

INSPECTION REPORT

BLEAK HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Windle, St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104773

Headteacher: Mr P W Isaac

Reporting inspector: Mr S Hill
21277

Dates of inspection: 17th to 19th June 2002

Inspection number: 198824

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:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hamilton Road Windle St Helens Merseyside
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G F Almond
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bleak Hill is a large primary school on the northern side of St Helens. It has 492 pupils, aged 4 to 11, in 17 classes. Children start in the school in the September of the year in which they will be five. In the last year the school has moved to a completely new building. In response to regulations on infant class sizes, and the limitations of funding, the school has arranged its classes so that there are three in each age group for younger pupils, but only two in each age group for older pupils. Consequently, there are three smallish classes (average just over 23) in each of Years R, 1 and 2, and two very large classes (average just over 35) in each of Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Almost all pupils are of white, United Kingdom ethnic origin, and all pupils have English as their home language. Pupils' social circumstances are somewhat more favourable than average and this is reflected in the below-average number of pupils entitled to free school meals (3.25%). The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs (16%) is below average, as is the number pupils with statements of special educational needs (4 - less than 1%). The majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Almost all pupils have some form of pre-school experience before they start at Bleak Hill. The overall attainment of most pupils on entry is average, although their social skills are above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school, where pupils achieve very well because teaching is consistently of a high standard. The school is led very well, and all staff work together to provide a positive learning environment, where pupils behave very well and enjoy learning. The quality of management is very good and the school provides very good value for money. The many strengths considerably outweigh the relatively minor areas to be improved.

What the school does well

- Pupils generally achieve high standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave very well, and form positive relationships.
- Overall arrangements to assess pupils' attainment are good, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- The school is led and managed very well.
- Provision for developing pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) is good, so that pupils achieve well.
- The school works hard to promote an effective partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- Systems for recording pupils' overall achievement, and for co-ordinators to check on standards and teaching, in subjects outside the core.
- Systematic arrangements to use pupils' ICT skills in other subjects.
- The quality of the school grounds as a resource for learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected, in November 1997, the improvement has been very good. High standards have been maintained and have risen in line with national trends. Teaching has improved, is now very good overall, and the proportion of good and very good teaching has increased significantly.

The key issues from the last report have been addressed very well. Day-to-day planning has been improved and is now good. In particular, what different groups of pupils should learn is identified clearly, especially in English and mathematics, and this is informed well by day-to-day assessments. Overall arrangements for assessment are now a strength, particularly in English, mathematics and science, although there is still a need for more structured arrangements in other subjects. Considerable improvement has been made in standards in ICT, and provision for the subject is now good. All subject co-

ordinators are now more effective in monitoring their subjects, and this is a particular strength in English and mathematics. However, there is still a need to improve monitoring of some aspects of other subjects. A number of minor areas identified as needing improvement at the last report have also been dealt with effectively.

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	A	A	A*	A
mathematics	A	A	A*	A
science	A	A*	A	B

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

A* means in the highest five per cent nationally.

Results for eleven year olds have been well above average in all three subjects for several years. They have gone up in line with national trends. Last year, results were particularly high in English and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools (where similar numbers of pupils are entitled to free school meals), results were above average in science, and well above average in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils in Year 6 are attaining standards that are ahead of national expectations in English, mathematics and science.

At the age of seven, pupils' results have been similarly high for several years, particularly in writing, where they are in the top five per cent nationally. Inspection evidence confirms these good standards.

At both key stages, standards in ICT are ahead of national expectations in most year groups, except in Year 6, where they are in line with expectations. This is because, despite the good provision throughout the school for ICT, these pupils have not had the benefit of this provision throughout their school career. In all other subjects, throughout the school, standards are at least in line with national expectations and there are examples of good standards in many subjects.

The youngest children make very good progress and almost all attain the early learning goals (the nationally expected standards) by the end of the reception year, and many exceed them.

