to think about how they feel and how their actions affect others. During one assembly, for example, pupils thought about things they had done that had made them sorry. All adults provide pupils with very good role models for behaviour towards others. They clearly teach pupils the difference between right and wrong.

19. An excellent range of activities additional to lessons, such as clubs, give pupils the opportunity to pursue individual interests. This helps pupils to develop socially through working and playing together in a situation different from that of lessons. Pupils have the chance to participate in sports or, for example, to join the computer, gardening or chess clubs. A very good variety of organised playground games at lunch times, ranging from games of 'stick in the mud tig', to throwing beanbags or playing with glove puppets, further helps pupils to mix together socially. Pupils' horizons are widened through visits, such as to the science and toy museums, and by the many visitors who talk to pupils.
20. There is very effective pastoral care. The headteacher and staff know pupils well and are very sensitive to their individual needs. Whilst pupils can share their worries together in 'circle time', they also have access to a very effective way of confiding their concerns to the headteacher. This is done through a 'No Worries' box outside the headteacher's office. Pupils greatly appreciate this system and feel comfortable using it. They know that their worries will be responded to swiftly.
21. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. All staff have had recent in-school training on child protection and are mindful of the importance of being vigilant. There are very effective procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and for areas such as first aid. The school takes bullying very seriously and has clear procedures for dealing with it should an incident arise. There are very effective procedures for promoting good behaviour. The emphasis is on all pupils being happy at school and able to learn without fear. Although attendance is well below the national average, the school does all that it can to improve the attendance levels. Parents are contacted before 10 o'clock in the morning on the first day of a pupil's absence. Since this first-day calling system has been in place, parents have become quicker at letting the school know if their child is absent. The school has been successful in reducing the amount of unauthorised absence since the last inspection. The headteacher is very aware of how absence adversely affects the progress and standards achieved by the few pupils involved.
22. The school very effectively checks each pupil's attainment and progress. Challenging targets are set for each pupil in reading, writing and mathematics, and these are reviewed termly. If pupils do not make enough progress towards their targets, extra support is given in lessons to help them. If progress does not improve enough, then the school looks to see if the pupil has special educational needs and takes the necessary action to give individual support. A very thorough analysis of all assessment information begins with the baseline assessment of children on entry to the reception year. The school is highly effective in identifying pupils' special educational needs early. It is because of this early intervention, that the percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is lower now than at the last inspection.
23. The school is also successful in identifying talented and gifted pupils, and carefully checks their progress. It keeps a register of these pupils and gives them additional

challenge and support. The school identifies differences in the performance of boys and girls. It also checks to see how well other groups of pupils, such as those from traveller backgrounds or from ethnic minority groups, are doing. In view of the better performance of girls than boys in the National Curriculum reading tests at the end of Year 2, books aimed particularly at boys have been purchased. Action is also taken to address this imbalance in how boys and girls are doing from the moment children enter the reception year. In addition to the thorough checking of pupils' academic progress, the school effectively assesses and records their personal development.

The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the school and is supported well by a staff team who are committed to the further development of the school.

24. The leadership and management of the school are much better now than when the school was last inspected. At that time, they were found to be satisfactory. The improvements are reflected in the significantly better quality of education now provided. The headteacher is very clearly focused on ensuring that the school does its best for each of its pupils. She sees it as paramount that they have the opportunity to achieve as well as they can at this important early stage of their education. The aims of the school are very well reflected in all that it does. The headteacher trusts the staff to give of their best, but she is also prepared to challenge poor performance, and has done so when necessary. Staff appreciate the headteacher's trust of them and respond well. The delegation of tasks is effective and linked to a clear identification of the strengths of individual teachers. Co-ordinators are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are giving effective leadership for their areas of responsibility. There is strong teamwork in the school and a clear, shared vision for its further development. The staff are by no means complacent, and the school is very well placed to improve further.
25. The checking of the school's work and identification of areas for development are very thorough and focused. The process involves the whole staff. Teachers have a very open approach to school development and by no means see the checking of their work as threatening. They observe each other in the classroom and provide mutual support. Some classroom observations are undertaken by teachers in their roles as co-ordinators, for example to look specifically at how well the time at the end of literacy lessons is being used. Teachers also request observations from colleagues, for instance when they want 'an external eye' to evaluate and guide them in a particular aspect of their work. The checking of classroom practice by the headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator, and subject co-ordinators, and by general observations of teachers by each other, has led to much greater consistency in the quality of teaching. Other strategies that are used effectively include the scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, discussions with pupils and parents, and informal walkabouts by the headteacher. The effective implementation of performance management, including threshold assessment, has also played a part. A key issue arising from the last inspection was the need to improve the quality and consistency of the teaching in Years 1 and 2. This has been achieved with considerable success.
26. The governing body is well informed by the headteacher and staff and also has some effective independent strategies for gathering information about the school's performance. The governors have faith in the headteacher and staff and recognise the very clear professional lead of the headteacher. They too play a strong role in the development of the school.

