

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103466

Headteacher: Mr R Maloney

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Brackstone  
21872

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Inspection number: 246301

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:         | 4 - 11   |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed  |
| School address:              | Broad Lane<br>Kings Heath<br>Birmingham  |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body   |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mrs C Menezes  |
| Date of previous inspection: | 19 <sup>th</sup> January 1998  |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--------------|------------------|----------------------|
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| 19374        | Mrs W Sheehan    | Lay inspector        |
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Alban's Catholic Primary School is an average sized primary school in Kings Heath on the southern outskirts of Birmingham. It caters for children aged four to 11 years and serves a wide catchment area comprising a mix of local authority and owner-occupied housing. Approximately 11 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is below the national average. There are 204 pupils on roll with more boys than girls (117 compared to 87). This is particularly noticeable in the Year 1 class. The vast majority of pupils are of white UK heritage. Although there are a very small number of pupils who use English as an additional language, none are at an early stage of acquisition. There are 55 pupils on the special educational needs register. The range of special educational needs includes moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems, speech difficulties and autism. There are two pupils who have statements for special educational needs. There are seven classes in school, consisting of one per year group. Thirty places are available in each year group and vacancies are rare as mobility is low. There are nine teachers; most have been at the school for a considerable period of time and therefore staff turnover is low. Children enter the reception class at the start of the academic year in which they will be five. At the time of the inspection there were 30 children in reception. Attainment on entry is below that expected for this age group with particular weaknesses in speech and language development.

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

This is a very effective school where all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well overall and are fully included in all aspects of school life. All children, many with below average skills on entry into school, make very good progress and, by the end of Year 6, attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above average. This is because the school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher and the overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards are well above average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress overall.
- The headteacher is an outstanding leader and manager of a highly professional team.
- The quality of teaching is very good and pupils work very hard to do their best.
- Throughout the school personal development is very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes, behave very well and enjoy very good relationships.
- Learning opportunities are very good, particularly the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is of very high quality.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils and ensures that they are all able to achieve their full potential.
- A very good partnership has been developed with parents and this has a positive impact on the quality of learning.

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

- The involvement of the governors in the strategic management of the school.

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

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

The school was last inspected in January 1998 and has made good progress since then. Standards in information and communication technology have improved and are now as expected. There are also improved resources for the teaching of information and communication technology. The development of the outdoor area for the children in reception has ensured that the physical development for this age group is now well catered for. Short term planning in each class has improved and teachers indicate clear targets for learning at the start of each lesson. In addition to rectifying these weaknesses, the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, the very high standards of the pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the very high quality provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have been maintained. Standards in mathematics and science have increased to be well above average. The overall quality of teaching is now very good and this is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. However, an area identified for development was the strategic role of the governors. This included their responsibilities for providing the required information for the school prospectus and their annual

report to governors. The headteacher has ensured that these documents now meet requirements. However, governors still rely very heavily on the dedicated headteacher and staff for information about the school rather than finding out for themselves how things are going. The exceptional headteacher and his dedicated staff have a shared commitment to improvement and a very good capacity to succeed.

## 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 |      |      |                 | <i>Key</i>  |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |   |
|                 | 2000          | 2001 | 2002 | 2002            |   |
| English         | B             | A    | A    | A               | very high A<br>*  |
| mathematics     | A             | A    | A*   | A*              | well above average A<br>above average B<br>average C<br>below average D<br>well below average E |
| science         | C             | C    | A    | A               |   |

Overall, children start school with attainment below that expected for their age group. A notable weakness is speech and language development. When compared both nationally and with similar schools in 2002 national test results, Year 6 performed well above average in English and science and were in the highest five per cent in mathematics. Inspection findings reflect these results and evidence suggests that current standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average in Year 6. In relation to their prior attainment and the significant minority of pupils with behavioural problems, Year 6 have achieved very well. In the 2002 national tests in Year 2 standards, when compared nationally and with similar schools, were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection findings indicate that the current standards in Year 2 are average. However, this particular year group has made good progress because they started school with poor levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment because they are very well provided for. The school sets appropriate targets based on their pupil tracking systems and is well placed to meet them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school                | Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are very eager to learn in lessons and are very highly motivated.  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Behaviour in and around the school is very good. No anti-social behaviour was observed during the inspection.  |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils very willingly undertake responsibilities such as house-captains and class monitors. Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils are fully aware of the impact of their actions upon each other. |
| Attendance                             | Attendance rates are well above average because pupils respond very well to the rewards for regular attendance. Parents are also fully aware of the implications of taking their children out of school for holidays.    |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Nursery & Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching    | Very good           | Good        | Good        |

