

INSPECTION REPORT

ST HELEN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124646

Headteacher: Mr P Golding

Reporting inspector: Terry Elston
20704

Dates of inspection: 12th – 13th March 2001

Inspection number: 197218

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body, St Helen's Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Rowe
Date of previous inspection:	December 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Helen's Primary School lies in the centre of Ipswich, and educates boys and girls aged between three and eleven. This is a large school, with 296 full-time pupils on roll, and 51 children attending part time in the Nursery. There are a few more girls than boys. Within the school is an Area Support Centre which, at present, educates seven pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The surrounding area is disadvantaged in social and economic terms, but the school also takes pupils from further afield, and pupils' attainment on entry is about average in all areas apart from language and literacy where it is significantly below average. Around 15 per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language, and 27 per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds; both these figures are high compared with the national average. At about 22 per cent, the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The school has about 14 per cent of pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is slightly lower than is found nationally. Eight pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is above average. The level of pupils' mobility is high, with 38 pupils leaving last year at times other than the normal ones, and 29 joining the school. The school has gained 'Beacon' status, and provides support for other schools in areas such as writing, the management of pupils' behaviour, raising standards attained by ethnic minority pupils and monitoring pupils' progress. The school is significantly over-subscribed.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Helen's is an outstanding school, which serves this diverse community very well. The excellent leadership combined with the very good quality of teaching throughout the school lead to very high standards of attainment and behaviour. These qualities, alongside the excellent systems to monitor its performance, mean that this school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' standards by the time they leave are well above average in English and mathematics, and very high in science.
- The excellent leadership of the school inspires pupils and teachers to strive for the highest standards in all of their work.
- The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school, because teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour.
- The school has excellent systems for monitoring pupils' progress, which are used very well to raise standards from year to year.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent, and mean that they make the best use of their time in school.

What could be improved

- Pupils attending the Area Support Centre are not integrated into the main school sufficiently.
- The accommodation is very cramped, and leaves the headteacher with nowhere to conduct confidential meetings, and pupils with minor injuries with no medical room in which to be treated.

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 improvement since the last inspection in 1996. The role of subject co-ordinators has developed very well, and they make significant contributions to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The school has made big improvements in the supply of reading books, and the way that pupils use them. The school has put in place all the required policies, and these all meet statutory requirements. The Nursery play area is now fenced and safe. The roles and responsibilities of the deputy headteacher are appropriate, and she makes a valuable contribution to the school's leadership.

Pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science are much higher than they were in the last inspection. They have moved up from average standards by Year 6 in English to well above average levels now. In science, pupils' standards are also well above average, compared with above average in 1996. In mathematics, pupils' work was average, and is now above average. Pupils' attainment by Year 2 is also better than before in all three subjects. The quality of teaching has improved further: there were no unsatisfactory lessons this time, and the proportion of good and very good lessons is much higher than before. In view of the high quality of the leadership and very good teaching, the school is very well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A	A	A*
Mathematics	B	A	B	A
Science	A	A	A	A*

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

Over the past three years, the school's results have been well above the national average overall, and have improved at a faster rate than schools nationally. The comparisons with pupils from similar schools show that these pupils achieve levels that put them in the top five per cent of this group. The excellent value added by the school is shown by looking at pupils' progress from their results when they were in Year 2, and comparing them with those they attained in Year 6. Using these figures, pupils' level of improvement was very high in English and science, and well above average in mathematics. This inspection confirms these standards. Year 6 pupils' literacy skills are well above average, and they make very good use of them in many other subjects. They read very well, and write lively, exciting stories and poems, many of which have been published or won awards. Year 6 pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good, and many speak confidently to large audiences. In mathematics, pupils' numeracy skills are well above average, and many have a very good feel for

number. The school has set ambitious targets for pupils in Year 6 to attain this year in English and mathematics, and they are on course to reach these standards. In science, pupils are particularly good at conducting investigations. Their knowledge of the human body is very good, as is their understanding of the life cycle of plants. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are above average by Year 6. They use computers confidently, and search the Internet skilfully to support their work in many other subjects. Pupils have very well developed artistic skills. Their paintings are exciting, and full of well-balanced colour. They sing very well, and many play musical instruments to a high standard.

