

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WIDNEY JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Solihull

West Midlands

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104504

Headteacher: Miss K Unsworth

Reporting inspector: Alan Blank  
8358

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 246345

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Clifton Crescent Solihull West Midlands
Postcode:	B91 3LQ
Telephone number:	0121 705 8516
Fax number:	0121 709 1005
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Michael Blewitt
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
8358	Alan Blank	Registered inspector
9619	Bob Miller	Lay inspector
25623	Ted Cox	Team inspector
2063	Judith Hicks	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Schools Inspection Unit  
School of Education  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 2TT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>17</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Widney Junior School has 254 pupils on roll aged between 7 and 11 years. The background of the majority of pupils is white British. Of the 56 pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds the most numerous group is British Indian. Twenty-nine pupils have English as an additional language, but none of these is at an early stage of language development and they do not require special support. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average at 10%. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (16%) is below average, but there are 11 pupils who have statements of educational need. Eight of these attend the special centre within the school for children who have specific learning difficulties (SpLD). These pupils are drawn from all over the borough. They are supported by mainstream teachers as well as staff in the centre and are an integral part of the school. The school has recently received a Schools Achievement Award for overall improvement in national test results over three years.

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

Widney Junior School is a good school with several very good features and where pupils make good progress and generally reach well above average standards. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good or excellent. The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership. The school is managed efficiently and it provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils generally achieve well above average standards.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and the pupils make good progress.
- The school provides a broad curriculum and a rich range of learning experiences.
- The school is well led and it is managed efficiently.
- Pupils' social development is very good as are their attitudes and behaviour. Pupils in the SpLD centre are very successfully integrated into the main school.

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

- The quality of pupils' writing.

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

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

The school has maintained well above average standards since the last inspection in 1997 and has made good progress overall. The school has improved standards in information and communication technology (ICT) very significantly. The teaching addresses the specific needs of different abilities in groups most of the time, including higher attaining pupils. In the monitoring of pupils' work and of teaching satisfactory progress has been made and this is still being improved.

## 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	B	A
Mathematics	A	B	A	A
Science	A	B	A	A

Key	
highest 5% of schools nationally	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards in English in 2000 were very high, in the top 5% of schools nationally and in 2000 they were well above average. In 2002 results were lower but were above average for schools nationally and well above similar schools. Year 6 pupils did not make the expected progress based on results in reading and writing assessments at the age of seven. The weaker aspect of English is the quality of pupils' writing, which the school has identified. The current picture is similar, with well above average standards in speaking and listening and reading, and average standards in writing. In mathematics and science standards are generally well above average compared to similar schools and schools nationally. The current Year 6 pupils are displaying similar standards in these subjects. Pupils enter the school with above average standards generally and their progress is good in mathematics and science, but in English progress is only satisfactory overall. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils in the SpLD centre generally perform better in science than in English and some do well in mathematics. Overall they make very good progress. The school has made very good progress in improving the provision for ICT since the last inspection and standards are average or above in all elements of the subject. In recent years the school has met or exceeded its targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. They are keen in lessons and take full advantage of the rich range of learning experiences provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are sensible and helpful in classrooms and around school. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good at all levels throughout the school. There is an atmosphere of cooperation and tolerance. Pupils' personal development is enhanced through the well conceived personal and social development programme and a range of informal opportunities to take responsibility.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	N/A	N/A	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.*

