

INSPECTION REPORT

POULTON LANCELYN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bebington, Wirral

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105031

Headteacher: Mr H. Wynn Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr John G F Parsons
22546

Date of inspection: 26-27 September 2000

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Venables Drive Bebington Wirral Merseyside
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ann McPeake
Date of previous inspection:	January 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Poulton Lancelyn is a large primary school situated near Bebington in Wirral. There are two buildings, the original one was built in 1970 and added to in the 1980s, the newer building is semi-open plan.

The school is situated in large attractive grounds, with a playing field. It is in the middle of a mature housing estate of private dwellings. The number on roll has declined in recent years, but the widening of the catchment has reversed this trend.

Currently there are 409 boys and girls on roll. They are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the year that they are five years old. A very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (eight per cent) is low compared with the national average but has increased slightly since the last inspection. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (seven per cent) is well below the national average; none of these pupils has a Statement of Special Educational Need¹. The attainment on entry of many pupils is above that expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Poulton Lancelyn has many strengths. It is a very good school at raising standards in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The school has achieved considerable success in maintaining and improving pupils' results in the national tests at seven and 11. This is despite a difficult period recently when there was significant illness of key teachers and the appointment of several new teachers, who have joined the school in the last few years. The school very effectively harnesses the pupils' natural enthusiasm to inspire them to achieve high standards. It promotes a calm and orderly working environment and very good relationships. The school offers very good value for money.

What the school does well

- It helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those in the Foundation Stage (under-fives) to achieve good standards in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and scientific knowledge.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers work well as a team and all adults have very good relationships with their pupils. The teachers effectively build on pupils' keenness to learn and very good attitudes to school, which ensure that they progress well.
- Pupils are very well behaved and show strong personal, moral and social development. They show care and consideration for each other and appreciate each other's work and points of view.

What could be improved

- The standards of work in information and communication technology are below average and the quality of provision for the subject is unsatisfactory. There are currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills on the computer and to use information and communication technology to develop learning in other subjects.
- There are not sufficient opportunities to develop investigative and practical skills in science. Practical skills in art and design and technology do not match the high standards found in some other subjects.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators to fully manage their subject through the monitoring of teaching and learning is not adequate.
- Parents consider that links are insufficient and would appreciate greater involvement in the life of the school.
- The school does not link its plans for development sufficiently firmly to the financial resources available.

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

¹ Stages of special educational needs range from Stage 1, when limited additional support is provided for pupils entirely from within the school, to Stage 5, which ensures that a pupil has a statement outlining his or her needs and shows what additional and specific support that pupil will receive. Stages 3, 4 and 5 involves external specialists as well as staff within the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school was last inspected in January 1996 when it was judged to provide very good value for money. Standards achieved by most pupils were very significantly above the national average in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science, and were particularly high in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing and numeracy throughout the school were very high. The school has maintained high standards and has improved its results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests, except for standards in science, which have declined this year (but are still above the national average).

Attendance has been maintained at a good level and the school continues to offer a caring and supportive environment. The school agrees that, whilst good overall, behaviour is not as good as at the time of the last inspection. This is attributed to the widening of the catchment area and the changing intake of pupils. The school has successfully linked assessment more specifically to the National Curriculum in English, mathematics and science, addressing a weakness identified in the last inspection. The outcomes of assessment are effectively used to analyse performance and track pupils' progress in these subjects and to prepare them for the National Curriculum tests. This effective use of assessment has already had a positive effect on standards. The school's difficult financial circumstances have continued since the last inspection and have increased with the costs involved in three senior teachers' long-term illness. The management of the school has shown initiative and partly addressed these difficulties by raising funds through letting out facilities and through the generosity of the parent body. The lack of costing of future initiatives in the school development plan and the lack of procedures to determine whether the school is achieving best value for money do not ensure that the school operates to maximum efficiency. However, satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, the good standards achieved in basic skills, the good quality teaching and the average pupil cost mean the school continues to offer very good value for money.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	
Science	A	A	B	C	

The school's standards in national tests for pupils at 11 years of age are well above average, both compared to schools nationally and to similar schools, in English and mathematics. Standards have declined in science, although they are still above average compared to schools nationally, and they are in line compared to similar schools. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 has improved by 12 per cent in English and by 21 per cent both in mathematics and science - a significant rise. In English 83 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 4 or better, in mathematics 87 per cent and in science 93 per cent. The school has met the challenging targets set in mathematics but results are slightly below target in English and science.

The opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge in science, art and design and technology are good and pupils achieve well here. However, there are gaps in curricular provision in these subjects. In science, pupils' understanding of investigations is not good enough and they have insufficient opportunity for practical experimentation. Provision for exploration and experimentation in the creative and aesthetic areas across the curriculum in art and design and technology have been only partly addressed since the last inspection. Moreover, there is insufficient provision both for the development of pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and for its use across the curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes are very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are enthusiastic in their work, join in well in lessons and assemblies and listen carefully to their teachers. They are keen to participate fully in school from an early age and show a high level of maturity.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. The great majority of pupils are very well behaved in lessons and around the school. Almost all parents think that the behaviour of pupils is good in school and when they are on trips or visits. Only very occasionally does behaviour fall below the school's high standards and then usually it takes the form of lack of attention and restlessness, if pupils are not challenged in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are confident, they are keen to take responsibility for their own learning. Older pupils enjoy helping younger ones and help them to settle into school; this develops the older pupils' social responsibility and contributes to good social harmony.
Attendance	Attendance is good and above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	good	good

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

During the inspection 93 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better. Almost 70 per cent of lessons were good or very good. Seven per cent (two lessons) were unsatisfactory. There is consistently good quality teaching found throughout the school. The quality of learning is also good. Literacy and numeracy are well taught and this has had a significant effect on raising the standards of pupils' work in other subjects and makes a significant contribution to the good standards in the National Curriculum tests. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and structure lessons tightly to achieve their objectives. Teachers manage pupils very well in the majority of lessons and the brisk pace of most lessons means that pupils make good, often very good, progress. Only very occasionally is the quality of teaching and learning not effective.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school quite rightly puts great emphasis on subjects such as English, mathematics and science. However, there are gaps in provision. In science, there are few opportunities in lessons for the development of practical and investigative skills. There is the full range of other subjects, but the development of practical skills is lacking in art and design and technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Their work is carefully planned and they receive effective support in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The school makes appropriate provision for the very small number of pupils with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils'	Good. The school clearly teaches pupils the difference between right

personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	and wrong and gives them very good opportunities to take responsibility. All staff set very good examples to pupils of how to behave. Some opportunities are given for pupils to experience cultures other than their own but they are not sufficient to be really effective.
How well the school cares for its pupils	It makes sound provision. It is a safe school and adults know pupils and their families well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is long serving and highly respected by the teachers who work closely as a team with him. He has a clear vision of what is required to maintain high standards in the basic subjects and has been very successful in maintaining these standards during some testing times. The deputy is very supportive as are the subject co-ordinators. However, the lack of non-contact time for co-ordinators means that there are few opportunities for them to monitor teaching and learning and to develop their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their roles satisfactorily. They are enthusiastic and keen to ensure the school continues to move forward, although budgetary constraints have hampered school development to some extent.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory overall. The school continues to effectively evaluate its performance in English and mathematics and has been very effective at gaining places at selective grammar schools, more than 60 per cent of pupils gaining places this year. It has been less effective at evaluating its performance in subjects which require practical and investigative skills, such as science, and practical skills such as art and design technology.
The strategic use of resources	Unsatisfactory overall. The school makes good use of staff, equipment and its two buildings to provide an effective education for its pupils, although there are problems with inadequate ventilation in the Key Stage 2 building and reception children do not have a separate play area. In terms of the strategic use of resources, the lack of a fully costed school development plan and procedures to ensure that best value is obtained, means the school is not operating at full efficiency.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They consider that their children like school • They feel their children make good progress • They consider school is well led and managed • The school has high expectations • They feel the school helps their children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents feel the school could work more closely with parents • The amount of homework is not suitable

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. It also agrees that the school would benefit from closer links with parents and that a more consistent approach to homework would benefit pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

It helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those in the Foundation Stage (under-fives), to achieve above average standards in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and scientific knowledge.