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

During the inspection almost all of the teaching was good, with much of it being very good or better. Therefore the overall quality of teaching and learning is judged to be very good because of the consistently good or very good teaching. Very good classroom routines are quickly established in reception and all children make very good gains in their learning. Very good learning habits are formed because of the well-structured work organised for the children. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy effectively. They successfully adapt questions and target them towards individuals. Consequently, all pupils are secure, confident and express their ideas so that their knowledge, skills and understanding can be further developed. Teachers have very high expectations of standards of work and behaviour and all pupils are fully included in every aspect of school life. This has a very positive impact on the quality of learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Class management is a real strength and mutual respect between teachers and pupils is very evident. Teachers' day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning and progress are of very high quality and good use is made of marking pupils' books to both praise their efforts and provide direction for future work. The needs of those pupils with special educational needs are successfully met through very good, detailed planning documents. These pupils acquire the knowledge and understanding they need to achieve very well because their teachers are good at planning work that builds on what they know, understand and can do.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum  | The curriculum is very good. It is very well enhanced by links with the local sports college that enables the school to provide a very good range of sporting activities and study classes for Year 6 pupils.  |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs  | Children with learning difficulties or behaviour problems are quickly identified on entry into school and are very well supported within class and group situations. Individual education plans have manageable targets that clearly indicate the steps to be taken to help the pupils make progress.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | Provision is very good overall. A climate has been very successfully developed where all pupils can flourish, be respectful of others and be respected. There is a very effective moral code that is presented consistently across all aspects of school life. A fully inclusive sense of community has been developed and good opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in literature, drama, music and events of other cultures. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils   | Staff know their pupils well and very carefully track their personal and academic progress through school. Procedures for monitoring good attendance and behaviour are very good. Effective systems are in place for child protection issues and ensuring the health and safety of the pupils.   |



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher is an outstanding leader and manager who has built a high performing team. He is very well supported by his deputy headteacher. Both ensure that the individual strengths of the staff are put to the very best use. Staff work very effectively together. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Governors are very supportive and have a clear understanding of its strengths. However, they are not involved in the strategic management of the school and rely too heavily on the headteacher to help them fulfil their statutory responsibilities.                      |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | There is a very detailed programme in place that checks the quality of teaching and learning. The school carefully analyses the progress made by all the pupils and evaluates the most effective methods of teaching.  |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | The funding made available is used very efficiently to promote pupils' learning. The school applies the principles of best value very well.  |

## 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>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Teachers have high expectations.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress because the quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel that the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They feel that behaviour is good.</li> <li>• When they have a problem they feel comfortable approaching the school.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul> |

The inspection team endorse all the positive views of the parents but cannot agree with the negative comment about the range of activities outside of lessons. However, whilst there is a very good range of sporting events to participate in, there are few opportunities to join in musical or other recreational activities. A small group of parents raised concerns about progress in Years 2 and 5 and homework throughout the school. These could not be confirmed by the inspection team who found progress in these year groups to be consistent with the rest of the school. Homework was also judged to be satisfactory and appropriate for the pupils at this stage in their education.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Standards are well above average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress overall.**

