

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. MARY'S C.E. AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bitteswell, Lutterworth

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120193

Headteacher: Mrs M Driver

Reporting inspector: Hugh Protherough
8339

Dates of inspection: 4th – 5th December 2000

Inspection number: 224995

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Green Bitteswell Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE17 4SB
Telephone number:	01455 552818
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Anne Dean
Date of previous inspection:	18 th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This small, four class primary school has 115 pupils on roll comprising 57 boys and 58 girls all of white ethnicity. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The school is popular and successful. As a result a significant number of pupils come from outside the villages that form the school's immediate catchment area. This leads to considerable fluctuation in the numbers of pupils in each age group and is reflected in the current large class sizes in Key Stage 2. The background of the pupils is generally favourable. The proportion entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The number of pupils on the school's register for special educational needs is also below the national average at 16 per cent. This figure includes one pupil with a statement of special educational needs. The levels of pupils' attainment on entry are generally above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that provides a good quality education for its pupils and enables them to achieve standards that exceed those found nationally and in similar schools. The pupils' all round development is assured in a caring Christian community where the core values of truth, honesty and integrity are central to daily life. The pupils are engaged in learning because many lessons are lively and challenging. The new headteacher has settled in quickly. She recognises the many strengths of the school and has made sound assessment of where and how to build for further improvement. The school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high throughout the school, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- A high proportion of very good teaching motivates the pupils to work hard and do their best.
- The classroom assistants are well qualified, highly skilled and make a significant contribution to the children's learning.
- The pupils are extremely polite, courteous and considerate.
- The school offers a very good range of extracurricular activities.

What could be improved

- The standard of the pupils' work in information and communications technology.
- Some aspects of the provision for the pupils in the Foundation stage.
- The organisation of the documentation relating to special educational needs.

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 February 1997. Since then the good quality of educational provision has been sustained and there has been further satisfactory improvement. Standards have remained high at the end of both key stages. The brighter pupils are stretched so that in the national tests a very large proportion exceeds the levels normally expected of seven and eleven year olds. However, the good quality of information available about the attainment of individual pupils has only recently been properly utilised to set realistic targets for each cohort moving through the school.

Progress towards improving provision for information and communications technology has been too slow. The recent increase in equipment and the proposed additional training for staff is a big step forward. However, this has not yet had time to bring about the necessary improvements in the pupils'

performance. The quality of the pupils' work in art continues to be satisfactory, but does not yet match the high standards achieved in other subjects.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A*	A	A*	A
mathematics	A*	A	A*	A*
science	A*	A*	A	A

Key

Very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that standards have been high for many years. By the time they leave school at age eleven, all children reach at least the expected levels in English, mathematics and science and a good number exceed them. For instance, in the national tests for 2000 almost two thirds of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved the higher levels in all three subjects. This is most unusual and represents an exceptionally strong performance. For instance, in comparison with the national picture the children achieved results in English and mathematics that were in the top five per cent of all schools. In mathematics, this was also the case when the pupils' results were compared with those of schools in similarly favourable circumstances.

The Key Stage 2 results reflect the good start made by pupils in Key Stage 1. In last year's national tests the seven-year-old pupils achieved results that were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

The inspection findings confirm that the standards in English, mathematics and science are high and the pupils achieve well throughout the school. However, the proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 working at the expected levels is lower this year because this cohort contains a few children with some significant special educational needs. The quality of the pupils' work in information and communications technology continues to lag behind the high standards achieved in other subjects because the school has only recently improved its stock of computers to an adequate level.

The new headteacher has sensibly re-assessed the school's performance targets for mathematics and English. Prior to this, the school's approach was unduly cautious. Given the consistently high standard of the pupils' work, it made no sense that the targets for 1999 and 2000 were set low.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The children enjoy school. They concentrate in lessons and work extremely hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils are polite, courteous and considerate in their dealings with each other, adults and visitors to the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are extremely positive and their personal development is good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. There has been a recent drop in attendance. Unauthorised absence is currently above the national average.

