

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ALKRINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Middleton

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105786

Headteacher: Miss J Lyons

Reporting inspector: Mrs Heather Evans  
21374

Dates of inspection: 20 – 21 May 2002

Inspection number: 198644

Short 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 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Manor Road  
Middleton  
Manchester

Postcode: M24 1JZ

Telephone number: 0161 643 6357

Fax number: 0161 643 8149

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Williams

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9843	Mrs Sarah Drake	Lay inspector
23221	Mrs Lynda Parkinson	Team inspector
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a larger than average primary school that caters for 444 pupils including 48 part-time in the Nursery class. The school is situated to the south of Middleton close to the boundaries with Oldham, Manchester and Bury. There is a significant number of pupils in the school from these education areas. Although the school is situated in an area of home ownership many pupils attend from other places, where there is a high level of social deprivation. On entry to the school in the new Nursery, attainment levels are average when compared with children elsewhere of the same age. The number of pupils claiming their entitlement to free school meals is similar to the national average and those pupils with special educational needs is, at 11 per cent, slightly lower than the national average. For these pupils difficulties are mostly in language and literacy although there is also a visually impaired child and one who has hearing impairment. Although some pupils are bilingual all but one of them speak English as their first language at home.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school with several strong features. Except in the years where there have been significantly more pupils with special educational needs standards are well above the national average and the quality of teaching is predominantly good. Pupils are eager to learn and demonstrate very good attitudes to their work. Pupils' behaviour is good and relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. The leadership of the headteacher and the senior staff is excellent. The school is very well organised because the headteacher and the governors are diligent in their management of money, personnel and teaching resources. They are very proud of what the school does well and are constantly looking for ways in which to help it to improve. This care ensures that the overall education provided for the pupils is very good. The school has limited funding and the amount available for each pupil is below the national average. The school provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of 11.
- Standards in history are impressive and are well above average.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes to school and relationships are very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning and the use of cross-curricular links to extend and consolidate learning are good.
- The revised curriculum and the procedures for the assessment of learning to inform planning are very good.
- The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The leadership and management skills of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff are excellent and are supported well by the governors.

#### **What could be improved**

- The provision of facilities for outdoor play and learning particularly for the children at the Foundation Stage.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in November 1997. Since then there has been good improvement including the addition of a Nursery class in September 2001. All of the subjects of the curriculum have been reviewed and new plans have been drawn up that meet the new national requirements. They ensure that the content and sequence of work planned allows pupils to learn effectively, building on previous experiences, as they grow older. Assessment strategies are built in at the planning stage and teachers consistently use the results of this evaluative review to plan for future work. Their work is interesting and stimulating and as a result past deficiencies have been resolved and overall standards are now above average. In 2001 a greater number of boys in Year 6 had special educational needs and as a result

overall boys did not do as well as the girls. This has been remedied during this year. Those pupils capable of higher attainment are identified at an early stage and are tracked carefully as they work towards their individual targets. Following the success of this work boys and girls are now seen to be performing equally well. The establishment of the new computer suite is helping pupils of all ages to do well in their study of information and communication technology. The school development plan has been improved and is now a useful tool for monitoring attainment, setting targets for improvement and checking that priorities are linked closely to the budget allocation. The governing body, under the leadership of the experienced chairperson, shares in the valuable role of overseeing the benefits of spending against standards attained. The monitoring of pupils' work and of teaching is now undertaken regularly by the headteacher and the subject leaders and by designated governors. Resources are satisfactory but not generous. They are in good condition and are used well by the teachers in order to help pupils to learn well.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	D	A	A
Mathematics	A	B	B	B
Science	A	A	A	A

**Key**

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

In 2001 the standards attained in the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in English and science were well above the national averages for these subjects and were also well above the average for similar schools. Fewer boys attained the expected level 4 than girls. This was caused by the group having an above average number of boys with specific reading difficulties. In mathematics, standards were above the national average and were above average when compared to similar schools. The school standards have been above those attained nationally in all but one of the past four years when English fell below in 2000. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards amongst the present Year 6 pupils are close to the very high targets agreed by the school for the present academic year. Overall the attainment levels observed in other subjects reflect the standards seen in English and mathematics and exceed expected levels. Standards of work seen at the age of seven during the inspection are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Across the school attainment in information and communication technology is at the expected level at seven and above national expectations by 11. Attainment in art and design and in design and technology is particularly good and overall is above the national expectations. Standards in history are well above average across the school. Pupils of all levels of attainment achieve as well as they should. The trend of improvement over the past four years has been parallel to that for schools nationally although the school's attainment levels have been above the national average for all of these years.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school; they want to attend and treat the building and the learning resources with care and respect.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good because pupils are managed very well and they have a clear understanding of the firm but fair behaviour policy. This year there have been two instances of exclusion.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good; pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the beliefs and values of others. Pupils show very good personal initiative and take good responsibility for managing their own work.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. The level of unauthorised absence is low.

