

# INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY OF LOURDES RC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Finchley, London

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101331

Headteacher: Mrs M Morrissey

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Richardson  
6676

Dates of inspection: 6 - 7 March 2003

Inspection number: 246116

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Bow Lane  
Finchley  
London

Postcode: N12 0JP

Telephone number: 0208 346 1681

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Daniel Servini

Date of previous inspection: 3 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school. It has 202 boys and girls in seven classes from Reception to Year 6. In addition, 52 children attend part-time in the Nursery. The school's popularity has grown in recent years and it is now heavily oversubscribed. Separate applications are made for the Nursery and for Reception, and the criteria for admission give priority to practising Catholics. Children join the Nursery at the age of three, for up to five terms, and enter Reception in September when they are four. Children's attainment on entry is broadly in line with what is expected at this age, although some children have poorly developed language and physical skills. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average and five pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school provides for several pupils who are in the autistic spectrum, and for a number who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. More than a third of pupils come from a minority ethnic background and this diversity is growing. Twenty-six different languages are represented among the school's pupils. A quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language, and four are at an early stage in learning English. The school has had some recent difficulty in recruiting teachers and two posts are currently filled by temporary teachers. The school achieved Investor in People status in 2001, and recently won a School Achievement Award for its results in 2002.

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

This is a successful school with many distinctive strengths. It is very well led, with vision and determination to achieve the best for all pupils. The pupils achieve high standards by the time they leave because they are well taught. They thrive as individuals, whatever their needs, because of the high quality of care they receive. Pupils benefit from a very broad and interesting education. They develop as people through contributing to school life and sharing the community's values. The school provides an attractive, orderly and stimulating environment for learning. It gives good value for money.

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

- Pupils reach very high standards in reading and mathematics by the time they leave.
- The quality of handwriting is very good.
- The school provides a very broad education, within and beyond the classroom.
- Information and communication technology is very well developed.
- The school's leadership promotes staff development and teamwork, seeking the best for pupils.
- Pupils behave very well and are extremely positive in their attitudes towards the school.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Close attention is paid to pupils' physical and emotional well-being.
- The building and the playground provide a very good environment for learning.

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

- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to write at length, in order to improve their skills.
- The school should further develop its monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work, in pursuit of quality and consistency.
- Higher attaining pupils do well, but are not sufficiently challenged in some lessons.

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

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

The school was previously inspected in November 1997. Since then there has been a big improvement in the standards reached by the age of eleven, as shown in the results of National Curriculum tests. The school has addressed the issues raised in the last inspection report. It has developed its assessment procedures and now has a very thorough system for analysing results and tracking pupils' progress from Year 2 to Year 6. This is helping the school to set, and to achieve, ambitious targets. It has developed, evaluated and revised its schemes of work in all subjects, to improve continuity from year to year, and is now building on this in producing detailed planning for each term. Provision for information and communication technology has improved with the establishment of a computer suite and pupils now

achieve well across the school. There have been other major improvements in the school's facilities, including the creation of the library and group rooms, enlargement of the hall, the building of a new nursery and the re-modelling of the playground. All this has significantly enhanced the environment for learning. The school has moved forward well since its last inspection. It is innovative and self-evaluative and therefore well placed to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	A	B	B	A

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

Pupils achieve high standards by the time they leave. In 2002, as shown above, results in the national tests for eleven year olds were well above the national average in English and mathematics and above the national average in science. In comparison with those in similar schools, results were well above average in all three subjects. The results showed that pupils had made very good progress in English and mathematics since they took the national tests for seven year olds.

In 2002, the results of national tests for seven year olds showed a mixed picture. In comparison with schools nationally, and with similar schools, results were average in reading but well below average in writing. In mathematics, however, results were well above average.

The work seen on inspection shows that pupils do well in mathematics throughout the school. Pupils also read well, particularly in the older years. Attainment in writing is not as strong as in reading, and the school is working to raise standards further in writing.