The school sets challenging targets for national assessment results, based on careful assessment of pupils' capabilities, and makes good progress towards them. Across the school as a whole achievement is very good, and pupils attain standards that are higher than might be expected in the light of their initial attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school, work hard and take a pride in their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are considerate and well mannered. They try hard to meet their teachers' high expectations and to follow the good role models provided by all the staff.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good and they work very effectively collaboratively or independently. They form very good relationships with

	each other and with adults in the school.
Attendance	Very good; well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The overall quality of teaching is very good. Almost all teaching observed during the inspection was good or better, and almost a half was very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects taught, and a good understanding of how pupils learn. This is a particular strength in literacy, numeracy and ICT, which are taught well across the school. Teachers have high expectations, which pupils try hard to fulfil. The teaching in the reception classes is characterised by consistently good organisation and teamwork between all staff. Throughout the school, particular care is taken to ensure that work is matched to pupils’ individual needs, so that they all make good progress. Lessons have a brisk pace, and good use is made of practical work, so that pupils’ interest is maintained and they really enjoy learning. Good use of collaborative work supports pupils’ social development and their increased understanding in a variety of subjects well. Generally, good use is made of the skilled classroom assistants, particularly in helping pupils who struggle with their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and all subjects are covered effectively. Literacy and numeracy are particular strengths. ICT is taught effectively throughout the school, but opportunities to use pupils’ skills to support work in other subjects are not planned sufficiently systematically. Extra-curricular provision is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are given work that is well matched to their needs, and get good support from teachers and staff. This enables almost all pupils to reach the expected standards in national tests. Pupils with statements get good support, well matched to their specific needs.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Personal development is supported well formally, through specific lessons and through initiatives such as the school council, and informally through day to day interactions. Staff provide very good role models for pupils. Provision for moral and social development is particularly good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures to look after pupils and to support their general well-being are very good. Child protection procedures are very effective. Very good procedures are in place for assessing pupils’ attainment in English and mathematics. Day-to-day assessment procedures are good. However, there is a lack of systematic procedures to assess and record pupils’ overall attainment in some other subjects, such as ICT and physical education.

The school works very effectively in partnership with parents, who hold it in high regard.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led by the headteacher and deputy, who are supported by a hard working, professional team of staff. Co-ordinators provide good support to colleagues, and the monitoring of planning is well-established. Teaching and pupils' work in some subjects, particularly English and mathematics, are monitored very effectively. In other subjects, while monitoring is satisfactory, it is not as thorough.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body works hard to support the school and has effective systems in place to enable this. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Results of assessments are analysed carefully and evaluations are used effectively to refine and improve the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing and resources are good and are used very well. The principles of best value are used well. The new building provides good quality accommodation, which is well maintained.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children make good progress. • The teaching is good. • Behaviour is good. • The school expects children to work hard. • They would be comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About a third of parents do not think there is an interesting range of activities outside lessons. • Some parents do not think they are kept well informed about their children's progress. • A few parents are unhappy about the amount of homework given. • A few parents do not think the school works closely with them.

Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views. In comparison with schools generally, the range of extra curricular activities is very good. Provision for homework is good. The work that the school does to involve parents is much more extensive than is usually found. The information provided for parents is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils generally achieve high standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science

1. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well. Examples of high standards were observed in lessons across the curriculum. Samples of pupils' work show that high standards are consistently achieved in English, mathematics and science.
2. Standards in English are very good. The majority of pupils achieve higher than average standards in their work. From the time that they start school, pupils are encouraged to speak confidently and to express their views and opinions clearly. Pupils spoke engagingly about their new school and the benefits it brought them, and younger pupils particularly expressed pride in the ICT suite. Pupils are given many opportunities to speak and listen to different audiences. Writing is a strength for 7 year olds. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils made their own non-fiction books and used headings and sub-headings well to organise their writing. They used punctuation correctly and presented their work carefully. These high standards continue through the junior classes. For example, in an effective lesson in Year 5 pupils learnt about complex sentences, the majority of pupils identifying the main and subordinate clause accurately. Pupils in Year 6 wrote poems with enthusiasm and thought. Their work evoked a sense of place and of individual characters very effectively. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading in school and at home, and many parents hear their children read at home. Younger pupils know many authors and illustrators. Older pupils gather information efficiently, making good use of their skills of "skimming" and "scanning" to quickly understand the gist of a particular passage, and to locate a particular piece of information on a page. They use their skills of inference and deduction well to understand and interpret more difficult texts. Teachers' effective use of the National Literacy Strategy makes the work interesting and relevant for pupils. This ensures they are fully involved in their learning so they make consistently good progress and achieve high standards.
3. Pupils achieve high standards in mathematics and apply their skills effectively in a wide variety of situations. Pupils in Year 2 understand the relationship between their mathematics and everyday situations and were able to relate the numerical form of a half and a quarter to practical problems. In Year 4, pupils are able to order decimal and vulgar fractions forwards and backwards in tenths correctly. They use their mental skills to add and subtract decimal fractions accurately and quickly. Pupils in Year 6 show a high level of mental mathematical ability, which they apply effectively to different situations. For example, they demonstrated remarkable flexibility when they mentally converted vulgar fractions to decimal fractions quickly and accurately in the course of solving problems. Throughout the school, pupils are highly motivated in their mathematics lessons. They enjoy mathematics and approach their lessons with eager anticipation. Pupils recognise the relevance of the subject to everyday situations and, by Year 6, they regard mathematics as an enjoyable and exciting part of everyday life.
4. The high standards in science were shown in an infant class, when pupils in Year 1 displayed good knowledge of the parts of a flowering plant. Over half of the class were attaining the standards expected from pupils a year older. They could explain that plants needed water and sunlight to grow, and could record the work they had done accurately in writing. Pupils continue to make very good progress in the juniors, and by Year 6 are attaining high standards. Virtually all pupils attain the expected levels for their age, and many exceed them. They have a very good understanding of a fair test, and most can sort out their ideas in a logical way. In a lesson during the inspection, pupils accurately identified the relevant variables in an experiment, for example the positions of the object and light source, the orientation of the object, and the brightness of the light in an investigation of shadows. They showed good scientific knowledge, which they applied well in making hypotheses about the results of investigations.

5. Examples of high standards were also seen in a range of other lessons, such as pupils' playing of instruments during a very good music lesson in Year 2, and good skills in gymnastics in Year 3. A variety of good work is also shown in displays around the school, such as the expressive, colourful portraits pupils in Year 6 have produced in the style of Picasso.