Twenty-four lessons were observed during this inspection. In eight of these the teaching was judged to be very good or excellent; in three lessons teaching was satisfactory and in all other lessons the teaching was good. The quality of teaching overall is good and this enables pupils to make good progress. Teaching in English and mathematics is consistently good or better. In one English lesson, for instance, the teaching was excellent as the teacher skilfully introduced the use of apostrophes using all elements of English, including role-play. In general, teachers are very well informed, prepare lessons in detail and choose methods that stimulate and motivate their pupils. Where teaching is only satisfactory there is less challenge and a generally slower pace than in better lessons. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well and receive very precise teaching in small groups. Pupils in the SpLD centre receive very good support both in the unit itself and when they are taught in other classes. The successful integration of these pupils and the close cooperation between staff in the centre and in the main school helps these pupils to learn very well and make very good progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language are monitored closely and support is provided when it is needed, particularly when pupils first come to the school, so that they learn well and make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. There is a rich and balanced mix of academic subjects, arts and sporting pursuits provided for pupils. Opportunities for individual music tuition and competitive sport are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils in the special centre for children who have specific learning difficulties is very good. The provision for other pupils with special educational needs is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils are identified and their needs are evaluated when they first enter the school. Pupils' progress is monitored by the school and outside agencies and support is provided for as long as necessary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' social development is very good; they learn to function well as individuals, as part of groups and as part of wider society. The provision for pupils' moral and cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Standards of care are good. Systems for tracking pupils' academic and personal progress are developing.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has made a very successful start to analysing school effectiveness and developing systems to review its performance. Senior staff support the headteacher well and have responded positively to the development and widening of their roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are well informed and committed. They fulfil their statutory duties in full and analyse school performance critically.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory at present and is an area being developed. The evaluation of the school's performance and the effectiveness of initiatives in the school improvement plan could be more rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources very well to promote pupils' learning and this is especially effective in the special unit. Specific grants and funds to improve the accommodation have been used very well to optimise learning and create a very attractive site. Governors and senior staff are vigilant in finding the best value for goods and services.

## 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>• Pupils make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is very good.</li> <li>• The integration of pupils in the unit is very effective and enriches the experience of all pupils.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is well managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside normal lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team support the positive views of parents and feel that they are well founded. The range of activities outside normal lessons is exceptional. There are many opportunities for pupils to pursue music and sport and the response to these is very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Pupils generally achieve well above average standards.**

1 Results in national tests in English indicate that the school has achieved well above average standards over the three years 1999 to 2002. In 2000 results were in the top 5% of schools nationally. In 2002 standards fell back somewhat but were above average compared with schools nationally and well above average compared with schools similar to Widney. In mathematics, standards have risen from average in 1999 to well above average in 2002, when again results were well above the average of similar schools. In science, standards have been well above average since 1999 except in 2001 when they were above average. The school has received a 'Schools Achievement Award' in recognition of its results in the three years from 2000 to 2002. Girls and boys perform equally well at Widney. There are slight differences in attainment in certain subjects in some years but nothing that suggests a trend or significant difference. Pupils in the SpLD centre, who have difficulties that are associated with language and literacy, perform less well in English than in mathematics and science.

2 In English pupils' speaking and listening skills and reading skills are well above average. Standards in writing are average and writing is the weaker component of English. The school has recognised this from the analysis of its results and through its own monitoring of pupils' work. Nevertheless, some pupils produce work in English that is of a very high standard. For instance, in Year 6, pupils read an extract from *The Demon Headmaster* using insight to analyse the author's description of the central character. They then wrote imaginative descriptions of their own, as in "She wears bright yellow lipstick, layered like a wedding cake." Their writing was accurate and divided into paragraphs.

3 In mathematics, the number of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in tests in 2002 was 46% compared with 27% for schools nationally. This proportion is also reflected in the work of pupils in the current Year 6. Pupils estimate and measure angles, carry out investigations into probability and can calculate quantities using percentages and ratios. There is an exceptional quantity of work produced in mathematics that covers a wide range of topics including numeracy, data handling and geometry. In science, 66% of pupils achieved the higher level 5 in tests in 2002 compared to 38% nationally. Once again this high proportion is reflected in current science work. In Year 6, pupils investigate the fall in temperature in a cooked potato, comparing different materials for their properties as insulators. They use the results to complete complex line graphs. In Year 4, standards in science are well above average with pupils carrying out investigations into friction and they understand how creatures depend on each other in shared habitats and environments.

4 At the time of the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were below average and the improvement in provision for ICT was a key issue. The school has made very good progress in this respect and standards are now at least average; in some aspects of the subject they are above average. In Year 3, pupils use computers to draw graphs linking with work in science. In Year 5, pupils control events such as flashing lights and measure changes in temperature, light and sound over several days. In Year 6, pupils calculate profits made over a three week period using a spreadsheet. They create multi media presentations importing images from the Internet. They use text boxes and sound effects to enrich the descriptions of themselves to others. It was not possible to reach firm conclusions about standards in other subjects during this short inspection but standards observed in physical education and the competence of individual musicians suggests that standards here are good also.