The impact of a tiny minority of parents who choose to take their children out of school for more than two weeks each year has lowered the school's hitherto excellent record of attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good. Fifty percent of the lessons observed during the inspection were judged to be of very good quality, 36 per cent were good and 14 per cent [two lessons] were satisfactory. There were no unsatisfactory lessons.

There is particular strength in the thorough way that the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught. The teachers have good subject knowledge and are well prepared to teach these basic skills. They plan their lessons in detail and set precise objectives so that it is clear what the pupils are going to learn. As a result, the pace of work is frequently brisk. The lessons are often stimulating because the teachers encourage a good range of practical activities, especially in science and mathematics. This motivates the pupils and encourages them to think more deeply about they have learnt.

A recent development in Key Stage 2 has been the introduction of teaching groups, in mathematics and English, based upon the pupils' prior ability. This is already paying dividends because the teachers are planning successfully for a narrower range of age and ability which helps them to set appropriately challenging work. Many lessons benefit from the extremely effective work of the good number of highly skilled learning support assistants who provide valuable additional adult help for small groups of pupils across the entire curriculum. This also ensures that all pupils, including the few children with special educational needs, receive full access to the school's curriculum.

Now that the new computers have arrived, the teachers are finding it easier to incorporate the use of information and control technology more frequently in their lessons. Most of the teachers have a

satisfactory level of knowledge and skills, but need the additional training in order that they gain greater confidence and understanding of how to extend more fully the pupils' work in this subject.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	With the exception of some aspects of the provision for the Foundation Stage, the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that is enhanced by a very good range of after school clubs and activities. A high priority is given to developing the skills of literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The teachers know their pupils well and make sure that they modify their teaching to meet individual needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school's Christian ethos underpins the strong provision made for the pupils' moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes good provision for child protection and ensuring the pupils' welfare.

The school has started to extend the range of the curriculum for the pupils under the age of five to meet the requirements of the new Foundation Curriculum. However, opportunities for the children to develop independence, especially in their creative development, require further improvement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher has made a good start. She recognises the strengths of the school and consults widely in order to establish a sense of common purpose in addressing the weaknesses. The staff team works together effectively by sharing their knowledge and expertise and in checking the quality of education provided. The exception is the lack of coherence in the system for organising the documentation relating to special educational needs. .
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body works increasingly closely with the headteacher and her staff. They have a satisfactory overview of the school and fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is careful evaluation of performance based upon the thorough analysis of evidence collected at first hand from around the school. This is used increasingly effectively in planning for future improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes wise use of its delegated budget. The levels of educational resources are good because the staff and children take care of equipment and materials. The headteacher, staff and governors are

	beginning to apply the principles of best value to all major spending decisions.
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The organisation of the documentation relating to special educational needs is currently unsatisfactory. The school lacks a coherent approach that ensures each stage of the special needs process is properly recorded and systematically stored for future reference.

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 enjoy school and make good progress • Standards are high, both academically and socially. • The teachers know the children very well. Their lessons are interesting and this motivates the children to work hard. • The range of extracurricular activities is very good. The number of sports clubs provided is excellent for a small school. • The new headteacher is settling in well. She listens to the views of parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about pupil progress.

The inspectors agree with the positive views of the overwhelming majority of parents. The school provides regular parents' evenings and good quality annual progress reports. Parents wishing for more information are welcome to make additional appointments with the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are high throughout the school, especially in English, mathematics and science.