Teaching and learning are very good

6. Almost all teaching observed during the inspection was good or better, and nearly half was very good. The consistency of the teaching throughout the school is the major factor in pupils' high achievement. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. This is a particular strength in literacy and mathematics. For example, in a good lesson with Year 2 on fractions, the teacher gave very clear explanations, which enabled pupils to quickly grasp work that was new to them. Similarly, when Year 5 pupils worked on complex sentences, the teacher's clear exposition gave pupils a good grasp of the concept, and astute questioning enabled her to assess pupils' understanding and to challenge them at an appropriate level. Similarly high levels of expertise supported achievement in a range of lessons observed, such as when pupils in Year 2 made very good progress in playing musical instruments rhythmically to represent different kinds of weather.
7. The teaching in the reception classes is characterised by consistently good organisation and teamwork between all staff. Planning is carefully matched to the early learning goals as well as to the start of the National Curriculum. During a very good lesson on Goldilocks and the Three Bears, the careful organisation allowed some children to work independently on appropriate tasks, while the teacher and classroom assistant each worked with a small group, intervening to take their learning forward very effectively.
8. Teachers throughout the school have high expectations, which pupils try hard to fulfil. This was shown in a very good mathematics lesson, when pupils in Year 3 responded positively to the challenge of dealing with negative numbers, as well as applying their good numeracy skills well to solving difficult problems.
9. Throughout the school, the quality of teachers' planning is good. Particular care is taken to ensure that work is matched to pupils' individual needs, so that they all make good progress. For example, in a science lesson in Year 1, pupils were given different worksheets of varying degrees of difficulty, on which to record their results. This ensured that each pupil was able to record their findings effectively, making maximum use of their different levels of literacy skill.
10. Lessons have a brisk pace, and this ensures that a lot is often accomplished in a relatively short time. This is considerably helped by the effective routines which teachers establish in class and which pupils follow conscientiously.
11. Teachers take care to make effective use of practical work, and to relate work to pupils' everyday experiences, so that subjects are brought to life for them. The wide range of interesting lessons and the gentle humour which teachers use support very positive relationships. Pupils enjoy their work and are keen to please their teachers. In conversation, older pupils said that the way teachers made lessons fun was one of the best things about the school. As a result of this, and the clear expectations that adults have, high standards of relaxed discipline characterise the vast majority of lessons.
12. Good use is made of collaborative work, and this supports pupils' social development as well as their increased understanding in a variety of subjects. Good examples of this were seen in a science lesson with Year 6, when pupils worked in groups to plan their approach to an investigation. They listened to each other attentively, shared ideas and made good progress in their understanding as they explained their thinking to each other.
13. Generally, good use is made of the skilled classroom assistants, particularly in helping pupils who struggle with their work. They are well briefed by the teachers and show good skills in working

with pupils. They contribute very well to pupils' learning, particularly those who have special educational needs.

Pupils enjoy school, behave very well, and form positive relationships

14. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. This has a positive impact on their learning and the high standards that they achieve. They are keen and eager to come to school and participate enthusiastically in all that the school has to offer. Attendance is very high. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school because "teachers have fun ways of helping us learn".
15. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 3, pupils were keen to succeed, tackling problems thoughtfully and effectively, discussing their work sensibly with each other, and developing their own and each others' understanding very well. In the reception classes, the youngest children know exactly what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and learning and they respond very well to these high expectations. Pupils are proud to wear their merit badges and to write their names in the Good Work books. In the playground and at lunchtime, pupils are sensible and respectful of one another. Routines are well established in the new building, and pupils work and play together happily.
16. Pupils' personal development and their relationships are very good. Pupils of all ages are given opportunities to develop responsibilities, for example as house captains and monitors. Through representing the school in sporting and musical events and generally supporting the smooth running of the school day in many small but important ways, they grow in confidence. Older pupils help younger children at lunchtimes and playtimes efficiently, and take a pride in this. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and fully integrated and included in all areas of school life. These very positive attitudes and good relationships mean that pupils work hard to do their best and achieve high standards in their work.

Overall arrangements to assess pupils' attainment are good, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science

17. Procedures for assessing children's attainment and monitoring their progress are good overall, and are very good for English and mathematics. For the Foundation Stage and for science they are good. In other subjects they are satisfactory overall, and are still developing. The assessment co-ordinator and the deputy head have worked extremely hard to establish a comprehensive range of assessments to identify standards accurately in the core subjects of English and mathematics. These ensure that the school is able to monitor progress, track pupils' targets and ensure, through careful moderation, that teachers in parallel classes use the same criteria accurately when making assessments. Good procedures for moderation include the marking of assessments by teachers from other year groups to ensure a more impartial approach. Teachers carefully analyse results from national assessments, and from optional tests at both key stages. They use this information to assess progress and development throughout the school and to modify future teaching and planning. Files containing all relevant information are scrupulously kept so that both progress within a subject as a whole, and pupils' individual progress, can be tracked and standards identified on a continuous basis. These procedures apply to English and mathematics and, to a lesser degree, in science. All this ensures that work for individuals and groups is matched to their needs, and supports the high standards in the school.
18. For all subjects, the day-to-day assessment by teachers is effective throughout the school. A strength of lesson planning is that plans are continually modified, for the class as a whole or for individuals, in response to the assessments made in each lesson. In English, mathematics and science, this "fine tuning" builds on the longer term assessments to ensure a consistently high but attainable level of challenge for pupils, and contributes to the high standards attained. In all subjects, the use of everyday assessment ensures a good match of work to pupils' needs, so that they make good progress across the curriculum.