In the Year 2 national assessment tests, pupils' attainment was well below average in writing and mathematics, and below average in reading. In science, the teachers' assessments show that standards were above average. These figures were distorted by a significant proportion of pupils in the Area Support Centre who took the tests. These pupils have now moved into the juniors, and this inspection finds that pupils' attainment by Year 2 has improved overall, and is now above average in reading, writing, science and mathematics. Pupils are well on course to achieve the school's targets this year for 94 per cent of them to at least attain national standards in English and mathematics. Their literacy and numeracy skills are good, and have benefited from the school's enthusiastic adaptation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Their scientific skills are well developed, and many have a good knowledge of plants and animals. Pupils have a good knowledge of computers, and use them well to support their work in literacy and mathematics.

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress, and nearly all attain the nationally agreed targets for very young children in all areas except language, where a few are still learning the basics of English. Children's reading is average, and a few are developing good writing skills. They have average mathematical skills, and are developing a good awareness of number and shape. They have a sound knowledge of the world around them. Children move confidently in physical education lessons, running, twisting and turning with good control. They have average creative skills, and mix and use colour confidently to paint portraits.

Given their average standards on entry to this school, and the significant proportion with English as an additional language, pupils achieve very well to reach such high standards by the time they leave. Pupils with special educational needs do well: they make good progress towards their targets, and many attain, or come close to, national standards by Year 6. More able pupils achieve appropriately high standards in all subjects. Their scores in the national tests show that many pupils read and write to a very good standard, and complete complex mathematical and scientific investigations with very good expertise.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are excellent, and are a significant reason why pupils do so well. Pupils love coming to school, and delight in their successes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is excellent. In classes, there is always an air of calm, and this means they are able to learn at a fast rate. In the playground, pupils play sensibly and there is no bullying.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good, and has a positive effect on their progress. Relationships are very good between all members of the school community.
Attendance	Good, and better than found nationally. This means that pupils make

	the most of their time in school.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Foundation Stage	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is very good, and promotes pupils’ learning very well. Of the 20 lessons seen, all were at least satisfactory, 95 per cent were good or better and 60 per cent were very good or excellent. Teachers are very good at applying the school’s behaviour policy in a consistent way, and this means that lessons take place in a calm atmosphere in which pupils can make the most of their time at school. Teachers teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy very well, systematically going over the processes that pupils need to learn, and this explains how pupils enter the school with only average skills and leave able to read, write and use number with considerable fluency. The youngest children have the benefit of a stimulating Foundation Stage curriculum, and lots of work to develop their early language and number skills. Here, the teachers are particularly good at teaching children to be independent, and they are soon able to organise their own work and play. Teachers in the infants build well on this start, and are particularly successful at developing pupils’ language, reading and mathematical skills. In the juniors, teachers push pupils hard to use and broaden their skills, and they respond so well that by Year 6, a high proportion are working at levels well above those expected of pupils their age. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils. Those with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive, and more able pupils are given many opportunities to develop their skills to the full. The support for pupils with English as an additional language, by class teachers and specialist staff, is very good, and nearly all who start the school in the Nursery attain at least national standards by Year 6.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The balance of the curriculum is very good, and well organised to give pupils a rich variety of experiences. The school has adopted the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies energetically, and this has had a powerful effect on pupils’ attainment. There is a good selection of extracurricular activities to extend pupils’ knowledge, and these have a particularly good effect on pupils’ skills in sports and music. The provision of personal, social and health education is very good. It gives pupils a good idea of how to live healthily, express their feelings and value the opinions of others.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is well organised. Pupils have very clear targets set for them, and their good progress is monitored carefully. Pupils in the Area Support Centre make steady progress, but spend too much of their time being

	taught as a separate group, and miss the stimulus of other pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good provision, which supports pupils well. They are included in all school activities, and quickly gain confidence in their use and understanding of English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is very good overall. Very good spiritual provision in assemblies and lessons gives pupils many chances to reflect on issues, and develop a good understanding of the place of God in their lives. Very strong moral provision teaches pupils how to behave as soon as they enter the school, and develop an excellent understanding of right and wrong. Very good social provision gives many opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills, and they work very well in groups. Children start to develop their independence in the Nursery, and by Year 6 work happily on their own initiative. Very good cultural provision supports pupils' knowledge of art, music and literature, and gives them a very clear understanding of the richness of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. Excellent assessment and tracking procedures mean that pupils' progress is monitored very carefully, and this helps teachers to provide very good support for pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership from the headteacher, who works tirelessly to look for every possible way to raise standards of teaching and learning. He has very good support from the deputy headteacher and senior staff. The school's rigorous analysis of how well teachers teach and pupils learn does much to ensure that all groups of pupils do well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the school very well, and all statutory requirements are met. They are committed to raising pupils' standards, give well-informed advice, and are very well led by a knowledgeable Chair.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses the performance of pupils and staff to an excellent standard. Pupils' progress, their strengths and weaknesses and their results in the national assessment tests are examined with great rigour, and are used very well to see where improvements can be made. The quality of teaching is monitored systematically by the headteacher, and teachers benefit from very good guidance about how they can improve the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning.