## **The quality of teaching is good overall and pupil make good progress.**

5 At the time of the last inspection the teaching was judged as very good or excellent in approximately a third of the lessons observed and this proportion was maintained again during this inspection where 24 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. The major difference in the quality of teaching is that in 1997 the teaching was unsatisfactory in a tenth of lessons observed, whilst during the current inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was observed and the overall quality of teaching was judged to be good, enabling pupils to make good progress.

6 Teachers are very well prepared for lessons and they use methods that interest and motivate pupils. For instance, in a Year 6 science lesson pupils tested bags for strength. The initial idea was to test bags from different supermarkets. However, with typical attention to detail, teachers tested some bags before the lesson and discovered that the weight needed to test bags to destruction would have been too great for the school's resources and could have presented some safety hazards. So teachers invited pupils to make their own bags from sugar paper using a range of designs and to test them in a competition. The resulting lessons were full of interest and competition, whilst maintaining rigorous attention to fair testing and scientific method.

7 In two literacy sessions in Year 5, pupils worked on the use of apostrophes. Pupils analysed sentences inserting and removing the punctuation marks appropriately, before writing their own pieces using them. However the theme of the written work about a disaffected pupil in discussion with a teacher was both relevant and amusing for the class. Pupils took turns to perform the pieces in front of the class demonstrating very good speaking and listening skills and confidence in performing.

8 Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. Teachers know their pupils well and use praise to reward and enthuse them. Often in mathematics and literacy the planning addresses the different abilities within the classes, so that higher and lower attaining pupils are challenged at appropriate levels. In some lessons, after the introduction, pupils with special education needs move into smaller groups and receive specialist teaching from the special educational needs co-ordinator. These sessions are planned meticulously, with clear targets that reflect the individual needs of pupils. Pupils who attend the SpLD centre make very good progress. Their specific needs are in language and literacy and they receive specialised help in the centre in these areas of learning, where the work is planned with precision and their progress is measured and monitored rigorously. For other subjects, these pupils join classes of their own age and are fully integrated. The system is very effective and several parents took the trouble to write to the inspection team and speak at the parents' meeting about the success the school has had with their children and the exceptional progress they have seen them make.

9 Both in lessons and in the samples of pupils' work that were analysed it was evident that teachers have a secure knowledge of what they teach. Skills in science are developed well and the work in ICT reflects teachers' determination to make use of the relatively new resources acquired by the school. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, often supporting lower attaining pupils. Their effectiveness during whole class sessions in the literacy and numeracy lessons is less effective and this is being developed.

10 Overall teaching in different classes in the same year groups shows a common approach and shared planning that results in consistent provision for pupils. However the

monitoring of teaching needs to be extended to share the very best practice even more widely.

### **The school provides a broad curriculum and a rich range of learning experiences.**

11 The amount of time devoted to individual subjects reflects the school's commitment to a broad and balanced curriculum. The school has maintained good standards in English, mathematics and science by devoting appropriate proportions of the time available to them. The amount of time devoted to ICT is above average and this has had the desired impact of raising standards quickly. The amount of time devoted to physical education is above average and this is reflected in the range of opportunities that are made available to pupils and has helped the school to receive official recognition for its sporting prowess in the form of a Sport England Activemark in 2000.

12 Within subjects, pupils experience a rich diet. For instance, in English pupils in Year 6 cover work based on *Macbeth*, *Oliver Twist* and *The Jungle Book*, reflecting a good cultural breadth as far as western literature is concerned. In mathematics, pupils have regular practical sessions and carry out investigations that use their numeracy skills and other mathematical knowledge. In science, a practical approach is adopted in most classes and this is particularly strong in Years 4 and 6. In science, the curriculum is enriched through a system that ensures that pupils end topics by carrying out a full investigation involving planning, testing, recording results and evaluation of evidence, so that by the time pupils reach Year 6 they are very familiar with scientific process and method.

