

INSPECTION REPORT

BENTLEY WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bentley, Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104174

Headteacher: Mrs Glenys King

Reporting inspector: Mr Ian Jones
2758

Dates of inspection: 15 - 17 January 2001

Inspection number: 197743
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mike Lee
Date of previous inspection:	29 September 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bentley West Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Walsall in the West Midlands. There are currently three hundred and fifty-two pupils attending the school, plus a nursery catering for forty part-time children. Children are admitted into the nursery in the term after their third birthday and commence full-time education in the September following their fifth birthday. The number of pupils attending this larger than average school has remained stable over recent years. However, there is considerable movement of pupils into and away from the school. Consequently, nearly forty per cent of the pupils in Year 6 did not start their schooling at Bentley West. The school mainly serves a large local authority housing estate. The school's intake reflects the predominantly white population of the area. A higher than average proportion of the community is unemployed. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The attainment of most pupils on entry to the school is well below that found nationally, with their personal and social development and communication skills being particularly poor. Nearly a quarter of the pupils attending the school require additional support because of their special educational needs, which is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is also higher than the national average. The school has additional resources for teaching pupils who are profoundly deaf.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The overall attainment of the children is particularly low when they start at the school. However, the attainment of pupils when they transfer to secondary education at eleven years of age has improved significantly in recent years, particularly in mathematics and science. Although attainment in English has remained well below average, especially for pupils at the end of their primary schooling (Year 6), this is an area now showing signs of considerable improvement. Teaching in the school is currently good and pupils of all abilities now make good progress as they move through the school. The personal and social development of the pupils is very good. The leadership and management of the school are effective and efficient and have a clear focus on the specific learning and social needs of the pupils. Given the strengths and context of the school, it provides value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Standards of attainment are improving, particularly in science and mathematics.
- The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils are very good overall.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher who is supported by highly effective senior staff and governing body.

What could be improved

- The standards achieved in English in Years 3 to 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The overall development since the last inspection in September 1997 has been good. The school has raised the standards of attainment in all areas of the curriculum. In mathematics and science attainment has risen from well below to well above the average compared with similar schools nationally. Curriculum policies and guidelines are now in place for all areas of the curriculum. The school has introduced procedures and practices for developing the teaching skills of the staff. These strategies have been successful with the result that the quality and effectiveness of the teaching have improved since the last inspection. The school has recently created a computer room with networked computers to enhance the pupils' learning opportunities in information and communication technology.

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The standards attained in the school have improved significantly in mathematics and science over the last three years and are now above the average when compared with all primary schools nationally. This represents a considerable achievement as many of the pupils start from a very low level when they first join the school. Attainment in English for the older pupils has not improved at the same rate and remains well below the standards achieved nationally. The pupils' current work in English is showing clear signs of improvement, but standards still remain below the level expected for pupils of their age.

The school sets targets for pupils to achieve in their academic work. These targets do move the pupils on in their learning, particularly in science and mathematics, but in English they are sometimes insufficiently challenging.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have a very good attitude towards all aspects of their school life. They are enthusiastic about their work and enjoy the wide range of opportunities provided by the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The behaviour of the pupils is generally calm and co-operative.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils work well together, support one another in their learning and demonstrate good social skills.
Attendance	The school works hard to encourage regular attendance. Most pupils do attend regularly, but absences are above the national average.

The personal, social and emotional development of the pupils is considered a priority by the school. The provision for this aspect of the pupils' development is very effective and helps them to make good overall progress, socially and academically.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very 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.

For this short inspection, the inspectors visited the school for two days and observed the teaching of twenty-two lessons. The teaching of English and mathematics was observed throughout the school and included pupils from the full age range. Although this is a small overall sample for a school of this size, it does provide an overview of the quality of teaching in the school.