The strategic use of resources	Specific grants are used well to, for example, support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. The development plan is clear about its targets, and how much they will cost. The administration of the school's budget is very good, and the school has good procedures for judging how well money is spent.
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The accommodation is well maintained, but lacks space for the headteacher to have a room, and there is no medical room for either pupils or staff to use if they are unwell. There is a good supply of resources to support pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The very high standards achieved by pupils. • The very good teaching. • Excellent standards of behaviour. • The support for pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language. • The very strong leadership by the headteacher. 	Parents made no significant criticisms of the school.

Parents' comments in the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting were extremely positive. More than one parent said "This school is our best kept secret!"

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

By the time they leave, pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science

1. When pupils enter the school, their initial assessments show that they are average in all areas of their development except in language, where a significant proportion of pupils have very little English. In the latest national assessment tests for 11 year olds, pupils showed that they had made excellent progress, and their scores were above the national average in mathematics, and well above average in English and science. In comparison with similar schools, their scores were very high in English and science and well above average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard was just as impressive, with 50 per cent of pupils achieving Level 5 in English, 38 per cent in mathematics and 65 per cent in science. In English, one pupil attained Level 6, which is a very high score, and two pupils did so in mathematics. This inspection confirms the test results, and the very good improvement that pupils have made in these subjects since the previous OFSTED inspection, when their standards were average in English and mathematics and above average in science.

2. In Year 6, in English, pupils' reading is very well developed. The school sets pupils targets to achieve in their reading from an early stage, and many read with lots of confidence and expression. Pupils have responded very well to the school's strong focus on teaching more advanced reading skills. As a result, many have a good understanding of a story's plot, and how different characters develop. They skim text easily to search for information, and soon pick out the main points of a passage. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take part in dramatic productions, and many speak clearly, and adapt their speech very well to formal and informal situations. Those pupils with English as an additional language benefit from a weekly 'Bilingual Club' which provides good opportunities for them to build on the skills learned in lessons. Pupils' writing is a significant strength because the skills are taught from Year 1. The writing is neat, and pupils use punctuation well to make their message clear. Their use of expressive language is particularly good, especially when writing poetry. One Year 6 pupil, for example, wrote a poem following the Omagh bombing which showed startling understanding of how emotions can be portrayed in verse:

*' Confusion, silence
Shrivelled hearts they live no more,
Waterfalls of tears'*

Another displayed a mature and ironic style when writing about an 'Eco Warrior' as:

*' Like a wood spider clinging to a tree,
His web is tiny twigs dangling from the tree,
His prey stands below him:
Bulldozers and chainsaws.'*

3. In Year 6, in mathematics, pupils' numeracy skills are very well developed. Many pupils have a very good recall of number facts, and soon pick up new ways of working out complex sums in their

head. When working out how to subtract large numbers, for example, pupils think of their own way, and then use different methods devised by others. In this way, they develop a range of strategies which they can apply to other challenges. Their knowledge of multiplication tables is good, and they are confident with problems involving positive and negative decimals. Pupils check their answers by using the inverse operation, and this ensures that their work is accurate. Their work on co-ordinates in four quadrants is very good: nearly all confidently draw and label shapes with both positive and negative values. They solve complex problems involving patterns of numbers well, and soon see how the sequence is developing. Their knowledge of shape is very good, as illustrated by their work investigating lines of symmetry, and rotating shapes on a grid. Pupils are confident when handling data, and produce excellent line graphs to show the relationship between the hours they spend watching the television and those spent reading. They display particularly good skills and understanding when they compile a scatter graph to illustrate the relationship between the length of their hand and the circumference of their wrist. Pupils have a very good understanding of probability, and work comfortably with concepts such as 'fair' and 'likely'.

4. In science, Year 6 pupils' skills and knowledge are very well developed. Nearly all pupils are at least at the level of the national expectation, and two thirds of them are well beyond this. They organise their own experiments with very good expertise, and suggest a number of variables to test their theories about, for example, the factors affecting how an aircraft gains lift as it takes off. They have a very good knowledge of the organs of the human body, and how micro-organisms can be harmful as well as beneficial. Pupils' work on materials shows a very good awareness of how substances change, and the different qualities of natural and synthetic materials. Importantly, pupils are starting to think like scientists: they see a challenge, work out how to test a hypothesis, predict the result and put their theory to the test. Their recording is organised well, and this makes it easy for them to evaluate their experiments, and come to an informed conclusion.