The firm implementation of the behaviour strategy has meant that this year there have been fewer exclusions than in the previous year indicating that the procedures set in place by the school are working.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	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.*

The quality of teaching is predominantly good, a quarter is very good and one lesson was judged to be excellent. Teaching has many strengths and no significant weaknesses. As a result pupils' attitudes to work are very good and their learning results in the above average standards that they attain. The well-organised teaching in English and mathematics enables pupils to make good progress in all classes. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teaching in other subjects is also good. Teachers select from a wide range of methods that are well matched to pupils learning needs. Teachers have very high expectations for the amount and quality of work by pupils, as is made evident in their work in books and in the well-presented displays around the school. Teachers are very successful in meeting the learning needs of all groups of pupils. During the inspection most of the lessons seen were judged to be at least good; no unsatisfactory or weak teaching was seen.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. The extra provision through clubs, visits and visitors to the school is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for all of the pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are identified early and good support is given.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although a number of pupils are bilingual all but one of the pupils speak English as their first language at home. This pupil is supported very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is well organised and pupils' personal skills are being developed well. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very effectively for all its pupils. The policy and procedures for child protection are good. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and the information gathered is used well to promote learning.
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Curriculum policies and plans for intended work are reviewed regularly and there are no significant curricular weaknesses. Extra-curricular activities such as clubs, as well as visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, enrich the opportunities for learning offered to the pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the headteacher working collaboratively with the deputy headteacher are excellent. They are supported very well by all of the staff, especially the subject leaders. Through their skills, hard work and dedication they have been successful in enhancing this very good school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body, led by an experienced chairman is fulfilling all of its responsibilities. Their understanding of the finance and their support for the curriculum is based on experience, knowledge and understanding.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has clear and practical procedures for evaluating its performance. Governors have a developing understanding of where strengths are found and a realistic view of areas for development and how to address them.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of personnel and practical resources is very good. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are used effectively throughout the school.

The leadership and management of the school are well organised and are very effective. The leadership of the headteacher and her deputy are excellent. The enthusiasm and skills of the subject leaders is proving to be stimulating and successful in raising standards. Teachers and governors have a shared vision for success and continued improvement. Resources are satisfactory and are regularly reviewed by the subject leaders. Financial management is very good and the governing body has a very effective understanding of setting the budget against the plans contained in the well-organised and clear school development plan. Governors review the evidence of the effect of spending on standards with the senior management team. The school has a good understanding of looking for best value when buying materials or appointing and deploying personnel. The accommodation enables the full curriculum to be taught successfully but outdoor play facilities for all pupils particularly for children at the Foundation Stage are limited and prevent some initiatives being implemented fully.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are very supportive of all aspects of the school and in the questionnaires and at the meeting for parents expressed very positive views about it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents would welcome improvements to the building and facilities for safe play.</li> </ul>

The inspection team fully supports the very positive views expressed by parents. The team agrees with the parents that the facilities for play on the main hard surfaced playground inhibit socialisation and co-operative activities.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

#### **Pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of 11.**

1. By the age of 11, overall standards are well above the national average in English and science and are above the national average in mathematics. To achieve these standards pupils learn very well and make very good progress throughout the school. Pupils' standards in other subjects are very well supported by the skills that they learn in English and mathematics. A strength of the school is the way in which pupils of all attainment levels are very well supported in lessons and are helped to learn thoroughly and systematically.
2. In English, the standard of pupils' reading by the age of 11 is very good and this is reflected in their use of exciting phrases in lessons that they then use later or modify in their written work. They read fluently with very good expression using their understanding of dialogue indicated by punctuation to very good effect. When reading aloud to the class both boys and girls are confident and transport the listener to the scene about which they are reading with great clarity. After the tests in English last year the school made significant changes so that skills taught and learned in English were reinforced in most other subjects. This was to remedy an identified difficulty where boys, mostly those with specific difficulties in reading did less well than girls in the formal tests. These changes have been seen to be very successful. The quality of writing and the range of topics in Year 2 are a pleasure to read. Pupils of all ages and attainment levels regularly include the favourite characters from their reading books in their own imaginative work. Throughout Years 3 to 6 the way that pupils have developed their skills in writing for different purposes is impressive. Letters of complaint and praise use balanced arguments to support the point that the pupils are making. They use telling phrases such as,

*'It goes without saying that my child's safety is of the greatest importance to me.'*

In Year 5 pupils are increasingly skilled at writing in short sentences to create instant effect such as when writing about the different life styles of black and white people in parts of South Africa. One child, writing about how a small African boy felt when entering the home of a white employer for the first time stated;

*'The space was vast! It terrified him!'*

In one Year 6 class pupils composing poetry about what they would place in a magic box, using a presented text as a model, described the box as,

*'studded with the glow of silver stars...a sweet fragrance as of the poppy field with its handle wrapped with soft wool from the first sheep on the planet.'*

These are just a few examples; the work in pupils' books and that on display is very good across the school. Pupils regularly write at length organising their work into carefully structured paragraphs. When writing for younger children some pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote books collaboratively using chapters to build the characters into

believable people and to develop and maintain the plot through linked episodes. All of the books were illustrated very imaginatively.