The school makes very good provision to support pupils with special educational needs and to help all pupils to keep up with work for their age group. As a result, most pupils achieve at least the level expected nationally by the age of eleven, meeting the challenging targets set by the school each year.

The school analyses pupils' progress each year from Year 2 onwards. This provides a clear overview of how well pupils are doing and of any areas of weakness which need to be addressed. Assessment information is not yet being used as effectively to set sights high from the Nursery to Year 2.

The school pursues and achieves high standards across a wide range of activities. For example, pupils do well in information and communication technology, confidently applying their skills across the curriculum. Many achieve well in music, benefiting from extensive provision for instrumental tuition. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn French in some years and they make good progress in starting to speak the language.

Children make a very good start in the nursery and generally reach the Early Learning Goals in all the required areas of learning by the end of the Reception year.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are extremely positive in their attitudes to the school and they have a strong sense of belonging. They are interested in their work and eager to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Around the school, pupils are polite, friendly and helpful. They know how they are expected to behave and they abide by the school's rules and routines. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties learn to fit in and to develop self control. There is restlessness at times in some lessons when pupils are not actively involved, but pupils are generally very attentive.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils absorb the school's values and community spirit and they thrive in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. They readily take responsibility and know that their contribution matters. Pupils care for people and for property and collaborate well in groups. Relationships between children and with adults are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average and has improved in recent years.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching was good or better in around two thirds of the lessons observed and very good in a third. In all the lessons seen, the teaching was at least satisfactory. Teaching was particularly strong in the Nursery and in the older classes, and in the support and extension sessions provided for groups in all years.

Across the school, teachers plan well. They share the learning objectives for lessons with pupils, although not always in plain language which children readily understand. Teachers ask questions well, giving pupils time to think, and helping them to explain their ideas. The quality of teaching is supported by effective school-wide systems, for example about homework, the teaching of spelling and handwriting, arrangements for reading and the provision of additional practice in mathematics. These systems help to ensure a consistent approach, even when teachers change. The school recognises, though, that there is more to be done in monitoring teaching and pupils' work, in order to set directions for further improvement.

The best teaching is lively and interesting and results in very purposeful learning. Teachers are alert to pupils' responses, adapting the pitch and pace of work accordingly and recognising sources of confusion. The teaching is demanding but encouraging and generates an atmosphere of shared endeavour.

Skills in reading and in mathematics are taught thoroughly and effectively throughout the school. Spelling and handwriting are well taught, and teachers help pupils to learn how they should structure

their writing. However, pupils are not given enough time, in English and in other subjects, to practise and extend their skills in writing.

Weekly extension groups provide additional challenge for higher attaining pupils in mathematics. Able pupils work hard and do well, although teaching does not always explore how far their learning could be extended. Teachers are alert to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and these pupils learn successfully. There is very good teaching support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Class teachers, teaching assistants and the special needs teacher work closely and effectively together in providing this.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, including all the subjects of the National Curriculum, and a substantial amount of time for religious education. Information and communication technology is well used across the curriculum. A high proportion of pupils learns to play a musical instrument. The curriculum is enriched by clubs and special occasions in school, by educational visits, and by residential visits further afield.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is a strength of the school. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides well-focused teaching for individuals and groups and supports teachers in the classroom. Pupils' needs are carefully diagnosed, and support is very well planned. As a result, pupils make good progress, often to the point where they no longer need additional support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school is adaptable in meeting the needs of bilingual pupils from a variety of language backgrounds. It provides teaching support from a speaker of the pupil's home language when necessary. The school is well resourced with bilingual books and dictionaries. Pupils rapidly gain fluency in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes a very well-rounded contribution to pupils' personal development. It helps pupils to grow morally and spiritually. Pupils develop social skills in relating to others and through participating actively in community life. The school encourages appreciation of art and music. It celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity, and what people have in common. It has established links with schools in other countries.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for pupils, whatever their needs, and this underpins learning. Teaching assistants also supervise at lunchtimes and pupils are well known by all staff. Procedures for care are well established. There is a strong concern for pupils' health and well-being.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school's success owes much to the energy and vision of the headteacher, who is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher. The school is organised and managed very effectively. The school's leadership creates a climate in which staff as well as pupils are supported and encouraged to go on learning.
How well the governors fulfil	Governors take a close interest in the school and fulfil their