13 Each class has two ICT sessions per week in the ICT suite. One is devoted to developing specific ICT skills and the second session is aimed at using ICT across the curriculum. The system leads to very good use of ICT across the curriculum. For instance, in Year 3 pupils use computers to create graphs of pupils' eye colour and the relative strength of magnets. In Year 5, pupils use computers to create pictures in the style of Picasso, write poems that are illustrated and produce charts showing the depth of water as a river enters the sea. In Year 6 pupils word-process their writing about the Second World War, devise letters of complaint and use biological keys to identify animals using computers.

14 The range of extra-curricular activities is extensive. A wide variety of sports clubs are provided, including some unusual pursuits such as golf. Some activities are provided by experts brought into school, whilst others are managed and run by staff. During the inspection the athletics club organised after school was attended by over 50 pupils. Pupils compete with other schools in netball, football, athletics, cross-country and swimming. Other clubs are provided for playing recorders, choir, dance and gymnastics. Many pupils take advantage of the individual tuition provided to play musical instruments and take part in festivals organised by Solihull Schools Music service and perform daily in school assemblies.

15 Residential visits are provided for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school is extending an already effective programme of personal and social development that aims to raise pupils' awareness of health related issues and develop personal skills such as communication.

### **The school is well led and it is managed efficiently.**

16 The headteacher has been in post for 15 months. Since her arrival she has carried out a careful analysis of what was already an effective school. She has monitored teaching and learning and gained the confidence of the staff, governors and parents. She has already begun to broaden the base of leadership within the school by providing opportunities for subject co-ordinators to extend their range of activities in leading subjects. For instance, co-

ordinators now regularly monitor colleagues' planning. Just as importantly, co-ordinators now monitor pupils' work so that they have a clearer picture of standards and progress within their own subjects. The science co-ordinator also takes in copies of class results in end-of-topic tests so that she can analyse strengths and weaknesses in provision and pupils' understanding. Both the English and mathematics co-ordinators have attended training specifically aimed at their role as subject leaders and have already begun to put into practice much of what they have learned, such as following initiatives through to look at the related outcomes in teaching and learning. They are starting to identify specific areas where pupils do not perform as well as they might in national tests, and to adjust teaching and overall provision to match. Both subjects have clear plans for development and a time schedule to work through. All co-ordinators contribute to the overall school improvement plan and write annual evaluations of their subjects for governors.

17 The recently appointed deputy headteacher has begun to review and improve systems to track pupils' progress. This information can be used to generate individual pupil targets to complement the existing group and class targets.

18 The co-ordinator for special educational needs is effective in supporting pupils when they are taken out of classes to work in small groups. She keeps detailed records and ensures that class teachers and parents are kept well informed about pupils' progress.

19 The centre for children who have specific learning difficulties is managed very effectively, ensuring that pupils' special needs are met and that they are systematically integrated into the main school. The records on pupils' progress are meticulously kept and they help class teachers to know exactly where pupils are in their learning. The support assistants in the centre are very well informed and have helped to maintain the smooth running of the unit during the extended absence of the unit's teacher-in-charge before and during the inspection.

20 The school improvement plan is an effective document that is helping to lead the school through the transition in leadership, but there are some aspects that could be improved. The cost and timing of some initiatives could be more precise and establishing success criteria, where they are relevant, would provide staff and governors with more precise measures to judge the effectiveness of changes. The current plan covers one year, whereas some projects and developments require a longer term perspective; it might also be helpful to have a more definite focus and to prioritise changes more.

21 The governing body is well informed and committed. Governors have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil their statutory duties in full. Governors make good use of specific skills within the body, for instance, seeking the best possible value for recent building work carried out on the school entrance. They analyse school performance critically and are well informed. The smooth running of the school is supported by other staff, who ensure that school administration is dealt with efficiently in the office. The school site is well maintained providing a very pleasant environment in which pupils learn and play.

### **Pupils' social development is very good as are their attitudes and behaviour.**

22 The whole school ethos promotes pupils' social development through the curriculum and other aspects of the school's provision. Pupils learn to work together in groups, taking turns, having specific roles and cooperating, but also develop skills and confidence working independently.