The presentation of completed work is excellent. Pupils use carefully formed script even at the drafting stage and many are beginning to develop pleasing individual styles. Spelling is good at the drafting stage but is always checked either in dictionaries or in a thesaurus which pupils use instinctively to refine and enhance their work. Very occasionally the effort of composition causes pupils to select the incorrect spelling but very few mistakes slip through. Pupils' drafting books are fascinating as the process of a work from the first idea to the completed product is traced and recorded. The end product is always very well crafted and pupils are rightly proud of their finished story or report. Tracking the process on saved disks, where pupils have planned and developed work on a computer, is a delight for them, the initial spelling is more imaginative as pupils know that the spell checking process will make the revisions more easy.

3. The work of pupils in Year 4, where they have produced storybooks for younger children, including the explanatory 'blurb,' demonstrates that high expectations are being established in the classes for younger pupils and that the above average standards are therefore being maintained. In Year 6 pupils have combined their writing about famous people such as David Beckham and Britney Spears in poems, articles, and imaginary interviews and film reviews with their work in art and design. Here they have created exciting pictures in the style of the iconic painter Andy Warhol to accompany their impressive literary endeavours. This motivated pupils at the end of Year 6 by focusing on their own special interests whilst still extending their learning and creativity. One boy wrote of:

*'The boot of Beckham' and,*

*'The grass trembling, waiting for the kick of fate when all watchers forgot to breathe'.*

This was when writing about the football match that gained England entry to the World Cup finals. As a result of the careful tracking process and the resultant remedial action by teachers boys and girls are now seen to be performing equally well.

4. In mathematics, pupils learn very well and use their knowledge and understanding of number without hesitation. Pupils in Year 1 readily explain how totals can be made using different combinations of numbers. In Year 2, pupils sort and order numbers to 100 and work with addition and subtraction with great confidence and a very high level of accuracy. They are using equations in algebra so easily that they are unaware that they are dealing with large numbers. In Year 3 pupils manipulate numbers using multiplication and division, confident that the inverse rule will always help them to find the easiest way of solving a problem and then checking their result. By the time they are 11 pupils select and use the most comfortable method for themselves to solve problems in geometry or in calculations involving fractions and decimals. They use alternative methods to check the accuracy of their investigations and calculations and then explain their selected process to the class.
5. In science, pupils across the school show how they are learning to be scientists rather than which scientific facts they have learned. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils reviewed the samples that were provided, made sensible predictions and recorded these in very practical ways. They then discussed ways of organising their investigations very well including how they could create and manage a fair test and recorded their results. The discussions about their findings were clear and structured and the way they reported back to the class was very mature and well managed. By the age of 11 pupils show

good scientific knowledge and the work in their books and that displayed on the school walls shows good experience of all of the parts of the work that need to be covered. Some pupils developing their independent work occasionally forget that they cannot make all factors in a test variable at the same time. They learn from their mistakes very quickly and then they have to think about why the work went wrong before moving more methodically through their selected processes.

6. Pupils are confident when using computers for word-processing, to enhance work in English, history and geography or to organise and review data in science, mathematics and design and technology, to create art and learn about the work of artists and musicians. Work in information and communication technology as a direct result of the greatly improved facilities, is stimulating and challenging. Since the last inspection, the increased skills of the teachers have enabled pupils to make very good progress. Standards overall are above the expected level. Some pupils are beginning to use computer programs to help with the composition of tunes and melodies in music. Pupils also enjoy work sending remote controlled robots around obstacle courses and writing programs for the computer that enable it to draw shapes in geometry.
7. The pupils' standard of work in design and technology by the age of 11 meets and sometimes exceeds the national expectations, which is an improvement since 1997. The designing and making phases exceed the national expectations but sometimes, evaluation of work is undertaken only orally and this means that the pupils do not have a record of evaluation findings from which to plan new work. Recently pupils in Year 6 shared in a competition day at the local civic centre where they were challenged by teams from other schools in a 'Great Egg Race'. One group was the outright winner of the challenge day and these pupils won a prize that included a family ticket for an evening match at the Lancashire cricket ground. The retained evidence, photographs and writing about ideas, refinements, prototypes, evaluations and modifications were all of high quality.
8. The pupils' attainments in art and design have been greatly improved since 1997 and by the end of Year 2 they exceed the expected levels for pupils of the same age. In Years 3 to 6 overall attainment is at least at the expected level and in some classes, where pupils and their teacher share a special interest in the subject, attainment levels exceed those expected nationally. The good quality of work seen in the classes for younger pupils and in some other classes indicates that the school is well set to improve the overall standards in the coming years. Pupils' work in the style of Monet, Van Gogh, Mondrian and Lowry as well as that of Andy Warhol demonstrates a wide range of techniques. Their study of the work of a Lakeland artist and sculptor Andy Goldsworthy has been instrumental in promoting pupils' own work in art and design and in literature, especially poetry.