The quality of teaching observed ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. In ninety-five per cent of lessons seen (twenty-one lessons), the teaching was satisfactory or better. In sixty-five per cent of lessons (fourteen lessons) teaching was good or better, and in twenty-eight per cent (six lessons) it was very good or better. In one lesson (less than five per cent of the sample) teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. The overall good teaching observed throughout the school is effective in supporting and guiding pupils' learning so that they make good overall progress.

The skills of literacy and numeracy are currently well taught and have resulted in the standards of attainment in mathematics rising significantly and the attainment in English showing clear signs of improvement. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is consistently very good. Overall, the school is effective in meeting the needs of all the pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, appropriately includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school's provision and its procedures for pupils with special educational needs are very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their actions and thoughts and the impact that their actions have on others. Their understanding of other cultures is developed through all areas of the curriculum. The school plans carefully for the social and moral development of each pupil, particularly in the nursery and Reception.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school has very effective child protection arrangements and procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. The teachers know individual pupils very well and are able to monitor effectively their development and provide necessary support and guidance.

The school's curriculum is well planned and provides all pupils, irrespective of their specific learning needs or background, with appropriate experiences that move them on in their learning at a good pace. However, sometimes the expectations for the pupils' work in English in Years 3 to 6 are too low. The school effectively cares for its pupils. The teachers carefully monitor the pupils' academic and personal development and, where necessary, appropriate support and guidance is provided.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is effectively and efficiently led and managed by the headteacher and senior staff, who are well supported by all members of staff. The headteacher has a clear perception of what constitutes excellence in education and uses her very wide professional expertise to move the school forward. She has a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is fully and very effectively involved in the work of the school. Its members work very hard to support the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
Aspect	Comment
The school's evaluation of its	The school effectively evaluates its own performance. It

performance	has a realistic understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has in place long-term strategies for its improvement. The school makes good use of the analysis of assessment results to identify area for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The governing body and the headteacher have a clear view of where the school is heading. The governors have made perceptive and accurate assessments of the school's long-term needs and put in place plans to support its priorities through careful financial planning. The school effectively employs the principles of best value.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, the senior staff and the governing body. These judgements by the inspectors reflect the views of the parents who consider that the school is effectively led and managed.

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. • The pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • Children like school. • The school is well led and managed. • Pupils are encouraged to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and regularity of homework.

The inspectors fully support the very positive views of the parents, but also found that there was some variation in the setting of homework from class to class.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

1. This is a larger than average sized primary school. There are two parallel classes for each year group. In total, including the nursery, there are sixteen classes taught in two separate buildings on one campus. The school received a short inspection and the inspectors visited the school for two days. In the limited time available, the inspectors focused on the teaching of English and mathematics throughout the school. Overall, twenty-two lessons were observed, which is a small sample for a school of this size. However, it does provide a good overview of the quality of teaching in the school.
2. The overall quality of the teaching seen during the inspection was good. It ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. In ninety-five percent of the lessons seen (twenty-one lessons) teaching was satisfactory or better. In sixty-five per cent (fourteen lessons) teaching was good or better, and in twenty-eight per cent (six lessons) it was very good or better. In one lesson (less than five per cent of the sample) teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. The overall judgement by the inspectors that the quality of teaching in the school is good is fully supported by the parents in their questionnaire responses and their comments at the meeting with the registered inspector.

Teaching in the Early Years

3. The quality of the teaching seen in the Early Years Unit (Nursery and Reception) was good overall. It ranged from satisfactory to good. The lessons were generally well planned and reflected the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage that is recommended nationally for children of this age. The children were involved in experiences that built on what they already knew and could do. This helped to ensure that all children, irrespective of their individual stage of development, were able to make good progress.
4. In the best lessons, the teachers made sure that all children were fully involved in the activities. Teachers were skilful in using questions to ensure that each child's learning needs were effectively met. Teaching strategies were varied and modified to respond to the interests and concentration spans of the children. For example, in a Reception class lesson, the teacher used a teddy bear to focus the children's attention and to motivate them to join in the discussion. Only the child holding the bear was empowered to speak; this encouraged the children to take turns and to listen to each other. The bear was passed around in such a way that the teacher was able to ensure that each child had an opportunity to speak. The children and the teacher listened with interest to what each child had to say. This encouraged the children to speak out with confidence, feeling that what they had to say was valued by the rest of the class. The Early Years Unit generally had a calm, purposeful atmosphere which encouraged the children to settle to their activities quietly and quickly. On the few occasions when children started to become difficult or uncooperative, the teachers managed them with patience, perseverance and great skill.