their responsibilities	responsibilities effectively. They contribute actively to the school improvement plan and to reviewing what has been achieved. Individual governors are linked with each aspect of the school's work and are developing their oversight of it.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is thorough in evaluating what it does well and what could be better. It is open-minded and innovative in planning for improvement, and effective in training and developing staff. It is looking to monitor teaching and learning more closely in order to strengthen consistency and the sharing of good practice.
The strategic use of resources	The school manages its budget well and uses its resources carefully to provide good teaching and support for pupils. The headteacher has been persistent and effective in securing funds in order to improve the school's facilities. The school is now well equipped and is continuing to extend its facilities in pursuit of its educational aims. It applies the principles of best value, for example in competitive tendering for larger projects.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children enjoy school.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<p>Some parents are not fully satisfied with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent of information about how children are getting on.</li> <li>• The provision of homework.</li> </ul>

Parents are generally very well satisfied with the school and inspectors agree that they are right to be so. The positive points above were agreed by a very large majority of the parents who returned questionnaires. Parents are generally satisfied with the school's provision of homework, although a number felt there was some inconsistency in how it was set and marked. Inspectors found that homework is mainly well planned and effective in supporting children's learning. Some parents felt they did not have enough information about how their children were getting on. The school has now begun to send out termly letters about the work to be covered in each class. It is looking to extend procedures for taking parents' view into account on matters including arrangements for consultation meetings. It is currently working with parents on what should be included in a guidance booklet for those joining the school. Inspectors consider that these are positive steps in extending the school's partnership with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Pupils reach very high standards in reading and mathematics by the time they leave.**

1. The school has good systems to ensure that pupils read a lot, at home and at school, from the nursery onwards. As well as reading with the class in literacy sessions, pupils in each class take part in a 'language carousel' for half an hour each day. Over the course of a week, each group of pupils has two guided reading sessions, with the teacher or teaching assistant, as well as completing a writing task and listening to story tapes, or reading poetry or topic books by themselves. The teacher monitors pupils' reading, questioning and checking their comprehension and noting any difficulties they encounter. Pupils benefit from this close attention to their reading. In Year 6, for example, pupils became immersed in books such as 'Ann Frank's Story', or 'The Haunting' by Margaret Mahy, and were keen to keep up with the group by also reading at home. Pupils are encouraged to monitor their own comprehension of what they read. For example, they make a note of words they come across which they do not understand, as seen when pupils in Year 6 turned to dictionaries to look up the meaning of 'aisle', 'annexe' and 'discrimination'.
2. The school has a very well-stocked library from which pupils borrow regularly. There is a good range of bilingual books, and non-fiction is well represented. On their birthday, children are encouraged to present a book to the library, rather than bringing in sweets. Pupils take great delight in this, and the school gains 200 books a year as a result. Technology is put to good use in tracking book borrowing through a thumbprint recognition system, which also gives an overview of pupils' reading habits.
3. Because reading is taught thoroughly and books are valued, pupils make very good progress over their time in school. In the 2001 and 2002 national tests for eleven year olds, almost all the school's pupils reached at least Level 4 in reading and half achieved Level 5.
4. The teaching of mathematics is well planned, thorough and systematic. Pupils learn number facts and multiplication tables and gain skills in calculating mentally. They are encouraged to talk about how they work things out and this helps them to detect patterns. For example, pupils in Year 2 recognised that a quick way of adding nine was to add ten and take away one, while subtracting nine required the reverse procedure. Pupils enjoy exploring numbers, for example, in an extension group in Year 4, wondering how addition as the inverse of subtraction applies to minus numbers, as in 32-52. Pupils are encouraged to think about problems, as when Year 6 pupils discussed how to go about estimating the number of pasta pieces in a packet, or the length of a piece of ribbon in millimetres.
5. Pupils' progress in mathematics is underpinned very successfully by 15 minutes daily practice for each child using a computer program. Pupils proceed at their own pace, benefiting from the reinforcement of concepts and procedures, and the presentation of problems in different ways. Progress in mathematics is also reinforced by regular homework.
6. Mathematics is a strength throughout the school. Almost all pupils reach at least the level expected for their age in national tests at seven and eleven and many achieve beyond this. The school now provides teaching for a group of higher attaining pupils each year from Year 2, on a weekly basis. This is beginning to have an impact in providing additional challenge for the most able.