The partnership with parents is excellent. The school reaches out to parents to involve them fully and to work closely with them.

27. The headteacher and staff are keenly aware of the need to work in close partnership with parents to be fully effective in meeting pupils' needs. The school goes out of its way to achieve this. An example of this is the involvement of parents in supporting pupils to achieve their academic targets. The school also sets personal targets for pupils in consultation with parents. These may include, for example, going to bed on time or the development of independence in getting dressed. The parents attending the pre-inspection parents' meeting spoke knowledgeably about their children's academic targets and those relating, for instance, to behaviour. Parents communicated a very strong and shared commitment between home and school in helping pupils to achieve their targets.
28. The school gives very good information to parents. It starts to work closely with parents even before their children begin school. There are individual interviews with parents and children before they start at school. Workshops are held for new parents to help them to know how best to support their children's learning. Pupils' targets are shared with parents at termly consultation evenings. In addition, open evenings are held and there are weekly open afternoons when parents are invited into their children's classrooms. The school's 'open door' policy means that parents are able to approach the school at any time. Pupils with behavioural difficulties have home-school behaviour books so that they can see that their parents and the school are working together. Annual written reports to parents on their children's progress have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Other information is provided through regular newsletters and a readable and informative prospectus.
29. Parents greatly appreciate the school's efforts to involve them and the closeness of the partnership with them. They feel welcomed in school and are comfortable approaching the headteacher and other staff with any concerns they might have. They feel very well informed about their children's progress. Parents rightly see the school as being a very good one, and are happy with all that it does for their children.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Not all children in the reception year have enough opportunities to learn through focused and purposeful play. Provision for children to learn through planned outdoor experiences is too narrow and infrequent.

30. Children in the reception year are taught in two separate classes. One class is just for reception children and has ready access to a secure outdoor area. The other class also has Year 1 pupils whose work is linked to the start of the National Curriculum. This class is taught in a temporary classroom that does not have its own play area. There is, however, a grassy area and the main infant playground nearby. Nevertheless, the indoor and outdoor accommodation for this class restricts the range of learning opportunities the teacher is able to provide. Only children in the class exclusively for reception age children usually have daily access to outdoor activities, for example using the sand and water trays outdoors. Those taught with Year 1 pupils, particularly the youngest, or those seen to be in more need of play experiences, are given opportunities to work with the main reception class. While these opportunities are valuable, they are not available equally to all the children in this class. Furthermore, in themselves they are not enough.
31. Because attention of the teacher in the combined reception and Year 1 class is often with the Year 1 pupils, there is not enough adult involvement in reception children's play activities. A suitable range of activities is provided but not always with a clearly defined purpose. 'Pretend writing' of letters might, for example, be an activity that children can

choose, but it is not linked to a purpose such as taking the letters to a role-play post office. As a result, there are some missed opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their capacity for imaginative play. Children play freely with sand and dough, but without enough adult support, for example to talk about what they are doing. This means that their language is not being well enough developed at these times. They are not given the necessary encouragement, for example, to talk about the qualities of the dough, such as how it feels to touch.

32. There is also scope for the use of the outdoor environment to be increased. The co-ordinator for reception year provision has highlighted this in her plan for developing the learning opportunities. Some good activities take place in the main reception class but these too could be increased. Although the school has large wheeled and push and pull toys, they are not in daily use. At the time of the inspection, they had not been used for several weeks. This not only restricts the opportunities for children's physical development, but also misses opportunities to develop mathematical concepts and children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

33. In order to maintain the many very significant strengths of the school and to deal with the area identified for improvement, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
 - Increase the range of opportunities for all children in the reception year to learn through focused and purposeful play. This includes developing the use of the outdoor environment to give children a wider range of experiences.

The school has already identified the need to develop this area of provision. It is included in the Early Years Co-ordinator's action plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	7

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	2	10	4	0	0	0
Percentage	6	11	60	23	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 five percentage points

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	140
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	37

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	20

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.5
---------------------------	-----

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	26	18	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	26
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	42	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (85)	95 (78)	100 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	26
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	42	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (87)	100 (93)	100 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	139
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: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	340,415
Total expenditure	349,743
Expenditure per pupil	2,754
Balance brought forward from previous year	44,353
Balance carried forward to next year	35,025

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
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

22.1%

Number of questionnaires sent out

140

Number of questionnaires returned

31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	26	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	42	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	48	3	0	3
The teaching is good.	68	29	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	26	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	26	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	19	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	58	39	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	58	42	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	35	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	39	13	0	10

Not all answers total 100 per cent owing to rounding.