5. Where teaching was judged to be satisfactory as opposed to good, it was mainly the result of the activities planned for the children being insufficiently well defined and purposeful. In addition, the routines for children and their parents at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions were unclear. For example, on one occasion, parents arrived early to collect their children and came into the classroom. This resulted in the lesson petering out in some confusion rather than as a pleasant, calm and well-organised end to a good and enjoyable session.
6. The teaching staff and nursery nurses work well together as an effective team. They all have a clear understanding about how young children learn and a common expectation of how children should behave. The staff responded sensitively to children who were upset or creating disruption. The consistent approach by the staff is an important factor in the successful promotion of the children's personal, social and emotional development.

Teaching in the Infant Years

7. At Key Stage 1, (Infant Years 1 and 2), a total of six lessons were observed, comprising two English, two mathematics one geography and one science. The quality of teaching overall was very good. All but one lesson was good or better. Four of the six lessons were very good or excellent.
8. The quality of English teaching at Key Stage 1 was consistently very good. The lessons were carefully planned and were guided by the recommended National Literacy Strategy. Teachers set work that varied in difficulty and complexity to ensure that the specific learning needs of individual and groups of pupils were met. Consequently, what was taught built effectively upon previously acquired knowledge and skills and was, in part, responsible for the very good progress made in the lessons. Similarly, in the two mathematics lessons seen in Key Stage 1, the work set was demanding, but carefully varied to target the specific needs of the ability range within the classes. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson the teacher introduced the work to the whole class, ensuring that all pupils understood clearly what they were expected to do. The teacher used skilful questioning to target the specific needs of each pupil. Following this lively introductory session, the pupils divided into groups where they undertook work that was set at different levels to take into account their different stages of learning. This promoted effective learning for all pupils.
9. In the very best lessons, the teachers were well organised, had high expectations of what the pupils could achieve, moved the lessons on at a brisk, purposeful pace and made learning an enjoyable experience. Where teaching was less successful, the lesson content included aspects that were too complex and did not capture the pupils' interest fully throughout the lesson. This resulted in some pupils losing concentration and the activities being undertaken in a noisy atmosphere that distracted pupils from their work.

Teaching in the Junior Years

- 10 At Key Stage 2, (Junior Years 3 to 6), the overall quality of teaching was good, ranging from satisfactory to very good. In total, the teaching and learning was observed in twelve lessons in the junior classes. The observations included six English, three mathematics, two history and one information and communication technology lesson.
11. Lessons were generally well planned, with teachers of parallel classes planning together the work for the year group for which they were responsible. This helped pupils in the same school year, but in different classes, to cover similar work and experience similar activities.
12. Where the teaching was judged to be very good at Key Stage 2, the lesson planning and management were of high quality. The pupils knew exactly what they had to achieve by the end of the lesson, they were clear that only their best work would be acceptable and that they had no time to waste on unrelated activities. The pupils' sense of purpose and determination to achieve well was a direct result of the teacher's high expectations, exemplified through clearly stated and understood learning targets for each lesson, and a tenacious approach to moving the pupils forward in their learning. In these lessons, the very good management of the pupils and their work, the support staff and the resources helped to ensure that the lessons were calm and pleasurable experience for all concerned and highly effective in promoting pupils' learning.
13. In lessons that were satisfactory as opposed to being very good, there was a lesser sense of urgency, purpose and challenge. The work set did not sufficiently challenge all the pupils and some were slow to produce work that was consequently of a standard below their best.
14. The teaching of English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 was good overall. The school has tried different ways of organising the teaching of these subjects at Key Stage 2 in an endeavour to raise the standards achieved. Currently, the pupils in Year 6 are taught English in two classes; one for boys and one for girls. This is the school's response to boys failing to achieve as well as girls. The quality of teaching of these classes was at least satisfactory and was targeting the specific learning needs of the pupils.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs

- 15 The teaching of pupils throughout the school with special educational needs was very good. Pupils with hearing difficulties are particularly well supported by an experienced team of teachers and assistants. All pupils, irrespective of their learning and development needs, are fully included in the work and life of the school. Pupils with statements of special educational needs, including those attending the hearing impaired unit, are fully and successfully integrated into the main school classes.

Teaching literacy and numeracy skills

16. The teaching of the skills of literacy and numeracy throughout the school is good and pupils make good progress. However, this is not yet reflected in the attainment of pupils in English when they leave the school at the age of eleven to transfer to secondary education. This is due in part to the high number of pupils with special educational needs attending the school and to the high turnover of pupils. Nearly forty per cent of the pupils who are currently assessed through the national tests at eleven years of age did not start their education at the school. The teaching staff has worked hard to introduce strategies to raise the standards of achievement of the large number of pupils who join the school during the junior years. They have been very successful over the last two years in raising standards in mathematics and science, and there are now clear signs of improvement in English, especially where teachers are setting very demanding targets.

Standards of attainment are improving, particularly in science and mathematics.

17. The standards of achievement in mathematics and science have improved considerably in recent years throughout the school.
18. At the end of Key Stage 1, the infant years, the pupils achieved below the national average in the national tests in mathematics in 1997 and 1999 compared with pupils of their age nationally. In 1998, the pupils achieved the national average. In the year 2000 national tests, the pupils' performance was well above the national average. When these results are compared with schools that are similar in context, (having a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals), the results were also well above average. In science, the teachers' assessments indicate that pupils are now achieving above the national average.
19. The pupils' work seen by the inspectors during the inspection confirmed that overall the standards achieved at Key Stage 1 in science and mathematics are improving. The inspectors also noted that at Key Stage 1, the standards achieved in reading and writing are also improving. In reading, pupils performed well below the national average compared with pupils of their age nationally from 1997 to 1999. In the year 2000, there was an improvement. However, the results remained below the national average compared with all pupils of their age nationally, but were average when compared with similar schools. In writing, the pupils have made considerable improvement since 1997 when they were well below the national average. In the year 2000, their performance had improved so that they were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. This improvement in writing was evident in the standard of work seen during the inspection.
20. The recent national test results and the standard of work seen during the inspection are very encouraging and clearly indicate that the standards achieved by pupils at Key Stage 1 are improving. These achievements are even more commendable when the low standards of attainment of children on entry into the nursery, the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the considerable movement of pupils both to and from the school are taken into account.
21. Standards of attainment for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1998 were well below the average when compared with all primary schools nationally in English,

mathematics and science. By the year 2000, the pupils' performance in mathematics and science had improved significantly and was above the national average. These results are well above the average achieved by pupils attending similar schools. Improvements in English have been less dramatic and are considered in more detail in the section of this report '*what could be improved*'.

22. The examination by the inspectors of the Key Stage 2 pupils' work provided a clear indication of the systematic approach to the teaching of mathematics and science and the resulting improvement in the standards achieved.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with very good support by teachers and classroom assistants and are fully integrated into the normal classroom work. The combination of the extra adult support, the stimulation and resulting motivation created by being included in the mainstream classes and the availability of appropriate resources helps these pupils to make very good progress and achieve well in the national tests.
24. Parents of pupils attending the school consider that their children are making good progress and that the school expects that all pupils will achieve their very best.
25. These commendable improvements result from the effect of strong, informed leadership, which has correctly identified where standards are too low and has then taken appropriate, determined action to improve these low standards by targeting specific resources in areas of need and providing extra professional support and guidance for both teachers and pupils. In addition, a well structured and systematic approach to curriculum planning and the good quality teaching currently evident throughout the school have been key elements in raising standards.