The school is led and managed very well

19. The headteacher and deputy work well together to give very clear leadership and direction to the work of the school. Other staff with management responsibilities support them well in this, and the entire staff work as a very effective team. They have a strong commitment to the school and to doing the best they can for their pupils. The systems of management in place are very effective and ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, backed up by the efficient office staff. The efforts of staff are closely focused on the maintenance and improvement of standards, and factors that support their improvement. This has been very effective and has resulted in significant improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching, which is now very good. The way that staff have worked together as a unit to develop ICT, led effectively by the co-ordinators, is a good example of how their teamwork supports improvements in provision, teaching and standards. A key element in the school's progress is the way that all staff are willing to examine their own practice and take on new ideas if these will benefit their pupils.
20. The subject co-ordinators have developed their role very effectively since the last inspection, and now give very good leadership to their colleagues. All subjects are managed well. The concentration has been, appropriately, on literacy and numeracy and the management of these subjects is very good, ensuring that consistently high standards are maintained. Other co-ordinators have worked very well within the time constraints available, and give good support to colleagues. The establishment of effective schemes of work, ensures that what pupils learn in one class builds on what they have been taught already. Good use has been made of national guidance to support this. The establishment of common, effective systems of planning and the time teachers spend in planning together also contribute to the broad and balanced curriculum which pupils receive. The curriculum and its effectiveness are monitored well by co-ordinators, through looking at planning and samples of work. In the case of English and mathematics, this is backed up by the observation of teaching in lessons. In general, co-ordinators and senior management have a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the school, which enables them to provide help and support where it is needed and to share best practice. This overview is strongest in English and mathematics.
21. Financial management is very good and contributes effectively to the school's educational priorities. For example, the school employs a large number of non-teaching staff. This is a very effective use of expenditure, as these people are skilled and efficient, and make very positive contributions to pupils' learning. The school ensures that proper training and support are provided to them and that they are well-briefed about their role and what is required. As a result, they work very effectively with teachers to help pupils to learn in a variety of situations. Their contribution to helping those pupils who struggle with their work to do well is particularly effective.
22. Governors have established good systems to help them monitor the school's work and to be involved in its development. They have been fully involved during the school's move to a new building, for example, providing good support to staff at this time. They fulfil their statutory duties well and make a positive contribution the school's continuous improvement.

Provision for developing skills in information and communication technology (ICT) is good, so that pupils achieve well

23. The provision for ICT has improved considerably since the last inspection. At that time, although standards were satisfactory in the infants, progress in the juniors was unsatisfactory, teachers' subject knowledge was weak and the National Curriculum was not taught systematically. All this has now improved.
24. Teachers and support staff have undertaken extensive training and are now confident in teaching pupils the basic skills and how to use a range of programs. They make very good use of the ICT

suite to do this, so that all pupils get regular hands-on experience of using computers. The teachers make very good use of the interactive white-board in the suite to demonstrate things clearly to their pupils, so they make rapid progress in their learning when they are in the suite. The provision of equipment is very good, with two computers in each classroom, and good opportunities in the suite for all pupils to actively participate. There is now an established programme of work which classes follow which ensures they cover the full range of national curriculum requirements during their time in the school.

