

INSPECTION REPORT

VIOLET LANE INFANT SCHOOL

Burton-upon-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124047

Headteacher: Mrs D Barker

Reporting inspector: Mrs A M Grainger
20782

Dates of inspection: 24th – 26th June 2002

Inspection number: 230682

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Salt
Date of previous inspection:	10 th – 14 th November 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Violet Lane Infant School is situated in Stapenhill on the edge of Burton-upon-Trent. Many pupils travel some distance to attend the school and about a third live outside the immediate area. With 170 boys and 146 girls on roll, the school is bigger than many other infant schools. In Year 2, there are almost twice as many boys as girls. In other year groups, the number of boys and girls are more evenly balanced. Children enter school in the term after their fourth birthday. Those with birthdays in September to December begin in January. Those with birthdays in January to March start in April. Both these intakes are taught in classes for 'pre-reception' children before moving to the reception year at the start of the school year in which they will be five. The children with birthdays in the summer term go straight into the reception year in the September following their fourth birthday. Almost all children have had pre-school education prior to entering the school. Most have attended the nursery on site. Taking the intake as a whole, children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average in relation to the expectations for their age.

There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and also very few who have English as an additional language. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (13 per cent) is below the national average. Most pupils on the school's special educational needs register have learning difficulties. Twelve per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is also below average.

The school has a Schools Curriculum Award for community education. It has Eco-Schools status, which is European recognition for the school's provision for environmental education. It also has the Investors in People Award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Violet Lane Infant School provides a good education for its pupils and has many very good features. Pupils make very good progress in relation to their attainment on entry in mathematics and good progress in English and science. Standards as seen in the work of pupils presently in Year 2 are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. Very good standards are achieved in pupils' attitudes to school and in their behaviour and relationships. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. The school gives appropriate attention to ensuring equal access for all pupils to the learning opportunities provided. The leadership and management are good, with the staff working well together. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' overall progress through the school is very good in mathematics and good in English and science. Standards in Year 2 are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and they behave very well. They have very good relationships with each other and with the adults in school.
- Teachers have high expectations of the standards pupils are capable of achieving. They use questioning well to develop pupils' understanding and focus carefully on what they want pupils to learn.
- A high priority is given to the all-round development of pupils as individuals who are aware of their responsibilities towards others.
- The headteacher and staff team are firmly committed to the further improvement of the school. There is a strong emphasis on the professional development of the staff.

What could be improved

- Although pupils' progress is good in some aspects of writing, not enough attention is given to increasing their imaginative use of language. Handwriting is not developed well enough and very few pupils in Year 2 are starting to join their writing.
- Too much time is allocated to activities in some lessons and the pace of learning slows as a result.
- The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not provide all the required information.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in November 1997. It has taken effective action on the areas found to need improvement at that time. A new library has been developed and the stock of non-fiction books has been increased. The curriculum planning has been developed and teachers are now more involved in making decisions about the content of lessons. They also do more to develop pupils' independent learning skills. The school continues to work to raise standards across all the subjects as recommended at the last inspection. A number of shortcomings were identified at the last inspection in the procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety. These have been rectified.

Standards in mathematics and science are better now than at the last inspection. Above average reading standards have been maintained. Writing standards continue to be above average, although they are not as high as at the last inspection in relation to the national picture. The very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships have been maintained. Teaching and learning continue to be good and are better now in the reception year. The school continues to provide well for pupils' personal development. With its many strengths and the strong teamwork of staff, the school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	A	A	A	A
writing	A	B	B	B
mathematics	A	A	A	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The above table shows that pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were well above the national average in reading and mathematics and above the national average in writing. The picture is equally good when the results are compared with those achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The 2001 results in mathematics were much better than those achieved in 1997, when the school was last inspected. They were also better in 2001 than in 1997 in reading, but not as good in writing in relation to the national picture. The overall trend in the school's results is much the same as that found nationally for all three areas together, although it is a bit better in reading and mathematics.

The work of pupils now in Year 2 show that well above average standards are being maintained in

mathematics. In reading and writing, standards are above average. The slightly lower reading standards are largely a result of the present Year 2 having more boys than girls. There is a tendency within the school, as is also the case nationally, for girls to do better than boys in reading and writing. The school is taking effective action to rectify this, particularly in reading. Boys and girls achieve equally well in mathematics. Pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, and those with potential for high attainment, all make very good progress in mathematics in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Their overall progress is good in English.

