

INSPECTION REPORT

ECCLESTON LANE ENDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Prescot

LEA area: St Helen's

Unique reference number: 104788

Headteacher: Mrs Jennifer Brighthouse

Reporting inspector: Lysbeth Bradley
19994

Dates of inspection: February 24th – 26th 2003

Inspection number: 246412

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Tracy Leather
Date of previous inspection:	10 th – 13 th March 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This voluntary controlled primary school is situated in Eccleston Park, Prescott and serves a wide area. The school is much the same size as other primary schools with 245 boys and girls on roll, aged from four to 11 years. Overall, their social and economic circumstances are above those found nationwide. Most children are of white UK heritage and all speak English as their first language. A small number is known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The numbers of pupils on the school's register for special educational needs and those with a statement of need are much lower than most schools. Most children attend a Nursery or playgroup before starting school and their attainment on entry is often above average when compared with children nationally, although in some years attainment is average. In 2002, the school was awarded Investors in People status, the Active Mark Silver and the local authority Early Years Kitemark. For the last two years, the school has also received a government School Achievement Award for improvement over time and, subsequently, for maintaining high standards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Eccleston Lane Ends is a good school with significant strengths and several outstanding features. Very good leadership from the senior management team and the strong commitment of the governing body have enabled pupils to achieve well, whatever their ability, in English and mathematics and to attain high standards. The pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is exemplary because all staff consider the care of pupils and their personal development to be of paramount importance. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and particularly effective in the Reception and Infant classes. Teachers set high standards, although expectations are not consistently high in the Juniors, where pupils are not always challenged enough in the non-core subjects. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain high standards in English and mathematics at the ages of seven and 11.
- Very good teaching, provision and organisation in the Reception class and the Infants lead to pupils making accelerated progress.
- High quality personal development produces thoughtful, considerate and well-mannered children who leave the school as well-rounded young citizens.
- Exemplary care procedures ensure that the school is very effective in meeting individual needs.
- Strong and purposeful leadership by senior managers and governors has brought about a culture of continuous improvement.

What could be improved

- Achievement is not high enough in the non-core subjects in the Juniors.
- The school is not always sufficiently rigorous and consistent in implementing its very good monitoring systems.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1998, standards have risen and these high standards have been maintained because the quality of teaching has improved significantly. The school has made very good progress overall in addressing the key issues. Higher attaining pupils now achieve well in English and mathematics through the good use of assessment and effective organisation and teaching. The school has been successful in developing pupils' ability to discuss and debate issues, to solve problems and to explore and investigate. The implementation of a new scheme of work in science has raised standards and is generally successful in ensuring that what has been learned before is built on and that work matches the attainments of pupils. The school has also made good improvement in monitoring and evaluating teaching through a comprehensive monitoring programme and effective performance management and appraisal. The school has also secured improvements in many other areas, most significantly in relation to pupils' personal development.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

A* indicates that results were in the top 5 % nationally

Pupils' attainment and achievement in the core subjects paint a positive picture. In 2002, eleven-year-old pupils attained standards in national tests that were in the highest five per cent nationally in mathematics, well above average in English and above average in science. When compared with similar schools¹, standards were above average in English, well above average in mathematics and average in science. This same group of pupils made very good progress in building on their very good results at age seven, in English and mathematics, when compared to similar schools, which represents very good achievement. At the age of seven, pupils attained standards in national tests that were in the highest five per cent nationally in writing, above average in reading and well above average in mathematics. Teacher assessment indicates that standards are average in science. Inspection evidence shows that pupils attain well above average standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science at seven and 11 years. The school has maintained high standards in English and mathematics at both key stages over the last four years by the effective implementation of the national strategies, regular tracking of pupils' progress and timely intervention to address areas of weakness. The school sets itself challenging targets and is successful in meeting them.

Many children start school with well developed literacy and numeracy skills. They achieve well in Reception and by the time they enter Year 1, most have attained the early learning goals in all areas of learning, and the majority have exceeded them in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. The school is very successful in enabling pupils to achieve high standards in writing and speaking, and in the use of number. Pupils of all abilities, gender and race achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and higher attaining pupils reach the standards of which they are capable in English and mathematics. In the Reception class and the Infants, pupils make good progress across the curriculum. In the Juniors, progress is not as consistent as it could be in most non-core subjects because pupils are not challenged enough.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils of all ages are very keen to learn and to play a full part in school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Behaviour is of a consistently high standard, whether at work or play. The oldest pupils provide a role model for the rest of the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils of all ages get on extremely well together and show each other and all adults consideration and respect.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils attend regularly and arrive on time.