25. As a result of the improvements in provision, standards in almost all year groups are above national expectations. For example, pupils in Year 2 can “cut and paste”, drag pictures into new positions, and change the font of writing confidently. Pupils in Year 4 quickly became confident in using text boxes during a very good lesson in the ICT suite. They retrieved previous work efficiently, produced and modified text-boxes, and added captions and illustrations to produce a page design. They discussed their work together effectively and learned a lot in a short time. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their work in ICT, concentrate well and work hard.
26. The exception to the good standards is in Year 6, where standards are now in line with expectations. The good provision has enabled them to catch up the ground they had lost, but they have not yet had time to exceed expectations. They show good skills in topics they have covered recently, such as word-processing, or using the Internet, but are very insecure in aspects they have missed out, such as using a spreadsheet. Nonetheless, they are now achieving well and making up the lost ground quickly.
27. The major facets of the good provision are the good teaching, the well-organised curriculum, and the high quality equipment, particularly the computer suite. The development of all of these has been brought about through clear leadership from the senior management team and the ICT co-ordinators, and teamwork through all staff working together.

The school works hard to promote an effective partnership with parents

28. The school’s very good links with parents make a strong contribution to pupils’ learning. This has a high priority within its work. For example, the school has appointed a family partnership co-ordinator, who makes a substantial contribution to promoting an effective partnership with parents. Her work is backed up well by the efforts and enthusiasm of other members of the school staff. Good steps are taken by the school to consult parents and evaluate its effectiveness in working with them. For example, during the building of the new school, consultation meetings were held with the community and families of the pupils.
29. The very good information that parents receive enables them to become more involved in their children’s learning and to have a secure understanding of the school’s work. Good quality information is given, for example, in notes on the curriculum and topics that are studied, in pupils’ written reports and in the school magazine. A further example of the very good links that the school has established is the significant number of parent volunteer helpers in school, who carry out a variety of tasks and contribute very positively to pupils’ learning.
30. The school also enjoys the strong support of its Friends of Bleak Hill Association. Besides raising substantial funds, which supplement the school’s budget, the association organises many events that bring people together socially. This facility further strengthens the link between home and school. The school is very successful in implementing its mission statement of “working with families, appreciating their involvement in the present and future education and development of their children and seeing the school as part of the wider community.” This latter is well exemplified by the school’s Theatre and Travel club, which is run by two former teachers. The club successfully involves large number of parents, children, staff and members of the community in a variety of social occasions throughout the year, strongly supporting the school in its role in the wider community.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Systems for recording pupils' overall achievement, and for co-ordinators to check on standards and teaching, in subjects outside the core

31. The assessment of pupils' progress and the checking on standards and teaching are well established in English, mathematics and science, and in the foundation stage. In some subjects, such as physical education and ICT, procedures are still developing.
32. While day-to-day assessments are good throughout the curriculum, there are currently no systematic ways of recording pupils' overall achievements in some subjects, either for individuals or for groups. The school is aware of this and the co-ordinators involved are considering what systems should be in place. For example, the recent major improvements in ICT provision mean that the school is now well placed to consider how achievement should be recorded, which was not previously the case.
33. Similarly, the co-ordinators throughout the school have systems for checking provision, including looking at planning and samples of work in their subjects. However, these systems are much better developed in English and mathematics than in other subjects, particularly with respect to monitoring teaching. Although the monitoring of work goes on in most subjects, it is not yet sufficiently systematic to identify some differences in outcomes in different classes, brought about by the different ways teachers have interpreted their planning. In some subjects, there are differences in the balance of the work done over the year in different classes - for example, in the time pupils spend writing in their own words in science, as opposed to filling in worksheets. There is need to draw on the expertise developed in English and mathematics to develop monitoring arrangements across the curriculum, although these should be tailored to the needs of the particular subjects.