1. Children in the Foundation Stage (under five) achieve an above average standard in all areas of learning. They are particularly strong in language and literature and personal, social and emotional development, building on the above average standards of children's literacy skills on entry. Many pupils are confident and speak clearly and articulately from an early age.
2. It is clear that pupils at Key Stage 1 continue to make the good progress identified in the last inspection: 'overall standards of achievement are high or very high for age and ability in English and mathematics'. At seven the pupils' scores in National Curriculum tests for 1999 and 2000 are similar, within a few points of each other. In the 2000 tests this indicated that pupils had standards which were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and in line with similar schools. In science, teacher assessment showed pupils' standards were above the national average and in line with similar schools.
3. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for Key Stage 2, standards were well above the national average and for similar schools in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In science pupils' standards were above the national average and in line with similar schools. Level 4² or higher was achieved by 83 per cent of pupils in English, by 87 per cent of pupils in mathematics and by 91 per cent of pupils in science. The school has made a particular effort to develop standards in the higher levels of the National Curriculum tests and has been successful when pupils reach 11. This is achieved through the use of booster classes, which select low attaining pupils for more support. The teachers are also careful to pitch work at a level which offers appropriate challenge in class through careful analysis of pupils' previous attainment in tests. As a result of this the number of pupils who have achieved the higher Level 5 has increased significantly in the 2000 National Curriculum tests: 47 per cent of pupils in English, 58 per cent in mathematics and 67 per cent in science achieved Level 5. This compares well with 35 per cent, 37 per cent and 46 per cent respectively in the previous year. This is clear evidence that the school's focus on improving the scores of high attainers has paid dividends.
4. Many of the pupils with special educational needs are making good progress. In addition to targeting the high attainers, the school is also improving the results of lower attainers by withdrawing them from class at Key Stage 2 to enable them to work under closer supervision and to ensure that they fully understand the work set. The results at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate the school's commitment to raising standards. Effective analysis of previous results and useful planning, using the procedures outlined in the literacy and numeracy strategies, make important contributions to this process. The whole school record keeping and assessment procedures are effective. The school closely analyses the results of the National Curriculum tests and the optional national tests taken by year groups. The school has adopted the local education authority record keeping system in English and science and is to adopt the National Numeracy Strategy assessment and recording procedures. By this process of detailed assessment, the school knows its pupils well

² At Key Stage 2 the nationally expected level for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6 is Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

and is able to focus on areas for development. For example, there is concern that writing skills might decline due to the lack of extended writing taking place. The school has addressed this in the timetable this year by giving more opportunity for pupils to practise their writing skills.

5. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils can read from a 'big book'. For example, in one Year 2 class the pupils enjoyed reading *Doodling Daniel* with the teacher. They read out loud with confidence and obvious enjoyment. When compiling a written list, they understand that a comma is used to separate the words. Teachers work well with lower attaining pupils, including those who have special educational needs, to ensure that they have been set work which is challenging yet appropriate, often spending specific time with a group. The overall standard in reading is above the national average. In numeracy lessons, pupils show increasing mental agility by the time they are seven. For example, in Year 2, pupils show good facility with the practical skills of multiplication, addition and subtraction. Many know that 10 times 10p is £1, that 5p plus 5p is 10p and that 10p less 5p is 5p. They are familiar with coinage and handle it well. The overall standard in numeracy is well above average. In a Year 1 science lesson, the majority of pupils know the parts of a plant, such as buds and leaves, and describe the weather conditions needed for them to survive. The standards observed in science are well above average.
6. By the end of Key Stage 2 in English the standard of writing is well above average, pupils understand the concept of non-chronological writing and writing for different purposes, for example when writing about 'Teeth'. They understand that the style should be impersonal and in the present tense. They use technical words such as nutrients, digestible and chemical and their standard of work in writing is well above the national average. In numeracy pupils show good mental agility adding on 7, 9, 11 and 12. The majority of pupils know their multiplication tables to 12. The pupils use this skill effectively to turn improper fractions to mixed fractions and vice versa. In science, pupils know the different types of teeth, the incisor, canine, pre-molar and molar. Their subject knowledge is well developed and many pupils know and use scientific language.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers work well as a team and all adults have good relationships with their pupils. The good teaching builds on pupils' keenness to learn and good attitudes to school, which ensures that pupils progress well.

7. Overall 93 per cent of lessons seen were satisfactory or better. The majority of lessons, 68 per cent, were good or very good. Seven per cent of teaching (two lessons) was unsatisfactory. The teachers concerned achieved satisfactory or good grades in other lessons. The remaining 25 per cent of lessons were satisfactory. This pattern is similar to the last inspection. Almost 90 per cent of parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire think that teaching is good. Parents consider the teachers are hard working and give freely of their time.
8. Several factors common to good and very good teaching are apparent in lessons. The high quality teaching enables pupils to learn effectively. Teachers' planning is very thorough and they make sure pupils build on what they have learned already, work becoming progressively more challenging as they move through the school. This enables pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding at their own level and learn most effectively. In the best lessons, teachers use the pupils' receptiveness effectively to keep the lesson lively and interesting, sometimes showing a keen sense of humour. For example, in a reception class lesson the teacher asked the children to close their eyes and said she would 'magic' the small book larger, she then placed

a similar 'big book' over the top of an ordinary one, causing the children great delight. Most teachers have very strong relationships with pupils, consisting of mutual respect and willingness on the part of the pupils to learn. This high level of care and interest was also evident from all the adults in the school. On a number of occasions teachers and the headteacher stopped pupils in the corridor to enquire after some personal matter, showing a genuine concern and interest in their welfare.

9. Another reason why teaching is successful is the system of making clear to pupils what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. Teachers explain briefly, often in a few sentences, what the purpose of the lesson is and what the pupils are expected to learn. It is rare that teachers have to repeat this. The majority of pupils have a full understanding of what is required immediately after the introduction, which enables pupils to develop an understanding of their own learning. Some teachers have printed cards, which are mounted on the wall with the 'lesson objectives' clear for all to see. In the best lessons, teachers review the lesson with pupils to make sure that all have fully understood what the intended learning outcomes are. In one Year 6 English lesson, some pupils were not clear initially what the meaning of non-chronological writing was, even though they knew what the features of it were. After some appropriate prompting from the teacher and discussion, they deduced from the style of writing that it meant 'not in the order things happen' and then applied it to their writing.
10. It is clear that the pupils have above average attainment on entry and parents have high aspirations for their children. Many children start school with good attitudes and high expectations of what they can achieve. Many parents specifically send their children to this school because of the high percentage of pupils that gain places at selective grammar schools at 11, 60 per cent in 2000. The headteacher and teachers are acutely aware of parents' aspirations and the very receptive nature of the pupils. The good teaching effectively taps into pupils' natural enthusiasm to keep lessons interesting, achieving high standards. Another feature of good lessons is the very high quality discussion which takes place. Pupils frequently exhibit a wide range of vocabulary and have the confidence to use it. They understand in a Year 6 English and science lesson, for example, that when giving a formal presentation about teeth it is inappropriate to make it personal and that it is better to say, 'when brushing teeth', rather than, 'when you brush your teeth'. Teachers have clear and challenging expectations of what can be achieved in a given time and set work for pupils which is of high standard but within their capabilities. More able pupils are provided with opportunities to extend their range of work. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in small groups within their classes and when they are withdrawn to work separately. Teachers use their time well. Lessons start promptly and they maintain a brisk pace that sustains pupils' interest and motivation. Frequently, a teacher will set time deadlines such as, 'you have 15 minutes to finish this piece of writing'. This adds to the sense of urgency in their work and concentrates pupils' attention. The few classroom support staff the school has are well used to work with groups.
11. The high quality teamwork is evident in the teachers' planning. There is a consistency in the planning which ensures that classes with children in the same year are working along the same lines and that there is good progression from one year to the next. For example, during the inspection, teachers taking parallel classes in literacy and numeracy were teaching a similar topic and there was a consistency in their approach, without the loss of their individual teaching styles. The high expectations of what was to be covered, the high quality learning and the good outcomes in pupils' work were generally similar across year groups.