¹ Similar schools are those where a similar proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is of a consistently high standard in both Reception and Years 1 and 2. Teachers and support staff are skilled at assessing pupils' needs and in planning a wide range of stimulating learning experiences that motivate them to strive to do their best. Very effective teamwork, good deployment of staff and flexible organisation enables the pupils in mixed-age classes to achieve very well as they move from class to class and between the Foundation Stage and the Infants. Teaching is good overall in the Juniors, although the same high levels of consistency are not as evident. Whilst very good teaching was observed, not all teachers have the same high expectations and planning is not generally sufficiently rigorous for pupils of different abilities in subjects other than English and mathematics. Teaching is at its most inconsistent in Year 6, because the teachers have very differing expectations of what pupils can achieve. Because pupils throughout the school are so motivated to learn, they make the most of all learning opportunities, even those that lack challenge.

All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and set clear parameters to which pupils respond very well. This ensures that no time is wasted. The teaching of English is a strength of the school. Good emphasis is given to speaking, active listening, reading and writing, not only in literacy lessons, but also in all other subjects. The consistent development of pupils' literacy skills maximises their opportunities to learn in other subjects. Most staff are adept at extending pupils' vocabulary and their understanding of the complexities of language. Mathematics is also taught well, with good emphasis on problem-solving and a good level of challenge for more able pupils. Pupils are encouraged to develop their numeracy skills in many other subjects. Pupils respond well to the targets that are agreed in writing and mathematics and take note of both oral feedback and written marking. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress, although not all individual education plans have sharp targets.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The Foundation Stage curriculum is very effective in providing a wide range of active learning opportunities for children to investigate and explore. The Infant curriculum is very good in building on what pupils already know and stimulating their thinking and creativity. Although the curriculum in the Juniors is good, pupils' independence in learning is not promoted well enough. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and enables them to achieve well and to play a full part in every aspect of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school is very successful in cultivating pupils' personal development. Moral development is outstanding, and spiritual and social development are both very good. Cultural development is satisfactory, although the school does not plan systematically for it to permeate pupils' learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are exemplary. Pupils speak highly of the care they receive. The school has developed very good procedures for assessment in all subject areas. It uses the information

	effectively to track pupils' academic progress and personal development.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides purposeful and sensitive leadership and gives a strong steer in achieving the school's aims. The senior management team has been very effective in promoting continuous improvement. Co-ordinators are generally very effective in developing their area of responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is conscientious in fulfilling its statutory duties. It is committed to obtaining the 'best deal for all pupils' and is instrumental in shaping the direction of the school. Governors are actively involved in monitoring the work of the school, but do not always understand the full implication of their actions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has developed a culture that is open to external evaluation, and performance management is very effective in setting targets that move the school forward. The school has established very comprehensive monitoring systems, but these are not always implemented with sufficient consistency or rigour. The school understands and applies the principles of best value well.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The governing body is very thorough in monitoring the budget, and in ensuring probity and that staff and resources are deployed effectively. However, the school lacks a robust strategic financial plan that will enable it to reduce its high carry forward to an acceptable level.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress • The school expects children to work hard and do their best • Behaviour is good and their children are encouraged to become responsible and mature • The school is well led and staff are approachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities provided for their children outside lessons • Homework policy is inconsistent • Information about their child's progress

The inspection team endorses parents' positive views. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, although most activities involve the oldest children and the school does not make the rationale behind its policy clear to parents. Homework is pitched at the right level for pupils' ages and abilities and often links well with what they are learning in school. There is, however, inconsistency in the approach taken by different teachers. The school communicates well with parents, both informally and formally, about their child's progress, although pupils' annual reports are inconsistent in the quality of information they contain and in the sharpness of targets.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils attain high standards in English and mathematics at the ages of seven and 11.