1. Although the local authority assessments undertaken on entry and the previous inspection report judge attainment on entry to be average, current inspection findings indicate that most children start school with overall levels that are below those expected for this age group. This is because a significant number of children have weaknesses in their speech and language development, which has a negative impact on their level of skills in all areas of learning. Good progress is made in the Foundation Stage and, by the time the children are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum, they have successfully attained the expected level in all areas of learning. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are in line with the national averages for this age group. This represents good achievement made in Years 1 and 2, particularly in relation to their attainment on entry. Current standards in Year 6 are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Pupil tracking over time indicates that a minority of pupils have experienced varying degrees of special educational needs and behavioural problems. Consequently, this also represents good achievement in Years 3 to 6. It is evident that pupils at St Alban's make very good progress overall from reception to Year 6.
2. In the current Year 2, pupils have developed their speaking skills and listen carefully to each other. They recognise familiar sentences accurately, use a wide range of techniques to work out unknown words and confidently talk about their favourite books. Pupils understand the difference between stories and fact books and know how to use contents tables and indexes. They read with expression and break down the sounds of words to help them with unknown text. Most pupils write confidently in full sentences and use both capital letters and full stops effectively. Their writing is neat and legible and most pupils are able to write in sufficient detail to engage the interest of readers. They are also developing their story writing skills and know that they must interest the reader. For example, they start their stories with '*Once upon a time*' and use powerful descriptive words such as '*a sparkling vase with diamonds and rubies*'. More capable pupils introduce speech into their stories and this creates further interest. By Year 2, the pupils have a suitable understanding of the use of writing. For instance, pupils have written instructions on how to look after a dog. The very successful implementation of the National Strategy for Literacy is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
3. In mathematics, most Year 2 pupils are able to count forwards and back, write and sequence numbers up to 100 and add and subtract numbers up to 30. They use their numeracy skills to solve simple money problems. Pupils also recognise odd and even numbers and tell the time using o'clock, half past, a quarter to and a quarter past. They recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and more capable pupils measure using centimetres.
4. Pupils' scientific skills in Year 2 have developed well. Most pupils understand that forces can be described as '*pushes and pulls*'. They know the difference between humans and animals and understand growth and change. The pupils recognise the difference between appliances that use mains electricity and those that use batteries. They actively involve themselves in simple investigations and record the results using appropriate tables.
5. By Year 6, pupils listen to each other with very good levels of interest and speak confidently about a wide range of topics. They read with fluency and expression and have a good knowledge of a variety of fiction and non-fiction books. They talk confidently about different authors such as Michael Morpurgo, Jacqueline Wilson and J R R Tolkien. Their writing is interesting and used for a wide range of purposes. For example, pupils write to persuade their audience or clearly record the points made in a discussion about whether girls should play in mixed football teams after the age of 12. They write play-scripts about being trapped and create news headlines. They use lively vocabulary to create poems and riddles about dragons and witches. Their writing is neat and well presented in a joined-up style. Accurate use is made of a wide range of punctuation such as commas and apostrophes.

6. Inspection findings indicate that in Year 6 pupils have a very good understanding of mathematical vocabulary and solve problems confidently. This is evident when they discuss co-ordinates and explain the centres of rotation. They confidently calculate the percentages and fractions of three digit numbers. For instance, the pupils accurately calculate what 60 per cent of 765 is and work out five-twelfths of 378. They are also able to express mathematical findings using symbols.
7. Current standards in science are very good in Year 6. Pupils have a clear understanding of a fair test and confidently make predictions. For example, they predict which substances will dissolve in water and which will not. They understand that some mixtures cannot be reversed after dissolving in liquid. The pupils know about the life cycle of a human and accurately explain the difference between joints and muscles. They have a very good understanding of technical terms and accurately label the parts of a plant. The pupils confidently explain food chains and the difference between vertebrates and invertebrates is very clearly understood. Good use is made of information and communication technology to record results.
8. Pupils make very good progress overall because teachers have very high expectations and their levels of achievement are very carefully tracked over time. Individual targets are set and this ensures that the pupils maintain their enthusiasm and are fully involved in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress because they are very well provided for. Record-keeping procedures and individual programmes are of high quality and all staff who work with these pupils are experienced and competent in their work, whether supporting in class or teaching in specific groups. Very clear targets are identified and how pupils might achieve the targets are set out with very good strategies. A key feature of the school's success with pupils with special educational needs is the way the withdrawal groups links so closely to work that is going on in the classroom. These lessons effectively reinforce previous work and great care is taken to ensure that the lesson prepares the pupils well for future work when they are working within the classroom environment.