The excellent leadership of the school inspires pupils and teachers to strive for the highest standards in all of their work.

5. The headteacher sets the standards at this school, and his keen eye for how even high standards can be improved lies at the heart of the school's success. He is everywhere, talking to pupils, supporting staff and meeting parents at the school gate. Parents are unanimous in their praise of him. The headteacher led the way in the application for 'Beacon' status, and the school's excellence in writing, the management of pupils' behaviour, raising standards attained by ethnic minority pupils and monitoring pupils' progress are now shared with others in the area. He is very well supported by a strong management team, who share his vision and high expectations. This team's analysis of the school's results set against a wide range of criteria provides the school with a clear idea of how these pupils are faring compared with others, and shows where the school can do better. The thorough analysis of pupils' performance in the national assessment tests highlights strengths and weaknesses within the school, and helps senior staff give support where necessary, or make changes to the curriculum. In this way, weaknesses in pupils' results in the mathematics tests were identified, and the school provided pupils with more experience of using their number skills, and specialist work to help them to make sense of the language in the test's questions. The improvements resulting from these initiatives meant that the school was able to raise its expectations for pupils in the forthcoming national assessment tests.

6. New staff are appointed with considerable regard for their personal qualities matched against the high expectations of the school, and are then given all the necessary support to develop their skills. In this way, the school has been able to appoint newly qualified teachers who have quickly become an integral part of the teaching force.
7. The leadership's effective role in monitoring and supporting the teaching staff is an important reason why the teaching is so good, and consistently so, throughout the school. The headteacher leads the way here, meeting with teachers first to discuss the previous observation, and looking at pupils' work to judge to what extent the targets have been met. These monitoring visits form the cornerstone of the good performance management structures in place, and teachers have responded well to this assessment of their practice.
8. The deputy headteacher works closely with the headteacher and staff. Her work in managing the assessment of pupils is of particular importance because it shows how well pupils and teachers are performing. The teachers in charge of the infant and junior stages fit well into the management system. They have a good overview of their key stage, and teachers value their contributions in meetings to plan lessons. The school uses its subject co-ordinators very well, and their role is much improved from the previous OFSTED inspection. Those for literacy and numeracy, in particular, have provided valuable guidance to teachers as they introduced the respective national strategies, and these lessons are working very well.
9. The governing body works closely with the school, and takes a keen interest in how well pupils and teachers are performing. Well led by a very knowledgeable Chair, the governing body keeps informed by looking at the school's results in the national assessment tests, going into classes and talking to teachers. In this way, they can see where problems arise and search for a solution. When, for example, Year 2 pupils' attainment in the tests last year was not considered high enough, they looked at all possible reasons and supported the mathematics co-ordinator in introducing a new set of resources. They are currently monitoring the effectiveness of this strategy.

The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school, because teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour.

10. The quality of teaching is very good, and accounts for the very good progress that pupils make. Of the 20 lessons seen, all were at least satisfactory, 95 per cent were good or better and 60 per cent were very good or excellent. This represents a significant improvement from the previous OFSTED inspection, when only half the lessons were judged at least good, and three were unsatisfactory.
11. The key to the successful teaching is in teachers' planning. This is very thorough, and profits from the useful joint planning meetings in each year group, and the part played in these meetings by subject co-ordinators and senior staff. These factors result in well informed plans, which are clear about what the lesson will teach specific groups of pupils, and how their progress will be measured. Teachers show a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and this gives pupils the confidence to ask questions to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. Teachers have adapted very well to the structures of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and all lessons are divided appropriately into sections where pupils learn skills, apply them and then evaluate how

much they have learned. Their direct teaching works well, particularly in these literacy and numeracy lessons, and this ensures that pupils learn basic skills effectively. Teachers are careful at the beginning of lessons to share with pupils what they should have learned by the end, and this works well. It helps pupils to focus on specific skills, and makes the teacher's assessment of pupils' learning accurate.

12. All teachers have high expectations of pupils, and settle for nothing less than their best work. This is why pupils can enter the school with barely average skills, or with English as a second or third language, and still exceed national expectations by Year 6. In fact, the school's analysis of the value added by its teaching shows that 97 per cent of pupils with English as an additional language who enter the Nursery and complete their schooling here attain at least national standards by Year 6 in all subjects.