**Standards in history are impressive and are well above national expectations.**

9. The standard of work in all classes in this subject is impressive. It is well above the average and exceeds the national expectations. From their entry into school to the end of Year 6 pupils are trained to be historians and to question everything that is presented to them in a thorough and persistent manner. They have a very clear understanding of how to investigate primary evidence. They examine objects of historical interest asking and answering probing questions and supplement this work by the careful use of research, using video evidence and information from photographs, books and the Internet. They are selective in their research and choose the elements that they find most telling very carefully. In subsequent work pupils used collected and shared evidence very well in order to enhance their personal stories.

10. Pupils are skilled at creating role-play situations and 'acting out' gathered information to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and to promote questions and ideas from others in their class. In a Year 5 class a pupil assumed the role of a youngster selected for ritual sacrifice to please the Aztec gods as part of the festival of Tezcatlipoca and, in so doing, bring honour to his family. Other pupils then organised a set of questions that drew from the actor all of elements of the ancient ceremony. From their personal knowledge they organised their interview and interrogation in such a skilled way that all of their separate research was shared so that everyone in the lesson knew exactly what would have happened to the young man. This work enabled the most confident to speak out and for the quieter pupils to listen or share in the questioning at each stage. The experience was rich and persuasive and caused the observer to want to know more. Following the questioning session by the other pupils all then assumed the role for themselves and wrote persuasively about how proud they felt, how wonderful it had been to be served as a great warrior, dying to ensure safe harvests for his people. The skills learned in English were used instinctively and to very good effect. Some pupils chose to write rather cold factual accounts with great clarity and precision. Others worked imaginatively, creating dramatic and compelling text that reflected the emotions of a young man selected to give his life for others and eager to be transported in death to the sun paradise of the gods.
11. In Year 1, pupils begin to understand the differences in toys now and at the time when their parents, grandparents or teachers were children. They compare the style of toys and note that whilst older toys were often made of metal and worked by means of clockwork many present-day toys are made of a variety of plastics and are controlled by computer chips or by using batteries. Pupils are knowledgeable and required very little prompting as they sorted and identified the old from the new. Their reasons were based on a set of strategies that they had learned in a previous investigation and were almost always correct. Where the toys had a high level of similarity the distinction was sometimes more difficult to establish and pupils then made decisions by collaboration with one another or asked the teacher for help. By the end of Year 2 pupils speak of visitors to the school from times past and are very knowledgeable about the time when Florence Nightingale was a nurse. They can explain about her dress and the famous lamp because they experienced a visit by an actor dressed as and taking the part of the famous woman. This actor brought with her a number of interesting objects linked with nursing at the time of Miss Nightingale for the pupils to handle and draw.
12. In Years 3 to 6 similar strategies are used to bring to life events in history. Pupils were enthusiastic as they described worked undertaken with actors who depicted the Viking invasion. The pupils' visit to the Yorvik exhibition in York enriched and extended their learning and understanding so that they spoke enthusiastically about what they knew and understood. Different groups of pupils enthused about the Life and work in Ancient Greece and the invasion by the armies of Rome. They were skilled at comparing the traditions of Ancient Egypt, with the current work about the customs and traditions of the Aztecs. Pupils who had been studying Tudor England and the wives of Henry VIII were delighted to explain how they would have lived, dressed and eaten had they been alive then and compared it very accurately with their experiences in Middleton today. Evidence of this stimulating and detailed work is displayed throughout the school in pupils' carefully mounted work and in their books. In Year 6, pupils contrast and compare life in Victorian England and Britain after 1939. During collective worship pupils learned about the diary of Anne Frank and of her frightening experiences during World War II. The consistently high quality of work in

this subject has contributed very effectively to pupils' knowledge of how past events have shaped our lives today. The school has been very successful linking the study of these periods with English, mathematics, geography and art and design as well as with study and presentation using information and communication technology.

13. The skills of the subject leader are very well supported by a complete understanding by all teachers of the benefits of linking work learned within all of the subjects taught through complementary themes. Teachers' personal extensive knowledge and enthusiasm extend this understanding of history very well. Sometimes the school is able to use the experiences of governors who have specialist knowledge about some periods. Pupils delight in sharing their personal research with others in writing or role-play whether the information is found in books or from the Internet and many frequently continue their studies either at lunchtime clubs or at home.

**Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes to school and relationships are very good.**

14. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils' relationships and attitudes to learning are frequently very good and sometimes they are excellent. In lessons, and around the school, behaviour was never less than very good. Inspectors judged pupils' attitudes to work and their relationships with adults and one another to be of a very high standard. Pupils' relationships and behaviour at other times such as lunchtime or when playing in the grounds were also very good. This is because of the high degree of respect that is shown to them by all of the adults in the school and the compliance with the school's aims and policies that put politeness and concern for others at the heart of what the school expects from everyone. This involvement and care is part of what makes the school so good as everyone, including the support staff, the maintenance and administrative staff and all of the catering and lunchtime staff show that they recognise the part that they play in building every child as an individual.
15. The school has worked hard to combat some unacceptable behaviour by a very small number of pupils. This has meant that the behaviour policy has been reviewed and parents have been kept very well informed by the staff about strategies for rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for dealing with oppressive or aggressive actions by pupils. This includes a system of groups of trained pupils acting as 'helping hands' to encourage co-operative play in the playground. The system is also enabling more timid pupils to become more self-reliant and has helped them to make friends. Pupils who continue to behave in an unacceptable way are dealt with very firmly. As a result, during the first year of this programme a number of pupils were excluded from the school for short fixed periods but this year just one pupil is still needing to be reminded that aggressive behaviour is always unacceptable.
16. Speaking with pupils about their school was a pleasure that made the work of the inspection team very worthwhile. From the Foundation Stage to Year 6, pupils were always sociable and polite. Older pupils were pleased to describe their recent residential visit and the appreciation that they felt for the teachers who had been with them. One child in Year 4 stated to an inspector that she was so happy at the school that she would like it to have a secondary department so that she need not leave when she was 11.

**The quality of teaching and learning and the use of cross-curricular links to extend and consolidate learning are very good.**

17. Teaching in this school has many strengths and no significant weaknesses. In a high proportion of the lessons teaching was judged to be at least good with four in ten lessons being very good or excellent; no unsatisfactory or weak teaching was seen. Teachers have very high but realistic expectations of the quantity of work that pupils should complete and of the high standards that they should achieve. This is evident in the challenging tasks set for pupils as well as the fast pace and the sense of urgency that the teachers inject into lessons. Lessons are usually fun, but the effort made by pupils to improve on personal best performance is a strong feature in all classes. Work presented by teachers is interesting and challenging and, as a result, pupils work together enthusiastically and productively and then they learn very well.
18. Teachers plan thoroughly and build assessment strategies into every lesson. The activities planned to increase pupils' learning and move their understanding forward are linked to the listed objectives for the lesson. There is planned simplification or adult support for pupils who find learning difficult and additional, more difficult, challenges for those capable of higher attainment. Links with other subjects are an important part of every lesson, which is why for example pupils use skills learned in numeracy very skilfully to support their interpretation of results in science. This work was also used very effectively in a lesson in Year 4 when the results from recent scientific enquiry undertaken as part of an environmental study project were reviewed during information and communication technology using spreadsheets and a database. Findings were displayed using bar graphs and pie charts and pupils were successful when comparing the effectiveness of the different pictorial presentation and deciding which style best suited the work in hand. In one lesson in mathematics in Year 2 pupils were tackling problems in addition and subtraction very confidently whilst the teacher kept them on their toes by reminding them just how much time remained for them to achieve their lesson targets. Probing questioning in many lessons challenges pupils to think beyond the most obvious answer. This was observed in history lessons in Year 5 when the teacher encouraged pupils to link their work about the traditions of the Aztecs with work that they had completed in an earlier set of lessons about the Ancient Egyptians. Pupils listed similarities and differences and made sensible judgements about which life-style or set of traditions they would have chosen. Groups of pupils had different preferences and skilfully argued the reasons for their personal selection. The process was more important in this case than the result as both traditions are now far in the past. Pupils were confident and capable when selecting from factual reporting strategies or a creative and imaginative style of writing prose learned in English when writing up the results of their discussions and deliberations.
19. From the Foundation Stage to Year 6, teachers show a good understanding of the subjects that they teach. For children in the Nursery and the Reception classes work is built successfully around the recognised curriculum with many opportunities for children to learn through role-play or by engaging in a wide range of practical activities. In a Year 1 class the pupils use a 'hide' made like a hollow tree, in the corner of the classroom, from which they use binoculars to observe insects and mini-beasts, displayed in and around the classroom. By the end of Year 6 pupils' are supported very effectively by the teachers' good understanding of the skills of developing both sides of an argument. Pupils used connective words and phrases to write persuasively about whether or not it was a sensible move to ban mobile telephones in school. Pupils reflected on the benefits for themselves and their parents of being able to make rapid contact with one another whilst, on the other hand, recognising the dangers of encouraging crime or even some possible health risks. Work observed in history, design and technology and information and communication technology showed how skills learned in literacy and numeracy were reinforced in

other subjects and how well these subjects benefited from pupils' knowledge and readiness to use these established skills.

20. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well throughout the school. As a result of the implementation of the firm but well understood behaviour policy in many lessons the organisation of classroom resources and of pupils was so good that it appeared to be effortless. This meant that pupils always listen attentively and are confident when making their ideas known to the class because they know that their opinions are valued. Both new and established teachers are very secure in their own knowledge of the subjects that they teach and make their instructions for pupils very clear. This means that when asked to work in groups or independently, pupils are eager to learn and so they settle quickly to their tasks and remain committed to their work without the need for teacher intervention. Teachers chose sensibly from a range of methods either setting out new work in clear steps or promoting learning experiences for pupils to develop new ideas or extend previous learning. Pupils at all stages of prior attainment learn well because of the skills of the teachers in making the process of learning interesting. In one lesson in art and design in Year 1, the teacher's brisk but friendly manner and the well-organised resources that included different pencils, paint, pastels, charcoal and clay, enabled pupils to complete their activities in a purposeful way. Pupils discussed their ideas within the group and tried them out using small sketches or models before embarking on full-scale compositions. Pupils worked within five linked activities attaining standards more usually found in classes for pupils in Years 2 or 3. All pupils worked with the stimulus of the flower form and had many examples both real and pictorial to inspire them.

**The revised curriculum and the procedures for the assessment of learning to inform planning are very good.**

21. The school plans with care to ensure that the pupils receive a very good range of learning opportunities, which meet their interests and aptitudes. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, as are religious education and personal, social and health education. The school makes suitable provision for pupils to develop an understanding about drug awareness and sex education. Appropriate time is spent on each subject so that it can be studied to sufficient depth to ensure that learning is well established and pupils' enthusiasm and interest sustained. The school is particularly successful in using knowledge from one subject to support learning in another. The curriculum provision for children in the Foundation Stage where the Nursery provision was only introduced in September 2001 is organised very well to promote learning and creates a stimulating environment that provides effectively for all. There is a wide range of play and other learning activities. The quality of support and help provided by adults is very good and the organisation and management of this time spent in the Foundation Stage, leading to the National Curriculum, prepares children well for the next phase of education in Year 1.
22. At the time of the last inspection, in 1997, the curriculum needed review and revision. Some plans for ongoing work were identified for review. The subject leaders have addressed and resolved all of the weaknesses, in each subject, in a determined and successful way. There has been particularly good improvement in information and communication technology, art and design and design and technology. The school has checked, tested and modified curriculum plans to match the revised National Curriculum introduced in September 2000 and has allowed appropriate time for this planning to be reviewed in the current year. Although each subject is planned for separately, the work that is scheduled dovetails subject areas so that pupils have the benefit of a much richer learning experience. For example, In Year 5 when pupils were

studying the life and traditions of the Aztecs in history they also studied the geographical area and life then and now in for example the rain forest in central America in geography. Pupils researched many details of the people's religion, art and mathematics. They compared their new understanding with what they had learned earlier about ancient Egyptians, another set of people who used pyramids in their life and worship. In many such instances work in one subject supported and refined that in another very effectively.

23. Lessons in literacy and numeracy are successful in developing pupils' skills in mathematics and English. The national strategies for Literacy and Numeracy underpin lesson planning and the subject leaders oversee the teaching of basic skills well. Pupils learn to write competently and interestingly at an early age and are being given increasingly good opportunities to write in all subjects. In consequence, pupils write very confidently selecting appropriately from a range of styles with regard to the different purposes of their written work. There is a well-structured programme of work for personal and social education. Health education is developed well through science, design and technology and physical education lessons. Teachers and pupils make regular visits to museums and many places in the locality and through these visits pupils' knowledge and understanding in science, history and geography is developed very well. Visitors are welcomed into the school and bring to the pupils their enthusiasms, experiences, knowledge and expertise.
24. The school's assessment policy contains clear and helpful guidance on the recording and monitoring of pupils' performance. The school has improved its assessment procedures that were identified as an issue in 1997 and has developed very effective practical strategies for monitoring the academic performance of pupils. This work has helped to identify areas for development and as a result, except where pupils in one group have a greater than average number of pupils with special educational needs, boys are now performing as well as girls in all subjects. The national tests are completed in accordance with statutory requirements. Trends are analysed over years and the school has been successful in remedying gaps in performance through changes in the curriculum and teaching strategies. Teachers make good use of the information gathered to help the setting of individual, group and school targets linked to the national requirements. The system works well and enables teachers to make realistic decisions about where help needs to be targeted. The school has been successful in managing the fluctuations in results well to the spread of differing levels of prior attainment in each year group. The pupils' individual records of achievement show a clear picture of the progress of each pupil through the school. Teachers are especially skilled when they modify the plans for intended work in the light of the day-to-day assessment of work completed in individual lessons.
25. The school makes good use of past National Curriculum results and the scores obtained in voluntary test papers to assess pupils' progress and to inform learning needs. Work is set for groups and individuals and, using this marked work, levels of attainment are agreed by staff. This work is then used in other subjects to assess levels of attainment. They are developed best in English, mathematics and science. Pupils across the school have explained to them what they need to do to achieve the expected and the higher levels of attainment. Individual targets are displayed in pupils' books and class targets are set out in prominent places in classrooms. In the Foundation Stage the staff use a detailed assessment system to help to plan various activities so that the children are helped to work towards the expected Early Learning Goals. The co-ordinator for assessment is looking to extend this work and build on the present success through collaboration with teacher from other schools.