#### **The quality of handwriting is very good.**

7. Handwriting is taught consistently and progressively throughout the school. As a result, most pupils develop a legible and well-formed joined handwriting style.

8. Pupils learn to form letters correctly from the start and begin to use joined writing in Year 1. Teachers teach handwriting carefully and this is mirrored in the effort pupils make to write well. Care is taken to ensure good posture, as when pupils in Year 3 chorused the reminder “1-2-3-4 are my feet flat on the floor?...”
9. Pupils earn the right to use a pen once they have mastered a fluent joined style, and pupils in Year 3 were working very hard to achieve this goal. Older pupils continue to practise their handwriting, creating an interesting personal anthology of poetry in the process. Pupils gain confidence from their handwriting skills, knowing that they can present their work well.

**The school provides a very broad education, within and beyond the classroom.**

10. The school is concerned that pupils should be given a broadly-based education and has been at pains to pursue high standards in literacy and numeracy without narrowing the curriculum. The school plans well and allocates time carefully in order to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum in some depth, while also giving substantial time to religious education. In addition, it enriches pupils’ experience through a range of clubs, invitations to visitors, special events and visits to places of educational interest. These activities add zest to school life and broaden pupils’ knowledge and interests.
11. Displays around the school show a good range of practical work within subjects such as design and technology. Pupils enjoy challenges in designing and making, as seen in the construction of working toys such as marble runs, and the balancing clowns from a science topic.
12. Music features strongly. Around 60 per cent of pupils currently have instrumental tuition, on recorder, guitar, strings, woodwind or piano, and this provides a good basis of musical knowledge. The school has a choir and orchestra which participate in local festivals. Pupils sing tunefully and well, and enjoy listening to music in assembly.
13. Educational visits help to bring learning to life. Pupils in Year 3 made a residential visit to Flatford Mill. They were awed to find they were standing where Constable looked out over the scene of ‘The Haywain’. A night walk gave them an exciting new experience. Pupils learn about other peoples, times and places drawing, where possible, on first hand experience. Year 4 visited Verulamium, putting on armour as worn by Roman soldiers to feel what it was like. In Year 5, pupils studying the Aztecs dressed up as musicians and played instruments of the time made from materials such as tortoiseshell. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 handled Victorian artefacts and looked at old photographs, comparing schooling then with now.
14. Pupils are encouraged to take an interest in the wider world. ‘Barnaby Bear’ is a much-travelled member of the school community, whose adventures, in the company of teachers and children, have been many and various. Pupils enjoy the reports and photographs which record his travels, from a visit to the Vatican to an encounter with a Masai chief.
15. Displays around the school show a very wide range of work, imaginatively planned and interestingly executed. These displays are moved from classrooms to communal areas so that pupils of different ages can see and take an interest in what others have done.
16. The importance of play is recognised and valued, and provided for very imaginatively. Children in the Nursery and Reception have regular access to a fenced play area. They clustered around to see how fast toy cars would run down zigzag guttering attached to the fence. They were fascinated by the footprints left by their wellingtons as they strode along a length of paper stretched between two paint trays. Such activities are well structured to help children observe and investigate, and to co-operate with each other.