Teachers assessed pupils' performance as well above the national average in science in 2001. The work of pupils now in Year 2 shows above average standards. As in English, this is not a decline but it reflects variations in year groups of pupils. All groups of pupils are making good progress in science as they move up through the school. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make secure judgements on standards and progress in other subjects.

Children of pre-reception age and those in the reception year are making good progress. Most are on course to achieve the standards expected at the end of the reception year in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical, personal, social and emotional development. A good proportion is likely to exceed the expected standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen and well motivated and have good attitudes to learning. More widely they show very strong enthusiasm for school, including towards the opportunities for their personal development.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Almost all pupils behave very well in lessons. They are very aware of others when moving around the school and when at play. They take good care of school property.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work and play together very well, willingly helping each other. They get on very well with the adults in school.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Last school year attendance fell to just below the national average and it has not picked up well enough this school year. This is largely because of a very few pupils with low attendance and parents taking their children on holiday during term time. Pupils arrive punctually in the mornings.

Pupils' enthusiasm for school and their very good behaviour and relationships all help to create a climate supportive of learning. The school is taking appropriate action to improve the attendance rate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Pre-reception and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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.

Judgements on teaching and learning are made on the evidence of teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books as well as on lessons seen. During the inspection, 22 lessons were seen. Teaching and learning were at least satisfactory in all but one lesson. They were good in just over two-fifths of lessons. In more than a further fifth of lessons, teaching and learning were very good, with one lesson in which

they were excellent.

The overall quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, including the basics of literacy and numeracy, is good. In mathematics this applies across all aspects of the subject, although it is particularly strong in numeracy and in the challenge provided for higher attaining pupils. Mathematics teaching builds very effectively on the strong start made in the pre-reception and reception classes. While teaching and learning are good overall in English, there are some areas of writing in which improvement is needed. Teaching and learning in science are good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good for children of pre-reception age and those in the reception year.

Throughout the school there is good attention to meeting all pupils' individual needs. Teachers have high expectations of the standards that pupils are capable of achieving. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support to meet the targets set for them, especially in literacy. Teachers are generally sensitive to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. In less effective lessons, including some that are satisfactory, too much time is given to activities and the pace of learning becomes slow.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is full coverage of the areas of learning for children in the pre-reception and reception classes. Some activities are particularly imaginative and stimulating. In addition to teaching the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education in Years 1 and 2, the school provides many additional opportunities through visits, visitors and clubs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified early and they are given the support they need to make effective progress towards the targets set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Teachers are generally aware of, and sensitive to, the needs of these pupils. However, there is no specific policy to guide teachers in planning for their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. There is a particularly strong focus on pupils' moral and social development, which contributes to the very good behaviour and relationships. Pupils are helped to develop as good citizens, aware of their responsibilities towards others and the environment.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. There is good pastoral care for pupils and attention to their personal wellbeing, such as in the procedures for child protection. The school is successful in promoting race equality. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and checking their progress are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. There is effective teamwork in the school. The headteacher gives strong and clear leadership. Key staff such as the deputy and the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and special educational needs, fulfil their roles well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their strategies for gaining information and checking the school's progress are adequate. The governors' annual report to parents is poor and has many omissions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. There is a good amount of checking of many aspects of the school's work, much of which is effective. The evaluation of the evidence gained is not always sharp enough, for example, in identifying specific

	strengths and weaknesses in pupils' writing.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Financial planning is careful. Resources are targeted on priorities for pupils' learning. There is satisfactory attention to whether the best value is provided for pupils and their parents.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is good and their children make good progress. • Their children are expected to work hard and are being helped to be more mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like better information on their children's progress.

Most parents are very pleased with all that the school offers their children. Inspection evidence supports these positive views. Inspectors find the information provided to parents on their children's progress to be satisfactory. However, there are omissions in the prospectus and the governors' annual report is poor.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils' overall progress through the school is very good in mathematics and good in English and science. Standards in Year 2 are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science.