23 Assemblies are used to promote attitudes of caring for the environment and each other. In one assembly the headteacher skilfully linked the work of Florence Nightingale with recent events in Iraq and the important part played by doctors and nurses in reducing suffering.

24 The school is developing an already effective programme of personal and social development. Pupils serve as house captains and nine pupils each term are voted on to the school council that meets every three weeks. Recent improvements resulting from school council decisions are improved seating areas in the playground and the establishment of a code of conduct that sets out the expectations for behaviour and routines during mealtimes.

25 Relationships are very good throughout the school and as a result there is a harmonious atmosphere of trust and a strong collective spirit. Pupils in the SpLD centre are integrated very successfully into the main school. When asked what was different about Widney compared to their former schools, pupils in Year 6 talked about whole-school features, such as interesting teaching, clubs and teachers who had made them feel that they could succeed. Several parents either wrote or spoke at the parents' meeting about the radical improvement made by their children both academically and socially since attending Widney. The integration of pupils in the SpLD centre is a key feature and major strength of Widney Junior School.

26 Pupils' behaviour is very good, both in classes and around the school in general. In lessons, pupils listen well to instructions and introductions, they work at a fast pace and as result complete above average amounts of work. Pupils' work is presented well, reflecting the pride they take in it. Pupils move through corridors sensibly and play enthusiastically, but fairly on the playground. Older pupils play a part in supervising the flow of pupils back into school at the end of breaks and lunch times.

27 Pupils' attitudes to school are reflected in the well above average attendance rates regularly recorded by the school. They are determined in lessons, want to do well and are keen to talk about their own achievements and the school itself, of which they are proud.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The quality of pupils' writing.**

28 Writing has been correctly identified by the school as an area requiring sustained development. Throughout the school the pupils' writing has some strengths, but there are also general areas of weakness that have not yet been effectively overcome. These are reflected in a slight decline in English test results at eleven, which have not kept pace with the school's high and improving results in mathematics and science. Very high standards were achieved in the English tests in 2000 and results remained well above average in the following year, but these fell back to some degree in 2002. The Year 6 pupils tested in 2002 did not make the progress that would have been expected on the basis of their reading and writing assessments at the age of seven. In the current Year 6, the pupils listen intelligently, speak confidently and do well in their reading, but standards of writing are little better than average for the age-group. They are not as high as at the time of the last inspection.

29 A positive feature is that the difference in performance between girls and boys, as measured by recent test results, is less than the national gap. During the inspection there were no obvious differences between the two, except that the most capable girls tend to present their written work better.

30 Confident speaking and regular reading have a beneficial influence on some aspects of the pupils' writing. Throughout the school, vocabulary and choice of words are sophisticated, even in some cases when the pupils are otherwise struggling with their writing. In Year 3, for example, many pupils drafted effective formal letters of apology from Goldilocks to the three bears. With very good teaching, the pupils were already beginning to understand the use of paragraphing at a simple level. Spelling was generally good, and where mistakes did occur this was often because the choice of words was relatively ambitious, giving rise to attempts such as 'georgus' and 'intefearing'. By Year 6 the higher attainers write very effectively for their age-group, in particular producing sensitive poetry, vivid prose descriptions and fast-moving narrative; for instance: *A loud crack followed by a deep, dark rumbling broke the silence...He looked again. The avalanche was bellowing towards him, swallowing anything that came in its way.* The pupils tend to write best when they work on relatively short pieces of descriptive writing, whether in prose or verse. When their imagination is engaged, however, they can write movingly at some length, for example when describing a visit to Coventry Cathedral, which clearly made a deep impression. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. Some longer stories are also effectively written, but there is a tendency for the plot line to be implausible and story endings are sometimes weak.