**Information and communication technology is very well developed.**

17. Pupils gain a good level of skill in information and communication technology, and this is a strength of the school. The computer suite, soon to be moved to a classroom to double the space, is well used for introducing and applying key skills. The youngest pupils learn to manipulate the mouse and to change what they see on screen. Year 3 pupils enjoyed learning to send e-mails and thinking up messages to send their teacher.
18. The school recognises that information and communication technology is a tool which supports learning. Pupils learn to apply their skills across a range of subjects. In Year 5, for example, pupils used a program about the human body to find out more about how the heart works. They practised the skills of research in interrogating the information available to find answers to their questions. Having learned that the heart is 'fist-sized', they discussed how best to describe its shape, thinking first about the shape of pears and then suggesting 'an enlarged strawberry without the stalk'. Pupils are learning the need to understand and interpret information rather than just copying it down.
19. The school makes very effective use of computer technology in the library. Two computers in each classroom are in regular use in support of learning in mathematics. Teachers have been well trained and they make good use of computers for planning and administration, as well as for teaching. The school also has a very well-developed system for recording test results to gauge how well pupils are doing. This use of technology is helping the school to set accurate targets and to keep track of pupils' progress over the years.

**The school's leadership promotes staff development and teamwork, seeking the best for pupils.**

20. The school is a community where staff, as well as pupils, are committed to their own continuing learning. Teachers comment that they find this stimulating and professionally rewarding. The headteacher's energy and vision inspire the team.
21. The school provides placements for students in initial teacher training and supports them well. New teachers are carefully mentored, and the appointment of key stage co-ordinators is helping this process. Clear guidelines, for example about the organisation of classrooms, help to achieve consistency and continuity for pupils when teachers change. The school is developing a teaching and learning policy in order to clarify expectations and to share good practice.
22. As well as a lunchtime business meeting, there is a weekly staff meeting for the purpose of professional development. Such sessions have, for example, focused on the special needs of children with autism, and on the school's expectations about assessment. The school works with others in the 'cluster' to pursue training opportunities, for example in the use of 'accelerated learning' strategies.
23. Teaching assistants meet regularly with the deputy headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator, and are closely integrated within the staff team. The award of Investor in People, in 2001, recognised the quality of established practice. Staff are encouraged to take on responsibility, to pursue interests and to share their learning with others. Subject leaders are expected to develop their knowledge and skills and to help chart the way forward for the school.
24. Several teachers have visited schools in other countries and brought back ideas. The school is seeking to expand its international links. It is currently instigating an environmental project with partner schools in five countries including Hungary and Finland.

**Pupils behave well and are exceptionally positive in their attitudes towards the school.**

25. Pupils have a very good understanding of what is expected of them. They are consulted and involved in the life of the school community and they know that their contribution matters. They take great pride in the school and speak with enthusiasm about what it offers.

26. The school council is well established. Two representatives from each class bring forward concerns and suggestions from their peers and these are discussed under the guidance of the deputy headteacher. Pupils report back to their peers at class councils. Agendas and minutes publicise what has been discussed and what is happening as a result. Pupils are very active in making suggestions: 'Can we have a new school sign?', 'Can we mark out an area for skipping on the playground?'. Pupils are given straightforward explanations, so that they understand the factors which have to be taken into account when implementing ideas. Their views are sought on how improvements, such as the new library system, are working. The school council is a very effective channel for helping pupils to participate in making decisions and developing their sense of ownership. Pupils appreciate this: "It's our ideas not the adults". The workings of the school council help to lay foundations for good citizenship.
27. Pupils learn from the start to co-operate and to consider the needs of others. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the nursery, and children learn to play their part. They tidy up busily after themselves, and exercise restraint in taking turns. By the time they reach the top of the school, pupils have a very positive attitude towards learning and collaborate very well in groups. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their work, as seen in their completion of homework; in asking questions when they want to know more; and in the noting of their own spelling errors.
28. Pupils behave well around the school and this is very evident at playtimes. All the midday supervisory assistants also work as teaching assistants. This means that knowledge of the children, and consistent expectations, are carried over from the classroom to the playground. Pupils respond immediately when the whistle blows at the end of playtime and come quickly and quietly into school. They play vigorously but harmoniously. Large numbers of boys and girls join in amicably, for example in football games. Pupils are sensible and responsible in operating the playground 'Buddy' system, lending out equipment such as bats, balls and skipping ropes, and checking that they are returned.
29. Year 6 pupils comment that the school feels safe, that newcomers are welcomed and 'everyone is always friendly'. They value and respect their teachers and appreciate their help.