1. In the National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2001, pupils' performance was well above the national average in reading and mathematics and above the national average in writing. The picture was equally good when compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. These results were significantly better than at the last inspection in mathematics. They were also better in reading, but not as good in relation to the national picture in writing. The overall trend in the school's results for all three areas together has been similar to that found nationally since the last inspection. It has been better in reading and mathematics than in writing. In 2001, teachers assessed pupils' performance in science as well above the national average.
2. Taking the intake as a whole, children enter the school with average attainment in relation to the expectations for their age. By the end of Year 2, standards, as seen in pupils' work, are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. This represents very good progress in mathematics in relation to attainment on entry and good progress in English and science. Standards in reading and writing, as key elements of English, are both above average. That reading standards are not as high this year is not an indication of any change in the school's provision. It reflects the composition of the year group, which has almost twice as many boys as girls. Within the school there is a trend of girls doing better than boys in reading and writing, although boys and girls achieve equally well in mathematics. The school is taking effective action to help boys to achieve as well as girls in reading. In science, the standards as seen in pupils' work are above average. As in reading, the lower standards than shown by teachers' assessments last year reflect variations in year groups of pupils, for instance the higher number of boys this year.
3. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make good overall progress. Those with special educational needs make particularly good progress towards their literacy targets, the area in which most are identified as needing additional help. The highest attaining pupils make good progress overall in English and science, and achieve very well in mathematics.
4. By Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are above average. Many pupils are confident and articulate communicators for their age. They give clear and often extended answers to questions, for instance about their work and their choice of reading books. They listen carefully in one-to-one, small group and whole-class situations. This was seen for example as they discussed pollution in one Year 2 class. In whole-school assemblies they remain attentive, for example as the deputy headteacher tells them a story using different voices for each of the characters.
5. Reading standards are above average because most pupils read confidently and accurately. Most pupils competently use a range of strategies such as letter sounds. They break down unfamiliar words into smaller sections in order to read them. Many pupils read with good expression for their age and have a good understanding of the characters and events in stories. Lower attaining pupils have generally satisfactory basic skills, although they need an adult to help them use letter sounds and to break down words. Many pupils enjoy novels such as by Roald Dahl. They also read plays and non-fiction books.
6. While some features of pupils' writing need improvement, overall standards are good. In particular, average and higher attaining pupils make good progress in spelling, grammar and using simple punctuation. A few of the highest attaining pupils are starting to organise their writing in paragraphs and use more complex sentences. Most pupils have the awareness expected for their

age of how to adapt writing for different purposes. Some average and higher attaining pupils do this well.

7. Mathematics standards in Year 2 are well above average because almost all pupils achieve at least the level expected for their age. About two-fifths of pupils are achieving at a higher level. A particular strength in pupils' work in mathematics is in their understanding and use of numbers. This also supports them in achieving well in other aspects of mathematics, such as problem-solving.
8. Most pupils have a secure understanding of tens and units, place value to 100 and order numbers to 1000. They understand the two times table well and use this when multiplying numbers up to 20. Pupils add and subtract to 20. When working with money, they successfully solve real-life problems such as planning refreshments within a given budget for a party. Pupils understand simple fractions and tell the time on the half and quarter hour with digital and analogue displays. They know what a right angle is and competently use standard units of measurement for length and weight. In handling data, they use tally charts and create block graphs. Higher attaining pupils work with bigger numbers and fractions such as tenths, fifths and thirds. They understand both reflective and rotational symmetry, read co-ordinates on tables and interpret graphs. While some of the work of lower attaining pupils is at a more simple level, they cover all the same main areas as the average pupils.
9. The main strength in pupils' work in science is in their knowledge and understanding of scientific investigation. They have a good level of independence for their age in organising the resources required, observing, measuring results and drawing conclusions from their findings. Pupils are beginning to ask why things happen and to test ideas. Through carrying out tests and experiments, pupils have developed a good knowledge across the areas of study required by the National Curriculum. In their study of materials and their properties, for example, pupils have tested 16 different materials to see whether they bend, squash, twist or stretch. In the area of life processes and living things, pupils know that food and water are essential for life and recognise the importance of exercise for humans and other animals. Pupils' understanding of pushes and pulls as forces is well developed, including their awareness of how pushing speeds up objects and pulling slows them down. They know how to make a simple electrical circuit.
10. The main reason for pupils achieving very well in mathematics and well in English and science is that teaching and learning are good. A distinguishing feature of the mathematics teaching is the very close matching of work to pupils' differing needs. This gives children in the pre-reception and reception classes a strong start. In Years 1 and 2 this is built on well, with teachers recognising the above average standards achieved by the end of the reception year. The teaching of pupils in groups based on prior attainment for mathematics also helps to ensure that pupils' needs are met. In particular, there is strong challenge for the higher attaining pupils. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are also given good support.
11. There is good attention to the basics of literacy such as spelling, punctuation and grammar. Spellings are regularly set as homework. Marking is effective in focusing pupils on areas they need to improve, such as the consistent use of simple punctuation. Targets for improvement are set for individual pupils and marking is well matched to these. Pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities for writing and this helps them to know how their writing should be adapted for different purposes. In subjects such as religious education and science, pupils have many opportunities to use their literacy skills. In addition to work with books in English lessons, teachers hear individual pupils read during lunchtimes. This allows regular reading practice, which most parents reinforce at home. Boys' motivation to read is promoted through the use of texts that will interest them, particularly non-fiction books linked to work in science.
12. Pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills contribute well to their progress in science. Pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are increased as they record work covered and reflect on what they have learned. There is good coverage of the National Curriculum requirements for science for pupils of this age. The work undertaken in the pre-reception and reception classes leads well into that done in Years 1 and 2, as was seen during the inspection when the whole