1. Many children start school with well developed literacy and numeracy skills. Very good foundations are laid in Reception where teaching staff build systematically on children's earlier experiences and understanding and enable them to achieve very well whatever their starting point. By the time they enter Year 1, most will have securely attained the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development and, in some years, a significant minority will already be working within the National Curriculum. The present group of children entered school with above average attainment, have settled to school very well and are motivated to rise to their teachers' high expectations.
2. In a literacy lesson, where the children were reading 'Mr Gumpy's Outing' together, there was a high level of involvement with many children asking pertinent questions, making thoughtful responses, responding to each other's suggestions and justifying accurately what they thought would happen next with reference to the text and illustrations. One child asked the meaning of 'squabble'; another proposed 'perhaps it's fighting'; another responded 'you could use quarrel instead'. Children had a good awareness of sentence structure and what constituted clear writing, and made good stabs at spelling, drawing on their a good knowledge of letter sounds and rhyming words. In a very lively numeracy lesson, many children had an awareness of numbers beyond 20 and most were confident in counting and matching. Half the group were able to add two numbers together to make ten, with more able children recording two dice as an addition sum.
3. The teaching of English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is of a consistently high standard with pupils expected to work towards individual targets, based on an accurate assessment of their work, to think for themselves and to put everything they learn into practice. Observation of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates rapid progress in lessons and very good achievement within years and between years. Although the school has been successful in maintaining high standards in writing and mathematics, standards in reading have been less consistent. Infant teachers have tackled this with vigour, through performance management, an emphasis of comprehension skills and an ability to discuss the text, underpinned by the introduction of rigorous tracking systems. Pupils in Year 2 are attaining standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average in both lessons and in their written work. The meticulous tracking of pupils' progress, along with the very good use of assessment in lessons, ensures that the work in one lesson leads seamlessly into the next. Through timely intervention throughout the lesson and in well focused sessions that round off each lesson, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and what they need to do next.
4. Many pupils in Years 1 and 2 attain impressive standards in writing and all pupils can express their ideas on paper, seeing themselves as writers and poets. Not only is the writing process modelled very well and supported by the use of writing frames, but teachers also provide good opportunities for pupils to explore language and discuss their thoughts, before writing independently. In addition, pupils have the capacity to record their learning across the curriculum. This is a key factor in their above average attainment in a wide range of subjects. The development of mathematical language is equally important in numeracy lessons and gives pupils the tools to discuss methods of working and to explain what they understand by signs and symbols. In a quick fire mental starter, pupils in Year 2 counted accurately in multiples of 5 and 10. This enabled them to tackle a homework task that involved decimal currency. Pupils were challenged to develop their own systems for counting on and to write their own number sentences to demonstrate their understanding of +, - and =. Pupils reached high standards in quick and accurate calculation and demonstrated a confidence in playing with numbers.

5. Pupils continue to achieve very well in English and mathematics in the Juniors, although their rates of progress are variable with a minority of pupils marking time in Year 3. The school is tracking the progress of this year group in detail and has extended successful strategies used in Year 2 into Year 3. By the age of eight, pupils have excellent attitudes to learning instilled and show high levels of interest in their lessons. They work hard at school and complete homework tasks conscientiously. By the age of eleven, almost all pupils attain the expected levels in English and mathematics, and a significant minority attain higher levels. The school has been successful in raising the achievement of more able pupils in both subjects since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 4 are taught by two teachers, who work as a job share, and benefit from their shared expertise, good joint planning and high expectations. In two poetry lessons, many pupils worked at a high level, commenting maturely on the vocabulary and form of complex poems, and deriving great pleasure in analysing skilfully the poets' use of imagery. The most able pupils in Year 6 are working at level 6 in mathematics and, unlike most schools across the country, there is not a large difference in standards in reading and writing, with 40 per cent of pupils reaching level 5 in writing in 2002.
6. The generally good use of assessment and effective deployment of learning support assistants enables work to be pitched at the right level. More able pupils in mathematics are taught in separate groups in Years 4, 5 and 6 to maintain the level and pace at which they are capable of working. In a very good numeracy lesson for more able pupils in Year 6, they operated at a high level, drawing on their knowledge of the properties of angles, triangles and intersecting parallel lines to solve complex geometrical questions. The quality of pupils' writing is of a uniformly high standard. All pupils have found their own voice and most write confidently for a variety of audience and purposes. Spelling is of a high standard and many pupils use a wide range of vocabulary, tenses and sentence structure. The best writers conveyed a real sense of tension in an account of a rising river, demonstrating the ability to blend narrative and dialogue for maximum effect. Although pupils' work indicates that they are capable of high standards of work, pupils in the current Year 6 are not always set work that is increasingly demanding or that challenges them to think for themselves and to work independently.