**The headteacher is an outstanding leader and manager of a highly professional team.**

9. The main reason why the school is so effective is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, which has been maintained since the last inspection. He is fully committed to providing the very best learning environment for his pupils and works very closely with his able deputy headteacher to successfully achieve this. Together they very skilfully motivate and influence the staff, using their strengths in the very best way. An example of this is the way in which they have strategically planned for staff specialisms to be used to ensure that the pupils gain the very best possible deal. Subject co-ordinators take classes throughout the school to share their expertise and give pupils extra help. For instance, the science and information and communication technology co-ordinator has worked with all year groups and, consequently, has a very good understanding of standards in these subjects throughout the school.
10. The monitoring and evaluation process is successful because the headteacher has developed a whole school system that consistently tracks the progress of all the pupils. Strengths and weaknesses are rapidly identified and very clear targets are set for improvement. Monitoring procedures are rigorous and are achieved in a wide variety of ways. These include the headteacher, subject leaders and classroom teachers analysing performance data from the National Curriculum tests and other assessment information. For example, results in the national tests for writing have been tracked over time. They have indicated that girls outperform the boys. Consequently, there has been a whole school focus on writing which is now having a positive impact on standards. This has included specialist advisor support and the purchase of books that stimulate the interest of boys. Informal monitoring also takes place through working alongside colleagues and with targeted groups of pupils.
11. The headteacher ensures that maximum use is made of all available resources for the benefit of the pupils. For instance, very good links with the local secondary school have been forged and Year 6 pupils are able to attend for evening study sessions. This secondary school is also a sports college and the expertise from this has had a really beneficial impact on the quality of learning in physical education. The headteacher ensures that the budget is also systematically linked to improvements that will benefit the pupils. For example, the school has recently purchased large play equipment for the reception class. This has enabled the youngest children in school to systematically develop their physical skills.

12. The governors are very carefully guided by the headteacher to ensure that best value is always sought. This is clearly evident through the very good procedures to monitor and evaluate all systems in school. For instance, the school rigorously compares the performance of its pupils to those within the local education authority and also uses national statistics very well to evaluate improvements over time. Parents are also carefully consulted over many issues, such as the recent changes in school uniform. The headteacher makes very good use of specific grants. For instance, the pupils are benefiting from specialist music teaching and enhanced information and communication technology resources as a result of grants successfully applied for.

**The overall quality of teaching is very good and pupils work very hard to do their best.**

13. During the inspection almost all of the teaching was good, with much of it being very good or better. Therefore the overall quality of teaching and learning is very good because of the consistently good or very good teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. Teachers have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and this is demonstrated in the range and quality of the work that is produced by pupils. For example, this is particularly evident in the Foundation Stage where a high priority is given to the children's development. All adults involved with this age group have a very good understanding of the ways in which young children learn and are sensitive to their individual needs. Team work is a strength of the Foundation Stage with teachers, assistants and helpers working effectively together to create a caring and secure atmosphere. The staff in the Foundation Stage work hard to provide an appropriate and stimulating range of learning activities. The response by the children is very positive; they are interested, motivated in their work and concentrate well. They clearly are happy and confident learners who want to do their best. Lessons are conducted in a calm, orderly manner and the children are managed very well. Very good emphasis is given to the children's personal, social and emotional development. This was illustrated during a session where the children were comparing old with new. In this lesson the children were encouraged to sit together in a circle and pass two different types of teddy bears around. This was a most appropriate choice of resource for this age group and ensured that the children would maintain their interest. The children were required to listen to each other's views, which promoted their personal and social development. They were then given an opportunity to describe how it felt when they touched the bears, which successfully developed their communication and language skills.
14. Throughout the school the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively. All teachers have a very thorough knowledge of the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this ensures that skills are taught well. They prepare their work thoroughly and identify precise learning targets that are conveyed to the pupils. This results in the pupils knowing what is expected of them. The teachers are skilled in asking questions that require pupils to think carefully before they answer. Pupils' self-confidence improves when they are praised and encouraged. For example, in a very good literacy lesson in Year 6, the teacher very effectively used praise to support the pupils' learning. During this lesson the pupils were encouraged to discuss the differences between formal and informal letter writing and their efforts were used to illustrate the teaching points. More capable pupils are encouraged to work appropriately at their own level and achieve good levels of understanding. Overall, pupils work at a very good pace during literacy and numeracy sessions and their concentration is maintained throughout the lesson.
15. Teachers generally have very high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond appropriately when working in both groups and pairs. Work is very carefully planned and activities match the needs of all pupils. This has a very positive impact on the quality of learning which is very good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Class management is a positive strength and mutual respect between teachers and pupils is very evident. This was clear in a very good Year 5 mathematics lesson where no pupil was allowed to disrupt the learning of a classmate. Teachers and classroom assistants support the different age and ability groups well and resources are used very effectively. Teachers' day-to-day assessments are of very high quality and good use is made of marking pupils' books to both praise their efforts and provide direction for future work. An appropriate amount of homework is set throughout the school and is used well to extend what is learned in school.
16. Good quality resources are available for use throughout the school. For example, in the shared area between Years 3 to 6 there is an up-to-date computer suite that is used well by all these classes. There is also a very good outside play area for the reception children, which is used effectively to develop their physical skills. Teachers are particularly talented in their deployment of everyday resources. This was evident in an excellent numeracy session in the Foundation Stage where groups of children were creating 'addition stories' using biscuits, icing sugar, small coloured sweets and liquorice strips. The children eagerly spread the icing on their biscuits and then partitioned it into two sections using the liquorice strips. Small numbers of the