Systematic arrangements to use pupils' ICT skills in other subjects

34. Some good use is made of ICT to support work in other subjects, such as when pupils in Year 5 pupils made great strides in their problem solving strategies during an excellent lesson combining mathematics and ICT. Other examples were seen in lessons when pupils did their writing on the computer in a literacy lesson in Year 6, or used the computer to "draw" and label a plant in a science lesson in Year 1.
35. Teachers are now more confident in identifying opportunities to use ICT in individual lessons, but there are not yet systematic arrangements to develop pupils' experiences in a planned way within each subject. The provision of software to do this is currently variable between subjects. Consequently, some opportunities are missed to support pupils' learning in the different subjects, and to give them extra practise in using the skills and understanding they gain in their specific ICT lessons. Both ICT and subject co-ordinators are aware of this need, and are considering ways in which it might be achieved.

The quality of the school's grounds as a resource for learning

36. The school has created internally an exciting, colourful, inviting and motivating environment. The well displayed work of the pupils, covering all aspects of the curriculum, serves not only to motivate the pupils but values their efforts, promotes their self-esteem and confirms to visitors their high achievements. The whole of the internal environment reflects the school's intentions to provide a high quality education for its pupils as well as reinforcing its aspirations for the future.
37. The grounds, however, apart from the reception courtyard, provide a stark contrast to this. The site is currently rather bleak and empty and, although there is plenty of space, since the new

building, the grounds are somewhat featureless. There is little shade, except in that part of the grounds which is too wet to use. There are no markings on the playground, and little to engage pupils' interest. There is little in place to take advantage of the space to advance pupils' learning across the curriculum. The school acknowledges this and has consulted with pupils, staff, parents, governors and other interested parties about how the external environment may be improved.

38. As a result of this investigation, a number of aspects have been identified which could complement the high quality internal environment. Such aspects include the marking of playgrounds, a canopy area for waiting parents that would also be an outdoor learning area in inclement weather, a seating areas for pupils, an adventure area for climbing and balancing activities, and a meadow and wetlands area for environmental studies. The school intends to put all these into place, as funds become available.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to build on the current very good provision the school should, in line with its current priorities and the school improvement plan:-

- (1) Improve the arrangements for monitoring and assessment, drawing on the very good practice already established in the core subjects of mathematics and English, by:-
 - a. Developing methods of assessing and recording pupils' overall achievements in subjects across the curriculum.
 - b. Developing ways for co-ordinators to have a better view of provision in their subjects in different classes, particularly with regard to standards and teaching, in ways that are tailored to the needs of each subject.
- (2) Make more systematic the use of ICT to support work in other subjects by:-
 - a. Establishing, within each subject, how ICT can best be used to support progress in each year group.
 - b. Purchasing relevant software to support "a" above.
 - c. Continuing to upgrade and improve resources in line with current plans.
- (3) Improve the school grounds, as funds become available, in line with the current detailed plans, which the school has already drawn up.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	14	1	0	0	0
Percentage	4	41	52	4	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	492
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	78

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	36	34	70

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	34	35
	Girls	34	34	34
	Total	68	68	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (100)	97 (100)	99 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	34	36
	Girls	34	34	34
	Total	68	68	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (100)	97 (100)	100 (100)
	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	30	40	70

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	29	30
	Girls	40	38	40
	Total	69	67	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	99 (94)	96 (94)	100 (99)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	29	30
	Girls	39	39	40
	Total	67	68	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (91)	97 (94)	100 (100)
	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	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	419
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.76
Average class size	28.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	425

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	1 023 379
Total expenditure	1 034 779
Expenditure per pupil	2 086
Balance brought forward from previous year	57 842
Balance carried forward to next year	46 442

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	492
Number of questionnaires returned	208

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33.5	1	0.5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	33.5	2	0.5	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58.5	39	1	0	1.5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	45.5	9.5	1.5	0.5
The teaching is good.	57	38.5	1.5	0.5	2.5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	46	15.5	3	0.5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61.5	32.5	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74.5	24.5	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35.5	52	9	2.5	1
The school is well led and managed.	59.5	34.5	3	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	44.5	2	0.5	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	33	27.5	6	7.5