The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils are very good overall.

26. The attainment of most children on entry to the nursery is typically well below that found nationally, with their personal and social development and communication skills being particularly poor.
27. The school has correctly identified the children's personal social and emotional development as one of its highest priorities. The staff has been very successful in raising the children's attainment in this area from a very low starting point. Progress has been very good. The very good progress that has been made is a direct result of the consistent, calm and skilled work of the members of staff.
28. The school has been effective in developing the children's personal, social and emotional skills. At the time of the inspection, most children in the nursery were starting to show some independence in selecting and carrying out activities. They were able to leave their main adult carer with confidence and were starting to understand the routines of the Early Years Unit. The children felt safe and secure and were prepared to play with each other without conflict. They were starting to build good relationships with each other and work harmoniously together. The children had formed trusting, positive relationships with the staff, and in particular with their key carer.

29. The pupils throughout the school have a very positive attitude towards their work and life at school. They were keen to discuss the school with inspectors and were proud of its achievements. The pupils showed a clear interest in the content of the lessons and were very willing and eager to contribute to discussions and participate in the activities provided.
30. This positive attitude is a direct result of the enthusiasm of the teachers and their skills of planning activities which both interest the pupils and move them on in their learning at a good pace, without undermining their confidence and motivation. In a Year 4 history lesson, for example, the teacher had invited a man to talk about his life at school in the 1930s. The pupils were totally fascinated by the stories of his childhood. They were keen to ask questions and listened intently to his responses. The teacher managed the lesson well and ensured that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, were able to learn from this first-hand experience. The visitor and the pupils were so involved in the discussion, enjoying the experience, that they totally forgot that the lesson needed to come to an end as it was time to go home. The pupils were polite and well behaved and treated the visitor with respect and consideration.
31. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, some of which take place during the lunch period. These clubs are well attended and provide the pupils with an opportunity to develop new skills, such as playing a musical instrument. The school also runs a parent and toddler group. As part of the school's programme to raise attainment, it runs an exercise class each morning. Exercises are directed by an occupation therapist, supported by school staff, and are designed to improve pupils' skills of movement and co-ordination. The class is funded in partnership with two local health authorities and, as it takes place before school begins, children are provided with breakfast.
32. The behaviour of the pupils is good overall. In lessons and generally when moving around the school the pupils conduct themselves in a sensible and considerate manner. This good behaviour has a very positive effect upon the work activities the pupils can be given and upon the progress they make. The school takes the behaviour of the pupils very seriously. Teachers and classroom assistants have a commonly agreed strategy for managing behaviour. This ensures a consistent approach throughout the school. Pupils are very clear about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Parents consider that the behaviour in the school is good. A few concerns were raised with inspectors about the conduct of some pupils at lunchtimes and the level of supervision. The school is aware of these concerns and, at the time of the inspection, was reviewing the arrangements.
33. The inspectors found the pupils to be most polite and helpful. In discussions with inspectors about their life at school, they made pleasant company and were at all times courteous and friendly.
34. The school's provision to support the personal and social development of the pupils is very good. From a very low starting point, the pupils make very good progress and become mature and responsible. The school provides many opportunities for the pupils to take initiative and manage their own time. For example, in a Year 5 English

lesson, the pupils worked in pairs and were encouraged to share ideas through group discussions and determine co-operatively how to respond to the writing activity. During this session, they worked together well, learning from each other and devising ways of tackling the task. In many lessons throughout the school, there was evidence of pupils working and playing harmoniously together. Pupils with specific learning difficulties or from different backgrounds were fully included into all aspects of the work, including group and paired activities.