Very good teaching, provision and organisation in the Reception class and the Infants leads to pupils making accelerated progress.

7. Over the past few years, teachers of the younger pupils have responded very well to both external and internal challenges in order to meet the governing body's commitment to provide 'the best deal for every child'. All staff have shown a high degree of professionalism and a ready willingness to take on new ways of working. In the Foundation Stage and the Infants, highly effective teamwork and communication underpin everything that is planned to meet the needs of individuals and groups, based on detailed assessment. Consistency is the watchword in the approach to learning and in the setting of high standards of work and behaviour. A rich curriculum that sparks pupils' imagination and encourages creativity, the systematic teaching of basic skills and a belief that learning can be fun ensure that pupils derive the maximum benefit from their early years at the school, whatever their ability. They develop a love of learning, which they retain throughout their time in school, an ability to think for themselves and to work independently.
8. The school has established very thorough induction procedures, aspects of which the local education authority (LEA) promote as a model of good practice. This enables both children and parents to make the transition from nursery or playgroup to school with confidence. As a result, children rapidly develop a readiness to learn and a capacity to take advantage of all the learning experiences that are on offer. The school has worked enthusiastically to implement the Foundation Stage curriculum and has achieved the LEA Kitemark for developing work in the Early Years, including continuous provision. This means that, whether taught exclusively in the dedicated Reception class or in the class with pupils in Year 1, children have access to a wide range of very well planned activities that are suitable for their age and stages of development. At

times, these are led by the teacher or a member of the experienced learning support staff and, at other times, the children are encouraged to make choices and to explore and investigate for themselves.

9. Members of the teaching staff are adept at enabling children to make connections with their own experiences and with other areas of learning. This was seen in a literacy lesson where the teacher linked the big book with work on road safety and children's knowledge of the immediate locality. They are also encouraged to make links for themselves, as illustrated by one child who pointed out in another lesson that the author, John Burningham, was very like Birmingham! Speaking and listening is promoted very effectively in all areas of learning and ensures that children are able to express their ideas confidently and accurately, as they did when sorting toy cows and pigs in a field. No opportunity is missed for children to apply what they are learning in other situations. The breadth and relevance of the curriculum motivates children to get involved and to try their best. Brains were seen ticking over in lessons as children eagerly waited their turn to answer and ask questions and to make suggestions. Not only did the children make at least good progress in the lessons seen, but also the carefully planned curriculum and accurate assessment enable them to achieve very well over time, whatever their ability.
10. When the government set a maximum class size of 30 for pupils between five and seven years old, the school had no alternative but to introduce mixed-age classes. It has established very effective ways of explaining to parents the way classes and learning are organised, although this was still raised as a matter of concern by parents at the meeting held as part of the inspection process. These concerns are groundless. Under the excellent leadership of the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, the Infant department has developed a 'spiral' curriculum that ensures that pupils build on what they have already learned, whichever class they are in. High quality planning and the very good use of assessment information ensure that teaching staff have a very good grip of pupils' attainment and their rate of progress. Highly effective organisation, with effective deployment of the good levels of both teachers and learning support staff, enables pupils to be taught in groups appropriate for their age and ability, through fluid groupings that appear effortless, but which are organised down to the last detail.
11. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work provide clear evidence of very good achievement in every subject. Lessons go at a cracking pace, as pupils match the teachers' enthusiasm for learning new skills and wrestling with new concepts. In an excellent art lesson in Year 2, pupils became absorbed in painting in the style of Andre Derain, using short brush strokes and an almost dry brush. They learned so much in a short time about how the painter achieved his effects, as well as developing their own skills, because the teacher explained clearly what they were to learn and made timely interventions to take their learning on. In a music lesson for all pupils in Year 2, the teacher held the attention of the very large group and enabled them to make impressive strides in their appraisal of 'Mars' by Gustav Holst. Very good levels of concentration and active listening, ably guided by the teacher, enabled pupils to explain on a first listening that the dynamics suggested 'two groups of aliens battling' and 'a rocket blasting off as the music gets louder', before the composer's intentions were revealed to them. On a second listening, when they were asked to listen specifically to changes in tempo, one pupil drew attention to the composer's use of trumpets to create atmosphere and the majority of pupils noted the changes in tempo as they followed the piece with rapt attention.
12. Very good achievement is not only the result of impressive learning in individual lessons, but because one lesson leads seamlessly into the next and also because pupils have such a clear idea of what is expected of them. Their eagerness to learn was inescapable in a literacy lesson for Year 1 pupils where they produced a wealth of suggestions when constructing sentences for themselves, and in a numeracy lesson where they used their ability to count on in 5s to solve shopping problems. In another numeracy lesson, pupils in Year 2 rose to the challenge of developing and explaining their own strategies for counting on. Pupils' individual targets and group targets, couched in 'child friendly' language ensure that they know precisely what they are aiming