**The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.**

26. Very good provision is made for personal, social and health education. This aspect of pupils' education permeates the whole curriculum. Alongside this the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as at the time of the previous inspection, continues to be a strength of the school. The school has worked very hard to extend pupils' cultural education in subjects such as mathematics and science as well as within music, art and design, history and literature. Parents are very happy with the attitudes and values that the school promotes.
27. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. During collective worship there was clear evidence that planned provision for pupils' spiritual development is at the forefront of the school's aims. The view of clouds in a pale blue sky seen through cherry blossom was vividly described with almost breathless pleasure by a pupil from Year 2 in one session of morning worship. The school's atmosphere for learning provides pupils with the belief that their school is a special place with special people who can all grow and flourish together. All staff work hard to ensure that pupils should value themselves and others. The gentle quality of collective worship within the school promotes pupils' understanding of human feelings and emotions very effectively. Assemblies are underpinned by the strong belief that all pupils are valued and are equal and have a full contribution to make to their school. It is evident that these pupils are learning a lot about themselves. In lessons the teachers ensure that pupils know exactly what to do and so they have the confidence to believe that they will succeed and are proud of what they do. There are numerous displays, which illustrate the value that teachers place upon pupils' work. There is clear evidence of the many activities that illustrates the breadth of experiences that pupils are offered to develop their spiritual awareness. Almost all parents agree that their children like to come to school
28. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The headteacher and all adults working in the school set very good examples. This makes pupils aware of the importance of rules that promote the values of honesty, justice and the care for others. Staff give reasons for how their pupils should behave so that they have a good sense of right and wrong. They are given opportunities to make choices, accept the consequences and know that their teachers will always listen and support them. For example, in several lessons, teachers praised pupils for their very good behaviour. All pupils move around the school in a very orderly manner and show consideration for one another, particularly those younger than themselves. The headteacher maintains a high profile around the school; thus ensuring that school rules are applied and that pupils are praised and encouraged for their good behaviour. The school has successfully dealt with a problem where a very small number of pupils behaved in an aggressive and unacceptable way towards others. The staff remains vigilant and all instances of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with swiftly using the firm but clearly understood behaviour policy.
29. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. There is a strong emphasis on personal, social and health education, which provides a sound basis for the school's approach to sex and drug awareness education. It also provides an effective means of helping pupils who experience difficulties to learn how to share, co-operate and develop positive relationships. The system of pupils working to support others called 'helping hands' is aimed at helping less confident pupils to develop social skills and to make friends. As a result, there is a positive attitude that enables pupils to make good

progress in lessons. Because relationships within the school are so strong the atmosphere for learning is very good. All adults in the school mirror this code of practice and pupils are valued for their contribution to the school community. They are taught to respect themselves, other people and property. From an early age pupils are encouraged to take responsibility seriously and sensibly. As they grow older, they return registers to the office, serve on the school council or work alongside younger pupils, supporting them in their work or play. Pupils share games at lunchtimes and take part in assemblies, school concerts and other events. The choir, football, cross-country running, cricket, netball, rounders and computer clubs further extend their social development. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the community, for example, through sports activities and during educational visits including the most recent residential outdoor activity visit. They are taught the importance of team spirit and of being able to trust one another. Parents speak positively about how the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.

30. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. This is another improvement since 1997. The school prepares pupils well for life in a diverse, multi-cultural society. They enjoy opportunities to prepare traditional foods from other countries. They learn about the ancient cultures of The Vikings, Greeks, Egyptians and the Aztecs as well as the work of famous artists and the music of famous and more contemporary composers. There are good opportunities for them to hear music and learn songs from other cultures and countries. They learn about faiths such as Judaism and Islam and about the festivals and compare them with Christian celebrations. Besides sharing in visits to art galleries and museums there are a number of visitors to the school, including authors, poets, artists and musicians. These experiences support pupils' awareness of their cultural heritage well and further their spiritual and social development.