35. As they move up through the school, the pupils become more confident and more aware of the effect that their actions have on others. Parents consider that the school is very effective in helping their children to develop into competent and responsible young people.
36. The school has been highly successful in supporting the social and personal development of the pupils and in creating an ethos in which good and respectful behaviour is effectively promoted.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher who is supported by highly effective senior staff and governing body.

37. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, the senior staff and the governing body. These judgements by the inspectors reflect the views of the parents who consider that the school is effectively led and managed.
38. The headteacher provides strong, well-informed leadership. She is an effective manager who is well supported by all members of staff. The headteacher has a very clear perception of what constitutes excellence in education and uses her very wide professional expertise to move the school forward. She has a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a determination to raise significantly the standards achieved by all pupils attending the school. Specific aspects of the school's management are appropriately and effectively delegated to senior members of staff. Through this process of delegation, a strong management team has been created which plays a most important role in the efficient running of the school.
39. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has made considerable improvements over recent years. Standards of attainment are rising, and there has been considerable improvement in the quality of teaching and the pupils' behaviour and attitudes. These are clear and commendable achievements.
40. The governing body is fully and effectively involved in the work of the school. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities and takes a keen interest in the life and work of the school. Individual governors spend considerable time in the school working with the pupils. The governing body is very supportive and works closely with the headteacher and senior staff to improve the educational provision and to raise standards. The governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how well it is performing in comparison with other schools. The governing body has in place long-term strategies for the school's improvement.
41. The full governing body sets the school's budget. Money is appropriately spent on

teaching staff, learning resources and maintaining the building and services. The school monitors expenditure carefully and employs the principles of best value when making management decisions.

42. The overall monitoring of the school's performance is good. The school makes good use of the analysis of assessment results and comparative data to evaluate its own performance and to identify aspects to be improved. Where the school finds areas for improvement, it takes decisive action. For example, the most recent Year 6 English test results showed that the performance of boys was significantly below that of the girls. The school reviewed the way it organised the teaching of English and divided the Year 6 pupils into two classes; one for boys and one for girls. Through this method, the school is endeavouring to target the specific needs of the pupils and to raise the standards achieved. At the time of the inspection, it was too early in the process to determine the full effect of the changes.
43. The staff is well deployed, making the best use of the specific expertise of individuals. Resources for learning are used effectively by teachers to support pupils' learning. The available accommodation is well used.
44. The day-to-day management and administration of the school are effective and efficient and do not distract the teachers from their role of teaching.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The standards achieved in English in Years 3 to 6.

45. The standards achieved in English at Key Stage 1, the Infant Years 1 and 2, have improved considerably in recent years. Standards in writing have improved at a much better rate than in reading. At Key Stage 2, the Junior Years 3 to 6, the standards achieved in the national tests in English in Year 6 remain well below the average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. However, a greater percentage of pupils achieved Level 4, the expected level for Year 6 pupils, in 2000 than in 1999. This improvement in pupils' attainment in English was evident in the work of the current Year 6 pupils seen during the inspection week. However, standards remain below that expected for pupils of their age. Parents consider that their children make good progress in English and they are generally happy with the standards that are achieved. This reflects the confidence of the parents in the efforts of the school to improve the standards achieved in all subjects and particularly in English.
46. In the Key Stage 2 national tests in 2000, the boys achieved overall better than in the last five years. However, their performance remained below the national average. The girls also performed better in the 2000 national tests and overall achieved above the national average. This represents a considerable improvement. The performance of boys in the national tests in Key Stage 2, when combined with the performance of the girls, had the effect of reducing the overall school performance to well below the average of all schools and similar school nationally. The test results of the boys had a

disproportionate effect on the overall school's performance because there were twenty-five boys compared with just nine girls in the Year 6 group of pupils.