for. In a poetry lesson, pupils in Year 2 demonstrated very good recollection of what they had learned previously. They too were expected to explain their strategy for spelling new words, and quickly grasped the significance of onset and rime in constructing their own rhyming couplets. The school's policy of a three-session morning enables teachers to make the maximum use of time across the day, as well as in individual lessons. Because children have discovered an excitement in learning, they respond well to these demands and sustain their interest and concentration throughout.

High quality personal development produces thoughtful, considerate and well-mannered children who leave the school as well-rounded young citizens.

13. Personal, social and health education is part of the school's core curriculum and a keystone in the realisation of its aims to encourage in pupils a responsible, flexible and questioning outlook in order to cope with the challenges of society. The school has a well-planned curriculum that is promoted through dedicated weekly lessons and circle time when pupils have the opportunity to reflect on issues of increasing complexity. The school also has specific weeks when issues relating to healthy eating, multi-cultural education and talents are explored in depth to develop in pupils an awareness of how others live their lives, what each has to offer and how to make informed choices.
14. From their first days in school, the youngest children are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong and to consider how their actions affect other people in both a positive and negative way. As they move through the school, all staff provide pupils with very good guidance and a clear route map that teaches them to make sense of each new situation and helps them to decide how to act based on a set of clear principles. Teachers take every opportunity in lessons and in assemblies to encourage pupils to reflect on issues, to understand what causes people to act as they do and to develop their own moral framework. Pupils in Year 5 showed good insight when discussing an incident of bullying in a video clip about Victorian schooling. More able pupils in Year 6 were able to demonstrate a depth of understanding that belied their years when asked to explain what was meant by 'a moral compass' when studying the life of Mother Teresa in religious education.
15. Pupils' spirituality is developed very well, particularly through well-planned opportunities to learn from religion, through the study of music, art and poetry. The school is successful in creating in each individual a sense of self-worth and an appreciation of others and of the world around them. Pupils are encouraged to think of others less fortunate than themselves by sponsoring a child in Africa. Each month, classes take turns to get involved actively by devising ways of raising money and seeing the project through. Very good attention is also given to pupils' social development. From the time they start in Reception, children are expected to take on tasks in the classroom and to be thoughtful towards others. In Year 2, pupils were observed clearing up methodically after themselves without prompting at the end of an art lesson. In the Juniors, pupils from Year 3 upwards have the opportunity to volunteer for the playground squad and receive training so that they can enable all pupils to enjoy playtimes and lunchtimes, whatever they choose to do. The squad has grown rapidly and now boasts five teams who turn out regularly. Each pupil in Year 6 takes on a designated role and is attached to a class or to a member of staff. They undertake their duties conscientiously, showing good levels of initiative in their work. This epitomises the excellent relationships within the school where staff and pupils alike look out for each other and do so with a willingness and cheerfulness that no visitor to the school can fail to notice.
16. Although the school has set time aside to celebrate other cultures and provides pupils with a satisfactory range of opportunities to learn more about their own culture and beliefs and those of others, the school does not plan for this aspect with the same thoroughness. As a result, cultural development does not permeate the curriculum in the same way as all other aspects of pupils' personal development. Opportunities are sometimes missed in subjects, such as art, literature and music, to widen pupils' horizons and pupils do not develop sufficient awareness of the challenging questions that they will be faced with as young citizens living in a country with an increasing

richness of ethnic diversity. This apart, the school has every right to be proud of its pupils who are thoughtful, considerate and well-mannered young people who are keen to do things for others and have the confidence and self-discipline to resist peer pressure.