31 Spelling is generally accurate and paragraphing is well developed. These strengths are fairly general in the upper junior classes. Whilst many technical features are secure, a common weakness in the pupils' writing is the failure to demarcate sentences with full stops in the right place. Many pupils, even in Year 6, have a tendency to string complete sentences together with commas, showing an uncertain grasp of sentence structure. This problem is exacerbated when non-standard usage is not picked up in the marking. Grammatical mistakes often occur when pupils attempt to structure complex sentences. Many average and below average pupils have problems with verbs and tenses, as in *I would of thought the lamp post would of fell.*

32 As in many schools, the pupils tend to find factual and persuasive writing more difficult than imaginative writing. There are some notable exceptions – for example, a highly competent explanation of the water cycle written by a high attainer in Year 5. But in many cases the pupils fail to expand their arguments and explanations, so that the writing is thin and not fully reasoned. Some average and below average pupils find it difficult to sustain the right tone and style, tending to revert to inappropriate anecdote or narrative in the past tense. Although in general they do just as well as the rest, this can be a particular difficulty for pupils with a non-English speaking background. The quality of handwriting and presentation is inconsistent. Whilst some pupils develop a neat and fluent cursive style, too much writing is straggly and untidy. A few are still inclined to print, even in Year 6.

33 Some good and very good teaching of literacy was seen during the inspection, with a focus on writing in some instances. In a successful Year 3 lesson, for example, letter writing conventions were very effectively modelled, with just the right level of challenge for pupils at different stages in their writing development. In a Year 6 lesson, the pupils' writing was based on a well-chosen text which was carefully analysed in the course of skilful questioning to bring out the connotations of the words used. Folders and exercise books, however, suggest that the teaching of writing is at present satisfactory rather than good, when taken as a whole. Although good progress is made in some classes, with one or two examples of pupils' writing really taking off, overall too much is left for Year 6 teachers to do in the final year. In particular there is not always enough to challenge the higher attaining pupils in Year 5, with some mediocre work praised inappropriately and significant mistakes not picked up. On the other hand, effective marking to promote development can be seen in some classes in Years 3, 4 and 6; there is a body of good practice for the school to build on.

34 A start has been made in developing writing across the curriculum, but there is further to go. Writing tasks such as imaginative accounts of the Blitz support work in history as well as giving opportunities for extended writing. Work in history and geography is, however, too dependent on the completion of worksheets that require little independent writing, especially in Years 4 and 5. The school has yet to develop its policy on writing in science.

35 The headteacher and literacy co-ordinator both have a high level of professional expertise and have received constructive advice from external sources. They are aware of what needs to be done and have begun to take the necessary actions to raise standards in writing. A whole-school policy for handwriting and presentation of work is currently being developed. There are regular termly assessments of writing and each child's work is matched against National Curriculum levels to help identify the next steps for each individual and group targets. This is good practice, but progress is hampered to some extent because teachers are not equally skilled in assessing accurately the level at which the pupils are working. There is a tendency on the part of some staff to over-estimate the pupils' achievements. This indicates both a need for further professional development, support and training and a need for closer oversight to ensure consistency. Recognising this, the school is now working steadily towards a systematic approach to monitoring teaching and learning by the co-ordinator, which has been lacking in the past. All the indications are that the school has the capacity to succeed in its aim of raising the standard of writing.

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

- (1) To continue efforts to raise standards in writing by:
- improving marking to ensure that the pupils are invariably challenged and helped to improve their writing;
  - giving more attention to sentence structure and grammatical correctness as well as vocabulary;
  - developing information writing across the curriculum;
  - sharpening the focus of monitoring by the co-ordinator;
  - providing further in-service training to increase staff expertise throughout the school.

*(Paragraphs – 1, 2, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33 and 34)*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	6	13	3	0	0	0
Percentage	8	24	54	12	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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	254
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	29

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	33	35	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	29	33
	Girls	28	34	34
	Total	55	63	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (84)	93 (79)	99 (94)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	29	33
	Girls	31	34	34
	Total	58	63	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (84)	93 (80)	97 (91)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	198	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	18	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	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: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	89

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	593021
Total expenditure	595445
Expenditure per pupil	2142
Balance brought forward from previous year	29406
Balance carried forward to next year	26982

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	265
Number of questionnaires returned	103

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	40	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	47	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	53	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	61	9	0	0
The teaching is good.	57	42	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	48	5	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	35	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	44	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	44	2	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	46	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	41	16	1	4