**The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.**

30. The headteacher makes a very strong commitment to ensuring that pupils are well served by the school, whatever their individual needs. Great care is taken in helping pupils with special educational needs, including those with severe difficulties, to flourish and to make progress.
31. The special educational needs co-ordinator is a strong presence across the school. She works alongside teachers, and supports individuals and groups of pupils in the classroom or in focused teaching sessions in the special needs group room. This provision is very effective. For example, in Reception, the teacher focused on speaking and listening skills with a group of children who benefited from the attention. The teacher gave them each a character in the story to listen for so that they were encouraged to take part. They joined in action rhymes with enthusiasm. Children are very well managed and motivated in these sessions. The teaching is practical and multi-sensory, and pupils are kept involved. In Year 1, for example, pupils practised the alphabet song, worked with wooden letters and mastered a 'vowel rap' concentrating hard in order to succeed. Working alongside another teacher in Year 3, the special educational needs co-ordinator quietly supported pupils who found the formation of letters difficult, helping them to practise using a sand tray. A boy glowed with pride as he traced the letters correctly with his finger.
32. The whole school takes pleasure in the success of children with learning difficulties, applauding their achievements. Progress is closely reviewed and targets are carefully set in close communication with parents. As a result, pupils are helped to keep up with their peers. This is evident in national test results which show most pupils achieving at least the expectation for their age.

**Close attention to pupils' physical and emotional well-being helps them to succeed in learning.**

33. The school takes care of the whole child. Staff visit children at home before they start in the nursery, establishing strong links with families and an understanding of the child's development. The school provides extended care, running a breakfast club before school each day, which around 50 children attend. This helps to give pupils a good start to the day, and contributes to punctuality. A weekly homework club is very effective in helping children who need support with homework.
34. The school is instigating approaches to 'brain friendly learning'. Teachers recognise the effects of physical factors on learning. Pupils have individual water bottles in the classroom, and are given fruit daily, to promote health and alertness. To aid concentration and co-ordination, classes take part in a 'brain gym', doing exercises such as touching their left knee with their right elbow and vice versa, and practising deep breathing. Pupils enjoy these activities and focus hard on them, quietly settling to work again afterwards.
35. Music played in classrooms helps to create a good atmosphere. For example, calm music set the mood in the nursery as children tidied up and sat down on the carpet to look at books. In Year 5, the 'Enigma Variations' played in the background as pupils settled down quietly to their writing.
36. The school helps pupils to understand their own and other people's feelings. In Reception, children used a computer program to interpret, and to change, the facial expressions of a character on screen. They were intrigued by what they were able to deduce: "Oh look, he's crying...", "I think he feels excited...". When Year 3 pupils explored the theme of 'friendship' in 'circle time', the class listened thoughtfully as one boy explored the idea that people can argue without falling out. Pupils are encouraged to use a 'Think Box' in the classroom to leave messages for their teacher if they want to share ideas or special news or if they have a problem.
37. Pupils are secure and confident because of the all-round care they receive, from staff who know them well. This helps them to learn successfully.