school studied plant growth. This is further reinforced in other lessons, such as when Year 1 lower attaining pupils focused on a diagram of a plant during an English lesson on non-fiction texts. Other opportunities, such as assemblies, are used well to reinforce learning. During the inspection the headteacher took an assembly in which the conditions necessary for plant growth were explored through a story.

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and they behave very well. They have very good relationships with each other and with the adults in school.

13. Some of the youngest pupils are particularly mature for their age. Children in the pre-reception and reception classes are independent and keen to learn, sustaining their involvement well in activities, even when working without direct adult support. Pre-reception age children collect some resources themselves and put them away when they are no longer needed. They very happily play together and get on very well with the adults who help them. Reception age children show a good level of interest and involvement during whole-class discussions or question and answer sessions. This was seen in a lesson with a science focus when they looked at different plants and, for instance, carefully examined the roots. In a mathematical activity in another class, children learned at a rapid pace because they were attentive and focusing on the questions posed by the teacher. Children share toys and resources well, for example when playing in the sand or in the role-play 'garden centre'. These young children know how to behave in different situations such as during whole-school assembly or when eating their packed lunches together on the picnic tables outdoors.
14. Attitudes to learning are good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils respond particularly well to the challenges provided in many mathematics lessons. They also show particularly good levels of involvement in mental mathematics sessions. They apply themselves well to tasks, such as looking at diagrams in non-fiction books or posing questions linked to the information in these books. In practical activities, such as in art and design, they remain involved for good amounts of time. They show themselves to be self-sufficient as they find and put on aprons or clean paint pots in the sink. Pupils enjoy activities such as working in the new computer room. Most pupils take good care with the presentation of their work, which further reflects their positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' wider enthusiasm for school is very good. They appreciate the additional activities that the school offers, such as clubs and visits. Members of the Eco-committee, which comprises pupils of all ages who promote care for the environment, are particularly enthusiastic about their work.
15. Almost all pupils behave very well in lessons and about the school. They have a clear awareness of the needs of others in lessons and when at play. Pupils move very sensibly and in an orderly manner to the hall for assemblies or physical education lessons. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions. Pupils take care of the school environment and respect other people's property. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.
16. Relationships are very good among pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils willingly help each other in lessons, especially those who are lower attaining or who have special educational needs. Pupils of all ages and prior attainment mix well. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well integrated and the school is a racially harmonious community. Pupils' relationships with adults in school are very good. They are friendly and confident, yet courteous and polite. Because of these strengths in pupils' relationships and respect for others, they are able to work in an environment free from oppressive behaviour such as bullying and sexism.
17. Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships all help to create an environment supportive of learning. Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations in these important areas. This contributes to their academic progress and the standards they achieve, as well as to their personal development. All the strengths found in this area at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils are more independent as learners now than they were at that time.