12. The teachers' skills at working successfully with pupils lies in managing pupils' behaviour in an effective but respectful way. They deal quickly and tactfully with any behaviour which is overly demanding or challenging. Teachers are aware that their pupils are keen to do well and that many have a private tutor to help them gain places at a grammar school. This puts teachers under considerable pressure as the expectations of parents and many pupils are so high. However, teachers rise to the challenge and make sure that all pupils work to the best of their ability by 'playing to their strengths', that is using pupils' generally high motivation, good attitudes to school and frequently high levels of ability to achieve good standards.

Pupils are very well behaved and show strong personal, moral and social development. They show care and consideration for each other and appreciate each other's work and points of view.

13. The very good standard of pupils' behaviour across the school is noticeable. Even when on a few occasions lessons were not particularly interesting, pupils made the most of them and their behaviour never fell below a satisfactory level. Parents are pleased with their children's behaviour in the classroom and around the school and 92 per cent of those who replied to the questionnaire considered behaviour good or very good. It was particularly noticeable that pupils were unselfconscious and confident even in the youngest classes. For example, in assembly they will speak before the whole school and talk about something that has happened to them, for example, an event in family life, without embarrassment. It is equally noticeable that other pupils will respond enthusiastically and appreciate what the individual has to say. There is an expectation in the school that pupils will be confident and well behaved and pupils rise to this expectation. In the classroom, pupils are always keen to contribute to discussions and provide their point of view.
14. The school promotes pupils' personal development by linking older Year 6 pupils with those starting reception. The older pupil acts as a 'big friend' to the younger one and they take this responsibility seriously. In Year 5 pupils write books for reception children which they read with them. This again develops effective links between older and younger pupils.
15. In the playground no threatening or oppressive behaviour was seen and the atmosphere was calm and harmonious. Pupils open the door for adults, and visitors are treated courteously and with respect. Pupils listen attentively to each other's oral contributions in lessons and there is a pleasant openness in class in which pupils are keen to contribute their ideas knowing they will be appreciated. In assemblies pupils are awarded certificates for sporting or other endeavours and are warmly applauded by their peers.
16. In their pre-inspection questionnaire a large majority of parents agreed that the school helps their children become mature and responsible. The previous report noted that, 'the social and moral development is of a high order. The school is a friendly and orderly community, and the quality of relationships between pupils is excellent'. One parent expressed the view: 'I am so impressed with the teaching, educational and social behaviour that I have refused to move house prior to my son starting there, as we would be outside the catchment area'. Clearly pupils' behaviour and personal and social development are strengths of the school, moral development is also good. The school uses stickers and certificates to reinforce this both in the classroom and during assemblies. Pupils are self-confident and have high self-esteem. The respect and attitude of the teachers and all adults to pupils in the school reinforces this. They have high expectations of pupils' maturity and performance both in and out of class.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The standards of work in information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations and the quality of provision for the subject is unsatisfactory. There are currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills on the computer and to use ICT independently to develop learning in other subjects.