1. By the time they leave school at age eleven, almost all pupils reaches at least the expected levels in English, mathematics and science and a good number exceed them. For instance, in the national tests for 2000 virtually two thirds of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved the higher levels in all three subjects. This is most unusual and represents an exceptionally strong performance. For instance, in comparison with the national picture the children achieved results in English and mathematics that were in the top five per cent of all schools. In mathematics this was also the case when the pupils' results were compared with those of schools in similarly favourable circumstances.
2. The inspection findings confirm that standards in English, mathematics and science are high and that the pupils achieve very well throughout the school. However, the proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 working at the expected levels is slightly lower this year because this cohort contains a few children with some significant special educational needs.
3. The vast majority of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 are literate and numerate. Those working in the top sets show a keen appetite for learning. They read widely and keep a detailed log of the texts they have used. They talk intelligently about favourite titles and authors. Their handwriting is neat, attractive and fluent. The content of their writing is interesting and covers a wide range of styles and genres. Their spelling is almost always accurate and their knowledge of how to use thesauruses and dictionaries is excellent. As a result, when these pupils are faced with the unfamiliar language of Geoffrey Chaucer in an English lesson, they tackle it with gusto.
4. In mathematics, the same pupils have already covered a great deal of ground since September. Their exercise books show a good volume of work. The vast majority has a secure understanding of place value up to two decimal places and can sort such numbers in order with confidence. A good start has been made to multiplication involving decimals, such as in the calculation of perimeter, area and the handling of money. These pupils understand the equivalence of simple fractions and are now beginning to extend this work by considering proportions within the context of pie charts. A lesson on factors revealed that the pupils have a very secure grasp of the multiplication facts.
5. It is the ability of so many pupils to talk intelligently about their work that reveals the depth of their understanding in each subject. This is particularly the case in science where there is a strong emphasis upon practical activity and experimentation that helps the pupils to begin to think like scientists. In a lesson on pitch and volume, for instance, the broad range of simple tests carried out in small groups enabled the pupils to develop a good appreciation of some difficult concepts. Thus by the end of the lesson most were making statements like, 'The longer the distance from the bridge to the end of the string, the lower the note,' or 'The less air in a test tube of water, the higher the note when I blow across the top.' A further strength of this lesson was the mature approach to researching further information on a CD-Rom. This enabled the pupils to begin to place their work within a more theoretical setting by linking images of sound waves against their sources.

6. The Key Stage 2 results reflect the good start made by pupils in Key Stage 1. In last year's national tests, the seven-year-old pupils achieved results that were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The inspection findings confirm that standards remain well above average with a good proportion of pupils already working beyond the expected level.
7. Lively and imaginative teaching ensures that the pupils swiftly gain competence in both English and mathematics. The work of the current Year 2 already shows signs of their increasing maturity. For instance, their diaries in the style of Samuel Pepys reveal not only a very good understanding of what happened during the great fire of London, but also a growing command of written language. The handwriting of the vast majority shows that they know how to form letters correctly whilst a good number are starting to join their letters with increasing regularity and fluency. They are gaining a good knowledge of the sounds of letters and use this and contextual clues to work out unfamiliar words when reading. In mathematics, the overwhelming majority has a secure grasp of their number facts up to twenty and most are confidently adding to their repertoire of techniques for carrying out rapid mental calculation. For instance, in one lesson these children were observed adding nine to a variety of other numbers. They were swift to explain that they managed this by adding ten then taking away one.
8. The new headteacher has sensibly re-assessed the school's performance targets for mathematics and English. Prior to this, the school's approach was unduly cautious. Given the consistently high standard of the pupils' work it made no sense that the targets for 1999 and 2000 were set low.

A high proportion of very good teaching motivates the pupils to work hard and do their best.

9. The quality of teaching has improved still further since the last inspection and is now very good. Fifty per cent of those lessons seen during the inspection were of very good quality, thirty six per cent good and the remaining fourteen per cent [two lessons] satisfactory. The major strengths of the teaching continue to lie in the teachers' very high expectations for their pupils and in the heavy emphasis placed on the early establishment of the fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy.
10. The content of many lessons is interesting and the activities fun to carry out. Consequently, the children develop extremely positive attitudes towards school and are fully engaged in hard work and exciting learning. For instance, the Year 2 pupils have been keeping a careful record of the weather over the past few months. In order to teach the children about tallying and the construction of simple graphs, the teacher made excellent use of these records so that the children were able to use real data that they had collected themselves. She takes care to use correct technical vocabulary whenever possible so very quickly all the children were using words like 'tally', 'graph' and 'chart' with confidence. However, the most significant learning lay in the pupils' developing understanding that data can be manipulated to provide useful information. Right at the start of the lesson the teacher had posed the question 'How many more sunny days were there in July than in November?' This helped the children to focus not just on the successful completion of their graphs, but made them use them for a real mathematical purpose.
11. The current large, mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2 have been of concern to many parents. However, the appointment of an additional part time teacher is working well because for English and mathematics the two classes are divided into three sets determined by the pupils'