**The building and the playground provide an interesting and attractive environment for learning.**

38. The headteacher has been very active in developing the learning environment and securing the funds to make this possible. Pupils, staff, parents and governors all take pleasure in what has been achieved in improving the school's facilities. The building has been refurbished so that it is light and cheerful, and attractive displays add to its interest. Structural alterations have been made to provide space where it is most needed, to create rooms for group work, to enlarge the hall and to provide a library, computer suite and music room.
39. The playground has been very well developed. Although the hard play area is limited, it is very well arranged and equipped to maximise opportunities for play. Pupils make full use of the wooden climbing equipment, developing their physical skills in the process. They are helped to be safe, with a soft landing beneath them as they climb, but they are also encouraged to be adventurous. They learn to take an interest in nature. For example, members of the gardening club filled plant tubs with new compost, and emptied out the old window boxes. They warily examined spiders' webs, and were intrigued to find maggots burrowing among the roots in the old soil.
40. The nursery has been re-sited in a new building close to the main school and an attractive area has been created for outdoor play, shared by Nursery and Reception children. Plans are now in hand for a new dining hall. The school's facilities have been very imaginatively and purposefully developed to improve the education provided for pupils.



## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Pupils do not have enough opportunity to write at length, in order to improve their skills.**

41. The school has identified writing as a major focus for attention in its school improvement plan, and has been working to raise standards further in this area.
42. In 2002, results in the tests for seven year olds were well below the national average in writing. This was partly because the school applied strict criteria, assessing a single piece of writing rather than the best of several, as allowed by the guidance, in order to provide a reliable baseline for measuring subsequent progress. Nevertheless, the school recognises that there are weaknesses in writing by the age of seven which need to be addressed. At the age of eleven in 2002, 70 per cent of pupils reached at least Level 4 in writing, although only half the boys did so. Seventeen per cent of pupils reached Level 5. The quality of writing is improving in the older years, as seen in the work of pupils currently in Year 6.
43. Pupils write for a range of purposes and their writing is often lively and interesting. However, writing is rarely developed at length and, across the school, pupils do not write enough. Too much time is spent talking about writing rather than doing it. For example, in working towards the goal of an extended piece of writing, a long time was spent discussing the structure of a type of writing without setting pen to paper. Lesson objectives do not always help pupils to write better. For example, younger pupils were introduced to abstract terminology about the need for 'orientation', 'setting' and 'resolution' in stories, although not yet able to write more than a few sentences by themselves. A planning framework, designed to help pupils organise their ideas, overcomplicated a straightforward task and restricted pupils' writing. In some classes, too little use is made of pupils' own writing as a source material for remedying errors, or as the starting point for helping pupils to organise their ideas better.
44. The school has identified the need to plan for writing across the curriculum. At the moment, writing is insufficiently developed in subjects such as science and history. This means that pupils lack opportunity to sort out their ideas in writing, using information which is already to hand.
45. Samples of writing are kept for each pupil, showing progress over time. These pieces are marked according to the level achieved, and teachers set targets to help pupils improve. However, pupils lack the practice needed to develop fluency in writing and to apply what they have learned.
46. Pupils' handwriting is very good and the school has good systems in place to ensure progress in spelling. Pupils learn spellings conscientiously each week, focusing on spelling patterns and on words which they have mis-spelt in their work. However, this does not always translate into a high standard of spelling when pupils are writing independently. This is partly because pupils do not write enough for the correct spelling of words to become entrenched, or for the routines of checking and editing to become strongly established.

### **The school should further develop its monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work, in pursuit of quality and consistency.**

47. Teachers work closely together and discuss their work. The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead by professional example. They have a very good overview of the school and of pupils' development and progress. Some useful written guidance is provided for teachers and the school is now developing an overall policy for teaching and learning. However, the turnover of teachers in recent years has made the monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, to foster consistency and the sharing of best practice, a pressing concern.
48. Teaching is observed in the context of performance management, and local authority inspectors also visit and provide feedback. The headteacher has recently observed teaching in religious education throughout the school, and subject leaders are given time for monitoring their subjects.