13. Teachers produce lessons which are always challenging, and, because their assessments gained through testing or during plenary sessions are accurate, all pupils can succeed at their own level. The ability sets in Years 5 and 6 work very well in this respect, because the most able groups are taught to focus on applying their advanced skills, whilst teachers of the lower attaining groups make sure that they understand the more fundamental concepts without expecting too little of them. All lessons move at a fast pace, accelerating in Years 5 and 6, with teachers keeping pupils focused by reminding them of the time limits. This works well, and explains why, by Year 6, the most able pupils are well above the national average, and those with special educational needs are at, or are close to, nationally expected levels. In last year's national assessment tests, for example, all pupils attained at least Level 3, and one third of pupils in mathematics, nearly a half in English and around two thirds in science reached the higher Level 5. The extent to which the gifted pupils are stretched can be judged by the excellent standards attained by three pupils who attained the very high Level 6, and one who gained a Grade A pass in the General Certificate of Secondary Education in mathematics.

14. Teachers maintain pupils' enthusiasm and concentration by providing interesting lessons, which make the best use of stimulating resources, and give opportunities for pupils to be creative in their work. They use questions carefully to ensure that all pupils are thinking hard about the topic. To make this even more effective, teachers pitch questions at appropriate levels to different groups of pupils, so that those with special educational needs make equally valid contributions to the lesson as gifted pupils. Teachers are careful to focus on the language of the subject, so that all groups of pupils understand important concepts. In a very good numeracy lesson which exemplifies these strengths, pupils had to investigate how to check their answers to multiplication and division sums by applying the inverse operation. The teacher told pupils clearly about the objectives of the lesson, and then made very good use of earlier assessments by recapping on previous work that pupils were unsure of. During the very fast warm up, the teacher ensured that all pupils were confident with the basic idea, and understood what words such as 'inverse' meant. This was followed by a very good combination of direct, well-informed teaching of how to check your answers, and excellent questioning, which teased out pupils' knowledge of multiplication and division. In the plenary session, it was clear that pupils had learned a valuable skill, almost without knowing that they had been working. A final success was left to the very end, when one of the less able pupils was asked to check answers provided by more able pupils using a calculator. With great pride, he went carefully through the sums, and enjoyed his new-found importance.

15. In all lessons, there is an air of calm. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are so high and so clearly expressed that no-one calls out, no-one shouts and pupils are able to use every minute of lessons to learn. The school's policy of not allowing 'low level disruption' at any time works very well, and pupils learn from their first weeks in the Nursery that, in this school, this is how you behave.

The school has excellent systems for monitoring pupils' progress, which are used very well to raise standards from year to year.

16. A significant reason why standards are so high, and keep rising, lies in the school's assessment of pupils. This starts in the Nursery, where children's development in all areas of learning is tracked carefully, and provides Year 1 teachers with a comprehensive picture of pupils when they begin working on the National Curriculum. From then on, teachers use standardised assessments each year to plot pupils' progress. These are used to very good effect to set targets for pupils, which are shared with their parents to gain the maximum benefit from them. Pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is monitored annually by the respective subject co-ordinators, and this enables the school to make adjustments in the way the subject is planned and taught. To make the very best use of this information, all of these assessments are reviewed by the key stage co-ordinators, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, who is the assessment co-ordinator. In this way, resources and staff training are allocated to areas where standards need raising. Pupils' attainment in the national assessment tests is monitored carefully to see which questions pupils found difficult, and this initiates a search to find the reason. In this way, the school has made significant improvements in pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics by providing more structured writing lessons, and focusing on teaching pupils about the language of mathematics.

17. On a daily basis, teachers make very effective use of their lesson plans, and the clear targets they provide, by annotating on the plans how well pupils met the objectives. This provides clear evidence on which topics may need to be revisited. In the medium term, at the end of a topic, teachers make further good use of assessment by evaluating how well it has gone, and whether pupils have learned all of the necessary skills. Teachers' marking is precise, helpful to pupils, and follows a consistent pattern throughout the school. Comments such as '*..you knew what to do, but because you didn't set your sums out correctly, you added the wrong digits together!*' tell pupils clearly what they have done wrong in a positive way, and show them how they can improve.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent, and mean that they make the best use of their time in school.