Exemplary care procedures ensure that the school is very effective in meeting individual needs.

17. The school is highly effective in meeting its aim to be a caring community by nurturing each individual child. The teachers and learning support assistants know their pupils very well and are alert to their individual circumstances and needs. They do their utmost to enable pupils to get the most from their education in a safe and secure environment. Pupils speak highly of the quality of care. Both parents and their children find all staff very approachable and pupils say that they would always know who to turn to, should the need arise.
18. Arrangements for the care of pupils and to support their welfare are excellent. Any issue or concern is dealt with as a matter of urgency and handled with sensitivity. The school has a policy and procedure in place for every eventuality. These are fully inclusive and take good account of the needs of boys and girls, pupils of different abilities and those from different cultures and backgrounds. The school monitors their implementation assiduously to ensure that policies are translated consistently into practice. Health and safety matters are given the highest priority and governors take their responsibilities very seriously in this regard. Teaching and support staff undertake regular training to ensure they are up to date with all matters concerning child protection and emergency first aid. A significant number of staff is trained in first aid and all pupils in Year 6 undertake certificated training as well. Liaison with external agencies is very good to support children in public care and those with special educational needs.
19. Central to the school's philosophy is the need to encourage self-respect and a sense of worth in each pupil. This is achieved in a myriad of ways. It involves the pupils themselves in understanding the needs of others and showing care and consideration for each other as a matter of course. The staff provide excellent role models for pupils to follow, and the older pupils in their turn see it as their responsibility to lead by example. The school has been very successful in providing a second chance for pupils who have been excluded from other schools. Pupils have been involved in formulating the few rules that are needed to maintain a very orderly community and all staff are quietly consistent in upholding the rules, whether at lunchtime, in the playground or in lessons. Through their time at the school, pupils' achievements are celebrated in class, in assemblies and in their record of achievement, whose content pupils are involved in selecting each year to highlight their achievements in and out of school.
20. In spite of the very high standard of care provided, staff and governors are not complacent and are constantly seeking to improve its provision. This has led to the establishment of an inclusion working party to drive forward the implementation of the inclusion index. The working party involves governors and staff at every level, as well as a former parent who acts as a critical friend, and seeks the views of parents and pupils in a thorough and systematic way. Although it is early days, the school is much further advanced than many schools in analysing its procedures and practices. The group has set itself the task of ensuring that each pupil is enabled to achieve at whatever they excel in. To this end, it has set about examining every area of school life in a considered and systematic way. Results are already evident in the improvements that have been made to the reception area, which is now welcoming and informative. A school council has recently been established with training for all council members and a role in monitoring the work of the school. The school is keen to establish genuine consultation with pupils, parents and the wider community and is open to new ways of seeing, if it can be of benefit to one or more pupils in the school.

Strong and purposeful leadership by senior managers and governors has brought about a culture of continuous improvement.