Teachers have high expectations of the standards pupils are capable of achieving. They use questioning well to develop pupils' understanding and focus carefully on

what they want pupils to learn.

18. As at the last inspection, the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The good teaching and learning found at the last inspection in Years 1 and 2 have been maintained. There has been improvement in the teaching of children in the pre-reception and reception classes. A particular feature of effective teaching is the high expectations teachers have of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining. In many lessons, and especially in mathematics, expectations are matched well to pupils in different groups based on their prior attainment. Questioning reflects teachers' high expectations and is used well to promote learning. Even in the less effective although satisfactory lessons, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. Their use of questioning is one of the stronger features.
19. High expectations are evident in the work that teachers set, which is usually challenging but also matched well to pupils' needs. In mathematics in particular, teachers are very effective in meeting the range of pupils' needs. They provide challenge through the activities set, the support they give during group work and also in the questions they ask. Questioning is used very successfully in mental mathematics activities to get pupils to apply their skills in calculation and to solve mathematical problems. In some of the most effective mathematics lessons, pupils are required to think again and their pre-conceptions about how problems might be solved are challenged. This advances the thinking of higher attaining pupils in particular. 'Open-ended' questions to draw information from pupils play a good part in this. This is reinforced through teachers saying "Tell me why", or "Explain to me".
20. High expectations are apparent when pupils are provided with choice as to how they record their work, as was seen in a very good science lesson in Year 1. This is also evident more widely in teachers' expectations of pupils' independence in scientific investigation, in using word-books for spellings and in the onus on pupils organising themselves in practical activities such as art and design.
21. Often, teachers are successful in targeting questions at individual pupils as well as at the whole class. In a science activity in a very good reception class lesson, questioning directed children to identify differences in the roots of plants, for example, noting those which were sturdy and those that were much finer. The teacher also picked up well on children's answers, so extending the learning of the whole class, such as when a child described a flower as 'camouflaged'. In this lesson, the questioning was gently probing and supportive, encouraging children's confidence in responding. In a Year 1 science lesson, gentle confidence-building questioning was also a feature. The teacher's encouraging manner as pupils responded persuaded them to develop their answers further. This helped their speaking and listening skills as well as their scientific knowledge and understanding.
22. Questioning in citizenship lessons shows that teachers expect pupils to be able to think through issues with good maturity for their age. Year 2 pupils gave careful thought in one such lesson as they explored the question of how they are able to care for the environment as children. They went on to think about how their influence might increase when they become adults.
23. The effective questioning is a key reason as to why pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed well as they move up through the school. In a reception class lesson in which children discussed a picture of cats, they were gently encouraged to provide words to describe what they saw, so extending their vocabulary. In English lessons in Year 1, questioning by both the teachers and pupils successfully developed pupils' awareness of non-fiction books and the different means by which they provide information.
24. In addition to questioning focusing sharply on what teachers want pupils to learn, there are other positive features of teaching that promote learning. Many effective lessons proceed at a brisk pace, ensuring that a good amount of work is covered. Support staff are used well, often to give specific help to a group of pupils. In the combined Year 1 and 2 class, the support assistant made a strong contribution to the learning of the Year 1 pupils during a science lesson. This ensured that the work covered was matched to the needs of pupils of different ages. In two Year 1 English

lessons, the support assistants gave effective help to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils were able to cover much the same work as others in their classes. Teachers, even of the youngest children, usually make sure that pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and what they are to learn. Sensitivity is shown to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

A high priority is given to the all-round development of pupils as individuals who are aware of their responsibilities towards others.