**The leadership and management skills of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff are excellent and are supported well by the governors.**

31. The headteacher and her deputy work together very well and with the support and cooperation of the rest of the management team and the subject leaders they set the very positive tone for the school. There is a total commitment across the entire staff to maintaining what is recognised as being good and developing and refining the details of the school's facilities and learning environment with the purpose of longer-term development. Since the last inspection the quiet, encouraging and firm leadership of the headteacher has enabled the school to plan for structured development with clarity of purpose and a clear vision for the future. Since the last inspection it is the formalisation of good practice, the introduction and development of new skills and ideas and a sharing of ideals and purpose that have lifted the school to its present level.
32. With the headteacher and the new deputy headteacher the staff has played a very productive part in reviewing the curriculum and in developing the management role of each subject leader. This has enabled the headteacher, designated governors and subject leaders to observe lessons and to share the best practice with all teachers across the school. Where teachers lacked confidence, subject leaders have worked with them and have presented demonstration lessons. Subject leaders now feel empowered to plan for the improvement of their subject through the use of designated funds, carefully allocated from the limited budget, that are closely tied to the school development plan. They audit initiatives and prepare thorough reports for colleagues and the governors as to how the planned work is helping to raise standards. They are impatient to instigate and develop other ideas aimed at raising standards as soon as funds permit. All of the staff help to share the process of evaluating and improving the planned work, the standards achieved and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Work scrutinised and analysed during the inspection, together with the results of the National Curriculum and voluntary tests, indicate that they are being successful in this enterprise.
33. The governing body is increasingly involved in overseeing and reviewing the work within the school to good effect. Its members bring various skills and talents to this work as well as a strong sense of the school's place in the community. Teachers and support staff all benefit from regular training. Learning resources are adequate; they are of good quality, readily accessible and are managed very well. The accommodation is clean and bright and the carefully presented work makes the school environment a good place to encourage learning. The establishment of the computer suite and the relocation of the library facilities have increased the opportunities for pupils to develop their personal skills for research and independent study. The addition of a Nursery class from September 2001 is beginning to extend the work of the Foundation Stage very successfully.

**WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The provision of facilities for outdoor play and learning, particularly for the children at the Foundation Stage.**

34. The outdoor facilities for play are spacious and well maintained but they are boring and unimaginative. Although there is plenty of space the hard surface offers little to inspire imaginative or co-operative play and with the playground having no separation from the car park pupils are inhibited when running or playing with balls. The neighbourhood around the school is subject to vandalism in the evenings and the

school staff has to be very vigilant clearing broken glass and other sharp items each morning before school. The grassed area at the back is pleasant to look at but, because of vandalism, drainage problems and the very steep bank, it is not usable except in very dry weather.

35. The small grassy area in the secure playing space for the new Nursery class is very steep and presents tremendous difficulties to staff and children. Equipment has to be carried up and down the banking each day and in wet weather the grass is too dangerous to allow the children to play freely. This reduces the range and scope of the curriculum activities planned by the teachers. Vandals regularly climb over the fence and damage the attractive enclosed play and garden area designed for the Reception classes. This damage caused to the amenities available for the children is very disheartening for the staff.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. In order to build further upon its many strengths the headteacher and governors should:

liaise with the appropriate authorities to seek all possible ways of improving the outdoor accommodation for pupils in the school, especially for those at the Foundation Stage, as set out in the school development plan as a matter of urgency by:

- (a) working to improve the playground and establish a separate car parking facility, as shown in the plans of the present feasibility study, in order to enable pupils to play more purposefully;  
*Paragraph: 34*
- (b) exploring ways of preventing access to the Reception class garden by vandals through the carefully planned re-siting of the dustbins to an alternative place that is accessible to the staff and the refuse collectors;  
*Paragraph: 35*
- (c) investigating ways of providing a safe, flat, grassed area for the Nursery for the children and staff in order to enable the full implementation of the well-planned curriculum prepared by the teachers.  
*Paragraph: 35*

All of these items are listed in the school's development plan and supporting action plans but the cost at present is greater than the school's financial capacity.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	13	4	0	0	0
Percentage	3	40	43	13	0	0	0

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

### 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)	24.5	419
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	39

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	30	28	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	30	29
	Girls	25	28	28
	Total	51	18	57
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	88 (90)	100 (88)]	98 (97)
	National	84] (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	30
	Girls	27	27	28
	Total	55	55	58
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	95 (90)	95 (95)	100 (90)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	31	28	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	22	29
	Girls	28	24	28
	Total	49	46	57
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	83 (75)	78 (82)	97 (95)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	21	26
	Girls	27	27	27
	Total	47	48	53
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	80 (65)	81 (72)	90 (82)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	9
White	346
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Average class size	30

#### **Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	265

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

### **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	1	0
White	7	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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/ 02
	£
Total income	898,625
Total expenditure	898,339
Expenditure per pupil	2,180
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,860
Balance carried forward to next year	13,147

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	444
Number of questionnaires returned	182

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	45	6	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	49	14	2	4
The teaching is good.	59	40	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	47	10	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	31	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	35	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	39	48	10	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	60	36	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	43	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	42	11	3	8