coloured sweets were then carefully counted out into the two sections thus creating an addition of two numbers. The children worked independently and showed good concentration skills. This well chosen activity ensured that the children worked collaboratively in a group and shared the rather tempting resources willingly.

17. A particular strength of the teaching is the very good use of the effective cross-curricular links to promote different topics. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their information and communication technology skills to create graphs about work they have done in mathematics and science.
18. A feature of all lessons is that teaching assistants are an integral part and provide invaluable help. For example, they often take groups to help with reading, letter and sound recognition. The training that they have had makes them confident and able to help pupils to learn most effectively. They know how to keep pupils interested by asking probing questions and by varying their approach.
19. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment as a result of effective teaching that takes into account all their needs. Teachers provide very good support for learning through well-matched tasks and the good use of support assistants whose work is of a high quality. The strong partnership between the school and home contributes significantly towards the good progress made by these pupils.

**Throughout the school personal development is very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes, behave very well and enjoy very good relationships.**

20. Pupils have very good attitudes towards school; they are highly motivated and always eager to learn. This was considered a strength at the last inspection and has been very well maintained since then. Pupils show very good levels of concentration and perseverance. This has a significant impact on their progress. The pupils settle quickly in lessons, are conscientious and work hard. They display real enthusiasm for their learning and take a full part in all activities. The pupils work very well together in small groups and are independent in their learning. Pupils listen enthusiastically to the views of others and willingly share resources. For example, in a very good science lesson in Year 6, pupils very sensibly and independently investigated the properties of a range of rocks using a variety of different tools. They discussed their findings with each other and confidently fed back to the rest of the class.
21. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' behaviour is very good. This is the result of a consistent and rigorous approach to behaviour management by all staff. For instance, around school pupils' behaviour is of a very high standard. This was evident during a whole school assembly when they came into the hall in a very orderly manner, sat very well during the story and the responded very positively to the rewards given to their peers. Parents confirm that their children respond very positively to the high expectations of behaviour. There is a very clear understanding of reward systems. For example, house points are given out not only for good work but also for positive behaviour. Incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with quickly and sensitively.
22. Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils enjoy the friendships and relationships they have with each other and there is a very happy and purposeful atmosphere in the school. They have high respect for all adults in school. Year 6 pupils are particularly complimentary about their teachers who they feel provide them with very good support. For example, at lunchtimes the pupils sit together in groups and take turns listening to each other. During the inspection two of the local professional football teams were playing in a local derby match. However, despite crowd trouble at the football ground, pupils who supported both teams did not argue or fight over the game the following day in school.
23. Personal development is very good. This is evident through the way they work maturely together in pairs and with groups. Pupils grow and develop as members of a community that goes beyond school. This is clear through their involvement with their sporting activities, the competitive house system and their response to both residential and day visits. All children develop self-confidence from the time that they start in the reception class. For example, pupils from the netball team eagerly stood up in assembly and provided the rest of the school with an update on their successes.

24. Attendance is very good and pupils take great pride in receiving awards for attending regularly. For example, during the inspection one pupil was awarded a certificate for attending school for 700 consecutive days.