Teachers are keen to develop their work, and new teachers can turn to a mentor. Key stage co-ordinators have been appointed to guide their teams. Teachers' planning is reviewed effectively by the deputy headteacher, who oversees the development of the curriculum. The senior management team is instigating a regular process of sampling pupils' work, in conjunction with subject leaders. This has yet to be fully developed as a way of identifying strengths and weaknesses and mapping out the action needed to secure improvement. The school is innovative and focused on helping pupils to learn well, as seen in the introduction of

'accelerated learning' strategies. However, monitoring is not yet fully established as a leadership tool for improving teaching, strengthening consistency, and evaluating the implementation of initiatives across the school.

### **Higher attaining pupils do well, but are not sufficiently challenged in some lessons.**

49. The school has high expectations for all pupils and this is very evident in the older years. It has a very well-developed system for tracking progress from Year 2 onwards. It is looking to develop tracking and target-setting from Nursery to Year 2, to help in setting sights clearly on what pupils are capable of achieving by the age of seven.
50. The school is seeking to develop its provision for higher attaining pupils, and has pursued staff training to this end. It is now providing an extension group once a week in mathematics for the higher attaining pupils in each class. These sessions are well taught by the deputy headteacher. Pupils enjoy the brisk pace and the challenge of thinking things through in a smaller group. This is a useful development, although its overall impact has yet to be fully evaluated.
51. Teachers ask questions well and give pupils time to elaborate their ideas. They do not always explore sufficiently how far able pupils are able to go. Some lessons are planned with the capacities of the most able in mind, and suitable extension work is provided, but this is not always the case. Sometimes, the task is constricting so that, for example, pupils may be limited to writing a few sentences when capable of much more.
52. Pupils respond well to a challenge, as seen in their work in design and technology. The school seeks to stimulate pupils' thinking and interest and encourages them to follow ideas up at home. In science, however, pupils' investigative skills are not strongly developed across the school. This means that the most able are not regularly required to apply their knowledge in planning investigations, testing ideas and interpreting findings.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

53. In order to build on its many strengths, the school should:
  - (1) continue to develop provision for writing, in English and in other subjects, in order to raise standards further, by:
    - auditing the time for writing and increasing the amount pupils write;
    - planning the development of writing across all subjects;
    - making lesson objectives for pupils more specific and attainable;
    - using pupils' own writing to demonstrate what needs to be improved.  
(paragraphs 41-46)
  - (2) extend the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work, with a view to improving quality and consistency by:
    - developing monitoring as a leadership tool for securing improvement;
    - evaluating the implementation of new initiatives across the school, and the impact on attainment.

*(paragraphs 47-48)*

- (3) take fuller account of the capacities of higher attaining pupils by:
- working in every lesson to extend the boundaries of learning for all pupils, including the most able;
  - providing more opportunities for able pupils to pursue investigations in depth, particularly in science.

*(paragraphs 49-52)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	8	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	34.5	31	34.5	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	202
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	59

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	18	12	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	12	18
	Girls	10	10	12
	Total	27	22	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (86)	73 (93)	100 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	18	18
	Girls	10	12	12
	Total	22	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (89)	100 (93)	100 (82)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	10	20	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	28	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (96)	90 (96)	97 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	27	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (77)	93 (88)	97 (96)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

*Separate totals for girls and boys are not given in the table above, as fewer than 11 boys took the tests, therefore individual pupils could be identified.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	92	0	0
White – Irish	10	0	0
White – any other White background	23	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	7	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	22	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	10.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.4
Average class size	28.6

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	166

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2002-2003
	£
Total income	695,270
Total expenditure	693,447
Expenditure per pupil	2,913
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,133
Balance carried forward to next year	3,956



Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	224
Number of questionnaires returned	113

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	30	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	41	5	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	43	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	42	11	2	15
The teaching is good.	55	41	1	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	47	13	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	39	6	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	36	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	32	53	11	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	57	35	0	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	37	3	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	35	13	3	15