17. A key issue in the last report was that there was a need to 'improve standards of achievement in art and in information technology in Key Stage 2'. This still applies in information technology, but more generally throughout the school. Many pupils have computers at home and have developed many of the basic skills needed to operate them successfully and are confident when using the keyboard and mouse, even from an early age. There is no culture within the school of using computers constantly as a tool to enable learning. Every classroom has a computer, albeit an old one. A new computer suite has just been installed.
18. Few opportunities for pupils to use word processing were seen and a computer was in constant use only in one reception class. The analysis of pupils' work from last year shows that information and communication technology is not the integral part of pupils' learning experience that it should be. Although there are plans to improve teachers' information and communication skills, there is a lack of teacher awareness that pupils need constant 'hands on' experience, building on the good levels of skill many pupils have learned at home. For example, in one class a Year 6 pupil was sitting on a stool which was too high for her to reach the keyboard properly. This lack of awareness extends to the more general area of the use of technology. In one assembly, for example, a teacher controls the hi-fi equipment in the hall, whereas older pupils could be given more opportunity to do so. The extensive new computer suite will improve and update the quality of computers. As yet, the school is not in a good position to use them effectively, as there are insufficient planned opportunities in the curriculum to do so.

Opportunities to develop investigative and practical skills in science, and practical skills in art and in design and technology, do not match the high level of provision for factual knowledge which the school has developed across the curriculum.

19. The previous report indicated that 'standards in art for older pupils were less than satisfactory for more than half the pupils'. During this inspection the standards of art work and design and technology models seen on display were generally in line with those expected for pupils' age. However, the overall impression of the quality of these displays around the school falls short of expectations when compared to the high quality of pupils' achievement in other areas, notably in literacy and numeracy.
20. The school's focus on knowledge-based skills is particularly evident in science in which pupils have a good knowledge of scientific terms, but have few opportunities to develop their practical and investigative skills. For example, in one lesson Year 6 pupils were studying a 'balanced diet'. The teacher read out the text and used a question and answer session effectively, but the teacher-centred nature of the lesson gave too few opportunities for pupils to reinforce their work through independent research and practical experimentation. One parent in their letter said: 'The school is good academically. However, I get the impression that the school is not as much fun as it could be for the children and it is basically (academic) work, probably due to emphasis on the National Curriculum and meeting standards'. The curriculum provision for pupils in the practical and investigative aspects of science, together with

the opportunities for the development of practical skills in art, and design and technology are unsatisfactory.

The roles of subject co-ordinators to fully manage their subject are not satisfactory because the monitoring of teaching and learning is inadequate.

21. The school collects a wealth of information about pupils which is effectively analysed to ensure that the curriculum addresses their needs and that standards are maintained. This form of monitoring of pupils is very effective, but is not supported by direct monitoring of teaching and learning. Co-ordinators have little or no non-contact time to enable them to act as a 'critical friend' to other teachers and monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and learning in their subject. The school has effective strategies in place to support newly qualified teachers. These include monitoring and evaluation of their effectiveness in the classroom. These strategies could equally well be used with all teachers and give the school a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning in the school and help develop them further.

The school does not link its plans for development sufficiently firmly to the financial resources available.

22. The previous report stated that, 'the governors and senior managers were particularly zealous in prioritising resources and demonstrated a high level of professionalism in difficult circumstances'. This rigour is not so apparent now. The school currently has a deficit budget (approved by the local education authority). This is due to over-expenditure on staffing as a result of the long-term illness of key teaching staff and a lack of insurance cover. The school development plan is a useful document as far as it goes. It details the targets for maintaining standards and provides information and identifies strategies to do this from the analysis of pupil assessment. However, at present, the governing body and the senior management team has no clear picture of how much the school needs to spend to implement initiatives, not only over the period of the current year but in the longer term. This is particularly significant in the light of the deficit budget. The school is acutely aware of the need to maintain and improve standards, but without a fully costed long term school development plan is not well placed to do this. It is apparent that the principles of best value are not fully applied. The school has not yet fully explored alternatives to ensure it receives the most economic, efficient and effective services. Indeed it has not reviewed its own current resources to ensure effective allocation of funds in the future.