prior ability in each subject. As a result, the teachers are setting work that is accurately matched to the range of ability within each set and the pupils' progress in lessons is brisk.

12. An excellent example of the success of this strategy was also observed in the literacy lesson involving the most able pupils. This group contains a large proportion of highly competent readers and young writers, many of whom are already working beyond the levels expected of ten and eleven year olds. The teacher was introducing a new unit of work considering how texts are often rooted in an author's experiences, and at the same time encouraging the pupils to use their own knowledge of spelling to begin to understand how words and expressions might change over time. After sharing with the pupils her key objectives for the lesson the teacher distributed copies of sixteen lines from the opening of Chaucer's 'The Canterbury Tales.' The pupils fell upon the text eagerly. They showed no anxiety about the unfamiliarity of much of the language, but immediately began to use their well-developed reading skills to make sense of what was in front of them. They rapidly identified similarities in words used by Chaucer and their modern day equivalents. They looked at the structure of the extract and soon spotted that it was written in rhyming couplets. Throughout the lesson, the teacher questioned shrewdly in order to find out just how much the pupils understood. During the group work time, she provided the pupils with additional challenging work. For instance, her guided reading group read Kevin Crossley-Holland's contemporary version of 'Beowulf' with great feeling and expression, whilst another group made a very good fist of writing their own versions of the Chaucer extract. The style of the lesson often resembled a university tutorial, and some pupils showed a knowing sense of humour in their questions, for example, 'Was Chaucer dyslexic?' However, there was also careful research and open debate, for instance, when one pupil determinedly made use of his dictionary in order to prove to the teacher that 'discrete' or 'discreet' are both acceptable spellings of the same word. The hour flew by and by the end of the lesson the pupils had all gained valuable new insights into some of the complexities of our linguistic heritage.
13. A further example of the success of the new approach of grouping the pupils was observed in the mathematics set containing the younger children. Once again the teacher shared his objectives with the class and then questioned carefully to check just how much the pupils remembered about 'time', from telling the time to appreciating the passing of time. In order to help the least able to begin to grasp this latter concept, he encouraged them to estimate, with the support of the learning support assistant, the passing of sixty seconds. This fascinated the children so that they concentrated on counting seconds to themselves rhythmically and after one or two attempts the majority became quite skilled in measuring this brief passage of time with reasonable accuracy.

The learning support assistants are well qualified, highly skilled and make a significant contribution to the children's learning.

14. The headteacher and governing body have made significant investment in the appointment of a group of five learning support assistants [LSA's], of whom two are qualified nursery nurses. It is quite evident that the support and additional flexibility afforded to the teachers by the presence of these additional adults and many volunteer parents add considerably to the quality of education provided at the school.
15. Central to their successful deployment are the close working relationships between the assistants and their teachers and the careful way that their work in lessons is prepared and planned. For example, one classroom assistant has a particular interest in information and communications technology. She is making effective use of her skills by finding ways to

support teachers in making the most of the recently improved provision in this subject. For instance, the new digital camera is in regular use for recording important events in the life of the school. In one information and communications lesson with Years 3 and 4, she showed a good level of personal expertise when demonstrating the program 'Colour Magic 2' to a large group of pupils.