**Learning opportunities are very good, particularly the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is of very high quality.**

25. The quality of the curriculum for the reception children has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. When children start school, detailed assessments are made and work is carefully planned to meet their need in all the six areas of the learning recommended for children of this age. Their progress is regularly reviewed and activities modified to ensure the needs of all children are met. Children with special educational needs are identified very early and very good support is given to them. An achievement folder is started for each child and their progress is evaluated carefully against the early learning goals.
26. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 has also improved since the last inspection and is now very good. All subjects are based on nationally recommended schemes of work, which enables skills to be taught progressively throughout the school. Extra-curricular activities are very good; these include a wide range of sporting activities after school such as cross-country, netball, Gaelic football, table tennis and swimming. The local authority promises that each child should take part in residential experiences and the pupils from St Alban's visit the Malvern Hills in Year 5 for three days and Alton Castle in Year 6, also for three days. Pupils are involved in day visits to a wide range of places of educational interest such as local farms and museums. Good use is made of regular visitors to the school who successfully extend and further develop the experiences of the pupils. For example, musical groups and professional basketball players have shared their skills with the pupils.
27. Throughout the school, strong emphasis is placed upon the effective use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills which impacts well on standards. This is achieved through the very successful implementation of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy and the imaginative use of opportunities to develop these skills through work in other subjects. For example, in subjects such as art and design and design and technology pupils extend their vocabulary by learning new words related to the activities in which they engage. In science, investigative tasks are provided that require accurate measurement and these develop pupils' numeracy skills. This was evident in Year 6 work where the pupils were required to weigh out salt and sugar using metric measurements.
28. Information and communication technology is an integral part of the daily life at school and this is clearly evident through most subjects of the curriculum. For example, investigations in both mathematics and science are successfully illustrated in graph form. This was evident in a Year 6 programme of work that focused on shadows. Good use of information and communication technology skills were used to create a graph that indicated that, when objects were closer to light sources, shadows became bigger. Activities for English, such as letter writing, are presented in a wide variety of differing formats. Pupils very confidently use CD ROMs to gain their required information for their topics. Older pupils make very good use of the available technology to create presentations on different subjects.
29. Provision for special educational needs is good. Children with behaviour or learning problems are swiftly identified on entry into school and the special educational needs co-ordinator works closely with class teachers and teaching assistants to provide appropriate activities. Individual education plans identify clear, consistent targets and provide manageable goals to achieve. The co-ordinator works very closely with the teachers.
30. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Spirituality is promoted very well through well-planned assemblies where high quality opportunities are provided for reflecting on day-to-day issues. This was evident during an assembly when the pupils listened to a story about the famous athlete Dorando Pietri who initially won a gold medal but was then disqualified for being helped over the finish line. They were then required to think how he might have felt when he had to return the gold medal. Pupils learn to understand the difference between right and wrong and understand fully the classroom rules that they have devised. Social development is very good. Pupils are provided with numerous opportunities to work together in groups and pairs. Older pupils are encouraged to help in assembly with the overhead projector and at lunchtime with dinner duties. The new house system encourages team spirit and a desire to do better. It also provides the older pupils with opportunities to take on responsibilities as house-captains. The pupils are also

given many opportunities to learn to be part of the local community by participating in sporting events and quiz competitions, entertainment afternoons with senior citizens and fund-raising events. Provision for cultural development is good. It is promoted through religious education, visits from Hindu pupils and a wide range of books around the school that fully reflect the multi-cultural society in which they live.

**The school takes very good care of its pupils and ensures that they are all able to achieve their full potential.**

31. The school provides very good pastoral care for the pupils. Their safety, welfare and security are priorities and the school strives to create conditions in which all children are able to achieve their potential. For instance, school routines and the ordinary daily expectations create a safe and secure environment. All policies and procedures are clear and well known by everyone working in school and staff have the necessary skills to deal with emergencies and ensure the safety of all the pupils. The atmosphere is very positive with all staff extremely well committed to high standards. Staff are thoughtful about the children's welfare. An example of this is the way that staff encourage the pupils to eat fruit at break times. Pupils' personal development is monitored well by the staff. They know the children very well and are quick to spot any changes in attitudes or behaviour. This was clearly evident when a small group of pupils were experiencing problems with each other. The troubles were quickly spotted and both pupils and parents received counselling. Pupils' attainment and progress are very carefully monitored and very good use is made of outside agencies to provide specialist support where required. Children are very well prepared for starting school and staff take great care to get to know their individual needs. There are also very strong links with the local secondary school, which ensure a smooth transition at the end of Year 6.