21. The headteacher, senior managers and governors have a clear idea of what they want for the school and work with determination to maintain high standards and to continue to develop all aspects of school life. Since the last inspection, they have not only worked hard to remedy areas of weakness, but they have also sought to improve those aspects of school life that were judged to be good. Significant improvement has been made in the development and refinement of assessment procedures and the way that they are used in English, mathematics and science to track the progress of individual pupils in order to plan work for them with the right degree of challenge. This has enabled the school to demonstrate that pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics and science in national tests, whatever their ability. In parallel with thoughtful implementation of national literacy and numeracy strategies, the introduction of a comprehensive system of monitoring to complement effective performance management and appraisal systems has enabled the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
22. The headteacher not only leads by example, but is a team player. She has created a very effective senior management team with complementary styles and a wide range of experience and expertise, whose members are working together with a unified purpose to drive the school forward. Every pupil is known to the headteacher through regular contact in class. This enables her to understand individual need as well as maintaining the big picture. When faced with the need to make changes, senior managers tackle each issue comprehensively and with thoroughness. They demonstrate energy and enthusiasm, tempered with sensitivity, which results in a commitment from all staff and governors to seek the best solution for the pupils. An excellent example of the school's effectiveness in managing change is the reorganisation of the Infant department to accommodate classes of 30 pupils. In the face of parental concern, the school has demonstrated, not only that their children will not miss out by being taught in mixed age classes, but that the new way of working is enabling pupils to learn in leaps and bounds.
23. In striving for continuous improvement, the governing body has been keen to support the school in opening itself up to outside scrutiny and external measures, particularly in areas of importance to the school that are not subject to national tests. This has enabled the school to work successfully towards an Active Sports mark, an Early Years Kitemark and strands of the Healthy Schools award. Governors have purposely directed their monitoring to areas where the school has sought to improve its practice. Furthermore, the governing body has been active in promoting work on the inclusion index and has encouraged the involvement of a critical friend to hold the school to account. As well as developing a framework for external challenge, the inclusion working party is formulating meaningful ways of consulting with pupils, parents and the wider community so that their views inform the school's bid for best practice.
24. The school achieved Investors in People status last year because of its well-organised and inclusive approach to staff development. Co-ordinators are clear about their leadership and management roles and undertake them well, with a good emphasis on monitoring the quality of learning in most subjects. Team leaders are also effective in ensuring that individual performance management targets are closely related to school priorities and make a demonstrable contribution to moving practice forward, as in the development of a portfolio for art and design with examples of pupils' work explaining in detail the standard achieved. Members of the support team are also committed to professional development and they, too, take on responsibilities, such as managing the first aid programme for pupils in Year 6, and are working collaboratively with senior staff in leading on initiatives, such as the playground squad and the school council. These initiatives in their turn are developing the pupils' sense of responsibility and their understanding of what constitutes effective leadership.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Achievement is not high enough in the non-core subjects in the Juniors

25. Since the last inspection, the school has rightly concentrated on raising standards in English, mathematics and science by improving the quality of the teaching and learning, the curriculum and the use of assessment. It has, nonetheless, sought to do this through other subjects as well as in literacy and numeracy lessons. A good deal has been accomplished in developing pupils' speaking skills and their ability to solve problems and to investigate across the curriculum. Ahead of many schools, assessment procedures have been developed in all subjects, which enable teachers to make judgements about pupils' skills and understanding as well as their subject knowledge. The school also sets aside a day when the whole staff scrutinises pupils' recorded work, but recognises that teachers are getting to grips with procedures and that their use has yet to be evaluated.
26. Staff in the Infant department have established weekly meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning and to check that pupils are working at the right level in all subjects, whatever their age or ability. These meetings have been very helpful in establishing a consistency of approach and expectation as well as addressing concerns and sharing best practice. The high standards attained in English, mathematics and science are equally evident in all other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are supported to achieve well and more able pupils are enabled to reach a higher level through effective questioning and challenging tasks. Scrutiny of work in science, geography and history provides evidence of their ability to investigate methodically, record their findings accurately and draw conclusions. They are also expected to raise questions and find things out for themselves.
27. Teachers in the Juniors do not build systematically on what pupils have already achieved and expectations are not high enough, particularly for the more able pupils. Most lessons plans do not indicate how higher attaining pupils will be challenged in developing skills and concepts. In many lessons, pupils are expected to work at the same pace and learn the same things. Unnecessary time is spent on colouring in printed drawings and maps, and too little time is spent on encouraging pupils to pose questions and find things out for themselves. Teachers' level of expectation varies between subject and between year group. In Year 3, pupils worked at a good level in history considering reasons for migration in the past and the present. The same pupils are undertaking similar work in science as pupils in Year 2. Too little is often expected of the oldest pupils who are articulate and highly motivated learners. Lessons are often poorly planned and have restricted content. Too much time is spent giving pupils information, and too little time is spent in encouraging them to think deeply, to compile evidence and to draw their own conclusions. They work within a tight structure and are not encouraged sufficiently to plan their own work, to discuss issues and to follow through their own ideas. As a direct consequence, they attain only average standards and their achievement is not good enough.