16. In the class containing the children in the Foundation Stage, the support of the classroom assistants is vital in sustaining the breadth of practical learning activities these children require. A secure start has been made so that important activities such as cooking can be carried out under proper supervision. Similarly, the good levels of support provided by these adults during literacy and numeracy lessons enables the teacher to plan activities that cater for the broad range of age and ability within the class.
17. The learning support assistants enjoy positive relationships with the children because they share the teachers' high expectations for their success. They offer very good role models because they are polite and considerate in their dealings with the children and other adults. Their significant contribution to the pupils' learning is firmly rooted in their strong commitment to their role, regular attendance at training events and the thorough preparation of their work with their teacher colleagues.
18. The school also benefits from the active support of many of its parents. For instance, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson one parent worked extremely effectively with seven pupils using computers and electronic programmable toys to help them get to grips with understanding ninety degree turns. The reason this worked so well was that she had a good grasp of what the children had to learn, the equipment they were using and the need for them to try things out for themselves. For instance, the three pupils using the programmable toy had to enter their own commands. If the toy moved the wrong way the parent asked careful questions to help them work out what went wrong, but at all times the responsibility for programming rested with the children. Thus when they eventually managed to get the toy to move not just a right angle, but to complete a square in one series of movements, they gained a real sense of personal achievement.

The pupils are extremely polite, courteous and considerate.

19. The school is a welcoming, friendly and harmonious community where the children's behaviour is of a consistently high standard. Although class sizes in Key Stage 2 are large and the classrooms small, the pupils demonstrate great consideration in the way that they collaborate with each other during lessons. A significant feature is the way that they share equipment and resources with equanimity. For instance, during a Year 6 science lesson the teacher provided a very good range of interesting equipment for small groups of pupils to use in their experiments. The children are obviously used to working in this way because they worked together extremely effectively to assemble components, carry out simple tests about the pitch and volume of sound, and record their findings accurately and neatly.
20. Throughout the day, the pupils greet each other, their teachers and visiting adults cheerfully and politely. Many took a keen interest in the visit of the inspection team who were made to feel welcome throughout their two days in school. Informal conversations with pupils covered many topics and showed that the overwhelming majority speaks maturely and thoughtfully about their lives and hobbies. Similarly, when asked about their work during lessons most spoke cogently about what they were doing and any difficulties they experienced in meeting the challenge of the task in hand.

21. The children receive regular opportunities to act as hosts at school. There are regular concerts for parents and sports fixtures when visiting teams are welcomed. The afternoon tea-party for grandparents organised by the four to six year-olds was very well attended and showed the strong commitment of both school and parents to ensuring that the children develop a good understanding of caring for others from an early age.

The school offers a very good range of extracurricular activities.

22. The vast majority of parents are delighted by the wide and varied assortment of additional sporting and cultural activities offered by the school. Those attending the pre-inspection meeting felt this aspect of the school's work to be a significant strength and the inspection team agrees. Although this aspect of the provision does not usually form part of the inspection schedule for a short inspection it is quite clear that the range of activities provided exceeds those normally found in a school of this size and is a notable strength. Seven different sports are played including swimming, cricket, netball, rounders and soccer and the pupils enjoy regular opportunities to compete in local events against children from other schools. A thriving chess club provides a more cerebral challenge for many.
23. In addition, the school makes effective use of those pupils who are learning an instrument by organising regular concerts and musical productions so that the children have opportunities to perform for an audience by playing and singing together in small ensembles.
24. Plans are now afoot to extend the out of school provision by organising a community holiday club in conjunction with volunteers from churches in the local parishes.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The standard of the pupils' work in information and communications technology [ICT].

25. The last inspection report identified the need for improvement in the school's provision for the teaching of information and control technology. This continues to be the case because the pupils' achievements in this subject do not yet reflect their high attainment in subjects such as mathematics and English. **This is a key issue for action.**
26. Since the arrival of the new headteacher, the school has recently improved the quality and quantity of its equipment. Thus the subject is at last gaining in stature. At the moment, the pupils' progress is fastest in Key Stage 1. As a result of good teaching and the effective deployment of a learning support assistant to work with small groups of children, many pupils are making rapid progress in finding out how to give commands to a cursor on a screen in order to make it move in predetermined ways.
27. The long-term lack of sufficient good quality computers in Key Stage 2 has restricted the frequency with which the pupils have been able to incorporate ICT into their learning across the curriculum. Conversations with pupils reveal that many have access to computers at home, and this is evident in the expert fashion in which they handle the keyboard and mouse when trawling CD-ROMs for information in science. Now that the provision of computers has improved, the teachers are doing their best to help the pupils make the most of new technology. For instance, they are encouraging the pupils to make use of word processing programs to organise and format their poetry.