Parents consider that links are insufficiently developed and would appreciate greater involvement in the life of the school.

23. In the questionnaire, 39 per cent of parents considered that the school could work more closely with them. It was apparent from the 32 parents who attended the meeting and the 26 letters received, that parents care passionately about their school and their children's education. Many expect their children to take up selected places at grammar schools when they reach 11. They have very high expectations of academic standards and in this respect they are generally satisfied; 86 per cent agreed their children made good progress. They also want their children to have a well-rounded education but some are very concerned about their progress. One parent said, 'I have had feedback from other parents which suggests my son may be dropping back in his reading abilities. The school fails to convey or dispel my worries'. In the parents' meeting a number of parents felt communication between the school and parents could be improved. As one parent commented: 'We welcome the home-school agreement and information evening on literacy and numeracy. However, somehow it does not always feel like a complete partnership; there seems

to be what we can only call distancing'. Many consider it is important to inform parents earlier if their children are having difficulties in class and also informing them earlier of events taking place so that they can ensure that they are able to attend, particularly those in families where both parents work. Inspection findings confirm the concerns felt by parents are justified.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

24. The governing body and headteacher should:

improve standards in information and communication technology by:

- ensuring that teachers know how to plan for full coverage of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology;
- developing an assessment system to inform teachers of what pupils need to learn next;
- reading and amending the appropriate Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work to suit the needs of all pupils at the school;

improve standards in investigative and practical skills in science by:

- reviewing and improving resources;
- ensuring that the planning for this subject includes an investigative and practical focus;

improve standards in art and design and technology by:

- providing more planned opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to develop practical skills;

strengthen leadership and management by:

- clarifying the roles and responsibilities of co-ordinators;
- ensuring that co-ordinators fully monitor teaching and learning in their subjects
- improving the quality of financial planning;

improve links with parents by:

- involving them even more in the work of the school;
- ensuring that they are kept fully informed about their children's progress and events in the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

28

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	11	57	25	7	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	407
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	25
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	25
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data 1999/2000	5
National comparative data 1998/9	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data 1999/2000	0
National comparative data 1998/9	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
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Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	31	26	57
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National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	27	26	31
	Girls	26	26	26
	Total	53	52	57
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (97)	91 (99)	100 (94)
	National	82 (81)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	27	31	31
	Girls	26	26	26
	Total	53	57	57
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (97)	100 (100)	100 (97)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (85)

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
	1999	40	28	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	35	34	37
	Girls	25	25	27
	Total	60	59	64
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	88 (89)	87 (99)	94 (80)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	32	32	32
	Girls	27	25	25
	Total	59	57	57
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	87 (86)	84 (83)	84 (90)
	National	68 (63)	69 (64)	75 (69)

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	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	404
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: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4:1
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	5

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	651,361
Total expenditure	663,640
Expenditure per pupil	1,631
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,651
Balance carried forward to next year	-5,628

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 43%

Number of questionnaires sent out	407
Number of questionnaires returned	175

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	46	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	31	54	9	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	45	3	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	51	19	10	2
The teaching is good.	36	53	6	2	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	41	29	11	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	29	45	13	10	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	44	3	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	22	39	25	13	1
The school is well led and managed.	34	50	7	5	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	45	5	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	32	32	12	11

Other issues raised by parents

In the meeting which was attended by 32 parents they perceived that:

- teachers bring out the best in pupils;
- the lack of competitive sports means pupils' sporting talent is underestimated;
- special educational needs are not always recognised early enough, examples were given;
- there are some weaknesses in communication with parents, for example no information on topics being covered each term, lateness of notices regarding events; this hinders parents from being more involved than they are.