18. Pupils' excellent attitudes to their work are a considerable strength of the school, and help to explain why standards are high. Parents are delighted that their children love coming to school, and that they are so keen to carry on their learning at home. As with most of the school's strengths, these attitudes start in the Foundation Stage. Very quickly, children in the Nursery and Reception classes learn what is expected of them, and they respond with great enthusiasm. They listen carefully to the teacher, develop a good level of independence and move around the room sensibly. They enjoy group work, concentrate well and mix easily with other children. By the time they reach the infant classes, pupils enter the classroom quietly, and are immediately ready to start work. They

sit eagerly awaiting the teacher's instructions, and respond instantly. When a teacher asks a question, pupils never call out, but always raise their hand. Pupils listen carefully to the contributions of others, and are delighted when someone else does well. When working in groups, they are very mature as they value other pupils' opinions. They are keen to help someone who is struggling with their work. These qualities were seen to good effect in a Year 1 lesson in the information and communication technology suite, when the teacher had introduced the topic in the classroom. Without any fuss, the pupils moved into the suite, and sat bright-eyed as the teacher introduced the next part of the lesson. They then sat in pairs to use the computers, and discussed with each other what they should do. Taking turns sensibly, they worked through the program until they had completed the task, and at no time did the teacher have to remind them to concentrate. When one group was stuck, another group just moved over and explained what was wrong, and, within seconds, the problem was solved. In the junior classes, pupils maintain their thirst for knowledge. They know they are doing well because their targets are challenging but achievable. They need less supervision as they get older, and by Year 6, they work at their mathematical and scientific investigations with a very good degree of independence.

19. Pupils' behaviour is excellent because that is what is expected of them. They learn to walk around the school sensibly, speak quietly, not to call out and listen carefully to the teacher and each other. As soon as they enter the school, pupils realise that only their best behaviour will be good enough. Consequently, teachers can trust pupils to work independently, hold discussions in the knowledge that they will respect each other's views and have fun with them without fear of losing control. This makes lessons enjoyable and very productive. Their behaviour is equally good in the playground, where small groups stand chatting, or play games sensibly.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Pupils attending the Area Support Centre are not integrated into the main school sufficiently.

20. Pupils with special educational needs who attend the Area Support Centre spend too much of their time being taught apart from the rest of the school, even for subjects such as physical education. This has one advantage of providing them with skilled teaching in very small groups, but denies them the stimulus of other pupils and different teachers. Some pupils have, in fact, had the same teacher for four years. None of the pupils has the sort of difficulties which could not be managed with support in the main school, and all would benefit from the stimulating language, very good teaching and excellent models of behaviour in mainstream classes.

The accommodation is very cramped, and leaves the headteacher with nowhere to conduct confidential meetings, and pupils with minor injuries with no medical room in which to be treated.

21. The school's accommodation provides sufficient space for all but the largest groups of pupils, but there is little 'extra' space. The space that exists has been adapted well for use by the Area Support Centre and the staff for pupils with English as an additional language, and the new information and communication technology suite is a very good resource. The lack of a room for the headteacher is, however, a significant weakness, and with nowhere that offers privacy, he has to conduct meetings with parents, visitors and teachers in any space that is available at that time. Whilst the headteacher copes well without an office, and has, indeed, 'donated' his old room for other uses, teachers find this unsatisfactory because they have nowhere to talk in confidence. The

absence of a medical room is a further shortcoming, and means that pupils with minor injuries have to be treated in the school office, or out in a corridor.

22. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to maintain the school's high standards, and improve the provision further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) include pupils in the Area Support Centre more in mainstream classes (paragraph 20), and**
- (2) investigate how the school could provide the headteacher with an office, and pupils and staff with a medical room (paragraph 21).**

24. PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	55	35	5	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	296
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		64

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	48

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	23	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	10	12
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	33	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79(75)	74(81)	79(69)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	15
	Girls	21	21	22
	Total	33	33	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79(79)	79(71)	88(73)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	20	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	20
	Girls	18	12	19
	Total	34	28	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85(90)	70(85)	98(95)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	17	20
	Girls	18	12	19
	Total	33	29	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83(93)	73(85)	98(98)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	25
Indian	2
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	27
Chinese	2
White	190
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.7
Average class size	20.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	169

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.4

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	672186
Total expenditure	652481
Expenditure per pupil	2105
Balance brought forward from previous year	30000
Balance carried forward to next year	49705

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	322
Number of questionnaires returned	180

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	63	35	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	33	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	34	7	2	1
The teaching is good.	62	34	0	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	39	4	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	32	5	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	54	33	11	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	65	32	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	34	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	27	12	6	5