25. The headteacher and staff recognise the importance of providing for pupils' all-round development at this early stage in their education. Central to this is preparation for their future role as citizens. Pupils experience frequent short lessons in citizenship. This is linked to the school's European Eco-Schools status. Pupils learn about caring for the environment and their specific responsibilities as children. They are also encouraged to consider how, as they grow older, they will have choices to make linked to care for the environment and preservation of the world's resources. An Eco-committee comprising pupil representatives from each class has responsibility for promoting activities that develop pupils' awareness of the environment. These pupils organise the collection of items for recycling and promote a litter-free school environment. During a committee meeting, pupils were seen reading and looking at information about wildlife. Under the direction of the teacher, they discussed how they might raise funds, such as through a sponsored walk, for a charity promoting the protection of wildlife.
26. Activities such as the Eco-committee give pupils opportunities to take responsibility and to think of the needs of others. There are other collections for charity, for example to sponsor a donkey that the school has adopted. Pupils perform country dancing for senior citizens on May Day. They also sing to senior citizens at Christmas and share harvest gifts with them. Responsibilities as classroom monitors also contribute to pupils' social development, as do lunches and strawberry teas when they entertain their grandparents.
27. 'Circle time', when pupils sit in a circle to discuss matters of concern to them, provides moments of reflection on matters of personal and wider importance. Assemblies also promote reflection. Extra-curricular activities provide further opportunities for pupils' personal development and for them to work and play together in circumstances different from normal lessons. The very good range of activities includes choir, recorders, computer and gardening clubs and ballet.
28. A variety of multi-cultural initiatives help develop pupils' awareness of beliefs and cultures different from their own. They begin to gain an insight into the rich diversity of cultures in Britain today. Festivals such as Diwali, Eid and the Jewish Tree Festival are celebrated. Role-play in the reception year and art activities in Years 1 and 2 extend this. The religious education curriculum also develops pupils' awareness and understanding of world faiths, particularly when pupils reach Year 2. These activities help pupils to respect other people's beliefs, and to recognise the similarities and differences in major world faiths. Visits out of school to places such as Sudbury Hall to study the Victorians and to the Black Country Museum also widen pupils' experiences and contribute to their cultural development.
29. There is very good attention to pupils' moral development. The school code of behaviour has been prepared by pupils. All staff provide good role models for behaviour towards others and consistently uphold a clear moral code. The outcomes of the provision for pupils' personal development, particularly for their social and moral development, are very clearly seen in pupils' very good behaviour and relationships. All the strengths found in the provision for pupils' personal development at the last inspection have been maintained.

The headteacher and staff team are firmly committed to the further improvement of the school. There is a strong emphasis on the professional development of the staff.

30. There is good teamwork in the school and a shared commitment to maintaining the things that the school does well, including the standards pupils attain, and to ensuring that further improvements are made. The outcomes of this are seen in the good progress the school has made since its last inspection. There have been some improvements in standards, most notably in mathematics. Although some aspects of pupils' progress in writing need improvement, the school is already aware that this is an area in need of attention.
31. The headteacher gives strong leadership and provides a clear educational direction for the work of

the school. She is ably supported by the deputy in the day-to-day running of the school and also in more specific areas such as the co-ordination of literacy. Special educational needs and key areas such as mathematics are well managed and clearly led. The other subject co-ordinators know their responsibilities and fulfil their roles well. An example of this is the work undertaken by the co-ordinator in preparing a very good development plan for information and communication technology. She has played an effective role in improving the provision for information and communication technology in the school. Included in this has been staff training and support for colleagues during lessons in the new computer room.

32. The good team focus on achieving improvements is also evident in the school's developing use of information and communication technology. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science are involved in evaluating computer programs for use with pupils. The staff team is also looking at how information and communication technology might contribute more to learning in other subjects. Teachers within year groups work well together in planning learning opportunities and reviewing their effectiveness. There is good involvement of support staff, who are well briefed regarding their roles in lessons.
33. A high priority is given to reflection on practice within the staff in order to achieve improvement. Staff training is not only emphasised in relation to school priorities but also for the individual member of staff's continuing professional development. The headteacher is currently undertaking research for a doctorate and four teachers are working towards higher degrees. Training is provided 'in house' for support staff, most of whom are studying for National Vocational Qualification level 3. Performance management is well-established. It contributes well to a climate of evaluation and continuing improvement.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Although pupils' progress is good in some aspects of writing, not enough attention is given to increasing their imaginative use of language. Handwriting is not developed well enough and very few pupils are starting to join their writing.