The school is not always sufficiently rigorous and consistent in implementing its very good monitoring systems

28. The school has established a raft of comprehensive monitoring systems, which have the capacity to enable senior staff and governors to keep track of the progress of individual pupils and to evaluate the impact of all its actions. Procedures are laid out in detail in the school development plan, which serves as an effective working document to guide the school's priorities for school improvement. The governing body is conscientious in ensuring that all statutory requirements are in place and is effective in most of its monitoring, particularly in relation to pupils' care, health and safety.
29. There are, however, areas where the school needs to be tighter in its practice. Through very prudent financial planning, the school has accumulated a large surplus of 15 per cent. The governing body identified how this money was to be spent, but as a result of its success in obtaining grants for most of its large projects and careful housekeeping, this large surplus has not

reduced. No alternative strategic plan had been established until very recently, but even this will not reduce the surplus to an acceptable level of five per cent. Now that the reduction in the school's admission number has worked its way through the school, the governing body is committed to maintaining the present level of staffing, but has not set out a long-term strategic plan that costs out the options.

30. The school has made good strides in developing comprehensive monitoring procedures, which focus on learning as well as teaching. There is a published schedule that all staff adhere to and good opportunities for staff to work together in assessing the quality of pupils' work across a wide range of subjects. The school has also developed good assessment procedures in all non-core subjects that provide useful guidance to staff in evaluating work. In spite of this framework, not all monitoring is undertaken with the same rigour and areas of weakness are not always picked up quickly enough. The school provides excellent opportunities for staff development for teachers new to the school, but does not check regularly that their expectations and practice are of a high enough standard. This has recently resulted in unacceptable variations in pupils' learning.
31. In many areas of the school's work there is an impressive degree of consistency. However, there are instances of inconsistency where the school has not shared best practice. Pupils' annual reports do not always provide parents with a clear picture of what their children do well and where they can improve. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs often fail to state specifically what a pupil is aiming for and this makes it impossible to measure the rate of progress or for the pupil to have a sense of achievement in reaching a goal. Each class establishes its own homework policy, some more detailed than others. Although the school's aim is for there to be continuity and consistency in the way homework is set, this is not always the case and some parents are understandably confused.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In its bid for continuous improvement, to maintain high standards and to obtain the 'best deal for every child', the headteacher, governing body and staff should:

- (1) Improve achievement in science and the non-core subjects in the Juniors by:
 - Building on the good practice established in the Infant department for leading and managing the curriculum;
 - Ensuring that teachers build on the achievements and above average attainment of pupils in the infants;
 - Making effective use of the very good assessment procedures that the school has introduced to plan work that challenges pupils of all abilities, especially the oldest pupils and the high attainers.
(Paragraph Nos. 26, 27)
- (2) Improve the ability to make judgements about the quality of its work and to ensure that the school obtains best value by:
 - Developing a long-term strategic financial plan that explores options, taking action to reduce the large carry forward to an acceptable level of five per cent and monitoring the plan to ensure that it is on target;
 - Sharpening monitoring procedures for teachers new to the school to ensure that they have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and tailor their planning and teaching to build

on prior attainment and to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, particularly the high attainers;

- Ensuring that pupils' annual reports, class homework policies and individual action plans are of a consistently high quality and draw from the best practice within the school and in other schools.

(Paragraph Nos. 29 – 31)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	8	12	5	0	1	0
Percentage	7	29	43	18	0	3	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	245
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	16	18	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	16	18	18
	Total	32	34	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	18	18	16
	Total	34	34	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	94 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	20	22	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	19
	Girls	21	21	22
	Total	37	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (94)	95 (100)	98 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	19
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	37	39	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (94)	93 (97)	95 (94)
	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		
White – Irish	2		
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3		
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background	2		
Asian or Asian British – Indian			
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese	2		
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded	34		

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7
Average class size	30.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	160

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	553634
Total expenditure	536968
Expenditure per pupil	2165
Balance brought forward from previous year	63798
Balance carried forward to next year	80464

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.8
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	244
Number of questionnaires returned	180

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	36	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	42	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	32	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	52	11	1	0
The teaching is good.	53	44	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	46	12	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	32	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	36	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	43	11	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	58	36	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	42	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	36	24	8	9