47. The main area of weakness within English is concerned with writing. The quality of handwriting and presentation seen by the inspectors in workbooks of the older junior pupils was very variable. For example, the handwriting of one girl in Year 6 was neat in a well-formed joined-up style for some pieces of work but became erratically formed printing of changing size for other pieces of work. Some work demonstrated great care in its presentation, whilst other work in the same book lacked care and included work scribbled out. There were many examples of unfinished work. The best work of this pupil was at least in line with that expected for her age with some examples at a higher than average level.
48. Overall, some good examples of creative writing were seen, where punctuation was used accurately and most words were spelt correctly. Examples of different forms of writing were seen, including letters, poems, stories and drafting. However, writing rarely extended beyond half a page in length and too often showed a lack of care in presentation and handwriting. Boys, particularly, found writing challenging with work that was brief, used a limited vocabulary and was poorly presented.
49. The teachers use the nationally recommended literacy strategy effectively to help pupils to develop their literacy skills. They plan the pupils' work carefully to help each child build on what has been previously learned. This good practice is limited in its overall effect because of a number of factors, particularly the very high turnover of pupils. Nearly forty per cent of the pupils in Year 6 did not start their education at the school. Most joined during the Junior Years 3 to 6. Many of these pupils join the school with levels of attainment well below that expected for their age. This presents the school with the considerable task of helping these pupils to catch up. The school has been most successful in achieving this in mathematics and science, but has found it more difficult in aspects of English because of the pupils' poor command of the subject. Whereas, the majority of pupils who have spent all their school life at Bentley West School achieve at least the level expected for their age. Writing, especially creative and descriptive, presents the pupils with particular difficulties. Many have acquired careless habits in their handwriting and presentation, which are difficult to rectify in the time available. In addition, many of the pupils attending the school do not gain positive and rich experiences of the English language out of school. The higher than average number of pupils attending the school with special learning needs, many who join the school in the Junior Years 3 to 6, are fully included in the activities of each class, are extremely well supported and make very good progress. However, these pupils do not in general achieve the levels expected for their age in the national tests.
50. The school has identified the need to raise the standards of attainment in English for all pupils. It has, over recent years, introduced a number of initiatives to support pupils' learning. The setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 for English and mathematics was piloted three years ago. The school introduced the National Literacy Strategy one year early to support the teaching of English. This has proved effective in developing pupils' literacy skills. Currently boys and girls in Year 6 are taught English

separately. This organisation has been introduced this year to enable the teachers to focus more closely on the specific learning needs of the boys and the girls. It was too early in the process at the time of the inspection to determine the effectiveness of this approach.

51. The school is clearly working hard to raise the standards achieved by all pupils. The inspectors found the greatest success was where:
- i. teachers had high expectations of what the pupils should achieve;
 - ii. the pupils had a clear understanding of what standards were expected and knew that their second best would never be accepted;
 - iii. the work set by the teachers was challenging and built upon what pupils already knew and could do;
 - iv. academic targets that were set for individual pupils were demanding, but achievable with effort;
 - v. there was a determination and commitment from all partners in the learning process to raise standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. The school's first and most pressing priority is to raise the standards of attainment in English. This is particularly important for pupils in Key Stage 2, and especially so for the boys. The school is fully aware of the need to raise standards of attainment in English and is currently taking clear and focused action to address the issue.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
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	23	36	32	5	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 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	40	352
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	66

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	19
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	85

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	25	30	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	22	23
	Girls	25	29	29
	Total	43	51	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (64)	93 (82)	95 (84)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	23	23
	Girls	27	29	29
	Total	47	52	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (74)	95 (84)	95 (82)
	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	25	9	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	19	23
	Girls	7	7	8
	Total	21	26	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (50)	79 (54)	91 (81)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	16	22
	Girls	7	7	8
	Total	24	23	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (52)	68 (56)	88 (72)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	35
Indian	8
Pakistani	19
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	283
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	4	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 –Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	29.3

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	4
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	612,435
Total expenditure	603,898
Expenditure per pupil	1,741
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,474
Balance carried forward to next year	11,011

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	372
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	44	2	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	39	2	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	35	24	0	2
The teaching is good.	66	33	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	41	8	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	33	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	54	8	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	46	49	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	41	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	56	15	2	2