34. Although Year 2 pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 and 2001 were above the national average in writing, they were not as high as in reading and mathematics. They were also not quite as high as when the school was last inspected in relation to the national picture. While pupils make good progress in basics such as spelling, punctuation and grammar, and increase their awareness of how writing has to be adapted for different purposes, progress is not as good in some other key elements. Pupils are not developing their use of imaginative and descriptive language well enough. Handwriting is not taught systematically.
35. Teachers give satisfactory encouragement to pupils to use adjectives to describe people and places. Some of the highest attaining pupils select adjectives well and their story writing engages the reader. In recognition of pupils' use of description, teachers often highlight phrases in their writing. However, there is not a strong enough focus on developing pupils' skill in this aspect of writing. Not enough attention is given to using language to paint a picture or to create atmosphere and tension, such as when setting a scene. Some writing is very simple, with missed opportunities for description.
36. While most pupils have neat and evenly formed handwriting, very few are starting to join their writing. Many do not even use flicks to show how letters might join. The youngest children are taught to include flicks for joins when forming letters. However, handwriting is not consistently developed as pupils move up through the school. It is unsatisfactory that pupils who could be joining their writing are not doing so and are not expected to do so.

Too much time is allocated to activities in some lessons and the pace of learning slows as a result.

37. Although the overall quality of teaching and learning is good, there are occasions within some

lessons when too long a time is allocated to an activity. Where this is the case, the pace of learning slows and the effectiveness of the teaching is reduced. This weakness was present in a fifth of lessons seen during the inspection.

38. In a Year 1 and 2 science lesson, teaching and learning were good at the outset. However, the prolonged time spent on activities meant that the lesson was not better than satisfactory overall and it had some unsatisfactory elements. There were moments when pupils were not involved well enough and were marking time. Pupils also found it difficult to concentrate in a story time in one Year 1 class. This was because there was too little active participation of pupils and missed opportunities to involve them. Two lessons in a Year 2 class, taught by a teacher who is not the usual class teacher, were also conducted at a slow pace. In both of these lessons not enough activities were provided to occupy pupils purposefully.

The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not provide all the required information.

39. Overall the information provided for parents, particularly on their children's progress is satisfactory. While the governing body's annual report to parents provides interesting information generally about what has happened in school over the year, it omits much of the information to which parents are entitled. It does not, as a consequence, meet statutory requirements.
40. The governors' report does not provide the required information on attendance, a report on progress on the action plan arising from the last inspection, information on school security, arrangements for the admission of pupils with disabilities and other information relating to disabled pupils, or adequate information on the National Curriculum test results. The graph on the National Curriculum test results is very difficult to understand because parts of it are missing.
41. The prospectus is a readable and professionally presented document. There are, however, a few items missing that should be included. These relate to National Curriculum test result data and information on attendance. The comment about level 2a being 'considerably higher than average achievement for a seven year old' is incorrect.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To rectify the weaknesses, while maintaining the many strengths of the school, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- a) improve pupils' writing by:
- giving more attention to developing their imaginative use of language, for example to describe places and people; and
 - helping them to write in a fluent and joined style;

(Paragraphs 34 – 36)

- b) ensure that teachers always use time in lessons effectively to maintain a good pace of learning;

(Paragraphs 37 and 38)

- c) make sure that the school prospectus and governors' annual report provide parents with all the information to which they are entitled.

(Paragraphs 39 – 41)

The school has already identified the need to improve pupils' writing in its development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	10	5	1	0	0
Percentage	4.5	23	45	23	4.5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Pre-reception	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	45	271
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	4	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Pre-reception	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

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

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving
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9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.6

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 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	49	56	105

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	45	46	49
	Girls	55	55	55
	Total	100	101	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (92)	96 (93)	99 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	48	49	49
	Girls	55	56	55
	Total	103	105	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (93)	100 (93)	99 (98)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	173
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.8
Average class size	28.5

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146

Qualified teachers and support staff: pre-reception

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
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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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	605750
Total expenditure	619563
Expenditure per pupil	1930
Balance brought forward from previous year	20000
Balance carried forward to next year	6187

Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	316
Number of questionnaires returned	135

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	33	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	38	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	41	4	1	3
The teaching is good.	67	33	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	44	10	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	24	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	44	47	5	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	33	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	39	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	38	4	0	5

Not all responses to questions total 100 owing to rounding.