28. However, the limited classroom space and the large numbers of pupils make the demonstration of new programs and skills extremely difficult. It is equally hard to ensure that all pupils receive sufficient opportunity to practise. For instance, in the Year 3-4 class the teacher made sensible use of the expertise of the learning support assistant so that they each demonstrated 'Colour Magic 2' to half the class on the two computers available. Nevertheless, the limited view offered by the fourteen-inch monitor hindered what was otherwise a very successful lesson.
29. In the last few weeks, the school has been connected to the Internet so that the pupils might access the World Wide Web. This also means that they finally have opportunities to write and receive email. A staff team that is well aware of the need to extend further their work in this subject eagerly anticipates the imminent provision of additional staff training through New Opportunities Funding. Part of this programme should also include a consideration of how to ensure maximum use of the equipment available and the identification of how the power of ICT can be incorporated at key moments across the entire curriculum.

Some aspects of the provision for the pupils in the Foundation Stage.

30. The school has made a good start to establishing its provision for the new Foundation Stage curriculum, but recognises that there are still aspects that require further development. **This is a key issue for action.** Currently, there are 6 reception-aged children taught in a mixed age class with 14 older pupils. Since September, the teacher has been working to improve planning with colleagues from other local schools who also have to cope with mixed age classes. As a result, she has developed a more thorough knowledge of the new curriculum, and in particular of the stepping-stones that pave the children's way towards the early learning goals. There is now a clear long-term plan and signs that a wider range of activities more suited to the children under five are beginning to be incorporated within the organisation of each day. For instance, the teacher is providing increasing access to more practical activities, such as sand and water, and the classroom assistants play an important part of this provision. They are most effective when they allow children to make choices and experiment for themselves. The children make good gains in their learning when, for example, they weigh and mix ingredients, count cakes and talk about the process to adults. This type of successful practice is central to the annual tea party to which all the children's grandparents are invited. The class computer is used to help create invitations that are posted far and wide and the replies eagerly awaited. Cakes are baked and thorough preparations undertaken to greet guests and entertain them. This type of activity provides a real boost to the children's personal, social and emotional development.
31. Most of the children arrive at school with above average levels of attainment. Many are confident and mature. They are very well behaved and enjoy extremely positive relationships with adults and one another. As a result, they respond positively to the teaching of reading and number skills in the literacy and numeracy hours and reach standards that exceed those expected for their age. The children know the sounds of letters and have good levels of word recognition. They count accurately and are beginning to understand the meaning of mathematical vocabulary, such as 'more' and 'less.'
32. However, the opportunities for these children to develop their spoken and written language through creative activities that offer them the chance to work independently and make choices are more limited. For instance, a literacy lesson introduced the idea of writing to Father Christmas. The drawings and lists produced by Year 1 were appropriately challenging. Although the Foundation Stage pupils coped with this task there were missed

opportunities. For instance, the pupils might have constructed simple finger puppets in order to make up a play about Father Christmas, or the list of gifts prepared could have been a useful springboard for devising a chant or rhyme.

33. The classroom displays suggest that there are currently too few opportunities for the pupils to engage in a suitably wide range of other creative activities. For instance, although the pupils painted carefully the items hung on Mrs Mopple's washing line, there is little evidence of them creating their own art by selecting from a wide range of different media or combining elements such as paper paint and sand to create textures.
34. The new computers have improved the provision for the teaching of information and communication technology and there are signs, such as the recent pictures produced through the program 'Colour Magic', that the children's skills are slowly developing in this area. However, there was little evidence of the pupils developing a wider understanding of the uses of technology, for instance, by employing headphones to play favourite story cassettes.