**A very good partnership has been developed with parents and this has a positive impact on the quality of learning.**

32. Most parents are very supportive of all aspects of school life. Parents effectively ensure that their children attend regularly and start school on time. All staff work very hard at involving parents at every stage of their child's education. Before children actually start school the staff work with parents to make their children's first days in school successful. During the Autumn Term the headteacher sends a progress report to parents, which informs them on how their children have settled into school. Parents appreciate this personal touch and feel reassured by his comments. They are also kept very well informed through regular newsletters, questionnaires, information sheets and workshops. For example, parents, teachers and pupils throughout the school have co-operated well together to develop story-writing techniques during the *'Inspire Workshop'* sessions. Annual written reports are also of a very good standard and fully reflect the achievement of the pupils. Parents are welcomed into the school to help with a wide variety of activities such as classroom tasks and visits out of school. Concerts and social events are supported very well. The strong parent/staff/friends group work very hard at fund-raising and social activities. The fundraising they do adds to the social life of the school and provides a source of extra income. The money raised is used very well to benefit all the pupils. For instance, this group has worked hard to provide the reception children with an exciting and stimulating outdoor area.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The involvement of the governors in the strategic management of the school.**

33. As at the time of the last inspection, the governors do not contribute substantially to the effectiveness of the school. They rely too heavily on the headteacher to fulfil their statutory requirements. The headteacher has worked very hard since the last inspection to ensure that school documentation meets full legal requirements. For example, the school prospectus has been written by the headteacher in the absence of one produced by governors. In addition to this, the governors have very little input in the school development plan and this means that they are not involved in shaping the future direction of the school. Staff keep governors informed about what is going on in school. For example, subject co-ordinators regularly update them on issues linked to their specific areas of responsibility but governors do not make formalised visits to school and report back to the rest of the governing body. As a result, the headteacher is not fully accountable to them and they in turn are not accountable to the parents of the school.

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

34. In order to improve the quality of education further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

I. Ensure that the governing body fully understands its role as a critical friend of the school and holds the school to account for the standards and quality of education it achieves by:

- exercising its corporate role;
- helping to shape the direction of the school;
- finding out for itself how things are going; and
- completely fulfilling statutory requirements.

*(Paragraph 33)*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 18 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 10 |

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 1         | 8         | 8    | 1            | 0              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 6         | 44        | 44   | 6            | 0              | 0    | 0         |

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

| <b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>                                    | YR - Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      | 204     |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 23      |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

| <b>Special educational needs</b>                                    | YR - Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 2       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 55      |

| <b>English as an additional language</b>                | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0            |

| <b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>                                | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 4            |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 6            |

### *Attendance*

| <b>Authorised absence</b> | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 4.1 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> | %   |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| School data                 | 0.0 |
| National comparative data   | 0.5 |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
|  | 2002 | 15   | 15    | 30    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 13      | 13      | 15          |
|   | Girls    | 15      | 15      | 15          |
|   | Total    | 28      | 28      | 30          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 93 (97) | 93 (97) | 100 (100)   |
|   | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English  | Mathematics | Science  |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 13       | 13          | 13       |
|   | Girls    | 15       | 15          | 15       |
|   | Total    | 28       | 28          | 28       |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 93 (100) | 93 (100)    | 93 (100) |
|   | National | 85 (85)  | 89 (89)     | 89 (98)  |

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 |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
|  | 2002 | 15   | 11    | 26    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science   |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 14      | 15          | 15        |
|   | Girls    | 10      | 11          | 11        |
|   | Total    | 24      | 26          | 26        |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 92 (88) | 100 (100)   | 100 (100) |
|   | National | 75 (75) | 73 (71)     | 86 (87)   |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science  |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 10      | 14          | 15       |
|   | Girls    | 10      | 10          | 10       |
|   | Total    | 20      | 24          | 25       |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 77 (84) | 92 (100)    | 96 (100) |
|   | National | 73 (73) | 74 (74)     | 82 (82)  |

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



### ***Recruitment of teachers***

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years   | 2   |
| 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)                           | 0.6 |
| 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 | 204 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 137 |

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

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 78             | 21            | 0                | 1                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 65             | 33            | 1                | 1                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 52             | 44            | 2                | 1                 | 1          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 44             | 47            | 8                | 1                 | 0          |
| The teaching is good.  | 69             | 29            | 1                | 1                 | 0          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 41             | 53            | 6                | 1                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 66             | 28            | 4                | 1                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 74             | 25            | 0                | 1                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 45             | 45            | 6                | 1                 | 4          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 75             | 22            | 1                | 1                 | 1          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 55             | 42            | 0                | 1                 | 1          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 24             | 36            | 21               | 1                 | 16         |