The organisation of the documentation relating to special educational needs.

35. The current organisation of the documentation relating to special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The two co-ordinators maintain separate folders for key stages 1 and 2, but the documentation within them is haphazard and unordered. Both folders are in need of thorough overhaul and review. For instance, the school policy for special educational needs is heavily annotated and clearly in need of revision. The file that purports to hold the school's register for special educational needs is empty, whilst the actual list of pupils is embedded in the middle of the folder. A further weakness is that there is no clear record that charts for every pupil when each stage was reached and if successful teaching has led to a reduced level of need. Although, there is good evidence of many recent review meetings with parents, there is no record of when parents are informed that their children are being added to the special needs register, nor any standard letter that is sent at such a time. The paperwork relating to each child is stored tidily, but it is often difficult to interpret because the chronology is jumbled. Every child has an up-to-date, individual, education plan, but the quality of the targets within each varies considerably. Those for the few pupils with greater levels of need are, on the whole, sharper and more focused, benefiting from the contribution of teachers, outside agencies and parents.
36. They are regularly reviewed, progress is noted and targets amended. Some of the plans for the children at the earlier stages contain targets for reading and writing that would suggest that the pupils are already working at an average level. Conversation with one of the co-ordinators confirmed that a further improvement is the need for the school to clarify more precisely the criteria by which the school decides who to include on its special needs register.
37. The teachers know their pupils extremely well and lessons are successfully managed so that there is generally a very good match of task that caters for the full range of abilities within each class. The informal systems by which the teachers share information and ideas to support individual pupils also work effectively and demonstrate clearly a joint commitment to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as possible. However, a thorough review of the school's special needs policy linked to a more systematic approach to the identification, recording and review of such pupils will place the teachers in a stronger position to target resources more precisely in order to bring about further improvement. Similarly, a more rigorous approach to the organisation of the supporting documentation will ensure that appropriate, informative records are developed for ease of reference and are subsequently

passed on when pupils move to the next stage of their education. **This is a key issue for action.**

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

38. In order to raise standards further and build on the many strengths of the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should now;
- Implement the proposed training programme for information and communications technology placing particular emphasis upon:
 - (a) Improving levels of teacher knowledge and skills in the subject.
 - (b) Devising a framework that sets out what will be taught at each stage as pupils move through the school.
 - (c) Clarifying the ways in which each class will incorporate the use of ICT across the subjects of the National Curriculum.
 - Continue to refine the planning for those pupils in the Foundation Stage by:
 - (a) Increasing the opportunities for these children to develop greater independence.
 - (b) Offering a wider range of creative experiences.
 - Conducting a thorough overhaul of the school's documentation relating to special educational needs so that:
 - (a) Any proposed changes to the school's policy are discussed and formally agreed.
 - (b) Systems for the formal notification of parents are clarified.
 - (c) The special needs register is easily accessible to those who need it.
 - (d) Supporting documentation for individual pupils is systematically organised to facilitate effective record keeping.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	5

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	50	36	14	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YRec– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		115
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YRec– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		19

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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	8	11	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	7
	Girls	11	11	10
	Total	17	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (88)	90 (100)	90 (94)
	National	83 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	11	10	10
	Total	17	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (100)	85 (100)	90 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	7	4	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (88)	100 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	7
	Girls	4	3	3
	Total	9	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (82)	91 (71)	91 (71)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	109
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YRec – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.29
Average class size	28.75

Education support staff: YRec – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	212 891
Total expenditure	209 640
Expenditure per pupil	1 823
Balance brought forward from previous year	13 976
Balance carried forward to next year	17 227

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

115

Number of questionnaires returned

70

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	45	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	50	3	1	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	44	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	59	17	1	1
The teaching is good.	50	47	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	50	21	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	42	1	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	21	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	20	59	16	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	44	44	3	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	41	6	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	52	13	1	4